

Essential Guidance for Surviving the End Time

By Clinton Wahlen

Too often as Adventists, we skip over the early chapters of Daniel and Revelation¹ in order to get to the “more important parts” when in fact these early chapters are foundational in understanding how to be ready for the final events, which seem closer now than ever before, with governments toppling down, earthquakes increasing in power and frequency, tsunamis, nuclear worries, uncertainty, fear.

Jesus warned of such things with remarkable clarity and precision: “there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:25-28).

In the early chapters of the book of Daniel we see faith being tested and people occupying strategic positions as witnesses to the true God. In chapter one, Daniel and his three friends are tested but refuse to defile themselves with the food and wine of Babylon, and God rewards their faith (Dan 1:8-17). They had purposed in their hearts to remain faithful in “little” things. Next, Daniel and his friends together and separately face larger tests of faith, demonstrating the indispensable role of prayer (Dan 2:17-18; 6:10-11) and the importance of true worship (Dan 3:16-18; 5:22-23). In the first three chapters of Revelation, God’s people, represented by the seven churches, face similar tests in connection with food (Rev 2:14, 20), worship (Rev 2:4; 3:8), and their relationship to truth (Rev 2:24-25; 3:8-9; cf. Dan 12:9-10). These letters provide indispensable counsel from Jesus regarding how our faith can survive the tests ahead.

Like Daniel and Revelation, the early chapters of *The Great Controversy* have a similar purpose. Church history becomes a guide for surviving the end time.

Here are just a few vital lessons drawn from the opening chapters of these three important end-time books:

1. Our resolve must be developed before the test comes. While prophecy is sometimes predictive, the predictive element is given not to satisfy our curiosity about the future but because we need to know the tests that will come in order to prepare for them. Like Daniel and his friends we should anticipate them and resolve in advance how we will respond (Dan 1:8).

2. Deception may arise even from within the church. Jesus warns the seven churches about those who claim to be something they are not (Rev 2:9; 3:9) and others who try to deceive those in the church through false doctrine and false prophecy (Rev 2:14-15; 3:20). We need to be able to distinguish truth from error.

3. We must study the Bible for ourselves. We can learn our present duty only through prayerful searching of the Bible for ourselves (see Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 93, 164). “The Holy Scriptures have treasures of truth that are revealed only to the earnest, humble, prayerful seeker” (ibid., 69). “It expands the mind, sharpens the perceptions, and ripens the judgment” (ibid., 94).

God has shown us how to survive the end time through the lives of His people in past ages. We can find no better guide for these times than the opening chapters of Daniel, Revelation, and *The Great Controversy*.

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¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 112-15, urges study of these books as especially pertinent to our time.

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