

Appendix 3

Ellen G. White on Time Periods and Date Setting

The majority of Adventists rejected the truths concerning the sanctuary and the law of God, and many also renounced their faith in the advent movement and adopted unsound and conflicting views of the prophecies which applied to that work. Some were led into the error of repeatedly fixing upon a definite time for the coming of Christ. The light which was now shining on the subject of the sanctuary should have shown them that no prophetic period extends to the second advent; that the exact time of this advent is not foretold. But, turning from the light, they continued to set time after time for the Lord to come, and as often they were disappointed. {GC 456.1}

When the Thessalonian church received erroneous views concerning the coming of Christ, the apostle Paul counseled them to test their hopes and anticipations carefully by the word of God. He cited them to prophecies revealing the events to take place before Christ should come, and showed that they had no ground to expect Him in their day. "Let no man deceive you by any means" (2 Thessalonians 2:3), are his words of warning. Should they indulge expectations that were not sanctioned by the Scriptures, they would be led to [457] a mistaken course of action; disappointment would expose them to the derision of unbelievers, and they would be in danger of yielding to discouragement and would be tempted to doubt the truths essential for their salvation. The apostle's admonition to the Thessalonians contains an important lesson for those who live in the last days. Many Adventists have felt that unless they could fix their faith upon a definite time for the Lord's coming, they could not be zealous and diligent in the work of preparation. But as their hopes are again and again excited, only to be destroyed, their faith receives such a shock that it becomes well-nigh impossible for them to be impressed by the great truths of prophecy. {GC 456.2}

The preaching of a definite time for the judgment, in the giving of the first message, was ordered by God. The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. The repeated efforts to find new dates for the beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late. {GC 457.1}

I plainly stated at the Jackson camp meeting to these fanatical parties that they were doing the work of the adversary of souls; they were in darkness. They claimed to have great light that probation would close in October, 1884. I there stated in public that the Lord had been pleased to show me that there would be no [36] definite time in the message given of God since 1844.-2SM 73 (1885). {LDE 35.3}

Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming.-1OMR 270 (1888). {LDE 36.1}

The people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time [Revelation 10:4-6], reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.-7BC 971 (1900). {LDE 36.2}

"The above, relative to time-setting, was printed nearly thirty years ago, and the books have been circulated everywhere. Yet some ministers claiming to be well acquainted with me, make the statements that I have set time after time for the Lord to come and those times have passed, therefore my visions are false. These false statements no doubt are received by many as truth. Those who know me and are acquainted with my labors will make no such report in candor. This is the testimony I have borne ever since the passing of the time in 1844: 'Time after time will be set by different ones which will pass by; and the influence of this time-setting will be to destroy the faith of God's people.' If I had seen in vision, and borne my testimony to definite time, I could not have written and published, in the face of this testimony, that all times that should be set would pass, for the time of trouble must come before the coming of Christ. Certainly for the last thirty years, that is, since the publication of this statement, I would not be inclined to set time for Christ to come, and thus place myself under the same condemnation with those whom I was reproving. I had no vision until 1845 which was after the passing of the time of general expectation in 1844. I was then shown that many would be deceived, and would set different times for the Lord to come, and urge them upon their brethren. But the Lord showed me that these times would pass; for the time of trouble must come before the coming of Christ; and that every time thus set and passed, would only weaken the faith of God's people. Has not this testimony which has been before the public nearly thirty years in published form been fulfilled in every particular? The First-day Adventists have set time after time, and notwithstanding the repeated failures, they have gathered courage to set new times. [222] God has not led them in this. Many of them have denounced the prophetic time, and the fulfillment of marked events in prophecy, because the time passed in 1844, and did not bring the expected event. They rejected the true prophetic time, and the enemy has had power to bring strong delusions upon them that they should believe a lie. I have borne the testimony since the passing of the time in 1844, that there should be no definite time set by which to test God's people. The great test on time was in 1843 and 1844; and all who have set time since these great periods marked in prophecy were deceiving and being deceived. {LS80 221-22}

About four months since, I had a vision of events, all in the future. And I saw the time of trouble, such as never was,-Jesus told me it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and that we should be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Just before we entered it, we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four Angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine,

pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion. Then we cried to God for deliverance day and night till we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment. And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest, and as he came out we heard the tinkling of bells, and knew our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God which shook the heavens and earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus' coming. Then the saints were free, united and full of the glory of God, for he had turned their captivity. And I saw a flaming cloud come where Jesus stood and he laid off his priestly garment and put on his kingly robe, took his place on the cloud which carried him to the east where it first appeared to the saints on earth, a small black cloud, which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to the east which took a number of days, the Synagogue of Satan worshiped at the saints feet. Ellen G. Harmon {DS, March 14, 1846 par. 2}