WHY AN “EVERLASTING” GOSPEL?

The gospel has been presented to fallen humanity ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden. Genesis 3:15 promised that the seed of the woman (Christ) would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan) and free humanity from his power and tyranny. And clearer light on the gospel has been continually unfolding through the centuries. After the death and resurrection of Christ, greater revelations of the gospel were given to God’s people. The apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 3:4-5, “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

The gospel, which is described as the power of God unto salvation in Romans 1:16 is the theme which permeates the whole new testament. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 it is called the “glorious” gospel of Christ. All the apostles were committed to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. Yet the gospel which they preached is never designated as the “everlasting” gospel. Not until we come to the Three Angel’s message of Revelation 14 do we read of the “everlasting” gospel. There John saw “another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Why is this end-time gospel called the “everlasting” gospel? Why is there a distinction between the gospel presented before 1844 and that which began to be proclaimed after 1844? There must be a reason for this distinction.

The gospel before 1844 did do a wonderful work of delivering people from the powers of darkness and slavery to sin. It did a marvelous transformation in the lives of people, making them as lights shining out in the darkness and misconceptions that were keeping people in ignorance of God. But it did not make the gospel converts secure from falling back into their old ways and losing their hold on eternal life. Even some of Paul’s converts and close associates apostatized. In 2 Timothy 4:10 he write of Demas who “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.” And the warnings were given, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Paul also faced a serious apostasy in the Galatian churches. They had departed from the true gospel into a false gospel, which caused him great concern. He wrote to them, saying, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” The Bible is replete with warnings that there would come apostasies and departures from the faith, especially in the last days. That has been a peril existing among believers all through the time of the preaching of the gospel before 1844. But that is not always going to be the case.

After the great disappointment in 1844, those who remained faithful and held on to their faith became the church of Philadelphia. This is one of the seven churches which receives no reproof from Christ, only encouragement and promise of a glorious future. They were sent a most significant message saying, “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Revelation 3: 7-8. Early Writings p. 42 describes what that door is which was opened for the first time.

“This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.”

The open door to the most holy place offered to God’s people a new dimension of understanding and experience in the process of redemption. With that greater light there was opened to them the possibility of a spir-
itual experience which would make them eternally secure from falling back into the ranks of Satan. The glorious promise made to the church of Philadelphia was that they were to become the most honored of any group of believers ever to walk on planet earth. Christ’s message to those who had entered the open door was “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” Revelation 3:12.

This verse is describing the 144,000 depicted in Early Writings, p. 15. “The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name.” We see here that the 144,000 have the Father’s name and the name of the New Jerusalem and also Jesus new name written on their foreheads. But there is one other significant promise made to the 144,000. Christ has promised to make them “a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” What is the significance of the words, “he shall go no more out?” It doesn’t mean the 144,000 are confined to the temple erected in their honor on Mt. Zion.

A temple in the Bible represents a place where God dwells. God told Moses to build Him a sanctuary “that I may dwell among them.” When David exclaimed in Psalm 23:6 that “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” he was simply stating his desire and purpose to always abide in God’s presence, to abide in Him who invites His people to “Abide in me and I in you” John 15:4. When Christ promised the 144,000 that “he shall go no more out” it was a promise to make them eternally secure from falling away from Him and being separated from Him through sinning again. That is one of the great blessings that results when Christ blots out the sins of His people in the investigative judgment. That is why the announcement that “the hour of His judgment is come” in Revelation 14:6-7 is called the “everlasting” gospel rather than just “the gospel.” Its results will be everlasting.

5 Testimonies p. 475 shows how and when this marvelous work of redemption and eternal security is accomplished for those who will become the 144,000. “As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, “Take away the filthy garments” from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” The spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices.”

That was the high destiny open to the believers after the disappointment in 1844. Unfortunately, they did not cherish the light shining upon them from the open door. They did not advance in that light so that by 1852, just eight years after 1844, they had retrograded spiritually to become the Laodicean church. See EW p. 107. They had become blind to the wonderful benefits that were offered them from the open door to the most holy place. And the church hasn’t recovered from the spiritual blindness that overtook it shortly after 1844.

In 1888, Christ made an attempt to once again direct the attention of His people to the open door, Speaking of that message, Testimonies to Ministers p. 92 tells us that “Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. . . .” Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts
above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can
never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. . . . The efficacy of the blood of Christ was to be present-
eted to the people with freshness and power, that their faith might lay hold upon its merits. “

Christ’s atoning work before the mercy seat in the most holy place is described in the next sentence: “As the
high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat, while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended
before God, so while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ’s atoning blood, our prayers are to
ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour’s character. . . Every sin acknowledged before God
with a contrite heart, He will remove “ (blot out).

Tragically, the church in 1888 did not respond to the message from heaven. They did not know the day of
their visitation. They failed to enter the open door. Note this passage from R&H Feb. 25, 1890 written a little
over a year after the Minneapolis conference.

“ Christ has made rich promises in regard to bestowing the Holy Spirit upon his church, and yet how little
these promises are appreciated! We are not called to worship and serve God by the use of the means em-
ployed in former years. God requires higher service now than ever before. He requires the improvement of
the heavenly gifts. He has brought us into a position where we need higher and better things than have ever
been needed before. The slumbering Church must be aroused, awakened out of its spiritual lethargy, to a re-
alization of the important duties which have been left undone. The people have not entered into the holy
place, (most holy place) where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for his children. We need the Holy
Spirit in order to understand the truths for this time; but there is spiritual drought in the churches, and we
have accustomed ourselves to be easily satisfied with our standing before God. We say that we are rich and
increased with goods and have need of nothing, while we are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind,
and naked. “

It is unfortunate that those higher and better things have never yet been realized by the church. The everlast-
ing gospel with its promise of eternal security from the power of sin and Satan was despised and rejected and
never allowed to accomplish what Christ intended. Elder A.G. Daniells, after reviewing what happened in
1888 wrote these words of regret. “ Who can tell what would have come to the church and the cause of God
if that message of Righteousness by Faith had been fully and wholeheartedly received by all at that time?
And who can estimate the loss that has been sustained by the failure of many to receive that message? Eterni-
ty alone will reveal the whole truth regarding this matter “ Christ Our Righteousness, p. 40.

Today, Christ is again inviting His people to enter by faith through the open door to receive the measureless
blessings offered through the everlasting gospel. Those who respond to His gracious offer will become the
Church Triumphant that will receive the power of the latter rain and sound forth the loud cry which will
gather out of Babylon all the faithful souls. They will become the ‘fit man’ who will lead away the scape goat
to his ultimate doom and bring the great controversy to a final end. The promise of Romans 16:20 will soon
be fulfilled when the everlasting gospel has done its work. “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under
your feet shortly.”

Hebrews 10: 35-39 tells us, “ Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of re-
ward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but
if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto
perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. “