

## Chapter 3

# Eschatology and Human History

We dwell in ignorance of history, uncertain about its origin, the direction in which it is heading, and its final destination. Concerning eschatology, or the doctrine of the *Last Days*, many Christians believe literally what is written in the Bible: “the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire”;<sup>1</sup> “the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven”;<sup>2</sup> and “with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet . . . the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”<sup>3</sup> One pertinent question for Christians is whether these events will take place literally or whether the verses are symbolic, as are many parts of the Bible. To address this issue, we should first understand such fundamental matters as the purpose of God’s creation, the meaning of the human Fall, and the goal of the providence of restoration.

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1. II Pet. 3:12
  2. Matt. 24:29
  3. I Thess. 4:16-17

## SECTION 1

### THE COMPLETION OF GOD'S PURPOSE OF CREATION AND THE HUMAN FALL

#### 1.1 THE COMPLETION OF GOD'S PURPOSE OF CREATION

We have discussed how God's purpose in creating human beings was to rejoice with them.<sup>4</sup> Thus, our purpose of existence is to bring joy to God. What must we do to bring joy to God and fully manifest our original value?

Created beings other than humans are endowed with the innate nature to grow to maturity naturally and become object partners which bring God joy. Human beings, on the other hand, can become true and authentic object partners who bring joy to God only through their free will and free actions.<sup>5</sup> They cannot become the object partners who inspire God with joy unless they understand His Will and make effort to live accordingly. Hence, human beings are endowed with emotional sensitivity to the Heart of God, intuition and reason to comprehend His Will, and the requisite abilities to practice it. A person who relates with God in this manner will attain perfection of his individual character. Adam and Eve prior to the Fall, as well as the prophets of every age, had some ability to converse with God because they had these innate faculties.

The relationship between God and a person who has attained individual perfection can be compared to that between the mind and the body. The body is the dwelling place of the mind and moves according to the mind's direction. Likewise, God abides within the mind of a fully mature person. Such a person becomes a temple of God and leads his life in harmony with His Will. A perfect individual is fully attuned to God, just as the body resonates with the mind. For this reason it is written, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"<sup>6</sup> and "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."<sup>7</sup> A person who has perfected his individual character becomes a temple of God, and the Holy Spirit abides within him. Living in oneness with God, he acquires a divine nature. Thus, it is impossible for him to commit sin or to fall.

A person who has perfected his individual character embodies total

4. cf. Creation 3

5. cf. Creation 5.2.2

6. I Cor. 3:16

7. John 14:20

goodness and fulfills the purpose of creation. If a person embodying total goodness could fall, this would lead to the illogical conclusion that goodness contains the seed of its own destruction. Moreover, if human beings, who were created by the omnipotent God, could fall even after becoming perfect, we would have reason to doubt the omnipotence of God. God is the absolute and eternal Subject. To give Him true joy, His object partner must necessarily also be eternal and absolute. For these reasons, a person who has perfected his individual character can never fall.

Had Adam and Eve reached perfection, being thereafter insusceptible to sin, they would have borne good children and founded a sinless family and society in complete concordance with God's blessings.<sup>8</sup> They would have founded the Kingdom of Heaven, which consists of one great family with the same parents. The Kingdom of Heaven has the form of an individual who has achieved perfection of character. Just as the members of the human body are coordinated in horizontal relationships with each other and move as one in response to the vertical commands of the brain, in this society people will form cooperative horizontal relationships with each other and live together in tune with the vertical directions emanating from God. No one will harm his neighbor, since if one person were to suffer pain, everyone in this society would experience the Heart of God who shares in that person's grief.

Regardless of the purity of the people of this society, if they were living in primitive circumstances like cavemen, this could not be considered the Kingdom of Heaven which both God and human beings desire. God gave us the mandate to have dominion over all things.<sup>9</sup> Hence, to realize the ideal of creation, people of perfected character should advance science, harness the natural world, and create an extremely pleasant social and living environment. This will be the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Once people have attained full maturity and enjoyed life in God's earthly Kingdom, then when they shed their physical bodies and pass into the spirit world, they will form the Kingdom of Heaven in heaven. Accordingly, God's primary purpose of creation is to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

## 1.2 CONSEQUENCES OF THE HUMAN FALL

Human beings fell while they were immature and still in their growing period. We have already clarified why the growing period was necessary and what the evidence is for the conclusion that the first human

8. Gen. 1:28

9. Ibid.

beings fell while immature.<sup>10</sup> Due to the Fall, human beings could not become temples of God; instead, they united with Satan and became his dwelling places. They failed to cultivate the divine nature; instead, they acquired an evil nature. People with evil nature have propagated evil through their children, constituting evil families, evil societies and an evil world. This is the hell on earth in which we have been living. In this hell, we cannot properly form cooperative horizontal relationships with one another because our vertical relationships with God have been severed. We perform deeds harmful to others because we cannot feel the pain and suffering of our neighbors as our own. Once people have accustomed themselves to living in hell on earth, when they end their physical life, they naturally enter hell in the spirit world. We have not built the Kingdom of God, but instead established the sovereignty of Satan. For this reason, Satan is called the “ruler of this world”<sup>11</sup> and the “god of this world.”<sup>12</sup>

## SECTION 2

### GOD’S WORK OF SALVATION

#### 2.1 GOD’S WORK OF SALVATION IS THE PROVIDENCE OF RESTORATION

The sinful world brings humankind sorrow and causes God to grieve.<sup>13</sup> Would God abandon this world in its present misery? God intended to create a world of goodness and experience from it the utmost joy; yet due to the human Fall, the world came to be filled with sin and sorrow. If this sinful world were to continue forever in its present state, then God would be an impotent and ineffectual God who failed in His creation. Therefore, God will save this sinful world, by all means.

To what extent should God save this world? He should save it completely. First, God must expel the evil power of Satan from this sinful world,<sup>14</sup> thereby bringing it back to its original state prior to the Fall of the human ancestors. Salvation must then continue until the good purpose of creation is fulfilled and God’s direct dominion is established.<sup>15</sup> To save a sick person is to restore him to the condition of health he

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10. cf. Creation 5.2.1

11. John 12:31

12. II Cor. 4:4

13. Gen. 6:6

14. Acts 26:18

15. Acts 3:21

had before the illness. To save a drowning person is to restore him to the state he was in before he fell in the water. Likewise, to save a person suffering under the yoke of sin means to restore him to his original, sinless state. In other words, God's work of salvation is the *providence of restoration*.<sup>16</sup>

The human Fall was undoubtedly the result of human mistakes. Nevertheless, God also assumes some responsibility for the outcome because it was He who created human beings. Therefore, God has felt compelled to conduct the providence to correct this tragic outcome and to restore human beings to their true, original state. Furthermore, God created us to live eternally. This is because God, the eternal subject partner, wanted to share eternal joy with human beings as His object partners. Having endowed human beings with an eternal nature, God could not, by the laws of the Principle, simply annihilate them just because they fell. If He were to do that, He would be violating His own Principle of Creation. The only choice left to God is to save fallen people and restore them to the original, pure state in which He initially created them.

When God created human beings, He promised to help us accomplish the three great blessings.<sup>17</sup> He declared through Isaiah, "I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it,"<sup>18</sup> meaning that despite the Fall, God has been working to fulfill His promise to us through the providence to restore these blessings. He sent Jesus to restore us to our original, ideal state, as we can discern from Jesus' words to his disciples, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."<sup>19</sup> An original, ideal person is one with God and has realized a divine nature; thus, with reference to the purpose of creation, he is perfect as God is perfect.

## 2.2 THE GOAL OF THE PROVIDENCE OF RESTORATION

What is the goal of the providence of restoration? It is the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, which in its totality is God's good object partner and the fulfillment of His purpose of creation. The center of God's Kingdom on earth is to be human beings. Although God created the first ancestors with that intention, they fell; hence, His Will for the earth was not realized. Since then, the primary goal of the providence of restoration has been nothing less than to rebuild the Kingdom

16. Acts 1:6; Matt. 17:11

17. Gen. 1:28

18. Isa. 46:11

19. Matt. 5:48

of Heaven on earth. Jesus, who came to complete this goal, told his disciples to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> He also said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”<sup>21</sup> His words testify that the goal of the providence of restoration is the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

### **2.3 HUMAN HISTORY IS THE HISTORY OF THE PROVIDENCE OF RESTORATION**

As clarified above, God’s work of salvation is the providence of restoration. Human history can be seen as the history of the providence through which God has been trying to save fallen people and work through them to restore the original, good world. Let us examine this idea in various ways, beginning with the history of the development of cultural spheres.

All people, in all ages and places, including even the most evil, have an original mind which inclines them to repel evil and seek goodness. People’s intellectual understanding of what goodness is and how goodness is achieved has differed according to time, place and individual viewpoint; this has been a source of the conflicts which have made history. Nevertheless, everyone cherishes the same fundamental goal of finding and establishing goodness. Why does the original mind irrepressibly induce people of every age and every place to do good? God, the Subject of goodness, created human beings as His good and worthy object partners in order to fulfill the purpose of the good. Despite Satan’s crippling efforts, which have rendered fallen human beings incapable of leading a life of total goodness, the original mind remains intact within them and prompts them toward goodness. Hence, the ultimate desire of the ages is to attain a world of goodness.

However hard the original mind may struggle to attain goodness, we can hardly find any examples of true goodness in this world under the sovereignty of evil. Human beings have thus been compelled to seek the source of goodness in the world transcendent of time and space. This necessity has given birth to religion. Through religion, fallen people mired in ignorance have sought to meet God by ceaselessly striving toward the good. Even though the individuals, peoples and nations which championed a certain religion may have perished, religion itself has survived.

Religion has endured through history despite the rise and fall of many nations. In the history of China, the Chao dynasty and the Warring

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20. Matt. 6:10

21. Matt. 4:17

States were followed by an era of unification in the Ch'in dynasty. This was followed by the Former Han, Hsin, Later Han, the Six Dynasties, and an era of unification in the Sui and T'ang periods. They were followed by the Five Dynasties, Northern Sung, Southern Sung, Yuan, Ming, Ch'ing, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. In its history, China has experienced many cycles of the rise and fall of dynasties and numerous transfers of political power, yet the religions of the Far East—Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism—have continued to thrive. The history of India has witnessed the empire of Mauryas followed by the Guptas, Harsa, Calukyias, the Mughals, Maratha, the British Raj, and today's independent India. Despite the rise and fall of many kingdoms, the religion of Hinduism has survived and prospered. In the history of the Middle East, the Umayyad Caliphate was followed by the Abbasids, the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks, the colonial period, and today's Arab states. Despite these changes in political sovereignty, the religion of Islam has endured and continued to thrive. In the history of Western Europe, we find that the center of power changed many times, from Rome to the Carolingian court, to the cities of Renaissance Italy. Spain and Portugal then became the leading powers of Europe, followed briefly by France and the Netherlands, and then England. In the modern era, the leadership of the West has been divided between America and the Soviet Union. Despite these political changes, Christianity has continued to flourish. Even under the despotic regime of the Soviet Union, founded upon Marxist materialism, Christianity remains vital and inextinguishable.

If we were to examine the rise and fall of nations, we would find numerous instances in which those nations which persecuted religion have perished, while those which protected and fostered religion have flourished. Often, the position of leading nation was taken away from nations that persecuted religion and passed to those that most esteemed religion. History thus assures us that the day will surely come when the communist world, which is persecuting religion, will perish.

Many religions have left their mark on history. Among them, the religions with the greatest influence formed cultural spheres. The major cultural spheres which have existed at various times in world history numbered between twenty-one and twenty-six. With the flow of history, lesser cultural spheres were absorbed by, or merged into, the more advanced spheres. Through the evolution of cultural spheres, as they were buffeted by the rise and fall of nations, four great cultural spheres have survived to the present day: the East Asian sphere, the Hindu

sphere, the Islamic sphere, and the Christian sphere. The current trend has these four spheres forming one global cultural sphere based on the Christian ethos. This historical development is evidence that Christianity has, as its final mission, the accomplishment of the goals of all religions which have sought the ideal of goodness. The history of the development of cultural spheres, each with its stages of expansion, decline and convergence, is ultimately aimed at constituting one global cultural sphere based on one religion. This demonstrates that the essence of human history has been the restoration of one united world.

Second, we can deduce that human history is the history of the providence of restoration by observing the progress of religion and science. It was discussed earlier<sup>22</sup> that the purposes of religion and science are to overcome the internal and external aspects of ignorance in fallen humankind. Although they have been working independently with little connection to each other, religion and science inevitably must converge. Today they are on the threshold of reaching this destination, where they will resolve all their problems together in one united undertaking. This trend shows that human history has been walking the providential course to restore the world to its original state.

Had it not been for the Fall, the development of the intellectual capacity of our early human ancestors would have enabled them to reach the highest level of spiritual knowledge, thus naturally stimulating their knowledge of the material world to develop to a corresponding degree. Science then would have advanced rapidly in an extremely short period of time, and today's level of science and technology would have been attained in those days. However, due to the Fall, human beings plunged into ignorance and could build only a primitive society, far beneath God's original ideal. Long ages passed before people could overcome this ignorance through the advancement of science. The modern world of highly developed technology has now brought us externally to the threshold of the ideal society.

Third, by examining trends in the history of conflict, we can understand that human history is the history of the providence of restoration. Battles over property, territory and people have continued without interruption, expanding their scope in step with the progress of human society. The scale of these struggles has broadened from the family level to the levels of tribe, society, nation and world until today, when the democratic world and the communist world confront each other in a final conflict. In these Last Days of human history, heavenly law has

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22. cf. Introduction

descended upon the earth in the name of democracy, bringing an end to the long phase of history in which people sought to obtain happiness by seizing property, land and people. At the conclusion of World War I, the defeated nations gave up their colonies. At the end of World War II, the victors voluntarily liberated their colonies and provided them with material aid. In recent years, the great powers have invited weak and tiny nations, some smaller than one of their own cities, to become member states of the United Nations, giving them equal rights and status in the brotherhood of nations.

What form does this final war between democracy and communism take? It is primarily a war of ideologies. Indeed, this war will never truly cease unless a truth emerges which can completely overthrow the ideology of Marxism-Leninism that is threatening the modern world. Communist ideology negates religion and promotes the exclusive supremacy of science. Hence, the new truth which can reconcile religion and science will emerge and prevail over the communist ideology. It will bring about the unification of the communist and democratic worlds. The trend of the history of conflict thus confirms that human history is the providential history to restore the original, ideal world.

Fourth, let us investigate this issue from the words of the Bible. The purpose of human history lies in the restoration of the Garden of Eden with the tree of life standing at its center.<sup>23</sup> The Garden of Eden does not refer to a specific geographical location where Adam and Eve were created, but includes the entire earth. If the Garden of Eden were limited to the small region of the globe where they were created, how could humanity be confined to such a small place and still fulfill God's blessing to multiply and fill the earth?<sup>24</sup>

Because the first human ancestors fell, the Garden of Eden was claimed by Satan, and the way to the tree of life at its center was blocked.<sup>25</sup> It is written in the Book of Revelation:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.  
—*Rev. 22:13-14*

Human history began with Alpha and will end with Omega. At the end of history, the hope of fallen people will be to wash their sin-stained robes, enter the restored Garden of Eden, and approach the long-lost tree of life.

23. Gen. 2:9; cf. Fall 1.1.1

24. Gen. 1:28

25. Gen. 3:24

Let us discuss further the significance of this verse. The tree of life represents the True Father of humanity who, as we have seen, was to have been Adam had he perfected his character. Due to the fall of the first parents, their descendants were corrupted with the original sin. To be restored to the state of true, original people, we, as Jesus said, must be reborn.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, history has been humankind's search for Christ, the True Father of humanity, the one who can give us rebirth. In this verse, the tree of life which the saints of the Last Days may approach is none other than Christ. Thus, the Bible teaches that the goal of history is the restoration of the Garden of Eden with Christ, who is to come as the tree of life, as its center.

When the Bible states that a new heaven and new earth will appear in the Last Days,<sup>27</sup> it means that the old heaven and old earth under the bondage of Satan will be restored as a new heaven and new earth under the God-centered dominion of Christ. The Bible also states that the whole creation, groaning in travail under satanic tyranny, awaits the revealing of the sons of God.<sup>28</sup> Created beings do not await the restoration of true children of God in order to be burned in fire and perish in the Last Days; rather, they wait to be made new.<sup>29</sup> They will be made new by being restored to their original position under their rightful masters, the true sons and daughters of God, who are able to govern them with love.

Having examined human history from various standpoints—the development of cultural spheres, the trend of religion and science, the trend of the history of conflict, and the evidence in the Bible—it has become clear that human history is the providential history to restore the original, ideal world.

## SECTION 3

### THE LAST DAYS

#### 3.1 THE MEANING OF THE LAST DAYS

Due to the crime of the Fall, the three great blessings God had granted our first ancestors were not fulfilled based on God's love and Principle, but instead were actualized in an unprincipled way under the tutelage of Satan. Human history since then has been the history of God's providence of restoration. Despite its evil beginning, the world under the sov-

26. cf. Christology 4.1

27. Rev. 21:1

28. Rom. 8:19-22

29. Rev. 21:5

ereignty of Satan must one day be transformed into the world where goodness reigns, where the three great blessings are fulfilled centered on God. The Messiah comes at this time of transformation.

The Last Days is this time, when the evil world under satanic sovereignty is transformed into the ideal world under God's sovereignty. Hell on earth will be transformed into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Therefore, it will not be a day of fear when the world will be destroyed by global catastrophes, as many Christians have believed. In fact, it will be a day of joy, when the cherished hope of humankind, the desire of the ages, will be realized.

Since human beings fell, God has attempted more than once to consummate His providence to put an end to the sinful world and restore the original, good world.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, at each attempt, human beings failed to fulfill their portion of responsibility, thus thoroughly frustrating the Will of God. Consequently, dispensations of the Last Days have been repeated several times. This can be confirmed by a close study of the Bible.

### 3.1.1 NOAH'S DAY WAS THE LAST DAYS

God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth."<sup>31</sup> This indicates that Noah's day was the Last Days. God wanted to destroy the corrupt, evil world which had been ruled by Satan since the time of the human Fall. He intended once and for all to purge sinful history, biblically reckoned as 1,600 years, by the Flood. In its aftermath, God intended to raise up Noah's family, who worshipped Him and no other, and resurrect the world of God's sovereignty upon the foundation of their faith. This is how the time of Noah can be considered the Last Days.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, when Ham, the second son of Noah, committed a sinful act which reaffirmed the Fall, Noah's family could not fulfill its portion of responsibility on behalf of humankind, and the Will of God was frustrated.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.1.2 JESUS' DAY WAS THE LAST DAYS

God has foreordained the fulfillment of His Will; hence, the goal of the providence of restoration is unchanging and shall be fulfilled

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30. cf. Foundation 1

31. Gen. 6:13

32. cf. Foundation 2

33. Gen. 9:22

without fail.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, even though the providence of restoration was not accomplished through Noah, God called upon other prophets to prepare anew the basis of faith. Upon this foundation, God sent Jesus to vanquish the satanic sovereignty which has held this world in thrall and to establish the God-centered ideal world. Accordingly, Jesus' day was also the Last Days. This is why Jesus said that he came to bring judgment,<sup>35</sup> and why Malachi prophesied of Jesus' coming:

Behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up . . . so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. —*Mal. 4:1*

Jesus came to restore the original, ideal world. However, when the people of Israel did not believe in him, the human portion of responsibility was left unaccomplished. This meant that the fulfillment of the Will of God had to be prolonged until Christ's Second Advent.

### 3.1.3 THE DAY OF CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT IS THE LAST DAYS

When the disbelief of the chosen people led Jesus to go the way of the cross, he could accomplish only spiritual salvation. It remains for him to return and accomplish the goal of the providence of restoration both spiritually and physically and restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.<sup>36</sup> Hence, the day of the Christ's Second Advent is also the Last Days. For this reason Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man"<sup>37</sup> and prophesied that many natural calamities would break out at his return.<sup>38</sup>

## 3.2 BIBLE VERSES CONCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS

Many Christians believe that in the Last Days natural calamities and radical changes beyond the imagination of modern men will take place, as is literally written in the Bible. However, if they understood that human history is the history of God's providence, which has been restoring the world to the original state intended by God at the Creation, then they would know that the signs of the Last Days prophesied in the Bible will not take place literally. Let us investigate what the prophecies concerning the Last Days actually symbolize.

34. cf. Predestination 1

35. John 5:22

36. cf. Messiah 1.4

37. Luke 17:26

38. Matt. 24:7, 29

### 3.2.1 HEAVEN AND EARTH DESTROYED, AND A NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH CREATED

It is written that God determined to destroy the earth in Noah's time.<sup>39</sup> Noah's time was the Last Days, yet the world was not destroyed. The earth is eternal, as the following verses indicate: "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever;"<sup>40</sup> "He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever."<sup>41</sup> The earth was created as the object partner of God. God, the subject partner, is eternal; likewise, earth, the object partner, should also be eternal. Almighty God would never be pleased with having created a world so fragile it could possibly perish because of Satan. What, then, is the meaning of the prophecies of the earth's destruction in the Last Days? For instance:

The heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. —*II Pet. 3:12-13*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. —*Rev. 21:1; cf. Isa. 66:22*

To destroy a nation is to overthrow its sovereignty, while to erect a new nation is to establish a new sovereignty. Likewise, the prophecies that heaven and earth will be destroyed mean that the tyranny of Satan will be overthrown. To create a new heaven and new earth means to restore heaven and earth to God's sovereignty founded on Christ.

### 3.2.2 HEAVEN AND EARTH JUDGED BY FIRE

What is the meaning of the prophecy that in the Last Days "the heavens will be kindled and dissolved and the elements will melt with fire"?<sup>42</sup> Malachi, prophesying of Jesus to come, spoke of a day burning with the fire of judgment.<sup>43</sup> Jesus came into the world to cast this judgment, as he said, "For judgment I came into this world."<sup>44</sup> Jesus also said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth."<sup>45</sup> "Fire" here represents the means of the judgment for which Jesus came into the world. Nevertheless, there is no record that in his time Jesus judged the world with literal fire. The verses referring to fire must be symbolic. It is written, "Is not my word like

39. Gen. 6:13

40. Eccl. 1:4

41. Ps. 78:69

42. II Pet. 3:12

43. Mal. 4:1

44. John 9:39; also John 5:22

45. Luke 12:49

fire, says the Lord?"<sup>46</sup> Therefore, judgment by fire represents judgment by the Word of God.

Let us look for some biblical examples concerning judgment by the Word: "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day."<sup>47</sup> "The lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth,"<sup>48</sup> that is, by his word. Moreover, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked."<sup>49</sup> "He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."<sup>50</sup> It follows that the judgment by fire which Jesus came to bring was the judgment by the Word.

What is the reason that Jesus judges by the Word? Human beings are created through the Word.<sup>51</sup> God's ideal of creation was that the first human ancestors fulfill the purpose of the Word by incarnating the Word. Yet they did not keep the Word of God and fell; thus, they failed to fulfill the purpose of the Word. Since then, God has tried to fulfill the purpose of the Word by recreating fallen human beings through the Word. This is the providence of restoration based on truth, the Word as revealed in the Scriptures. It is written, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."<sup>52</sup> Jesus completely realized the Word. He will come again as the standard of the judgment by the Word and judge the extent to which humanity has fulfilled the purpose of the Word. Judgment in this context contributes to the attainment of the goal of restoration, which is the realization of the purpose of the Word. Hence, in the course of the providence, the Word must be set up as the standard through which judgment can be carried out. Jesus lamented, "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!"<sup>53</sup> As the incarnation of the Word,<sup>54</sup> he was grieved that the people of Israel did not receive the life-giving words which he proclaimed.

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46. Jer. 23:29

47. John 12:48

48. II Thess. 2:8

49. Isa. 11:4

50. John 5:24

51. John 1:3

52. John 1:14

53. Luke 12:49

54. John 1:14

### 3.2.3 THE DEAD RISING FROM THEIR TOMBS

It is written in the Bible that in the Last Days the dead will rise from their graves:

With the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. . . the dead in Christ will rise first. —*1 Thess. 4:16*

We can understand the meaning of this prophecy by examining a similar event, when the dead rose from their tombs at the time of Jesus' death:

The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. —*Matt. 27:52-53*

This verse does not mean that the decomposed bodies of the saints literally rose up from their graves.<sup>55</sup> If the physical bodies of the saints of the Old Testament Age had actually risen from their tombs and appeared before many people in Jerusalem, they would certainly have testified to the people about Jesus, since they already knew that he was the Messiah. After hearing such testimony, who among the inhabitants of Jerusalem would not have believed in the crucified Jesus? Additionally, if the saints really had risen from their tombs in the flesh, then surely their deeds would have been recorded in the Bible. However, we find no such records.

What does the Scripture mean when it says that the bodies of the saints rose from their tombs? This record was made by people who could perceive the spirits of the past saints being resurrected spiritually and appearing on the earth.<sup>56</sup> This is much like Moses and Elijah who, as spirits, briefly appeared before Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.<sup>57</sup> What does "the tomb" symbolize? The realm of form spirits, the region of the spirit world where the spirits of the Old Testament saints were abiding, appears to be a dark place when viewed from Paradise, the realm of the spirit world opened up by Jesus. Hence, it is referred to as a tomb. The spirits of these saints had all lived in that lower region of the spirit world before they appeared to spiritually-attuned believers on the earth.

55. cf. Resurrection 2.3

56. Ibid.

57. Matt. 17:3

### 3.2.4 PEOPLE ON EARTH CAUGHT UP TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR

Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. —*I Thess. 4:17*

The “air” mentioned in this verse does not refer to the sky over our heads. In the Bible, “earth” is often a symbol for the fallen world under the sway of evil sovereignty, while “Heaven” is often a symbol for the sinless world of good sovereignty. The omnipresent God certainly dwells everywhere on the earth, yet we pray, “Our Father who art in heaven.”<sup>58</sup> Even though Jesus was born on the earth, he is referred to as “he who descended from Heaven, the Son of man.”<sup>59</sup> Meeting the Lord in the air means that the saints will receive the Lord in the world of good sovereignty when Christ comes again and restores the Kingdom of Heaven on earth by defeating the kingdom of Satan.

### 3.2.5 THE SUN DARKENED, THE MOON NOT GIVING LIGHT AND THE STARS FALLING FROM HEAVEN

In the Last Days, Jesus said, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven.”<sup>60</sup> How are we to understand this verse?

It is written that Joseph, the eleventh of the twelve sons of Jacob, had a dream:

Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?”  
—*Gen. 37:9-10*

When Joseph later became the prime minister of Egypt, his parents and brothers bowed down before him, as the dream had foretold. In his dream, the sun and moon symbolized the parents, while the stars symbolized their children. As will be explained, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the True Parents who came to give rebirth to humanity in place of Adam and Eve.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, in this prophecy from Matthew, the sun and

58. Matt. 6:9

59. John 3:13

60. Matt. 24:29

61. cf. Christology 4

moon represent Jesus and the Holy Spirit, while the stars represent the faithful believers who are their children. Elsewhere, Jesus is likened to the true light because he came as the incarnation of the Word and shone forth the light of truth.<sup>62</sup> Here, the sunlight means the light of the words of Jesus, and the moonlight means the light of the Holy Spirit, who came as the Spirit of truth.<sup>63</sup>

For the sun to be darkened and the moon to lose its light means that the New Testament Word given by Jesus and the Holy Spirit will lose its luster. How can the Word as revealed in the New Testament possibly lose its light? The Old Testament Word was eclipsed when Jesus and the Holy Spirit came and gave us the New Testament Word, which fulfilled the Old Testament Word.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, when Christ returns and gives the new truth<sup>65</sup> in order to fulfill the New Testament Word and build a new heaven and new earth,<sup>66</sup> the Word which he gave at his first coming will lose its light. It is said that the Word will lose its light because, with the coming of a new era, the period of the mission of the old truth will have lapsed.

The prophecy that the stars will fall from heaven signifies that in the Last Days many faithful Christian believers will make a misstep and fall from God's grace. At the time of Jesus, the leaders of the Jewish people were all yearning for the coming of the Messiah, but they met their downfall when they did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah and opposed him. Likewise, Christians who have been anxiously awaiting the return of Jesus are likely to make the same misjudgment and fall when he actually returns.<sup>67</sup>

Jesus asked, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"<sup>68</sup> On another occasion he said he would declare to devout believers, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers."<sup>69</sup> Jesus gave these warnings to the Christians of the Last Days because he foresaw that they would be likely to disbelieve and trespass against him at his Second Advent.

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62. John 1:9, 14

63. John 16:13

64. II Cor. 3:7-11

65. cf. Eschatology 5.1

66. Rev. 21:1

67. cf. Second Advent 2.2

68. Luke 18:8

69. Matt. 7:23

## SECTION 4

### THE LAST DAYS AND THE PRESENT DAYS

When Jesus was speaking to Peter of his fate, Peter asked him about John's future. Jesus replied, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"<sup>70</sup> Upon hearing this, the disciples thought Jesus would return during John's lifetime. Moreover, Jesus said to his disciples, "you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes"<sup>71</sup> and "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."<sup>72</sup> Based on these sayings, the disciples and many Christians since have believed that Jesus would return during their lifetime. They have been constantly haunted by a sense of urgency that the Last Days are at hand. This is because they fail to grasp the fundamental meaning of the Last Days.

We can deduce that today is in fact the Last Days by examining the various circumstances of the present age. We can recognize in these circumstances the restoration of the three great blessings, which God has purposed in His providence of restoration. As Jesus said:

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.  
—*Matt. 24:32-33*

#### 4.1 SIGNS OF THE RESTORATION OF THE FIRST BLESSING

The first blessing God gave to Adam and Eve was perfection of individual character.<sup>73</sup> In the modern world, there are various phenomena which indicate that God's providence to restore fallen people to their original state as perfected individuals is near its zenith.

First, we can observe that the spirituality of fallen people is being restored. We have already explained that when a person reaches perfection, he becomes completely one with God in heart and is able to build true relationships with others. Adam and Eve, though not quite perfect, were able to converse with God. When they fell from this state, they caused their descendants also to sink into ignorance of and insensibility to God. Gradually, the spirituality of fallen people has been reha-

70. John 21:22

71. Matt. 10:23

72. Matt. 16:28

73. cf. Creation 3.2

bilitated as they enjoy the merit of the age in the providence of restoration. In the Last Days, therefore, many faithful believers will acquire the ability to communicate with God, as was prophesied in the Bible:

In the last days . . . I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. —*Acts 2:17*

As we witness a profusion of spiritual phenomena taking place all around us, we can discern that the present era is the Last Days. We are entering an era when we can reach individual perfection and restore the first blessing of God.

A second sign that the first blessing is being restored in the present era can be seen in the historical trend toward the recovery of the freedom of the original mind. Due to the Fall, our original mind was shackled under the yoke of Satan, and we lost the freedom to come before God. In the present era, as people struggle for freedom at the cost of their lives, the zeal to gain true freedom has reached its height. This is an indication that we are now entering a new era in which we can attain individual perfection, long denied by Satan, and freely go before God.

A third sign of the renewal of the first blessing is the restoration of true human value. From the horizontal perspective, every person possesses equal value, but that does not do justice to his true worth. From the vertical perspective of Heaven, each individual possesses the loftiest cosmic value.<sup>74</sup> Human beings lost their original value because of the Fall. In the present era, as democratic ideals have flourished, people have been promoting the emancipation of slaves, the freedom of oppressed racial minorities, and the independence of small and weak nations. They are advocating human rights and equality between the sexes and among all peoples. More than ever before, people are zealously uplifting the value of the individual toward its original value. This demonstrates that we have arrived at the threshold of the Last Days, when fallen people can restore the first blessing of God.

A fourth sign that the first blessing is being renewed in the present age is the restoration of original, true love in fallen people. The world which has realized the ideal of God will be in the image of a perfected individual. Every person in that world is united with God vertically, and this forms the basis upon which they can naturally live in harmony with each other horizontally. Solidarity and empathy are attained only when people join together in the love of God. Due to the Fall, the vertical bond

74. cf. Christology 1

of love between God and people was broken, and this in turn caused the horizontal love among them to be severed. As a result, human history became one of perpetual conflict. In the present era, however, the philosophy of universal love has become widespread, and people are increasingly seeking for true, original love. This is more evidence that the present time is the eve of the Last Days, when we can restore God's first blessing and reach perfection of individual character grounded in the love of God.

## 4.2 SIGNS OF THE RESTORATION OF THE SECOND BLESSING

God's second blessing was for Adam and Eve to attain True Parenthood and bear and raise good children, forming a family, society and world where goodness reigns. However, Adam and Eve fell and became evil parents multiplying evil children; their descendants (all humanity) formed a world oppressed by evil. Ever since, God has been conducting a twofold providence, internal and external, to restore the sovereignty of goodness.

God has founded religions and worked through them to elevate people's spirituality by internally purifying people of satanic elements. At the same time, God has been cutting off Satan's influence externally through conflicts and wars. By separating Satan both internally and externally, the providence of restoration has been raising up good children who will one day be able to serve Christ when he comes as the True Parent. In this way, human history has been paving the way for the restoration of God's second blessing. Accordingly, we can deduce that the present era is the Last Days by examining the signs of the internal and external restoration of God's sovereignty. These are manifested as trends in the history of the development of cultural spheres and in the history of the rise and fall of nations, both of which are rooted in religion.

First, let us investigate how the history of the development of cultural spheres has progressed to the point when, in the present era, we have arrived at the threshold of the Last Days. God sends prophets and saints to fallen humanity to found religions. He works to develop them through the original minds of those who seek the good. In this way, God builds up cultural spheres based upon religions. Although many cultural spheres have emerged in the course of history, with the passage of time most of them either merged with or were absorbed by others. In the present age, we see a clear trend toward the formation of one global cultural sphere based on Christian ideals. As this trend progresses, all races and peoples are increasingly coming to stand side by

side as brothers and sisters under the love and guidance of Jesus Christ, thereby restoring the second blessing of God.

The main distinction between Christianity and other religions is that its purpose is to receive and honor the True Parents of humanity, through whom all people can be reborn as good children. In this way, Christianity should renew the world as the one global family which God purposed from the time of creation. This makes Christianity the central religion with the mission to fulfill the goal of the providence of restoration. In the present era, the world has been coalescing into one cultural sphere based on Christian ideals. As the world has been greatly influenced by the teachings of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who are the True Parents of humankind,<sup>75</sup> the way has been opened for all people to become godly children. This trend is evidence that God's second blessing is being restored. Thus, we can conclude with certainty that the present age is the Last Days.

Next, let us investigate how the history of the rise and fall of nations has been progressing toward the goal of restoring the sovereignty of good, thereby leading us into the Last Days. It is an error brought about by ignorance of the fundamental providence of God to regard the cause of struggles and wars as mere conflicts of interests and contests between ideologies. Humankind has suffered through a sinful history ever since the first human ancestors fell under the subjugation of Satan. However, as long as God's purpose of creation still stands, the purpose of this history must be to cut our ties with Satan and restore God's kingdom. If there were no wars or divisions in this fallen world, then the sovereignty of evil would continue forever and the world would never be restored. Therefore, God has worked His providence to restore the heavenly sovereignty by degrees. He sends prophets and saints to the fallen world to found religions and raise the level of morality. He establishes governments with higher standards of goodness which come to oppose and destroy regimes with lower standards of goodness. To fulfill the providence of restoration, therefore, conflicts and wars are unavoidable.

To summarize some of these issues, many of which will be treated more thoroughly in Part II, human history has progressed through the providential course of restoration through indemnity. Although there have been times when evil seemed to prevail, in the end the relatively evil social and political forces declined and were absorbed by the more godly forces. The wars which have shaped the rise and fall of nations are thus unavoidable during the course of the providence to re-establish the reign of good.

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75. cf. Christology 4

For example, in the Bible God ordered the Israelites to destroy the seven tribes of Canaan. When Saul disobeyed Him, leaving some of the Amalekites alive with their cattle, God severely punished him.<sup>76</sup> While on that occasion God commanded the Israelites to destroy the Gentiles, at another time, when the Israelites of the northern kingdom turned to evil, God delivered them into the hands of the Assyrians.<sup>77</sup> We must understand that God's only intention by these events was to obliterate the sovereignty of evil and restore the sovereignty of good. Therefore, fights between individuals within the same good sovereignty on the side of God are evil, because they can weaken and even cause the disintegration of the good sovereignty itself. On the other hand, wars conducted by a good sovereignty to destroy an evil sovereignty are good in that they further the fulfillment of the providence of restoration.

The history of conflicts among nations has served the purpose of cutting off Satan's ties to humankind. History has progressed to the point where God's side can now reclaim territories and wealth all over the world. The providence to reclaim people began from lone individuals called by God. God's foundation progressively expanded to families, societies and nations, and today has reached the world level. The providence to separate Satan began with the clan society and continued through stages of political and social development: feudalism, monarchy and, today, democracy. At present, our world is divided into two: the democratic world, which seeks to create societies on God's side, and the communist world, which has been establishing regimes on Satan's side.

In other words, although fallen human history began under the sovereignty of Satan, God's providence has brought about a progressive transformation of the hearts of people and has nurtured their original nature, which seeks goodness through religion, philosophy and ethics. This inner nurturing has inspired groups which seek a just rule to separate from the prevailing evil. This process of separation has culminated in the establishment of two opposing powers on the global level. These two sovereignties, with contrary purposes, can by no means peacefully coexist. As human history nears its consummation, they will surely arrive at the point of intersection, colliding internally in the realm of ideology. This inner conflict may spur them to fight external wars with military forces. At the conclusion of this conflict, Satan's sovereignty will perish forever and Heaven's sovereignty will be re-established as the one, eternal sovereignty of God. Today we are at this very point of intersection, when these two worlds are confronting each other in the final

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76. I Sam. 15:18-23

77. II Kings 17:23

battle. This is yet more evidence that the present era is the Last Days.

The flow of human history, in which good and evil are gradually separated, may be compared to muddy water. When muddy water is flowing slowly, the mud sinks to the bottom while the clear water rises to the top, until eventually the mud and water are completely separated. Human history is similar: with the passage of time, the evil sovereignty slowly sinks to destruction while the good sovereignty gradually ascends on the path of prosperity. After these two sovereignties intersect near the end of history, the good sovereignty will remain as God's eternal Kingdom, while the evil sovereignty will perish in eternal darkness.

The era when the paths of these good and evil sovereignties intersect is the Last Days. This is also the time when Adam and Eve's fall from the top of the growth stage will be restored through indemnity. All people in this era will suffer through great ideological confusion, much as the first human ancestors at the point of their temptation were utterly confused as to whom they should obey and what should guide their actions.

During the course of the providence of restoration, there were several occurrences of the Last Days, when the good and evil sovereignties came to the point of intersection. The times of Noah and Jesus, as mentioned earlier, were also the Last Days. Hence, they too were times when the two sovereignties intersected. Yet because people failed to accomplish their portion of responsibility, God's efforts to destroy the evil sovereignty were frustrated, and He had to begin once again the providence to separate good from evil. At the time of Jesus' return, the two sovereignties will intersect once more. The course of the providence progresses in a spiral path, moving forward in pursuit of the purpose of creation while events periodically repeat themselves in a circular fashion. Consequently, history has repeated itself, producing parallel periods.<sup>78</sup>

### 4.3 SIGNS OF THE RESTORATION OF THE THIRD BLESSING

Once Adam and Eve had attained perfection, they were to fulfill God's third blessing by gaining dominion over the natural world. Dominion over the natural world has two aspects: internal and external. Both these aspects of dominion were lost to humankind at the Fall, but we witness their restoration in the present era. This also suggests that the present era is the Last Days.

Internal dominion denotes dominion of the heart. A person who reaches perfection and comes fully to resonate with God in heart will experience God's Heart as his own reality. Hence, he will be able to

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78. cf. Periods 1

love the creation with the same love as that which emanates from God's Heart and appreciate its beauty with the same delight as God. This is the meaning of dominion of the heart. However, when human beings fell and could no longer experience God's Heart as a reality, they also could no longer relate to the creation with the same love as that which flows from God's Heart. God's providence of restoration through religion, philosophy, ethics and so forth, has gradually elevated the spirituality of fallen people toward God. In the modern world, there is evidence that people are regaining the worthiness to govern the creation through heart.

External dominion denotes proper mastery of the creation through science and technology. Had our first ancestors reached perfection and attained internal dominion over the creation, able to love it with the same heart as God, then their sensibility to the spiritual dimension of creation would have developed to the highest degree. This would have stimulated the rapid advancement of science, giving them external dominion over everything in the natural world. Humankind would have reached the stars long ago and harnessed the full potential of the universe. Economic progress would have accompanied the development of science and technology, creating a comfortable and pleasant living environment.

However, due to the Fall, people's spirituality declined, and they lost internal dominion over the natural world. Their spiritual sensibility became as dull as those of animals, and they descended to the level of primitive man. Consequently, they also lost external dominion over the natural world. Through God's providence of restoration, people's spirituality is being elevated and their internal dominion over the creation is being restored. As a result, their external dominion is also being renewed, leading to today's highly advanced science. Modern people have built an extremely comfortable and pleasant living environment through the economic progress that has accompanied scientific development. Fallen people have thus been restoring their dominion over the universe, advancing toward the re-establishment of God's third blessing. Observing this, we are assured that the present era is the Last Days.

To summarize, the world's cultural spheres are converging toward one global cultural sphere based on one religion. Concurrently, nations are moving toward forming an apparatus for international governance, having progressed from the League of Nations to the United Nations. Today, people are envisioning plans for a world government. In the sphere of economics, the world is moving in the direction of establishing

one international market. Highly developed transportation and communication technology have overcome the separation of time and space. People today can travel and communicate with each other almost as if they were all living in the same village. People of all races, from East and West, can meet with one another as easily as if they were members of a large family. People on all six continents are crossing the oceans seeking friendship and brotherly love. However, a family can be formed only when there is a father and a mother; only then can true brotherly love arise. Only when Christ comes again as the Parent of humanity will all people join together in one great family and live harmoniously in the global village.

As these events unfold, we may know that today is surely the Last Days. There is yet one final gift that history must present to humanity: it is the cosmic teaching which can bind together all the strangers of the global village into one family through the love and guidance of the same parents.

## SECTION 5

### THE LAST DAYS, THE NEW TRUTH AND OUR ATTITUDE

#### 5.1 THE LAST DAYS AND THE NEW TRUTH

Fallen people have been overcoming their internal ignorance by enlightening their spirituality and intellect with “spirit and truth”<sup>79</sup> through religion. “Truth” may be divided into two types: internal truth as taught by religion, which helps people overcome internal ignorance, and external truth as obtained through science, which helps people overcome external ignorance. Accordingly, we can discern two aspects within the intellect: the internal intellect, awakened by internal truth, and the external intellect, awakened by external truth. Religions develop as the internal intellect pursues internal truth, while science advances as the external intellect pursues external truth.

“Spirit” in this context denotes the inspiration of Heaven. Cognition of a spiritual reality begins when it is perceived through the five senses of the spirit self. These perceptions resonate through the five physical senses and are felt physiologically. Cognition of truth, on the other hand, arises from the knowledge gleaned from the physical world as it is perceived directly through our physiological sense organs. Cognition thus takes place through both spiritual and physical processes.

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79. John 4:23

Human beings become complete only when their spirit self and physical self are unified. Hence, the experience of divine inspiration gained through spiritual cognition and the knowledge of truth obtained through physical cognition should become fully harmonized and awaken the spirituality and intellect together. It is only when the spiritual and physical dimensions of cognition resonate together that we can thoroughly comprehend God and the universe.

God thus assists ignorant, fallen people to elevate their spirituality and enlighten their intellect through spirit and truth. By these means, God conducts His providence to restore people to the original state before the Fall. In the course of history, people's spiritual and intellectual levels have gradually been elevated due to the merit of the age in the providence of restoration. Hence, the quality of spiritual experience and the depth of religious and scientific knowledge have risen accordingly.

Spirit and truth are unique, eternal and unchanging. However, the degree and scope of their teaching and the means of their expression will vary from one age to another as they restore humankind from a state of utter ignorance. For example, in the age prior to the Old Testament, when people were still unenlightened and could not directly receive the Word of truth, God commanded them to make sacrificial offerings as a substitute for the Word.<sup>80</sup> In the course of time, the spirituality and intellect of human beings were elevated to the point when, in Moses' day, God granted them the Law, and at the time of Jesus He gave the Gospel. Jesus made it clear that his words were not the truth itself; rather, he declared that he himself was "the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>81</sup> Jesus was the incarnation of the truth. His words were just a means by which he expressed himself. Thus, the scope and depth of Jesus' words and the method of his teaching varied according to whom he was speaking.

In this sense, we must understand that the verses in the Bible are only one means of expressing the truth and are not the truth itself. The New Testament is but an interim textbook given to enlighten the people of two thousand years ago, whose spiritual and intellectual levels were far lower than today. The modern, scientific-minded thirst for the truth cannot be satisfied by expressions of truth which are limited in scope and couched in symbols and parables aimed specifically at instructing the people of an earlier age. For modern, intellectual people to be enlightened in the truth, there must appear another textbook of higher and richer content, with a more scientific method of expres-

80. cf. Restoration 1.2.1

81. John 14:6

sion. We call this the new truth. This truth, as discussed previously,<sup>82</sup> must be able to reconcile science and religion as one united undertaking in order to overcome the internal and external aspects of people's ignorance.

Let us examine some other reasons a new expression of truth must appear. The Bible, as was noted, is not the truth itself, but rather is a textbook teaching the truth. It renders important parts of the truth in symbols and in parables. Since these are open to various interpretations, there have arisen numerous disagreements among believers, causing them to divide into many denominations. The primary cause of denominational divisions lies in the character of the Bible, not in the people. The strife between denominations will only grow more intractable unless a new truth emerges which can elucidate the symbols and parables obscuring the essential truths of the Bible. Without this new truth, God's providence, which comes through the unification of Christianity, can never reach its goal. This is why Jesus promised that in the Last Days he will give us the new Word of truth:

I have said this to you in figures; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father.  
—*John 16:25*

Due to the disbelief of the people of his time, Jesus died on the cross without being able to teach all that was in his heart. As he said, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"<sup>83</sup> What is more, Jesus added, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now,"<sup>84</sup> disclosing how sorrowful he was about the inability of even his closest disciples to receive all that he wanted to share.

Nevertheless, the words that Jesus left unspoken will not remain forever a secret, but one day will be divulged through the Holy Spirit as a new expression of truth. As Jesus said:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. —*John 16:13*

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82. cf. Introduction

83. John 3:12

84. John 16:12

Moreover, it is written:

I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. —*Rev. 5:1*

The words that Jesus wanted to give us are written down and sealed in this very scroll. When John wept because he could not find anyone worthy to open the scroll and read it in heaven, on earth or under the earth, one of the elders said, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”<sup>85</sup> The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, signifies Christ. The day must come when Christ will open the seven seals of the scroll, whose contents have long remained secret to humankind, and reveal to the faithful the words of the new truth. This is why it is written, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”<sup>86</sup> It is also prophesied that in the Last Days:

I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. —*Acts 2:17*

For all these reasons, we can expect the appearance of a new expression of truth in the Last Days.

## 5.2 OUR ATTITUDE IN THE LAST DAYS

When we examine the progress of history in the providence of restoration, we find that a new dispensation begins when the old dispensation is about to end. Accordingly, the beginning of the new overlaps the conclusion of the old; As darkness falls on the old history, the new history is already dawning. At such a time, the good and evil sovereignties, which had their origins at the same point yet pursued contrary purposes and have each borne their fruits on the world level, come to the point of intersection. Hence, those who live in this period suffer internally from anxiety, fear and confusion due to the absence of a guiding ideology or philosophy. They suffer externally from strife and battles fought with fearsome weapons. In the Last Days, disasters and devastation will abound, as Jesus said, “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”<sup>87</sup>

85. *Rev. 5:3-5*

86. *Rev. 10:11*

87. *Matt. 24:7*

In the Last Days, it is inevitable that such devastation take place in order to vanquish the power of evil and erect the rule of good. In the midst of such wretchedness, God without fail will establish the center of the emerging good sovereignty in order to usher in a new age. Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus were among those whom God raised up as the central figures of their respective new eras. Today, at this historical transition period, we must find the person whom God has designated as the central figure of the new dispensation in order that we might participate in this new age and give honor to God's wishes.

The providence of the new age does not begin on the ashes of the old age. On the contrary, the new age sprouts and grows amidst the final phases of the old age and comes into conflict with that age. Accordingly, it is difficult for a person steeped in the old tradition to understand or accept the new providence. This is why the saints and sages leading the dispensation of a new age were often persecuted and martyred as victims of the old age. Jesus, for example, who inaugurated the New Testament Age, came at the close of the Old Testament Age in such a way as to bewilder the faithful adherents of the Mosaic Law. He was ostracized by the Jewish people and eventually crucified. This is why Jesus said, "New wine must be put into fresh wineskins."<sup>88</sup>

Jesus is to come again at the close of the New Testament Age. He will give us the new truth with which to found a new age, signified by the Bible's vision of a new heaven and new earth.<sup>89</sup> Just as Jesus at his first coming was derided by the Jews as one possessed by Beelzebul,<sup>90</sup> he will similarly be persecuted by the Christians when he comes again. Jesus therefore prophesied that at his Second Advent, "he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."<sup>91</sup> At this historical transition period, those who are comfortably entrenched in the ways of the old age will surely face judgment, along with the old age.

Fallen people's spiritual sensibility is extremely dull. Hence, they generally tend to adhere strictly to the letter of the truth in their efforts to follow God's providence. Such people cannot readily adjust themselves to the dispensation of the new age, even though the providence of restoration is moving toward it. They are generally too strongly attached to the outdated perspective provided by the doctrines of the old age. This is well illustrated by the case of the Jewish people of Jesus' day who were so attached to the Old Testament that they could not

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88. Luke 5:38

89. Rev. 21:1-7

90. Matt. 12:24

91. Luke 17:25

respond to Jesus' call to open a new chapter of the providence. On the other hand, those believers who receive divine inspiration through prayer are able to grasp spiritually the providence of the new age. Even though this may put them at odds with the doctrines of the old age, they will still respond to the promptings of the spirit and follow the calling of the new providence. Among the disciples of Jesus, there was not one who was overly attached to the Old Testament Scriptures. Rather, they all responded to the spiritual experiences which they could sense through their inner minds. In the Last Days, people who lead an ardent life of prayer or who live by their conscience will feel intense anxiety in their hearts. This is because in their hearts they vaguely sense a spiritual calling and want to follow the providence of the new age, yet they have not come in contact with the new truth which can guide them to act accordingly. These are the chosen ones who, once they hear the new truth, will be awakened simultaneously in their spirits and intellects by spirit and truth. They will then fully understand God's providential needs concerning the new age and will volunteer with great enthusiasm and delight.

We who are alive today are living in the Last Days. We should cultivate a humble heart and make the utmost effort to receive divine inspiration through prayer. We should not be strongly attached to conventional concepts, but rather should direct ourselves to be receptive to the spirit, in order that we may find the new truth which can guide us to the providence of the new age. When we come across this truth, we should ascertain whether it leads us to become one with Heaven's guidance. We should examine ourselves as to whether or not genuine, heavenly bliss springs forth abundantly from the depths of our soul. Only in this way can we, the seekers in the Last Days, discover the path to true salvation.

**Chart 1: The Unfolding Manifestation of God's Word  
in the Creation of the Universe and the Providence of Restoration**

