

The Good News About Last Day Events

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Years ago three men waited for a train. At the station they fell into deep discussion and became totally oblivious of the train's arrival. When the whistle sounded all three made a mad dash to the nearest door. Now in that part of the world, steps led up to a platform, from which the door could be opened. Two of them rushed fast enough to get onto the steps, but the last one couldn't quite make it, and the train left him behind.

In the deep shadows a man observed the whole proceedings. He noticed the three men deep in discussion until the whistle sounded, and then the mad dash. He noted that the one left behind suddenly burst out laughing, and had to find out why. So he came to him and said, "Sir, I know it's none of my business, but I saw all that happened. I saw your buddies make it, and you left behind. How come you are the one laughing?"

"I don't blame you for asking," the man chuckled. "If I had watched this happen, I would want to know, too. Those two men came down here to see me off."

Focus! How important it is! Some sincere Adventists are caught up in deep discussions about the times of trouble ahead while oblivious to Christ standing among them waiting to take them through last day events.¹

Recently I surveyed some students studying last day events at Southern Adventist University. This took place near the beginning of the semester. The results: 49% worry about the present pre-advent judgment; 56% are frightened of last day events; in fact, 41% would rather die than go through last day events; 37% believe they gain entrance to heaven through Christ's sacrifice plus their human works; 50% are not sure they would be saved if they died today; and yet

¹For those who would like to read about end-time movements, end-time doctrines, and end-time events from this perspective, see my recently released book *Christ is Coming!* (Review and Herald, 1998). It is a resource/textbook on last day events, to prepare end-time saints to face the future unafraid.

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88% claimed they know Christ as a personal friend. That's a stunning revelation, when you realize these represent a cross-section of Seventh-day Adventist youth, from all over the States and other countries, studying a variety of majors. They are among the final generation, yet many do not want to be! There's something radically wrong here. And who could say that the results would be any better if older people were canvassed? These students had received the message about trouble in Scripture, but they got it out of context, and it brought upon them unnecessary trouble.

One student blurted out, "I'd rather die and go to heaven via resurrection than live through last day events!" So many are afraid of Revelation 13. Yes, the chapter is bad news to many Seventh-day Adventists. They think of the Sea beast (or what Adventist historicists have interpreted, along with a number of early reformers, as the Papacy). The Greek for beast is *therion*, or wild beast, and it is blasphemous (v. 1), and wars against the saints (v. 7). Then the Earth beast (which we have seen as pointing to the U.S.A) is the same kind (*Gr.allos*) of beast, a wild one (*therion*), just like the Papacy. The United States forces the world to worship the Papacy (v. 12), deceives the world through miracles (vs. 13-14), passes a death decree against the saints (v. 15), and forces everyone to receive a mark (v. 16). Here's a global confederation led by the Papacy and enforced by America against the saints who are described as commandment keepers in Rev 12:17 and worshipers of the Creator in Rev 14:7, suggesting they are Sabbath keepers.² Seventh-day Adventists see the final battle over worship, and the Sunday/Sabbath issue as central.

The whole world follows the Papacy (Rev 13:3), and yet people from every nation, tribe, language and people join Sabbath keepers (cf. Rev 14:6). Here are two global churches. A church which, with the world that worships Satan and the Papacy (Rev 13:4); and Sabbath-keepers who worship Christ, who made the heavens and the earth (Rev 14:7) and gave mankind the Sabbath (Gen 2:2-3; Heb 1:1-2; Luke 6:5; Mark 2:27). There's no room here for congregationalism. God's end-time church is as global as the Papacy. Former Jesuit Malachi Martin didn't grasp this fact in his book, *The Keys of This Blood*, where he says Seventh-day Adventists need to collaborate "in the building of a geopolitical structure" or they will "diminish in numbers and influence, and finally lose their identity as operative parts in the new world order."³ We have news for him, don't we? And that has everything to do with the good news that is found in the biblical context of Revelation 13. The issue in Revelation 13 is worship—false worship is forced upon all mankind, but the saints will stand for the truth and worship Christ alone.

² The call to worship "him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7) comes from the Sabbath commandment (Exod 20:11).

³ Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1990), 285-292.

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Three General Comments

Before coming to look at the context of Revelation 13, three general comments are in order:

Resting in Christ, King of Kings. Babylon (Rev 14:8; 17:1-6; 18:1-4) is an appropriate name for this anti-truth conglomerate. They are like those who built the tower of Babel to save themselves apart from Christ (Gen 11). By contrast, Sabbath-keepers worship the Lord of the Sabbath, and this means far more than mathematics—far more than keeping the seventh instead of the first day of the week. The Sabbath was given to mankind to show the distinction between the Creator and the creature,⁴ a fact that Satan refuses to admit, and which the end-time enemies of God refuse to admit. But end-time saints believe it and practice it. They have given up on their efforts to go through final events. They rest solely upon His work. This is the end-time Sabbath test—the world never gives up on its own works; the saints give up on theirs and rest in His work to get them through.

So the distinction between Christ and the saints is crucial to final events. His responsibility is to get us through final events. Our responsibility is to rest in Him in utter trust. That takes away the fear of final events. Anything less is only tower of Babel building—even if done by worried saints wanting to go through final events. Just as Christ brought us into this world as a gift, so He will get us into the next world as a gift. The only difference is we can turn Him down now, or accept Him. To trust Him and not ourselves— that’s the good news about last day events! Frightened saints are afraid because they take responsibility for getting through last day events—responsibility that belongs to Christ alone.

Depending on Human Kings. An overview of the end-time of Revelation 13 is given in Rev 17:12-14: “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is the Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

The kings of the world will support the Papacy. They have one purpose: to war against the Lamb of God, Christ in His office as man’s only Savior. Here is an utter repudiation of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice. Satan has caused his papal system to replace Calvary with the mass, and the church and human works to replace Christ as the means of salvation. You will find this rejection of Christ’s substitutionary atonement in spiritualistic and new age literature.⁵ The final battle is against the Lamb. Even in our church some have rejected the sub-

⁴Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 347-348.

⁵See Norman R. Gulley, *Christ is Coming!* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1998), chapters 12-14.

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stitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and this should raise a warning flag.⁶ It is urgent that we grasp the truth that Christ is our Substitute at the cross, today and in last day events.

The coming crisis is Christ-centered. It's more important to focus on Christ than on the crisis, for *final events have far more to do with Who is coming than with what is coming*. The final confederate union is described as lasting only one hour—a small duration—for the King of Kings will defeat humans kings and the whole world that supports the Papacy. And note, those who follow the Lamb, who cling to His substitutionary sacrifice for them, will be saved. Final events are Christ-centered and not Christian-centered. As we approach them we cry out, "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling." It is this picture of clinging to our substitute Savior that takes the saints through final events, just as Jacob clung to the pre-incarnate Christ during the typical time of Jacob's trouble (Gen 32). Yes, we will go through the antitypical time of Jacob's Trouble, but we will be in the arms of our Savior as Jacob was. That's the good news about last day events!

The Place of the Lamb in Final Events. The place of the Lamb in final events is the crucial difference between the two sides. As Revelation 17:3-5 indicates, the Papacy leans on the kings of the world. But end-time saints cling to Calvary and the King of Kings. This is the way they face final events. The Papacy will use human kings, rulers, the uniting of church and state in its attempt to attempt to destroy the saints. By contrast, the saints depend solely upon Calvary for their salvation and Christ for their deliverance. This radically affects the way they look at last day events. They see the coming crisis in the context of the crucified and conquering Christ, and are saved from all fear of the future. For "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). It's the wicked who depend on human power; the saints depend upon divine power. That's the difference between the two sides. We have Christ; they don't. That's the good news of last day events.

Context of Revelation 13

Revelation 13 must be studied within the following three contexts. Its Old Testament source chapter is Daniel 7, its general context is the Book of Revelation, and its immediate context is chapters 12-15.

Daniel 7 Source Chapter. Non-SDA scholars recognize the connection between Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, as seen, for example, in the work of Greg K. Beale of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary⁷ and Alan F. Johnson of *The*

⁶See my article, "A Look at the Larger View of Calvary," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 3/1 (Spring 1992): 66-96. Compare "Toward Understanding the Atonement," *JATS*, 1/1 (Spring 1990):57-89. Seventh-day Adventists believe in salvation through Christ's substitutionary atonement (Fundamental Belief #9).

⁷Gregory K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John*, (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 247.

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Expositor's Bible Commentary.⁸ Although they arrive at different interpretations from Adventists, it is important that other scholars are connecting the two chapters. So should all SDAs, for this is one way to take the terror out of last day events. Daniel 7 clearly calls in question the dominance of the global Papacy in Revelation 13.⁹ Daniel 7 is the first mention of the Papacy in Scripture. Three times it is introduced, and immediately the results of the pre-advent judgment are given—the Papacy will be destroyed and God's saints will be delivered (vs 1-10; 18-22; 24-27). It is urgent that we realize why Satan has attacked our doctrine of the pre-advent judgment, for it is precisely in this judgment that his global system is condemned. It must be grasped by Adventists that the death decree verdict of Revelation 13:15 comes after the destruction-deliverance verdict of the pre-advent judgment (Dan 7:13-14).

Adventists need to look beyond the death decree verdict on earth to the prior pre-advent verdict in heaven, for the heavenly verdict nullifies the verdict on earth. The heavenly court overrules the courts of the earth, which are bent on causing the whole world to conform to the Papacy and its day of worship. Compare verses from both chapters. Revelation 13:2-4 states, "The dragon [Satan] gave the beast [Papacy] his power and his throne and great authority . . . The whole world was astonished and followed the beast [Papacy]. Men worshiped the dragon [Satan] because he had given authority to the beast [Papacy], and they also worshiped the beast [Papacy] and asked, 'Who can make war against him?'" The rest of the book of Revelation answers that question, showing that Christ Himself will make war against the beast. Daniel 7:13-14 shows why, "I looked and there before me was one like a Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He [Christ] was given authority, glory and sovereign power: all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." So the true Christ will overcome the false Christ and his system.

General Context in Revelation. Now to the general context of the book of Revelation. A throne room scene precedes each of the seven divisions of the book that reveal troubles to take place on earth (Rev 4:1-5:14; 8:2-6; 11:19; 15:1-8; 16:18-17:3; 19:1-10; 21:1-5). They shout out, "Look up here, and see the Crucified Christ on the throne. He is in charge. He is here as the Son of Man. He understands. He went through the great time of trouble for you. He has not forgotten you. He will be with you." And sometimes the end-time saints are already pictured as being in heaven, so sure is their victory through the coming crisis (Rev 7:1-17; 14:1-5; 15:1-4).

⁸ Alan F. Johnson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, *Revelation*, vol 12, p. 525.

⁹ The sea beast of Rev 13 is described as a conglomerate of leopard/bear/lion (v. 2), the beasts mentioned in Dan 7:1-6.

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Revelation 16-19 reveals the pre-advent, end-time destruction of the world's powers and peoples which have combined in war against God's saints. Plagues and Armageddon will decimate those warring against the saints. These judgments come to implement the pre-advent judgment verdict. Great will be the destruction of the powers of Revelation 13, and glorious will be the deliverance of the saints against whom they battle. Christ will stand up, and great will be the deliverance of His saints (Dan 12:1).

Revelation 17:12-17 shows that the ten kings will turn on Babylon and on the false churches which are her daughters and bring them to ruin. This seems to agree with Daniel 7:11-12, which says the little horn is slain and the other beasts, stripped of their authority, live on for a period of time.

Immediate Context of Revelation 13. Now to the immediate context of Revelation, that is chapters 12 to 15. It must be remembered that troubles for the remnant in Revelation 13 come after the church is first introduced in Revelation 12:1 as wearing a *stephanos* crown, or a laurel wreath of victory given to an Olympic winner. The saints are introduced as victors.

Revelation 12. Revelation 12 gives an overview of the cosmic controversy and reminds us of two falls of Satan. He was thrown out of heaven (v. 7-8), then he was hurled down once more at Calvary (vs. 9-11)—"The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, *who leads the whole world astray*, He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a voice in heaven say, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. *For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before God day and night, has been hurled down.* They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." These are approximately the central verses of Revelation. It is *that final event* which determines all other end-time events. Satan was defeated at Calvary (John 16:1). When Christ cried out "It is Finished" (John 19:30), Satan was doomed. The decisive battle of the great controversy was over. But Satan is like a man who loses a boxing match, but still flings his fists after the final bell. This causes pain but doesn't alter his defeat. The final bell rang at Calvary. Satan flings his fists all he wants in Revelation 13—but Revelation 12 says the church has the crown because the church has the victorious Savior. That's the good news about last day events!

John twice describes this relationship of saints with their Savior, saying, "The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of" (v. 14, cf. V. 6). Christ put His strong arms of love around His persecuted saints and loved them to the end. Some will die before the close of probation (Rev 20:4), but nothing can separate them from the love of Christ (Rom 8:38-39).

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Revelation 14. The 144,000, or the translated saints, are pictured with the Lamb on Mt. Zion. Zion¹⁰ in Hebrew (tsiyown) means “fortress.” Obadiah says of Mt. Zion, in the Old Testament, “on Mount Zion will be deliverance” (v. 17). In the New Testament Mt. Zion is Heaven (Heb 12:22-23), the place of deliverance to which saints go immediately after the second advent (John 14:1-3). Yet the saints in Revelation 14 are presented as already there. If chapter twelve portrays the translated saints as wearing the victor’s crown, then chapter 14 portrays them as already in heaven as victors. That’s the assurance that surrounds both sides of Revelation 13 with all its trouble!

The 144,000 are innumerable according to Rev 7:9. “Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”¹¹

The translated saints, called the 144,000, are only twice mentioned by that name in Revelation, and both times the vision of them is in heaven with the Lamb. Revelation 14:4 says, “they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.” This is throughout eternity, for they are the only ones to live after the close of probation (just as Christ did all His life), and they have a story to tell unfallen worlds that vindicates the cause of God in the Great Controversy.¹² They are Christ’s

¹⁰ The word “Zion” is used in different ways in the OT. David conquered the Jebusite fortress located on a hill southeast of the later city Jerusalem, and this fortress city became known as David’s city (2 Samuel 5:7, 1 Kings 8:1) and became the dwelling place of God. When Solomon built the temple on the hill north of David’s city, Zion came to include the expanded area. Sometimes the word Zion applies to the whole city of Jerusalem (Isa 33:20; 60:14) and sometimes to the whole nation (Isa 40:9; Zech 9:13). See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, ed. Siegfried H. Horn, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1960), p. 1182. Zion, the dwelling place of Christ, can include His end-time remnant with whom He dwells as their fortress (Psa 91:1-16; Matt 28:20, Heb 13:5).

¹¹ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 649, where she identifies the 144,000 with the great multitude.

¹² Translated saints are saved like the rest of the redeemed—through accepting the saving work of Christ for them. There is no different plan of salvation in the end-time, no special kind of perfection. But they live during the greatest time of trouble ever, and show that even under such circumstances they can remain loyal to Christ, because they allow Him to keep them from falling. None of their end-time contemporaries can argue against this demonstration at the end of the millennium. They cannot even say that Christ kept the law because divine, for here the weakest of the weak under the worst time of trouble ever, will demonstrate that total dependence upon Christ—in a Sabbath-like rest in Him—enables Christ to keep them true to Him. In an infinitely greater way, Christ lived His whole life after the close of probation (He had no intercessor) and showed that Satan’s charge that created beings cannot keep God’s law, and hence that God is unjust, was itself unfounded.

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senators and have an eternal mission with Him. What an awesome privilege to be in this group who will be translated—the modern Elijah people (cf. Mal 4:5-6).

They sing a new song before the throne which no one else can learn, for they alone have lived during the great time of trouble. (Rev 14:3). *The Great Controversy* says its a song of their experience.¹³ They will sing of the great time of trouble during the millennium in heaven and beyond, wherever Christ and they journey to tell their story throughout the inhabited worlds.

Do you like singing about your troubles? “Oh what a rotten day I had yesterday”? No! So what are they singing about? The answer is in Revelation 15.

Revelation 15. The context of Revelation 15 is in heaven just before the seven last plagues come upon the wicked. Again God’s end-time saints are pictured as in heaven before the great time of trouble, so sure is their victory. Verse 2 says they “had been victorious over the beast and his image.”

Look at the focus of the song in Rev 15:2-4. “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you [This looks beyond the false global worship of Revelation 13 to the post-millennial time when every knee will bow; Isa 45:23-24; Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10-11]. For your righteous acts have been revealed.” The mighty acts of God in the great time of trouble that fill the song! How awesome His destruction of the wicked! How wondrous His deliverance of the saints (Dan 12:1)! Not one word about trouble gets into the song. And this they sing during the millennium and forever as they follow Christ in eternity (Rev 14:1-4)! My friends, *if it’s worth singing about so long after it happened, it must be worth going through!* Right? That’s the good news about last day events!

What do you suppose the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace would have told their grandchildren? Was it about the flames heated seven times hotter or about the presence of the pre-incarnate Christ in there with them (Dan 3:8-25)? We must see beyond the coming crisis to Christ. What’s the song of the 144,000 called? “The song of Moses and the Lamb” (Rev 15:3). The passage through last day events is typified by the passage through the Red Sea. Isaiah said, “The Shepherd of His flock brought them through the Red Sea” (Isa 63:11). Moses called Him the “angel of God” (Exod 14:19). Luke said, “an angel appeared to Moses in the burning bush . . . I am the God of your father . . .” (Acts 7:30, 32). Daniel said when Michael the archangel stands up, there will be the worst time of trouble ever, but at that time the saints will be delivered (Dan 12:1). Clearly the Christ who led His people through the Red Sea will lead His people through final events. In both, Christ’s part is to get them safely through. Their part is to trust Him completely.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 649.

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No wonder Moses said, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only be still” (Exod 14:13-14). That’s the deeper meaning of the Sabbath in final events. It’s resting in Christ and not being afraid of the whole world against us. There is rest in true worship. Like Jehoshaphat, surrounded by enemy nations, end-time saints will feel helpless. In 2 Chronicles 20:12 the king cried out, “O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.” That’s the focus—on Christ and not on the crisis. There is no more need of a Mediator in heaven. The saints are sealed (Rev 7:1-3). But they need a Mediator with them on earth. Christ will cross the Red Sea of final events with us even as He did with ancient Israel. That’s the good news about final events!

In utter contrast, the third angels’ message says the wicked have no rest, for they worship the beast and His image (Rev 14:9-11; the two powers of Rev 13). They have no rest because the Spirit is withdrawn from the world (not from God’s people).¹⁴ Satan has full control of them. So in the great time of trouble it’s the world against us that has no rest—not the saints! What’s the use of controlling the world when they have no rest? They do not have Christ with them, but the saints do. That’s the decisive difference in the end-time. The Lamb makes all the difference! The wicked and not the saints have the greatest time of trouble. I wouldn’t want to be on their side, would you?

How to Be Among the 144,000

Have you ever wondered why the vision of the victorious 144,000 comes before the three angels’ messages? The messages come to tell us how to be in the group. They say much more, but I want to focus on the experience they speak about—an experience that will lead to the experience that the 144,000 will have in the great time of trouble. The first angel’s message says, Look to Christ. Reverence the One who is the Creator of heaven and earth—especially in the judgment time. Do not look to yourself and be afraid of your name coming up in judgment, but look to Him, and by beholding Him become ever more like Him (2 Cor 3:18). By beholding become like Jesus. Enter the second message. Babylon is fallen. Babylon means self-dependence. Remember the tower of Babel (Gen 11). We’ll build it 15 feet beyond the water line and save ourselves in the next flood. This kind of self-dependence crumbles as we gaze on Jesus. Enter the third message about the image to the beast, the union of church and state. What is this experientially? It means to no longer try to be religious (church) through our own secular (state) power. Put the three together. As an experience they say, Behold Jesus and become like Him, so that you no longer depend upon self; even to the extent that you no longer try to be religious through your own

¹⁴ Ibid., 615.

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secular power. That's righteousness by faith, isn't it? That's the total dependence upon Christ necessary to get us through final events. That's the essence of the end-time Sabbath test—resting in Him alone! As Luke 15:6 says, the Shepherd puts the sheep on His shoulders and carries it all the way home. That's the only way to go through final events.

Armageddon

Armageddon is written large over Revelation 14-19. It clearly demonstrates that the greatest time of trouble is for the wicked and not for the saints. Consider two examples. Both are second advent scenes. In Revelation 14:14-20 we read, "I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one 'like a son of man' with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand." The crown is a *stephanos* crown, a laurel wreath of victory worn by an Olympic victor—the same crown worn by God's saints in Revelation 12. The crown signifies Christ's victory over Satan in His life and death. The One who defeated Satan and His followers already at Calvary comes vaulting through the heavens just as the Papacy and its fiends move to implement the death decree.¹⁵ In Revelation 14:6-13 we have the message of the three angels. In verses 14-20 we have the mission of three more angels. The destruction of the wicked is effected by destroying angels, as in the Passover night of Israel's exodus. Jesus comes for the saints. He comes as one who has been through end-time troubles for us.

Revelation 19:14-21 is the other scene of Christ's second advent. Now Christ comes on a white horse, "with justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns" (Rev 14:11-12). He comes as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16). These crowns are diadems—worn only by royalty, worn because of inherent power and authority, not through winning a race as a human, but worn because Christ is God. Whereas He comes as Son of man to deliver the saints in Revelation 14, He comes as Son of God to destroy their enemies in Revelation 19. Note how the two beasts of Revelation 13—the Papacy and the USA as Apostate Protestantism—who confederate to destroy the saints—are singled out. Revelation 19:19-21 says, "Then I saw the beast [Papacy] and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast [Papacy] was captured and with him the false prophet [Apostate Protestantism] who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse" (Rev 19:19-21).

¹⁵ Ibid., 635-636.

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Here is the outcome of the persecution of Revelation 13. The two beasts, the Papacy and Apostate Protestantism in the USA, are overcome by Christ. *Armageddon needs to be understood in its context. It issues out of Calvary with its double verdict—deliverance to the saints and destruction to their enemies. That’s precisely what is looked at during the pre-advent judgment.* The saints are those who have accepted what Christ did for them in their place when He was judged at Calvary for them, when He who knew no sin became sin for them (2 Cor 5:21). Those who accept His work for them will be delivered. Those who have not accepted His work for them will be destroyed. The pre-advent judgment is not so much looking at what works we have done as it is looking at our acceptance or non-acceptance of His work when He was judged in our place at Calvary. It’s the acceptance of Calvary that saves the saints and takes them through final events. The enemy and the world have not accepted Calvary and will not make it through the end-time, even if they seem for a while to triumph. Armageddon issues out of two verdicts, the verdict of Calvary which is worked out in the verdict of the pre-advent judgment. So Armageddon has Calvary and the pre-advent judgment as well as Christ’s intercession before it. The implementation of the pre-advent judgment verdict is the final implementation of Calvary during the pre-advent time.

The rejection of the Lamb is global in the end-time. Only a remnant accept Him. Christ came in the first advent to a rebel world. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering (Isa 53). Just before His final events He looked at a clinging vine and said “That’s how I feel”—“I am the vine” (John 15:1). That’s the only way to go through final events—clinging to Christ. Jesus went through the greatest time of trouble that any human being will ever endure. His last day events were infinitely worse than ours will ever be!

In Gethsemane, “The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God’s wrath against sin was crushing out His life.”¹⁶ “Terrible was the temptation to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt.”¹⁷ Jesus “fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour.”¹⁸ “Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world’s Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 687.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 690.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 690-693.

GULLEY: THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT LAST DAY EVENTS

Calvary

The scene is changed to Calvary. “The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation . . . Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Savior could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror . . . He feared that sin was so offensive to God that their separation was to be eternal.”²⁰

He cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46). One thing is for sure. Jesus did not forsake us on Calvary, nor will He in the end-time. He promises, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you” (Heb 13:5). But as our sin-bearer He felt God-forsaken in His great time of trouble. Though Christ had promised to rise from the dead (Luke 18:33), build homes for the saints in heaven (John 14:1-2), and return in the second advent (John 14:3), now He couldn’t see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him a safe passage through death. “Father, If my death will mean eternal separation from you so that my people can live with you in my place—so let it be”—and He plunged into the abyss and perished. That’s the ultimate meaning of Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice for us! That’s the ultimate of what it means to be the Lamb! And if He went that far for us, and we cling to Him, He will never let us slip out of His hands in final events. He says to us today: “Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). That’s the good news about last day events.

In the great time of trouble Christ’s voice is heard saying to the saints, “Lo, I am with you. Be not afraid. I am acquainted with all your sorrows; I have borne your griefs. You are not warring against untried enemies. I have fought the battle in your behalf, and in My name you are more than conquerors.” “The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints.”²¹ That’s the good news about last day events.

²⁰ Ibid., 753.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 633.