

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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World History Written By God

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.

In words of matchless beauty and tenderness, the apostle Paul set before the sages of Athens the divine purpose in the creation and distribution of races and nations. "God that made the world and all things therein," declared the apostle, "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Acts 17:24-27.

God has made plain that whosoever will, may come "into the bond of the covenant." Ezekiel 20:37. In the creation it was His purpose that the earth should be inhabited by beings whose existence would be a blessing to themselves and to one another, and an honor to their Creator. All who will may identify themselves with this purpose. Of them it is spoken, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." Isaiah 43:21.

In His law God has made known the principles that underlie all true prosperity, both of nations and of individuals. To the Israelites Moses declared of this law: "This is your wisdom and your understanding." "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." Deuteronomy 4:6; 32:47. The blessings thus assured to Israel are, on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens.

Hundreds of years before certain nations came upon the stage of action, the Omniscient One looked down the ages and predicted the rise and fall of the universal kingdoms. God declared to Nebuchadnezzar that the kingdom of Babylon should fall, and a second kingdom would arise, which also would have its period of trial. Failing to exalt the true God, its glory would fade, and a third kingdom would occupy its place. This also would pass away; and a fourth, strong as iron, would subdue the nations of the world.

Had the rulers of Babylon--that richest of all earthly kingdoms--kept always before them the fear of Jehovah, they would have been given wisdom and power which would have bound them to Him and kept them strong. But they made God their refuge only when harassed and perplexed. At such times, failing to find help in their great men, they sought it from men like Daniel--men who they knew honored the living God and were honored by Him. To these men they appealed to unravel the mysteries of Providence; for though the rulers of proud Babylon were men of the highest intellect, they had separated themselves so far from God by transgression that they could not understand the revelations and the warnings given them concerning the future.

In the history of nations the student of God's word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth.

The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5. And to each the words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar of old are the lesson of life: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Daniel 4:27.

To understand these things,--to understand that "righteousness exalteth a nation;" that "the throne is established by righteousness," and "upholden by mercy;" to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings,"-- this is to understand the philosophy of history. Proverbs 14:34; 16:12; 20:28; Daniel 2:21.

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose. {Prophets and Kings Pg.499-502}

When the empire of Babylon was so strong and its influence so far-reaching that seemingly the most powerful foe could not take its scepter, Daniel, a man inspired by God, prophesied that it would pass away, notwithstanding its apparent magnificence, and that a second would succeed it. He prophesied also that the second empire would be succeeded by the third, and that a fourth empire should arise, more fierce, more determined, and more powerful than any kingdom that had preceded it. As strong as iron, this kingdom would subdue and break in pieces all the nations of the world. {Review Herald, February 6, 1900}

The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally. Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.

The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God's law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption. {Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 4, Pg.1168}

The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot Him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value {Youth Instructor Sept. 22, 1903}

It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp-meetings. The enemies of truth are many, and because our numbers are few, we should present as strong a front as possible. Individually, you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth.

Some will say "It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for me to save the money, and give it to the advancement of the work where it is so much needed." Do not reason in this way; God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of his people. Strengthen the meeting all you possibly can by being present with your families. Put forth extra exertion to attend the gathering of God's people.

Brethren and sisters, it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you. Make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. You need every ray of light. You need to become qualified to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege.

If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict? And if the people of the world then needed the light which God has committed to his church, how much more do they need it now?

This is a time for every one to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The forces of the enemy are strengthening, and as a people we are misrepresented. We desire the people to become acquainted with our doctrines and work. We want them to know what we are, and what we believe. We must find our way to their hearts. Let the army of the Lord be on the ground to represent the work and cause of God. Do not plead an excuse. The Lord has need of you. He does not do his work without the co-operation of the human agent. Go to the camp-meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so. Go with a will to work. And make every effort to induce your friends to go, not in your place, but to go with you, to stand on the Lord's side and obey his commandments. Help those who are interested to attend, if necessary providing them with food and lodging. Angels who are commissioned to minister to those who are heirs of salvation will accompany you. God will do great things for his people. He will bless every effort to honor His cause and advance his work. {Pamphlet 130 Pg.9-10}

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