



THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE SEVEN TIMES

Introduction

It is important that God's people have a thorough understanding of the Biblical and historical evidence establishing the 2520; that they may correctly instruct seeking souls, and show as darkness the wisdom of those who would turn the truth of God into a lie. But just as important as the historical evidence are the spiritual themes illuminated by this prophecy. Themes which include God's law, His mercy and grace, the conditionality of His promises, the plan of salvation, and the gathering of the remnant that will give the Loud Cry.

God's Character—the Heart of the 2520

The Bible declares that without a knowledge of God none can be saved (John 17:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Seeking a deeper knowledge of God through His word, and through His providential dealings in the life, should be the goal of every true Christian. Scripture teaches that God's law is a transcript of His character (Exodus 33:18-19, 34:5-7, 20:5-6). It is therefore significant that Leviticus 26 begins by reiterating the second and fourth commandments of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:4-6, 8).

“Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God. 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 26:1-2.

The infliction of the 2520 hinged upon how God's people responded to these commandments. But given that God's law is a transcript of His character, it follows that the infliction of the 2520

hinged not simply upon their response to His commandments, but upon the character they developed in the course of their religious experience. Whether they formed characters after God's own image through obedience to His law, or whether they took on the mold of Satan by rebelling against His law, determined whether or not the 2520 would take place. Likewise those who by obedience are now fashioning characters after Christ's own likeness will enjoy the promised blessings which include the outpouring of the latter rain (Leviticus 26:4-5; Hosea 6:3; James 5:7). And those who, through their rebellion, are forming characters after the image of Satan, will suffer the curses of the wicked and finally be scattered for eternity. Thus through the 2520 is communicated the eternal truth that our final destiny hinges upon the character developed in this life.

God's Eternal Purpose—The Salvation of Mankind

Leviticus 26, with its declaration of punishment for seven times is but a continuation of Leviticus 25. Leviticus 25 sets forth the jubilee and sacred cycle of seven which was to govern the Jewish nation's use of agricultural land. The Jubilee is a type of the release from the bondage of sin and death at Christ's second coming:¹

“At the close of the Day of Atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the sabbatical year which closed the last of the seven weeks of years (49 years), the trumpets were blown throughout all the land, announcing the jubilee.

“...How like the final trumpet of the Lord was the blast of the jubilee trumpets in ancient Israel! The toiling slave arose and threw off his shackles. To the avaricious and covetous man, who had oppressed the hireling and the widow to gain his possessions, it came as a death knell to all his hopes. Every person in bondage was freed, and all returned to their own land.

“In the type, the jubilee was ushered in at the close of the Day of Atonement. In like manner we understand that the antitypical jubilee will follow the antitypical Day of Atonement...

*“The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard.” Then the pious slave will rise and shake off the chains that bind him. The trumpet of the Lord's jubilee will resound through the length and breadth of the land. Saints sleeping in Satan's prison house the grave will hear the glad sound, and he “that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners” “did not let his prisoners loose homeward,” will be powerless to hold his prey; for our Redeemer has said, “The prey of the terrible shall be delivered,”-yea, delivered forever from the power of sin and Satan.” Stephen Haskell, *The Cross and its Shadow*, 250-255.*

How God's people responded to his requirement to let the land rest every 7th year, and to celebrate the Jubilee every 50th year, also determined whether they received the blessings

promised for obedience, or the curses spoken of in connection with the 2520. The 2520's connection with the Jubilee serves to illustrate that at its heart is God's purpose of saving mankind from sin—the plan of salvation. This is more clearly understood in the context of the closing scenes of this world's history. Daniel 11:44 states that “tidings out of the east and out of the north” shall trouble the Papacy. These tidings are the third angel's message which will be given with latter rain power at the Sunday law.² But God has to raise up a people in order to give this message, and the 2520 identifies the church that will be used to accomplish this. The 2520 began with the scattering of Israel between 723 B.C and 677 B.C (46 years). But after chastising His people for seven times, God promised to gather them again and restore His covenant with them (Leviticus 26:44-45, Ezekiel 11:17-20). Counting 2520 years from both B.C. 723 and B.C. 677 brings us to 1798 and 1844 A.D. respectively. It was between 1798 and 1844 (46 years) that God gathered the church that He will use to give the tidings out of the east and north.³ The church gathered during this time is the Seventh-Day Adventist church—God's spiritual Israel. The remnant of Adventism who stand through the sifting of the Sunday law will give the tidings that will trouble the papacy and usher in the antitypical Jubilee at Christ's second coming.

The Conditionality of God's Promises

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:” Isaiah 1:18-19.

A deadly deception that has insinuated itself amongst God's remnant church, is the presumptuous sin of claiming God's promises without due regard for the conditions upon which they are fulfilled.

“There are those who profess holiness, who declare that they are wholly the Lord's, who claim a right to the promises of God, while refusing to render obedience to His commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God; but this is presumption on their part, for John tells us that true love for God will be revealed in obedience to all His commandments. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth, to make a profession of faith in Christ, to believe that Jesus is no impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments,” John wrote, “is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.” “He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him.” 1 John 2:4, 5; 3:24.” Acts of the Apostles, 562.3.

This was the mistake of the Jewish nation whose history we are repeating today:⁴

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. 10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. 11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the

prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us. 12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.” Micah 3:9-12.

Leviticus 26 sets forth blessings for obeying God’s commandments (Leviticus 26:3-14). The same chapter also enumerates curses for breaking His commandments. It is in connection with these curses that the 2520 is declared (Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28). The 2520 was a conditional prophecy that was to be visited upon God’s people in response to continued transgression. Communicated through these facts is the principle that God’s promises are conditional.

“Every fiftieth year, the year of jubilee, every inheritance in the land was to be restored to its original owner. “In the year of jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession,” God declared.

“Thus in His infinite wisdom the Lord educated His people. His requirements were not arbitrary. Connected with all the instruction received by the people from the Source of all light was the consequence of obedience and disobedience. They were taught that obedience would bring them the richest spiritual grace, and would enable them to distinguish between the sacred and the common. Disobedience would also bring its sure result. If the people chose to manage the land in their own supposed wisdom, they would find that the Lord would not work a miracle to counteract the evils He was trying to save them from.” SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 1, 1112.2 & 3.

A correct understanding of the 2520, and what the principles governing it reveal about God’s character, would better guard us from the sin of presumption; a sin of which God’s people in the last days are chiefly guilty.⁵

The God of Judgement

At the beginning of the 2520 God scattered His people. Through the scattering God is revealed as a God of judgement who will “by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:7). By bringing upon His people the promised judgement for transgression, God is communicating that the final and just outcome of impenitence is spiritual bondage and death (Romans 6:16, 23).

This is an aspect of God’s character regarding which many are deceived today. Some reject the 2520 on the grounds that the infliction of such a punishment would show God to be cruel and vindictive. But such sentiments would not be expressed if they had a right conception of the grievousness of sin, and its far-reaching influence for evil. They are in need of the heavenly eyesalve that will open their blind eyes and give them spiritual discernment to see things as God sees them (Revelation 3:18).⁶

The God of Mercy

God's love and mercy are revealed in His subsequent promises to remember His covenant and gather His people from the lands into which they were scattered:

“But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord. 46 These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.” Leviticus 26:45-46.

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deuteronomy 30:1-6.

The God of Grace

God's grace is manifested in the fact that He does not simply gather His people to their former standing, but as stated in Deuteronomy 30:5 above, He multiplies them above their fathers—He bestows greater blessings upon them than those He gave prior to scattering them.

Nebuchadnezzar was scattered among the beasts of the earth for “seven times” (Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32). But at the end of his 2520 days of chastisement, His kingdom was restored with “excellent majesty” (Daniel 9:46). This can also be seen in William Miller's dream which portrays the history of the truths that constitute the foundation of Adventism.⁷ These truths were scattered and buried beneath the dust and shavings of tradition and human interpretation. But Christ enters to perform a work of restoration. The testimony is that the jewels were not only gathered to their former estate, but were caused to shine with “ten times their former glory” (Memoirs of William Miller pg.363). This truth is also conveyed in the story of the prodigal son. After leaving his father's home and wasting “his substance with riotous living” (Luke 15:13), the prodigal fell into hardship and determined to return. He understood that his sin and rebellion made him unworthy to be called His father's son:

“I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” Luke 15:18-19.

But the testimony is that His father not only received him as his son, but showered Him with great blessings:

“And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” Luke 15:20-24.

Such is the grace of God to the penitent sinner. His matchless grace can also be seen in the plan of salvation. At the consummation of the great controversy the Garden of Eden is to be restored “more gloriously adorned than at the beginning.”

“The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the divine glory was revealed. Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. Here they renewed their vows of obedience to that law the transgression of which had banished them from Eden. When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be “a new heaven and a new earth,” it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning.” Adventist Home, 539.1.

In all these things God is revealing His grace—the unmerited favour He bestows upon those who come to Him through Christ; and this vital aspect of His character is enshrined in the 2520.

In Closing

The 2520 contains deep spiritual truths. God’s dealings with His people in this time prophecy provide insight and understanding into fundamental aspects of His character. Through the 2520 we are better able to understand that God truly is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty...” (Exodus 34:6-7). With our hearts we can say “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth

to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah 7:18-20). But to reject the 2520 is to close ones eyes to much light, and forego many a precious blessing to be obtained from the understanding of God’s word.

¹ See also Christian Experience and Teaching of Ellen White pg.95-96

² Time of the End Magazine pg.45-47

³ The number 46 symbolizes God’s covenant and the building of His temple be it literal or spiritual (Exodus 24:12, 15-18; John 2:20)

⁴ *”The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ—how the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God’s servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth.” {ISM 406.1}*

⁵ *Presumption is a common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and claim by their faith to been listed in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied. Meditation and prayer would have preserved them and led them to shun the critical, dangerous position in which they placed themselves when they gave Satan the advantage over them. The promises of God are not for us rashly to claim while we rush on recklessly into danger, violating the laws of nature and disregarding prudence and the judgment with which God has endowed us. This is the most flagrant presumption. {LHU 80.3}*

⁶ *The gold that Jesus would have us buy of Him is gold tried in the fire; it is the gold of faith and love, that has no defiling substance mingled with it. The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the wedding garment which Christ alone can give. The eyesalve is the true spiritual discernment that is so wanting among us, for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (RH April 1, 1890). {7BC 965.1}*

⁷ See article Entitled William Miller’s Dream – with Explanatory Notes
<http://pathofthejust.org/william-millers-dream-with-explanatory-notes/>