

## **The 1858 Great Controversy Chapters 16-18.**

### **Chapter 16. Paul Visited Jerusalem.**

Shortly after Paul's conversion he visited Jerusalem, and preached Jesus, and the wonders of his grace. He related his miraculous conversion, which enraged the priests and rulers, and they sought to take his life. But that his life might be saved, Jesus appeared to him again in a vision while he was praying, saying unto him, Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Paul earnestly plead with Jesus, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. Paul thought the Jews in Jerusalem could not resist his testimony; that they would consider that the great change in him could only be wrought by the power of God. But Jesus said unto him, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

In Paul's absence from Jerusalem, he wrote many letters to different places, relating his experience, and bearing a powerful testimony. But some strove to destroy the influence of those letters. They had to admit that his letters were weighty and powerful; but declared that his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible.

I saw that Paul was a man of great learning, and his wisdom and manners charmed his hearers. Learned men were pleased with his knowledge, and many of them believed on Jesus. When before kings and large assemblies, he would pour forth such eloquence as would bear down all before him. This greatly enraged the priests and elders. Paul could readily enter into deep reasoning, and soar up, and carry the people with him, in the most exalted trains of thought, and bring to view the deep riches of the grace of God, and portray before them the amazing love of Christ. Then with simplicity he would come down to the understanding of the common people, and in a most powerful manner relate his experience, which called forth from them ardent desires to be the disciples of Christ.

The Lord revealed to Paul that he must again go up to Jerusalem; that he would there be bound and suffer for his name. And although he was a prisoner for a great length of time, yet the Lord was carrying forward his special work through him. Paul's bonds were to be the means of spreading the knowledge of Christ, and thus glorifying God. As he was sent from city to city for his trial, the testimony concerning Jesus, and the interesting incidents of his conversion were related before kings and governors, that they should not be left without testimony concerning Jesus. Thousands believed on him and rejoiced in his name.

I saw that God's special purpose was fulfilled in the journey of Paul upon the water, that the ship's crew might witness the power of God through Paul, and that the heathen also might hear the name of Jesus, and many be converted through his teaching, and by witnessing the miracles he wrought. Kings and governors were charmed by his reasoning, and as, with zeal and the power of the Holy Spirit, he preached Jesus, and related the interesting events of his experience, conviction fastened upon them that Jesus was the Son of God; and while some wondered with amazement as they listened to Paul, one cried out. Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian. Yet they thought that at some future time they would consider what they had heard. Satan took advantage of the delay, and as they neglected that opportunity when their hearts were softened, it was forever. Their hearts became hardened.

I was shown the work of Satan in first blinding the eyes of the Jews so that they would not receive Jesus as their Saviour; and next in leading them, through envy because of his mighty works, to desire his life. Satan entered one of Jesus' own followers, and led him on to betray him into their hands, and they crucified the Lord of life and glory. After Jesus arose from the dead, the Jews added sin to sin as they sought to hide the fact of the resurrection, by hiring for money the Roman guard to testify to a falsehood. But the resurrection of Jesus was made doubly sure by the resurrection of a multitude of witnesses who arose with him. Jesus appeared to his disciples, and to above five hundred at once, while those whom he brought up with him appeared unto many declaring that Jesus had risen.

Satan had caused the Jews to rebel against God, by refusing to receive his Son, and in staining their hands with most precious blood in crucifying him. No matter how powerful the evidence given of Jesus' being the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world; they had murdered him, and could not receive any evidence in his favor. Their only hope and consolation, like Satan's after his fall, was in trying to prevail against the Son of God. They continued their rebellion by persecuting the disciples of Christ, and putting them to death. Nothing fell so harshly on their ears as the name of Jesus whom they had crucified; and they were determined not to listen to any evidence in his favor. As in the case of Stephen, as the Holy Spirit through him declared the mighty evidence of his being the Son of God, they stopped their ears lest they should be convinced. And while Stephen was wrapped up in God's glory, they stoned him to death.

Satan had the murderers of Jesus fast in his grasp. By wicked works they had yielded themselves his willing subjects, and through them he was at work to trouble and annoy the believers of Christ. He worked through the Jews to stir up the Gentiles against the name of Jesus, and against those who followed him, and believed on his name. But God sent his angels to strengthen the disciples for their work, that they might testify of the things they had seen and heard, and at last in their steadfastness, seal their testimony with their blood.

Satan rejoiced that the Jews were safe in his snare. They still continued their useless forms, their sacrifices and ordinances. As Jesus hung upon the cross, and cried, It is finished, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, to signify that God would no longer meet with the priests in the temple, to accept their sacrifices and ordinances; and also to show that the partition wall was broken down between the Jews and the Gentiles. Jesus had made an offering of himself for both, and if saved at all, both must believe in Jesus as the only offering for sin, and the Saviour of the world.

While Jesus hung upon the cross, as the soldier pierced his side with a spear, there came out blood and water, in two distinct streams, one of blood, the other of clear water. The blood was to wash away the sins of those who should believe in his name. The water represents that living water which is obtained from Jesus to give life to the believer.

## **Chapter 17. The Great Apostasy.**

I was carried forward to the time when the heathen idolaters cruelly persecuted the Christians, and killed them. Blood flowed in torrents. The noble, the learned, and the common people, were alike slain without mercy. Wealthy families were reduced to poverty because they would not yield their religion. Notwithstanding the persecution and sufferings those Christians endured, they would not lower the standard. They kept their religion pure. I saw that Satan exulted and triumphed over the sufferings of God's people. But God looked with great approbation upon his faithful martyrs, and the Christians who lived in that fearful time were greatly beloved of him; for they were willing to suffer for his sake. Every

suffering endured by them increased their reward in heaven. But although Satan rejoiced because the saints suffered, yet he was not satisfied. He wanted control of the mind as well as the body. The sufferings those Christians endured drove them closer to the Lord, and led them to love one another, and caused them to fear more than ever to offend him.

Satan wished to lead them to displease God; then they would lose their strength, fortitude and firmness. Although thousands were slain, yet others were springing up to supply their place. Satan saw that he was losing his subjects, and although they suffered persecution and death, yet they were secured to Jesus Christ, to be the subjects of his kingdom, and he laid his plans to more successfully fight against the government of God, and overthrow the church. He led on those heathen idolaters to embrace part of the Christian faith. They professed to believe in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, without a change of heart, and proposed to unite with the followers of Jesus.

O the fearful danger of the church! It was a time of mental anguish. Some thought that if they should come down and unite with those idolaters who had embraced a portion of the Christian faith, it would be the means of their conversion. Satan was seeking to corrupt the doctrines of the Bible. At last I saw the standard lowered, and those heathen were uniting with Christians. They had been worshipers of idols, and although they professed to be Christians, they brought along with them their idolatry. They changed the objects only of their worship, to images of saints, and even the image of Christ, and Mary the mother of Jesus. Christians gradually united with them, and the Christian religion was corrupted, and the church lost its purity and power. Some refused to unite, with them and they preserved their purity, and worshiped God alone. They would not bow down to any image of any thing in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath.

Satan exulted over the fall of so many; and then he stirred up the fallen church to force those who would preserve the purity of their religion, to either yield to their ceremonies and image worship, or to put them to death. The fires of persecution were again kindled against the true church of Jesus Christ, and millions were slain without mercy.

It was presented before me in the following manner: A large company of heathen idolaters bore a black banner upon which were figures of the sun, moon and stars. The company seemed to be very fierce and angry. I was then shown another company bearing a pure white banner, and upon it was written Purity, and Holiness unto the Lord. Their countenances were marked with firmness and heavenly resignation. I saw the heathen idolaters approach them, and there was a great slaughter. The Christians melted away before them; and yet the Christian company pressed the more closely together, and held the banner more firmly. As many fell, others rallied around the banner and filled their places.

I saw the company of idolaters consulting together. They failed to make the Christians yield, and they agreed to another plan. I saw them lower their banner, and they approached that firm Christian company, and made propositions to them. At first their propositions were utterly refused. Then I saw the Christian company consulting together. Some said that they would lower the banner, accept the propositions, and save their lives, and at last they could gain strength to raise their banner among those heathen idolaters. But some would not yield to this plan, but firmly chose to die holding their banner, rather than lower it. Then I saw many of that Christian company lower the banner, and unite with the heathen; while the firm and steadfast seized the banner, and bore it high again. I saw individuals continually leaving the company of those bearing the pure banner, and joining the idolaters, and they united together under the black banner, to persecute those bearing the white

banner, and many were slain; yet the white banner was held high, and individuals were raised up to rally around it.

The Jews who first started the rage of the heathen against Jesus, were not to escape. In the judgment hall the infuriated Jews cried, as Pilate hesitated to condemn Jesus, His blood be on us and on our children. The race of the Jews experienced the fulfillment of this terrible curse which they called down upon their own heads. Heathen and those called Christians were alike their foes. Those professed Christians, in their zeal for the cross of Christ, because the Jews had crucified Jesus, thought that the more suffering they could bring upon them, the better could they please God; and many of those unbelieving Jews were killed, while others were driven from place to place, and were punished in almost every manner.

The blood of Christ, and of the disciples, whom they had put to death, was upon them, and in terrible judgments were they visited. The curse of God followed them, and they were a by-word and a derision to the heathen and to Christians. They were shunned, degraded and detested, as though the brand of Cain was upon them. Yet I saw that God marvelously preserved this people, and had scattered them over the world, that they might be looked upon as especially visited by a curse from God. I saw that God has forsaken the Jews as a nation; yet there was a portion of them who would be enabled to tear away the veil from their hearts. Some will yet see that prophecy has been fulfilled concerning them, and they will receive Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and see the great sin of their nation in rejecting Jesus, and crucifying him. Individuals among the Jews will be converted; but as a nation they are forever forsaken of God.

## **Chapter 18. Mystery of Iniquity.**

It has ever been the design of Satan to draw the minds of the people from Jesus to man, and to destroy individual accountability. Satan failed in his design when he tempted the Son of God. He succeeded better as he came to fallen man. The doctrine of Christianity was corrupted. Popes and priests presumed to take an exalted position, and taught the people to look to them to pardon their sins, instead of looking to Christ for themselves. The Bible was kept from them, in order to conceal the truths which would condemn them.

The people were entirely deceived. They were taught that the popes and priests were Christ's representatives, when in fact they were the representatives of Satan; and when they bowed to them, they worshiped Satan. The people called for the Bible; but the priests considered it dangerous to let them have the word of God to read for themselves, lest they become enlightened, and their sins be exposed. The people were taught to look to these deceivers, and receive every word from them, as from the mouth of God. They held that power over the mind, which God alone should hold. And if any dared to follow their own convictions, the same hate which Satan and the Jews exercised towards Jesus would be kindled against them, and those in authority would thirst for their blood. I was shown a time when Satan especially triumphed. Multitudes of Christians were slain in a dreadful manner because they would preserve the purity of their religion.

The Bible was hated, and efforts were made to rid the earth of the precious word of God. The Bible was forbidden to be read on pain of death, and all the copies of the holy Book which could be found were burned. But I saw that God had a special care for his word. He protected it. At different periods there were but a very few copies of the Bible in existence, yet God would not suffer his word to be lost. And in the last days, copies of the Bible were to be so multiplied that every family could possess it. I

saw that when there were but a very few copies of the Bible, it was precious and comforting to the persecuted followers of Jesus. It was read in the most secret manner, and those who had this exalted privilege felt that they had had an interview with God, with his Son Jesus, and with his disciples. But this blessed privilege cost many of them their lives. If discovered, they were taken from reading the sacred Word to the chopping block, the stake, or to the dungeon to die from starvation.

Satan could not hinder the plan of salvation. Jesus was crucified, and arose again the third day. He told his angels that he would make even the crucifixion and resurrection tell to his advantage. He was willing that those who professed faith in Jesus should believe that the laws regulating the Jewish sacrifices and offerings ceased at the death of Christ, if he could push them further, and make them believe that the law of ten commandments died also with Christ.

I saw that many readily yielded to this device of Satan. All heaven was moved with indignation, as they saw the holy law of God trampled under foot. Jesus and all the heavenly host were acquainted with the nature of God's law; they knew that he would not change or abolish it. The hopeless condition of man caused the deepest sorrow in heaven, and moved Jesus to offer to die for the transgressors of God's holy law. If his law could be abolished, man might have been saved without the death of Jesus. The death of Christ did not destroy the law of his Father; but magnified and honored it, and enforces obedience to all its holy precepts. Had the church remained pure and steadfast, Satan could not have deceived them, and led them to trample on the law of God. In this bold plan, Satan strikes directly against the foundation of God's government in heaven and on earth. His rebellion caused him to be expelled from heaven. After he rebelled, in order to save himself, he wished God to change his law; but God told Satan, before the whole heavenly host, that his law was unalterable. Satan knows that if he can cause others to violate God's law he is sure of them; for every transgressor of his law must die.

Satan decided to go still further. He told his angels that some would be so jealous of God's law that they could not be caught in this snare; that the ten commandments were so plain that many would believe that they were still binding; therefore he must seek to corrupt the fourth commandment which brings to view the living God. He led on his representatives to attempt to change the Sabbath, and alter the only commandment of the ten which brings to view the true God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. Satan presented before them the glorious resurrection of Jesus, and told them that by his rising on the first day of the week, he changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Thus Satan used the resurrection to serve his purpose. He and his angels rejoiced that the errors they had prepared took so well with the professed friends of Christ. What one might look upon with religious horror, another would receive. The different errors would be received, and with zeal defended. The will of God plainly revealed in his word, was covered up with error and tradition, which have been taught as the commandments of God. But although this heaven-daring deception was to be suffered to be carried on down through time until the second appearing of Jesus, yet through all this time of error and deception, God has not been left without a witness. There have been true and faithful witnesses keeping all of God's commandments through the darkness and persecution of the church.

I saw that angels were filled with amazement as they beheld the sufferings and death of the King of glory. But I saw that it was no marvel to the angelic host that the Lord of life and glory, who filled all heaven with joy and splendor, should break the bands of death, and walk forth from his prison house a triumphant conqueror. And if either of these events should be commemorated by a day of rest, it is the

crucifixion. But, I saw that neither of those events were designed to alter or abolish God's law; but they give the strongest proof of its immutability.

Both of these important events have their memorials. By partaking of the Lord's supper, the broken bread and the fruit of the vine, we show forth the Lord's death until he comes. By observing this memorial, the scenes of his sufferings and death are brought fresh to our minds. The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with him by baptism, and raised up out of the watery grave in likeness of his resurrection, to live in newness of life.

I was shown that the law of God would stand fast forever, and exist in the new earth to all eternity. At the creation, when the foundations of the earth were laid, the sons of God looked with admiration upon the work of the Creator, and all the heavenly host shouted for joy. It was then that the foundation of the Sabbath was laid. At the close of the six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work. The Sabbath was instituted in Eden before the fall, and was observed by Adam and Eve, and all the heavenly host. God rested on the seventh day, and blessed and hallowed it; and I saw that the Sabbath would never be done away; but the redeemed saints, and all the angelic host, will observe it in honor of the great Creator to all eternity.