

Our Firm Foundation

and the longer period of 2300 days reaching to the cleansing of the sanctuary. Of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the centuries-long controversy between the king of the north and the king of the south, climaxed by the capture by a certain power of “the glorious holy mountain” and the standing up of “Michael the Prince.”

This highway, in general outline, is clear and plain. That there are a few shadows of uncertainty about its final plunge into eternity we are well aware, and we have no intention at this time of entering this controversial twilight zone. Nor do we need to do so, for our sole purpose here is to point out where we stand today in relation to the fulfillment of the entire prophecy. And where is that?

The ram and the lie-goat, typifying the Medo-Persian Empire and Greece, have long since played their part and faded away. The little horn power, representing first pagan, then papal, Rome, has acted exactly as predicted. The time period of seventy weeks, or 490 years, beginning in 457 BC with the command “to restore and to build Jerusalem,” and extending to “Messiah the Prince,” has been fulfilled to the letter in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Likewise the longer period of 2300 days, beginning at the same time, and of which the shorter period was an integral part, terminated in 1844 with the beginning of the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven and the announcement of the judgment hour on earth. Furthermore, most, if not all, of the conflicts between the king of the north and the king of the south can be pin pointed upon the pages of history down to comparatively recent times.

Where, then, do we stand on this highway? Obviously somewhere between 1844 and the standing up of Michael the Prince, by which we understand the completion of Christ’s work in the sanctuary and His preparation to return in glory. In other words, we are living between the first pronouncement of the judgment-hour message 108 years ago, and the beginning of the time of trouble that is to occur just before Jesus comes to raise the dead. (Daniel 12:2)

While it would be most desirable to know with fullness of certainty-and unanimity-just which power is to take possession of the glorious holy mountain and come, helpless, to its end, such information is not of the highest importance. More information would be welcome, but it is not essential. Looking at this great prophecy as a whole, glancing down the full length of this grand Highway of Divine Visitation from start to finish, it is unmistakably clear that by far the greater length of it passes through territory of fulfilled prophecy. What remains is but a short stretch through history’s closing scenes to the glorious return of Jesus.

4. The Highway of the Son of Man

Next among the great highways of prophecy is the one outlined by our Lord Himself, as recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the Synoptic Gospels. It was given in answer to the direct question of His disciples, “Tell us what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3.

In response to this question Jesus told of the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem, to be followed by -great tribulation” for His followers. “In those days” but “after that tribulation” the sun would be darkened, the moon appear as blood, and the stars would fall from heaven. (Mark 13: 24, 25; Revelation 6:12, 13)

Following these signs there would come upon the earth He said, “distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:25-27.

The sequence is most familiar to us all. We know it by heart. It stands upon the pages of Holy Writ as an everlasting testimony against those who claim that there is no way of knowing when Christ will come.

Where are we on this Highway of the Son of Man? Certainly not in the days of old Jerusalem, sacked and burned by the Romans in AD 70. Not in the days of the great tribulation, which, after staining the Dark Ages with blood, terminated in the latter half of the eighteenth century. All this is history. So are the darkening of the sun and the appearance of the moon as blood. As for the falling of the stars, are we not convinced that this last great celestial sign occurred in 1833? And if so, are we not living between this spectacular phenomenon and the shaking of the powers of heaven? Clear proof that we are is afforded by the distress and perplexity of the nations, the roaring of the multitudes for freedom and vengeance, and by the terror in the hearts of men as they look into the future “after those things which are coming on the earth.”

At the very time when some are saying, as Israel said to Ezekiel, “The vision that he sees is for many days to come,” Jesus says, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your

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heads; for your redemption draws nigh.” Luke 21:28.

5. The Highway of the Churches

Turning now to the book of Revelation, we find a highway which runs from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ. It parallels the highways outlined in the book of Daniel and the one traced across the centuries by the Master Himself, but has particular reference to seven stages in the religious experience of the followers of Christ from the day He ascended till the day He returns.

As we are all aware, the message to the church at Ephesus was a message to the pure and zealous church of the first century, whereas the message to the church at Smyrna was directed to the Christians who suffered dire persecution under the Roman emperors in the second and third centuries; and so on down the ages to the Philadelphia experience and, finally, to Laodicea.

Do we need to ask where we are on this highway? Full well we know that we are not in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, or even Philadelphia. Laodicea is the word that fits the present condition of the church. It is rich and increased with goods. Its members are becoming more and more prosperous, rivaling their non-Christian neighbors in the luxury of their homes, while the spirit of the world is seeping into their hearts and sapping their spiritual vitality. They prefer preachers who preach smooth things to those who challenge them to action. They want more psychology and less eschatology, and set greater value on a university degree than on a mission experience. They have become lukewarm not only to service but to sin, so that the line of demarcation between right and wrong has become dim and fuzzy among them; church rolls are cluttered with the names of people who no longer uphold its principles, and who long since have lost their first love.

Beyond all question we stand today in the final phase of the church’s experience, just before the shaking time and the coming of Jesus to take His faithful remnant home.

6. The Highway of Apostasy

In the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation we have the beginning of the prophecy of the seven seals, a highway which also starts at Pentecost and runs down the centuries to the Second Advent. Galloping along its first few miles is a white horse, ridden by one with a bow, a crown, and a conquering spirit-typifying the apostolic church in its zeal to win the world for its Lord.

Then, as the white horse vanishes, a red horse takes its place, its rider bearing a sword, symbolizing the strife that came into the church as it departed from the teachings of its Lord.

Next upon this highway appears a black horse, its rider carrying a pair of balances, dispensing food at exorbitant prices, fitting picture of that apostate organization which, posing as the church of Christ, sold the free gifts of God for money and built its cathedrals with ill-gotten gains.

Then comes a pale or greenish-colored horse, signifying decay and decomposition, with the figure of Death upon its back, and Hell following behind, grim symbols of a church so utterly unlike the divine pattern that it actually persecutes the true children of God.

On and on winds this Highway of Apostasy, down through the dark, bleak years of papal supremacy, past the slaughter of the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Huguenots, and many others. At last, leaving behind the bones and ashes of a million martyrs, it passes the monuments to these heroic dead as the Reformation revalues their sacrifice.

Suddenly, at the opening of the sixth seal, there is a great earthquake, the sun becomes black as sackcloth, the moon becomes as blood, and the stars of heaven fall to the earth “even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.”

Thus this great highway passes through the city of Lisbon, to behold the mighty earthquake of 1755, leaps the Atlantic to New England to see the Dark Day of May 19, 1780, and the star shower of November 13, 1833, then vanishes into eternity as heaven departs as a scroll, Christ appears in His majesty, and all humanity cries out, “The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

Where are we upon this highway? Do we see the rider on the white horse going forth conquering and to conquer? Do we see the red horse, the black horse, the pale green horse? We do not. All have galloped away into the mist covered wastes of history.

Where are we, then? We are far beyond the Lisbon earthquake, far beyond the Dark Day, and far beyond the falling of the stars. The next event on this highway of prophecy is the departing of the heaven as a scroll and the return of our Lord in glory. Indeed, if these awesome phenomena of nature were intended to be signs of the approach of the final consummation of the controversy between the church of Christ and the powers of darkness, how absurd to suggest that hundreds of years may yet elapse before the Lord shall