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Revelation 10 Revisited

One hundred seventy-six years ago, the spiritual forefathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church expected Jesus to return to earth in power and great glory on October 22, 1844. They had come to this conclusion as a result of their study of the little book of Daniel, specifically centering on the prediction in Daniel 8:14 which clearly states:

"And he said unto me, 'Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.'"

When Jesus did not appear as they expected, the little band of survivors searched the scriptures and prayed for additional light about their experience. God answered their prayers by directing their minds to Daniel 7:9-14, where Jesus is pictured as being led into the presence of His Father to begin the celestial judgment. In addition to the light shining from the scriptures, special spiritual enlightenment was given to Hiram Edson, that instead of coming to the earth as they had expected, Jesus had gone into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, there to begin the final judgment, beginning with the dead and finally ending with the living, after which He would indeed come back to take His people home.

As they continued to study, the Holy Spirit directed their minds to Revelation 10. There they discovered new light and information concerning their experience. Significantly, the chapter ends with an imperative sentence which rings down through the years, even to us: "You must prophesy again." Rev. 10:11.

It is my purpose in this article to restudy Revelation 10 until every part of it is understood and applied to us -- the spiritual children of the brave pioneers who gave their lives and all they had to build up a truth and a movement that would take us through until Jesus comes. This study is of utmost importance, for all prophecies that have been written about the end of time are about to be fulfilled.

Revelation 10 begins with a powerful description of Jesus in the form of a mighty angel with a message of vital importance to the whole world:

"Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and His left foot on the land." Rev. 10:1, 2.

Ellen White identifies this mighty angel as Jesus Himself:

"The mighty angel who instructed John is no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left foot upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth." 7BC 971.

The compelling power that attended the preaching of this message in 1844 went around the world, and thousands responded to it and made ready to meet their Lord. But when Jesus did not come as they had expected, many fell away and became scoffers. Others went off into splinter groups and denied the truth of the message they had once held dear. But the small group who refused to abandon the truths which they had preached under the power of the Holy Spirit, found comfort and encouragement as they were led by the Holy Spirit to find a description of their experience in Revelation 10:8-11:

"Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: 'Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.' So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, 'Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.' I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach turned sour. Then I was told, 'You must prophesy again [to] many peoples, nations, languages and kings.'"

Truly, the message of Jesus' soon return had been to these faithful students of scripture as sweet as honey in their mouths. And when Jesus did not come, it was a bitter disappointment. But as they went back to their Bibles and implored Jesus to explain to them the meaning of what they had experienced, light flooded into their minds from this scripture which so accurately described what they had experienced. Hope revived, and as they read verse 11, 'You must prophesy again,' they looked forward to another time, another day, when their work would be rewarded, and Jesus would indeed come again.

Now let's go back in Revelation 10 to a mysterious section of this chapter which, though not understood in the days of our pioneers, is to be revealed as the work goes forward to its final conclusion:

"He, [Jesus], was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.'

"Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.'" Rev. 10:2-7.

In this section of Revelation 10, there are mysteries which need to be understood, for they are specifically designed to be unveiled to the final generation who will be alive when Jesus comes. Through their close relationship with Jesus, they will understand when to "prophesy again," and what they are to prophesy. They will know by the events that are happening in the world and in their own lives when "there will be no more delay" for Jesus' coming. So, let us decode the secrets that Jesus has for us in this passage of scripture so that we can go forth unafraid to preach the message once again that Jesus is coming in our generation and coming soon!

Before beginning the study of Revelation 10:2-7, I want to explain why I am using the NIV version of verse 6, "there will be no more delay." The King James wording for this is, "there should be time no longer." Our pioneers accurately saw this as meaning that the time prophecy of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 is the last prophetic timeline in the scriptures. The SDA Bible Commentary states:

"After this there is to be no further message bearing on a definite time. No time prophecy extends beyond 1844." SDA Bible Commentary, p.798.

However, after the passing of the 1844 date, some of our leading men, including A.T. Jones, began using the translation, "there shall be no more delay." No doubt this answered the cry of their hearts that Jesus would still come again soon, even in their day, and if they would continue to do their part in preaching the Advent message, there would be, indeed, no more delay.

The SDA Bible Commentary also allows for the translation of this passage as, "no more delay":

"This cryptic declaration has been variously interpreted. Many expositors have understood it to mark the end of time, as such, and the beginning of eternity. Others have taken the word 'time' in the sense of the time that elapses before the final events of history, and so have translated, 'there shall be no more delay.'" SDA Bible Commentary, p. 798.

Strong's Concordance also accepts the possibility of this translation and offers it as an option. Therefore I am using this translation because at some point in history – and I believe this is where we are now -- God's people need to be preaching an urgent message that because of the events which are happening in the world today, it is obvious that we have come to the place where "there will be no more delay."

Now let's go back to Revelation 10, beginning with verse 3:

"And he [Jesus] gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.'" Rev. 10:3, 4.

Doesn't it seem strange that Jesus would tell John not to write down this important message, even though he himself heard and understood the words that were spoken?

However, there is nowhere in scripture where the interpretation of this message is given. Thus, the message of the seven thunders is waiting to be studied and understood by the people who live just before Jesus comes. Fortunately, Ellen White does make some significant comments about the message that these thunders contain.

"These relate to future events which will be disclosed in their order....

"John heard the mysteries which the thunders uttered, but he was commanded not to write them.

"The special light given to John which was expressed in the seven thunders was a delineation of events which would transpire under the first and second angels' messages.... The first and second angel's messages were to be proclaimed, but no further light was to be revealed before these messages had done their specific work. This is represented by the angel standing with one foot on the sea, proclaiming with a most solemn oath that time should be no longer.

"This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should proceed the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time." 7BC 971.

The message of the seven thunders is of utmost importance to those who will be living at the time in history which immediately precedes the second coming of Jesus. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14, joined by the fourth angel's message of Revelation 18, must be preached, and do their work of reaping before probationary time can end. These messages were preached prior to 1844 and did their reaping work in the Protestant churches of that time. But an even greater work must be done when the papacy rises to power at the end of time and every soul must make their choice for truth or falsehood. Therefore, our study of the thunders necessitates going back in a brief review of the past, as the three angels' messages were preached by our pioneers.

Message #1: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters." Rev. 14:7.

The first angel's message was an announcement to the world that Jesus had gone before His Father in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, there to begin the judgment of the true status of every individual who had ever accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, and had been written in the Lamb's book of life. This also was the time when the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath was discovered and reinstated as the proper day of worship. As a result, they saw that the papacy was the man of sin who changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and eventually will attempt to cause everyone on earth to worship on Sunday, the day Satan claims as his own mark of authority.

Message #2: " Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." Vs. 8.

It is clear from the words in this scripture, that the full extent of the preaching of the second angel's message has not come as yet, but is still future.

"The second angel's message... was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time, they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that 'Babylon is fallen,... because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world-conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time, exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;' and they that received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, will be left to receive strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future." GC 389, 90.

Message #3: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath." Vs. 9, 10.

As the battle between good and evil escalates, the third angel's message is joined by the message of the fourth angel of Revelation 18, calling God's people for the final time to come out of Babylon before probation closes, and the wrath of God is poured out without mixture upon the world and its inhabitants.

Message #4: "Then I heard another voice from heaven say: 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.'" Rev. 18:4.

"Revelation 18 points to the time when, as a result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work.... Then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call, 'Come out of her, my people.'" GC 390.

So, in our quest to unveil the message and purpose of the seven thunders, it should become clear that Jesus did not intend for the pioneers to hear and understand these matters, for the fulfillment of the prophecy would not take place in their day, but was reserved to be understood by the generation that would actually live to see the events that were prophesied.

But why is it important for any generation to understand the message of the thunders, since Jesus told John not to write it down? The importance of the message of the thunders lies in the fact that from 1844 onward until Jesus comes, there are no specific time prophecies that tell us when the coming of Jesus is near at hand. Therefore, Jesus expects His people to know when His coming is near, by the events which He allows to happen in the world around us. Here are some quotations from the pen of Ellen White concerning the importance of recognizing the events which precede the coming of Jesus:

"We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude." 9T 11.

"God cannot forbear much longer. Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places.

"There will be a series of events revealing that God is master of the situation." 9T 96.

"The Lord will cause man to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire." Isa. 30:30.

"More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world. In fire and flood and earthquake He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach." 9T 97.

"Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, and floods, and tempests, in earthquakes, in peril by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void His law. When God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand?" 5T 136.

"The earth itself is convulsed, the ground heaves and swells like the waves of the sea, great fissures appear, and sometimes cities, villages, and burning mountains are swallowed up. These wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction." PP 109.

So, for those who live to see Jesus come, there will be no specific time prophecy in the scriptures which will tell us exactly when Jesus will come. But we are expected as His children to know when His approach is near by the events around us in the world and in

society that have been prophesied as signs of His speedy return. Will everyone who claims to be a Christian recognize these signs that are happening in the world? No, the Bible tells us that until the end there will be scoffers, who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Unless we hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit and are close to Jesus in a daily relationship with Him, His coming will take us by surprise like the foolish virgins.

At this point, I will now address the mystery of the seven thunders. Thunders in the Bible are often heard when the presence of God is manifested. Such was the case at Mount Sinai when God came down to deliver His law to the Israelites:

"On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God." Ex. 19:16, 17.

"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'... From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder." Rev. 4:1, 5.

"His thunder announces the coming storm." Job 36:33.

God's voice is not always understood when He speaks. Once, when Jesus was preaching and predicting His death, He asked His Father to glorify His own name by what He (Jesus) was preaching. "Then a voice came from heaven and said: 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to Him.

"Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.'" John 12:28-31.

This dramatic episode has a direct significance upon our study of the seven thunders of Revelation 10. First, thunders are used by God when something of great importance is being conveyed to the world and specifically to His people. Next, only those who are familiar with His voice and listening for His counsel will be able to understand the message of the thunders. Who, then, will be able to understand the message of the thunders of Revelation 10? Only those who are already close to the Lord and are cleansing their lives so they can clearly hear the still small voice in their hearts. These will respond quickly to the warning messages of the events that are happening in the world under the seven thunders and will come out from Babylon to join the true people of God.

"While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing." COL 420.

As we have already seen, the fulfillment of the thunders will come during the final preaching of the first and second angels' messages of Revelation 14, which will be

joined by the fourth angel of Revelation 18. This will be the final call to the people of the world to come out of Babylon.

"For his church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work." COL 78.

"In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation." COL 127

"The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the word of inspiration.... It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice, we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been, and the things that will be." CW 26, 27.

"Many who embraced the third message had not had an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them; but the third angel was pointing them to the Most Holy Place, and those who had had an experience in the two former messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly Sanctuary. Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages, and gladly received them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly Sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan." EW 256.

What should we understand from the first two angels' messages that will keep us faithful until Jesus comes?

#1. Understand and participate in the judgment hour cleansing work of Jesus in our lives during His ministry in the Most Holy Place.

"Jesus told the angels that all who found Him would understand the [cleansing] work which He was to perform." EW 251.

#2. Resist boldly and openly the Sunday law movement led by the Papacy and her apostate Protestant daughters.

"In the very time in which we live, the Lord has called his people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin." Ev 705.

"The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power, -- all will be unmasked." GC 606.

"Let us not cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth.... Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise.... The world has a right to know what to expect of us." CW 95.

Now can we see more clearly just where we are in the lineup of the seven thunders of Revelation 10? I believe it is significant that when God the Father spoke in behalf of His Son, in John 12:28, Jesus replied: 'Now is the time for judgment on this world; now will the prince of this world be driven out.'" John 12:31, 32.

This portrays the work that is to be done at the final end of time when the sins of Babylon will be fully exposed before the world, and God's people will stand up for truth no matter what it may cost them personally.

Many of God's sincere people are now recognizing and participating in a personal judgment/ cleansing experience with Jesus and gaining victories in their lives that they never have in their past. At the same time, things in the world are deteriorating so significantly that people are wondering what will happen next. The tide seemed to turn, in 2001, when the towers of New York fell and startled the whole world to recognize that we were in troublous times such as we had never seen before. The day the towers fell, President Bush stated that we were now in war, and nothing would ever be the same again. And, my friends, history has proven him to have been correct.

Since then, many other unprecedented events have happened around the world. Huge storms, such as hurricanes Rita and Katrina, which took place in 2004 and 2005, are becoming more common. In 2008, the economy fell lower than anytime, since the great depression of 1929. Then, in September, 2015, the Pope spoke to the US Congress and to the UN. His principles of climate change, outlined in his encyclical, *Laudato si*, were accepted by both President Obama and the UN, and he was voted the most popular religiopolitical person in the world, as reported by Time Magazine. Also during this time period, great strides were made by numerous Protestant leaders to end the schism between Protestants and the papacy and refute the principles of the Protestant reformation which was begun by Martin Luther, announcing openly that "The protest is over."

Recently, worldwide weather patterns have become significantly more dangerous. In 2019, a hundred and twenty thousand new records were made in world weather patterns. And now we have Covid-19 and the incredible changes it has made in the lives of the people of every country in the world.

How much more do we need to convince us that we are in the very last slip of time before Jesus comes? Many people are now awakening and recognizing these events as clear evidence that Jesus is speaking to the world through the thunders and the trumpets of His majestic voice, for the sound of trumpets is also significant when God speaks, and trumpets are also important in the closing up of Revelation 10. Notice Revelation 10:5–7, NIV:

"Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and

all that is in them, and the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.'

In this text is hidden the answer to the mystery of when we can know that Jesus' appearance is imminent. The last trumpet is sounded at the coming of Jesus. Just before He comes, His people will go through the judgment process, or cleansing, that is necessary to bring them to the perfection of character that He requires, in order for them to be translated without seeing death. This is the mystery spoken of by Paul in Colossians 1:25-28:

"I have become its [the church] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness -- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this ministry, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy which so powerfully works in me."

"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment." Eph. 1:9, 10.

Isn't this clear? The finishing of the work of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary will be accomplished when the final remnant of God's people at the end of time participates with Jesus in the complete cleansing of their characters from everything defiling so that they represent Jesus fully by their perfected lives in the judgment process.

"If we will submit to the Lord's refining, all the dross and tin will be consumed." 4BC 1181.

Beloved, now is the time when we can see by the purposeful events allowed by heaven, that we are living in the time when Jesus is about to close probation and come back to get His people. He is now doing this cleansing work in all who cooperate with Him and allow Him to have full sway in their lives. Are you hearing the sound of the trumpets and the thunders as God is calling us to be ready to meet him in peace? Then, heed this wonderful counsel from Paul:

"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many...."

"You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded...."

"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

"See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken -- that is, created things -- so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:14-28.

Brothers and sisters, now that we know who we are and where we are in time, let us fearlessly obey God's command, "You must prophesy again!" The message that we are to give is clear, and the time is now!

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