

## The Great Controversy Series

### Sermon 31: A World Wide Awakening

Last time we compared the experience of Jesus' first disciples with the experience of William Miller and his associates. Jesus' disciples, by preaching the message "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:14-15) announced the approach of the kingdom of God. But Jesus' disciples did not see in the prophecy in the Bible that He would be crucified. Jesus had told this to them. But popular ideas about the Bible blinded their eyes.

The disciples expected the Messiah to come as a worldly king. That is what they thought the kingdom of heaven was. But when the Bible speaks about the kingdom of God, it refers to both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. First, Jesus by His death, established the kingdom of grace. Second, He will establish the kingdom of glory at His second coming. The disciples did not understand this. Jesus' crucifixion came as a surprise to them. They were greatly disappointed but the Lord's purpose was fulfilled. The kingdom of grace which had formerly been established on the promise was in actuality established and the door to eternal life was open to humanity.

In a similar manner, William Miller and his associates announced the end of the 2300 year period in Daniel 8:14, the day of judgment and that Jesus was about to set up His everlasting kingdom. This message was altogether correct. Miller thought that these would all happen with Jesus' second coming. This was wrong. In 1844 the 2300 year prophecy ended. Correct. In 1844 the judgment began. Correct. Judgment begins before Jesus comes. Revelation 14:6-7 says:

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people --<sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for **the hour of His judgment has come**; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

While the gospel is still being preached, it is announced that the judgment day has come. Miller and his associates announced this correctly while preaching. Jesus was about to come. This message was given to people to give an opportunity for preparation. Many people who claim to be God's people were living worldly lives and they needed to repent and return to the Lord.

Are you ready to meet Jesus when He comes? Are you forsaking your sins or do you love this world and its ways? You cannot choose both. Now is the time for character development. The judgment day has begun. When will your name appear in the judgment? Jesus said,

Matthew 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

And James said this also:

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.<sup>11</sup> For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.<sup>12</sup> So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

The standard in the judgment is the law of liberty which is the Ten Commandments. Are you knowingly trampling upon one of them? Remember that Jesus said the law is spiritual.

Matthew 5:21 " You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'<sup>22</sup> "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.<sup>23</sup> "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,<sup>24</sup> "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Now is the time of character correction for the judgment. But you cannot change your character by yourself. This is God's business. You must be born again. You must receive the Spirit of Christ who did not sin. The Holy Spirit will straighten your life.

Galatians 6:8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

In the judgment you need an advocate. As it is written:

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Choose Christ as your advocate!

Now let us return to Revelation 14:6-7 and look more closely at that verse.

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people --<sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Who is spreading the gospel in this world, people or angels? We know that angels help but mostly people spread the gospel. Jesus Christ committed this work to us. But in Revelation 14:6-7 an angel flying in midair is bringing the gospel to people. Such a glorious scene symbolizes a world-wide movement and revival. This event is not a small thing done in a corner somewhere. The message goes to every people. The message is given in a loud voice. The flying angel shows the rapidity with which the message is given.

The gospel has been preached in every age and is being preached. But this message can only take place at the time of the end because only at the time of the end does the judgement day come. The prophet Daniel said:

Daniel 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

When the time of the end comes, then the message in the book of Daniel will be explained and understood. Paul did not expect Jesus' coming in his own time and he did not announce that.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,<sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,<sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The man of sin and the one showing himself that he is God is the papacy and he maintained his dominion for 1260 years. In 1798 this dominion ended. Jesus' second coming could not take place before that. Since 1798 the book of Daniel is open and the judgment message is proclaimed.

In the same way that the Reform movement of the 16<sup>th</sup> century appeared in different lands at the same time, the great advent revival appeared in many countries at the same time. When William Miller and his associated announced Jesus' soon coming they were not alone. In Europe and America many believers who were studying the Scriptures understood that the world would soon end. In different countries isolated Christian groups, only by studying the Bible, arrived at the conclusion that Jesus' coming was near.

In 1821 in Germany Dr. Joseph Wolff, who was born into a Jewish family but later became a Christian, began to preach that the second coming of Jesus was near. Some people who objected pointed to this verse:

Mark 13:32 " But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Wolff would answer something like this: "The Lord Jesus told of signs that show the time is near. We are able to know that and we should know them."

For 24 years Wolff traveled extensively between 1821 and 1845. In Africa he went to Egypt and Ethiopia: In Asia he passed through Palestine, Syria, Iran, Bukara and India. He visited the United States. He spread God's word among Jews, Turks, Iranians, Indians and many other people groups in their various languages and everywhere he went he announced that Jesus' kingdom was approaching. He sometimes came across groups of believers who believed that Jesus would come sometime between 1840 and 1844.

In 1826 in England, the message of Jesus' soon return began to be announced. A definite time was not so much preached as it was in America. Hundreds of preachers preached this message. Publications which announced Jesus' coming in 1844 were carried to England and distributed.

In South America, Lacunza, a Jesuit priest wrote a book under the pseudonym Rabbi Ben-Ezra. In the book, he put forward the idea that Jesus would come soon. Lacunza lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but in 1825 his book went to England and was translated. In England it gave support to the advent movement.

In Germany, Bengel, in Switzerland Gaussen, and in Scandinavia in a miraculous way, children widely announced that Jesus' coming was near.

But in America with the work of William Miller and his associates the Advent Movement found its center. Publications went out from there to the whole world. The message, "Fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgment is come" was broadcast to the world.

In America, many religious leaders did not accept the message. While from the popular pulpits the message, "Peace and safety" was preached, common and humble people carried the message of Jesus' coming and the judgement day. Many people were converted. While the message of a definite time of Jesus' coming was being preached, many people spoke as it is recorded in the Bible:

2 Peter 3:3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,<sup>4</sup> and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

Many people who claimed to love Jesus said they did not object to the teaching of Jesus' second coming. They simply communicated that they were against the definite time. But the Lord who sees all read their hearts. They did not want to hear about Jesus' coming to judge the world in righteousness. Their works could not stand God's scrutiny, they were afraid to meet the Lord. They had become unfaithful servants. As the Jews at Jesus' first coming, they were not ready to meet Jesus. Not only did they reject the Bible truths they mocked those waiting for the Lord.

No one knows the day or the hour of Jesus' coming but it is commended that we know when it is near.

Matthew 24:33 "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near -- at the doors!"

The expected time passed and Jesus did not come. Those waiting for Jesus experienced a great disappointment. But the Lord's purpose was accomplished. The hearts of the church members were tested. Many people only accepted the message out of fear. The message did not affect their life style. Later they denied the message saying, "We never believed the message."

But the Lord was with His people who longed to see Jesus and who experienced the great disappointment. As Jesus' first disciples, after the disappointment brighter days would be ahead.

Perhaps in your personal life you have experienced a great disappointment. Do not give up your faith. The Lord leads His people through tough times. There are better days ahead.