

Unmasking the Supernatural 14

“And (Jesus) said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!” Luke 10:18

The Deception of Light and Power

There is a most amazing early vision that was given to Sister White way back at the very beginning of Seventh-day Adventism. It contains some vital information for the end times we live in and we are going to take a look at it to see what we can learn. It was about what happened on October 22, 1844, and illustrates, partly symbolically, the beginning of the Investigative Judgement and the passage of Jesus from the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary to the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary, there to begin His intercession for His people as the Father conducts the pre-advent judgment.

Here it is from the earliest written source, the Day Star magazine; Feb., 15, 1846.

“God showed me the following, one year ago this month:[Feb. 1845]--I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired his lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold for a cloud of glorious light covered him. I asked Jesus if his Father had a form like himself; He said he had, but I could not behold it; for, said he, if you should for once see the glory of his person, you would cease to exist. Before the throne was the Advent people, the Church, and the world.”

Notice in this first paragraph we see a throne and both the Father and the Son were seated on it. Before the throne are three groups; the Advent people, the Church, and the world; the Church here means all who profess to be Christians. Symbolically they are all seen before the judgment throne. Continuing.

“I saw a company bowed down before the throne, deeply interested while most of them stood up disinterested and careless. Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus, then he would look to his Father and appeared to be pleading with him. Then a light came from the Father to his Son and from him to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light. Many came out from under it and immediately resisted it. Others were careless and did not cherish the light and it moved off from them. Some cherished it and went and bowed down before the throne with the little praying company. This company all received the light, and rejoiced in it as their countenances shone with its glory. Then I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot go into the Holy of Holies within the vail, and did sit.”

So we see that this first scene is happening in the Holy Place, the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. The ‘Little Praying Company’ were those who were serious about serving and obeying God; they were a small group compared to most of the people who were not all that interested in religious things. The serious group were seeking light from Jesus, and Jesus would ask His Father, claiming His great sacrifice as the reason these people should receive help. The Father would respond by sending light to Jesus, who in turn passed it onto the praying group.

Then we see an exceeding bright light come to the praying ones; this light we realize was the Midnight Cry, where the time of October 22, 1844 was pinpointed. Now there is a change in the groups, some of the earnest ones rejected this light and went with the careless ones and some of the careless ones grabbed onto this light and began to bow and pray with the group before the throne. This company all received the light and it made them very glad. Then we see a change as the Father leaves the Holy Place, the first apartment, and goes into the Most Holy, the second apartment. Continuing:

“There I saw thrones which I had not seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and most of those who were bowed down rose up with him. And I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to

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the careless multitude after he rose up, and they were left in perfect darkness.”

She is now looking into the Most Holy Place and sees other thrones there. Now as Jesus rises up, the serious worshippers follow Him. This is by faith of course. But the casual, carless folk after this did not receive any more special light from Jesus. Not one ray, it says! They were in darkness. Now we must note this fact; the casual Christian churches that do not accept the truth about what took place in heaven on October 22, 1844, do not receive any more special light! They are left in perfect darkness; how much can you see if you are in perfect darkness? Let's continue:

“Those who rose up when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on him as he left the throne, and led them out a little way, then he raised his right arm and we heard his lovely voice saying, wait ye, I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom. Keep your garments spotless and in a little while I will return from the wedding, and receive you to myself. And I saw a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire.”

Now this little scene represents the time of the Midnight Cry when the message that sounded all over empowered by the Holy Spirit was, “Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh! Go ye out to meet Him!” Even though the people who preached this message from August until October 1844 thought that their message meant that Jesus was coming back to earth. But in spite of that, the message was accurate, because Jesus, the Bridegroom, was going to receive His Kingdom, which is represented as His bride. He receives His Kingdom from His Father as the Investigative Judgement goes forward. The people whose names remain in the book of life as the judgement progresses, they are the subjects of His Kingdom.

“Angels were all about the chariot as it came where Jesus was; he stepped into it and was borne to the Holiest where the Father sat. Then I beheld Jesus as he was before the Father a great High Priest. On the hem of his garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Then Jesus shewed me the difference between faith and feeling. And I saw those who rose up with Jesus send up their faith to Jesus in the Holiest, and praying, Father give us thy spirit. Then Jesus would breathe on them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power and much love, joy and peace.”

Now this is one of the most important parts of this vision. Here the Father is on the judgement throne in the Most Holy Place and Jesus is not on that throne, but rather He is standing before the Father as our great High Priest. She saw Him dressed in the symbolic garments that the earthly high priests wore in the Old Testament times.

The people who had followed Jesus by faith as He began this special intercessory work, no prayed to Him in the Most Holy Place by faith. It is by faith that they see Him there before the Mercy seat interceding for His people. They ask the Father through Jesus to give them the Holy Spirit and it is given to them by Jesus. Now here is the part we must notice; in that breath from Jesus there are five things; first, light and power; then much love, joy, and peace. Keep this in mind because it is the secret for being able to discern true religious revivals from false ones.

“Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne. They did not know that Jesus had left it.”

Now we look back at the ones who did not follow Jesus by faith into the next apartment. They are the ones who rejected the special bright light of the Midnight Cry; they just kept on with their old traditions, refusing to consider that changes were occurring in heaven that concerned them there on earth. What was good enough for the parents and grandparents was good enough for them. They did not need any 'new light'.

In the vision they are shown as praying to an empty throne. They do not know that Jesus has moved and so they did not follow Him by faith. They could have known it, but they would not listen to the special bright light message.

This vision is an interesting combination of things that are literal, and things that are symbolic. The two apartments and the moving of the Father and the Son from the first to the second, is literal. The change of

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dispensation and Christ's position before the Father, His standing before Him interceding as the Great High Priest on the Day of Atonement, wearing the special robes with the bells and pomegranates around the bottom of the robe, this is literal. These bells and balls were there on the ancient garments so the people kneeling outside could hear the High Priest moving around as He did His duties in the Most Holy Place. as long as they could hear that tinkling sound, they knew all was well and he had not been smitten by the Lord.

"Satan appeared to be by the throne trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne and pray, My Father give us thy spirit. Then Satan would breathe on them an unholy influence. In it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace."

The next part of the vision is symbolic; notice it is not saying that here was Satan up there in heaven sitting on the throne in the Holy Place; No, this was God's way of illustrating to her what Satan was trying to do and how he was able to deceive the people who had refused the light from God and remained with their traditions. It says, he appeared to be there. In other words, the effect of what they were doing was allowing him to deceive them.

You see, any time we are shown new light or new information from God, in the Bible; if we refuse it, we are more vulnerable to Satan's attacks! Our refusing of truth to cling to old habits and traditions is like opening up a door that Satan can enter to bring his deceptions and lies more directly to us. This is why we need to watch that we never excuse any so-called 'little sins', refusing to repent of them, and allow Jesus to remove them. When we do this, we will not receive any new light and we begin to push the Holy Spirit away from us and Satan gets more control in our lives. We surely do not want that!

Now again we see the key sentence; notice that Satan's influence has two things the same as the light from Jesus. They are light and much power. Notice Satan's influence has 'much power' where Jesus gave power but much love! That is a world of difference. The other three, sweet love, joy and peace are missing from Satan's influence! We will talk further about this shortly.

"Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children. I saw one after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus in the Holiest, go and join those before the throne and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan."

This is what Satan was trying to do; he was trying to make it appear that the churches that had rejected the truth and had actually lost sight of where Jesus is now, are being greatly blessed by God and prospering. This way he tries to fool the true believers and get them to turn away from their position of seeing Jesus by faith in the Most Holy Place and offering up their prayers to Him there. And when they do get fooled by the light and much power of these false revivals in the churches of Babylon, then they go and join the deceived ones and right away Satan can have more control over them. He can make them feel that this is something great!

This is what she says earlier that Jesus showed her the difference between feeling and faith. Remember, faith is not a feeling, nor is it making yourself believe something; Faith must be based on the Word of God or it is meaningless. True faith is believing what God says! So these people are seeing this light and much power and they are going by how it makes them feel, in spite of the fact that the Word of God does not confirm it!

Now we want to take a closer look at those three things that are missing from Satan's spiritual influence; much sweet love, joy and peace. As I ponder these, it seems that today Satan has managed to counterfeit two of them in the fallen churches; in fact it seems he has done it quite well, because he fools God's true people into thinking it is for real.

The first counterfeit is love; they talk about loving one another; they act very friendly; they seem to have togetherness. But it is clear there is a difference in the true sweet love from God and this counterfeit. I believe the difference is that this false love is more a sentimentalism, a surface kind of love. It consists of sweet words and hugs and so on but it does not have much depth to it. Some have experienced that it quickly grows cold if you start putting forth Bible truths and encouraging people to obey the Lord.

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The other one he counterfeits is joy. Oh my yes! Now real joy is a quiet solid thing that does not depend on outward circumstances. It is a contentment that gets its source from the promises of God. The false joy is a mix of excitement and emotionalism and is very much dependent on circumstances. In fact people who go to these exciting meetings where the Holy Spirit is believed to be making people feel super happy and causing them to do all kinds of weird things, often find that once they are away from the exciting environment they are quite depressed! They very much lean on their friends and pastors to keep them feeling good and if something is not stimulating them, they droop.

In fact, it seems these days that the worse things get in the sad bad world, the more people hunger for, and seek after, laughter and excitement! Silliness, foolishness, and rowdiness are all loved by the world but avoided by God's true children.

But these special characteristics of the Holy Spirit are quiet and solid, and again they are based on the Word of God.

The final item in God's list, I do not see Satan able to counterfeit it much; that is peace. The Bible says, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Psalm 119:165. No wonder Satan has a hard time counterfeiting that one; he hates God's law!

Oh, he gets people talking about peace, they strive for it and plan for it and try to pass laws to make it happen, but it is all in vain. The Bible warns: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Do you know when they are going to think they have peace and safety? It will be when they pass laws to try and force all people to break God's law!

But God's people have peace in their hearts. There is peace there because they love God's Law and because Jesus, the Prince of peace dwells in them, they are set free from all the lusting and striving and commotion that sin causes in the life. There is true contentment in the peace from Jesus.

If you take notice of the people of the world, actually they do not like peace very much. Peacefulness and quietness is not near as desirable as excitement, stimulation and commotion. Kneeling quietly in prayer or sitting peacefully searching God's Word would be way too boring to these restless souls.

"In the hosts of evil there is jarring and discord, but they are all firm allies in fighting against heaven. Their one aim is to disparage God, and their great numbers lead them to entertain the hope that they will be able to dethrone Omnipotence." SpTB02 6.

There is no peace in Satan's ranks; another name for Satan is Beelzebub; this means, "Lord of the restless ones" or "Lord of the flies". Are you starting to see how these things can be used to be able to tell the true from the false revivals? Let us look at a few more Bible texts.

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Isaiah 32:17.

"For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land." Psalm 35:20.

Here again we see that the wicked do not have peace but the righteous are peaceful, quiet people.

"There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." Isaiah 48:22

Because this is the final lesson in our series, it will do us good to review some of the basics about God's wonderful free plan of Redemption; after all, there is no more important topic to understand than this.

The Story of Redemption:

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Here is the problem that God was faced with when He wanted to show mercy to fallen humanity. The sinner is condemned by the Law which he has transgressed; the sinner must die to pay the penalty, and that death is eternal, no resurrection!

So God had to find a way to pay the penalty and justify the sinner and still protect His holy law. The plan was that Jesus would come and in our flesh, with its tendency to sin, He would, by relying on His Father to live in Him, live a perfect life, never sinning in thought word or deed.

Then the sins of all humanity would be placed on Him, as shown by the innocent Lamb in the sacrificial services; and He would die to pay the penalty for all of them. Then because He actually was sinless, death could not hold Him in the tomb, and He arose from the dead!

SO how it works is, if I am to receive the benefit of God's perfect plan of salvation, I accept Jesus' death as my death. I look to the cross and say, that is ME, that is My death, my sinful self is to be nailed to that cross. Then I accept and choose to have Jesus live in me instead of my own self.

There are many ways a man can kill himself, but one way he can't do it is by crucifixion! Someone has to do that for you! So when we surrender to Jesus, our self is nailed to the cross of Christ, and Jesus lives instead of us. This is shown in the symbol of baptism, which means we die with Christ, self is buried and we arise to a new life with Christ in us, the hope of glory! Sadly, too many people are 'buried alive' when they are baptized and arise the same as before!

So when I actually physically die, the power of Jesus' perfect life in me will bring me from the grave when He calls me, to live eternally as He does.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21.

Paul says, "I die Daily". Why do we have to make that surrender and die to self, daily? Because self doesn't like being dead, it likes to get down from that cross and take over our lives again. It gets in the driver's seat instead of Jesus being there through the Holy Spirit. When self is in the driver's seat it is only keeping the seat warm for Satan. Because in ourselves we have absolutely no power to resist the evil angel's control of our lives. This is why unless we are *fully* surrendered and stay that way day by day, even though we may seem to live a good life outwardly, we are only polished tools in the hand of Satan, he will use us whenever he wants, to trip others and do them harm.

The other amazing gift that God has given us in connection with the plan of redemption is also something that few people understand. It is the gift of free will or the freedom of choice! There is no freedom in the ranks of Satan; if God did not give this to us and protect us so we can use it, we would be total slaves to sin and Satan, just mindlessly obeying him.

This is why, just by us first choosing to belong to Jesus, it is not the end of the story, but only the beginning. When we do give our heart to Jesus, the Godhead through the Holy Spirit begins to teach us bit by bit. I may be totally surrendered to Jesus in everything I know today, in other word, I am in my integrity; I am serving Him with an honest heart. But then I am led through the Word to learn that, lo and behold, I have been worshipping on Sunday and the 7th day is the real Sabbath of the Lord! Oh MY! I find myself a transgressor again, and I come before the Lord and repent for my ignorance in breaking His law; I ask forgiveness and I am given it. Then I start keeping the Sabbath and again I am in my integrity—obeying God in all that I understand.

Then later, I come face to face with something else I did not know about; then again I confess, repent, ask forgiveness and get that sin out of my life through Jesus' power. This is the process of 'sanctification'. This is why we are told sanctification takes a lifetime, because we continue to learn all our lives. God-likeness is God's goal for us! But at each step of the way we are to be in our integrity, not disregarding anything we know of God's will. This does not mean, as many Adventist folk like to take it, that if I have a known sin in my life, it is OK, I have a whole lifetime to get rid of that sin! Oh No No!! Until that sin is removed, I am unjustified!

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Suppose we go back in our story and here I am again, just having given my heart to Jesus and He has accepted me and blessed me with forgiveness of my past sins, this is justification.

I am justified by the Blood of Christ; Then here comes a truth new to me, say it is the Sabbath truth again, and I look at it and I can see it is in the Bible, and it is in God's law and I am sinning by not keeping it—BUT I say, "I have given my heart to Jesus, and I am His, I do not need to keep this old Jewish Sabbath! I am good enough; I am saved just as I am!"

So what happens then? Several things; for one, I am no longer justified, because I can't be justified if I am living in known sin! Second, I stop progressing in my Christian walk; because no more light comes to me once I reject something that has been clearly shown me. I begin to backslide. Then the Holy Spirit begins to back off from me, at first He keeps trying to convict me of this sin and get me to repent and change, but if I keep rejecting these pleadings, and especially if I start saying that this pleading voice is of the devil, the Holy Spirit's voice gets fainter. The Holy Spirit does not give up easily, but the time comes eventually that He stops pleading with me altogether, my heart is hardened, and I feel fine! But I am the total slave of Satan.

Satan's counterfeit.

Next we notice Satan's counterfeit; come with me back to the Garden of Eden and listen to Satan's great lies. He told Eve essentially that she would not and could not die. That she herself was a god and only needed to develop her own powers. Basically, he convinced her that she was immortal!

That lie is now believed by nearly everyone on earth! People are convinced that when they die they go to heaven or hell, or they go flitting around the earth as a ghost, or they go and be born into another body and live another life! This is Satan's great masterpiece and he uses his angels to appear as dead people to 'prove' that people are not really dead when they die here.

Jesus says basically, "Only by surrendering fully to Me and dying to self and allowing Me to live in you and perfect you by the merits of My life, can you be saved."

Satan has convinced people, "Oh that is nonsense! Humans have evolved so high that they now have an immortal soul! You don't need to be saved because you are immortal!" What a terrible delusion. They will not take hold of God's marvelous and complete plan of salvation, because they feel they don't even need it. As Jesus said, "If you do not believe on me, you will die in your sins!" There is no other way! There is not any truth in the idea that all religions are good and there is no problem in whatever you want to believe in.

OK, so what is the status of the wicked?

The man who dies in his sins has exerted his free will in a wrong direction; He has chosen to take God's amazing gift of redemption and throw it back in God's face as it were.

Jesus' death paid the penalty for ALL human sins! But we all have to choose if we want that gift or not! We also have to believe God's verdict on us, namely, that we are sinners, deserving the death penalty and our only hope is in our Savior. We have to also choose to allow Jesus to remove our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness. I read a story once where the people claimed to be saved and on a train to heaven, but they all had their bundles of sins packed carefully away in the baggage car, just in case they wanted them!

When the wicked are raised it is because Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection paid the price for all to be raised from the first death. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22.

The sin which condemns the wicked is that they have rejected the plan of salvation. So why do all their bad deeds rise in the judgment? It is because by choosing to reject Jesus' sacrifice and God's plan to save them, they become guilty of the blood of Christ; also they have chosen to bear their own sins, so God honors their choice, and their sins remain on them. You know the Bible says that the second death in the Lake of fire was only for Satan and his wicked angels; not a single human being ever needs to die there! God's great plan of salvation was laid deep enough, wide enough, and high enough, and complete enough to save all!

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“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:” Matthew 25:41.

As we make our choices day by day, we decide in many ways, large and little, whether we will let God’s will rule us, or we will decide to do our own will. We are always free to choose to leave God’s service, to take our hand out of the Master’s hand and do our own thing! But as long as we chose to remain with Jesus, nothing can remove us from His care! So when it boils down to it, all we really have is the power to say “Yes” or “No” to God; and the power to say “Yes” or “No” to Sin.

I have learned that the louder and more determined we make those choices, the more effective they are! When I find myself almost overcome by darkness of some sort and I am almost losing my faith, if I cry to the Lord, even feebly in my distress, “Lord save me, Help my unbelief! I will not dishonor Thee; I refuse to dishonor Thee in this way!” Rescue comes swift and sure!

Remember Joseph? “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” He was empowered to stand through all because God backed up his choice with power. God protects and honors our freedom of choice. May all of us use our power of choice in choosing to serve God now and forever!

We have all heard about the miracles in the Bible stories, but do real miracles ever happen in our days in answer to prayer? This beautiful story was written by a doctor who worked in Africa...

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all we could do, she died leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a crying two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive; as we had no incubator (we had no electricity to run an incubator). We also had no special feeding facilities.

Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool that the baby would be wrapped in.

Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst (rubber perishes easily in tropical climates). "And it is our last hot water bottle!" she exclaimed.

As in the West, it is no good crying over spilled milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. They do not grow on trees, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways.

"All right," I said, "put the baby as near the fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job is to keep the baby warm."

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with many of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle, and that the baby could so easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

During prayer time, one ten-year old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. "Please, God" she prayed, "Send us a hot water bottle today. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon."

While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added, "And while you are about it, would you please send a dolly for the little girl so she'll know You really love her?"

As often with children's prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, "Amen"? I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know that He can do everything, the Bible says so. But there are limits, aren't there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the

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homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever, received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the verandah, was a large twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly. Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box.

From the top, I lifted out brightly coloured, knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas; that would make a batch of buns for the weekend. Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt the.....could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out yes, a brand new, rubber hot water bottle. I cried.

I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that he could. Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, "If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly too!" Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted!

Looking up at me, she asked: "Can I go over with you and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?" "Of course", I replied!

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months. Packed up by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child - five months before, in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it "that afternoon".

"Before they call, I will answer" (Isaiah 65:24)

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.