

## Invading the Kingdom of Satan

This morning, I'd like to talk about the people who were the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, because the work they did and the things they suffered are pretty much what God's people in these last days will do and suffer just before Jesus makes His way back to this sin cursed earth. And I know there are a lot of Christians today who believe they're going to be whisked away in a secret rapture before the time of trouble comes, but that is not the testimony of Scripture. We will be saved out of the time of trouble, but not from it. So, preparation for that great day is of utmost importance as we look forward to "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." **(Titus 2:13)**

Now, I hope you don't mind, but we're going to go through a little history this morning in order to understand the difference between God's church and Satan's counterfeit and the two streams are very much traceable from the beginning of creation right up to today. But we're not going to go as far back as Cain and Abel but begin with the New Testament church and follow these two streams right on down to our own day.

I don't know about you, but when I was in school I didn't care much for history. In fact, I didn't care much for school, but when I became a Christian 53 years ago, I wish that I had paid more attention in class so I didn't have to learn some of these things later on in life. Funny how that works, isn't it? So pay attention if you are a young person, and learn as much as you can now, and if you do you'll be ahead of the game when you get older, that is, if you are able to steer clear of all the falsehoods being taught today. Just make sure you make the Bible a big part of your curriculum, that way you'll be able to detect any falsehood that comes your way.

During the dark ages of papal supremacy that began in the early part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the light of truth was not totally extinguished. The papacy did a good job of trying to keep the truth from people, but there were faithful souls, as there always has been, that were witnesses for God during this time of darkness who clung to Christ and Him alone as the only mediator between God and man. They held the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, and honored the true seventh-day Sabbath when the papal Sunday counterfeit was being promoted as the so called "Christian sabbath." But there's only one problem with Sunday as a sacred day, and it's a big one, it simply can't be sustained by the word of God. It couldn't during the dark ages, and neither can it be

to this day no matter how some people are trying to bend over backward to try to prove the unprovable.

By the way, this study today is not focusing on the seventh day Sabbath for the most part, but in my mind the best argument in favor of keeping it today is the fact that God wrote the ten commandments with His own finger on tables of durable stone. And if He wrote it with His own finger, He would have to do it in just as miraculous of a way as when He first wrote it in order to make it clear that it was He who changed it. Does that make sense? God did not authorize even the prophets to write the ten commandments down on papyrus at the beginning like they did the rest of the Bible, He did it Himself, and in **Malachi 3:6** He said, "I change not." And **Titus 1:2** says God "cannot lie." It doesn't say He doesn't lie, but He cannot, it's impossible, because He's a God of truth. But we know someone who does lie, and someone who cannot tell the truth, don't we? In **John 8:44** Jesus said it's the devil who is the father of lies. So we know from Jesus' own lips that the devil has to be the one who is behind any attempt to change His law, because God's law is not susceptible to alteration of any kind, and to believe that it is, is to admit that God made a mistake. And if we're foolish enough to believe that, then we have no foundation on which to stand and salvation itself would be questionable.

The papacy, is responsible for attempting to change God's law. And when I say the papacy, I want you to know that I believe there are many Catholics who are true Christians and are living up to all the light they have. But they should understand that Catholicism is a false system of religion with a sinful man at the head of it that they are following and supporting. And I hope and pray that they will see the importance of following the only one infallible man that has ever lived on this planet, and that's the man Christ Jesus.

But it's an undeniable fact, as we shall see, that it was the papacy that accused these faithful men and women we're going to study about today, of being heretics, of criticizing their motives, of vilifying their characters, of misrepresenting their words, and killing some of them, yet these faithful souls stood firm and maintained their faith in the word of God; and that sacred heritage has been handed down to us today, and the world owes a great deal to these godly men and women for their willingness to lose everything in order to remain true to the God of heaven and to their Bible educated conscience.

So who are these people I'm referring to this morning? If you haven't already figured it out, it's the Waldenses. Only a few traces of their existence through the historical records can be found today, and it's mostly because of the accusations of the papacy who persecuted them. That's where we get the best glimpse of their faithfulness, but just because their history may be limited doesn't mean that their contribution to the Christian faith is small, and certainly their names are registered in the Lamb's book of life, and we'll be able to find out all about them when we get to heaven if we remain faithful to the end.

And don't forget, it's not enough to have our names registered in the Lamb's book of life, because it can be blotted out, says Moses in **Exodus 32:32**. We get our names registered there when we are justified by faith by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf, and just as importantly, it's retained there as we are sanctification by faith, as it says in **Acts 26:18**. And so, faith cannot be taken out of the equation. The good news of salvation is a beautiful thing, but we have to realize that God will not save us apart from our own choice, and it's a choice that must be made daily. Just as we must choose to accept Christ and be forgiven, so we must choose to be made holy, because that's what sanctification is. And as we do this by faith day by day, God has pledged Himself to mold our characters more and more after the likeness of Christ. And when He has a people that He can trust to maintain that kind of relationship with Him, then He will come to claim them as His own.

Now let me back that up with an inspired statement. In *Christ's Object Lessons, page 69* it says, "Christ is waiting **(He is what? Waiting. That means something is holding Him up, which also means it's not His fault that He hasn't come back yet)** "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **(Not in a denominational organization, but in a people made up of individual faithful souls)** When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."

So, what is Jesus waiting for, and why has He not yet come? It's because His character has not yet been perfectly reproduced in the final generation that will live upon this earth. The question is, are we that final generation? I hope so; I pray so. But, if a people like this is not found soon, guess what? It will have to be another generation. And I know that sounds discouraging to think about, but it wouldn't be the first time there has been a delay.

In ***Manuscript 4, 1883***, it says, “Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. . . . It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. . . . It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”

Then 18 years later in ***Letter 184, 1901***, it says, “We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.” And it’s been 125 years since that was written. So obviously there’s still a problem!

So again, is Jesus going to find a people that will perfectly reflect His character before this generation passes off the scene? Only if we allow God to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure and to proclaim the third angel’s message like we’ve been told to do. Friends, it’s plain to see that this world is ripe for destruction and the signs of the times are screaming at us today to get ready, get ready, get ready. And will we be that final generation is the question. We can actually move the hand of God if we so choose, or we can continue to make Him wait. Which is it going to be?

As we study history, especially through the dark ages from 538 AD to 1798, it’s always been the policy of the papacy to do everything in its power to totally obliterate every trace of dissent from her teachings. When she was in control, everything the church of Rome considered heresy, or any expression of doubt or disagreement one might have regarding Rome’s authority, was enough to forfeit their lives. The papacy did its best during her 1260 year reign of terror to destroy every record of her persecutions toward those that disagreed with her; torturing them until death was preferred to living, burning them at the stake and burning up their writings if they dared hold differing views about what the Bible teaches, and it’s estimated that there were somewhere between 50 and 68 million people that were snuffed out as a result, and the Waldenses being included in that number.

We take it for granted today, at least in America, that we have a Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, but that has not always been the case. In fact, that was a rare thing as you study the various world powers down through the centuries. So we ought to be thankful and take advantage of it while it lasts, because Bible prophecy is clear that one day soon that freedom is going to go away as the papal beast and apostate Protestantism seek to remove these sacred rights that were given us by our Creator.

As soon as the papacy obtained power during those dark ages, it did everything it could to crush out anyone that refused to acknowledge its supremacy, and one after another, both of individuals and of churches, eventually submitted to papal authority, except for this people that became known as the Waldenses, and eventually even they succumbed to a large extent except for a very small remnant.

England was a place where true Christianity had taken root early on, and during the first few centuries after Christ, they were relatively free from Roman apostasy. But finally, the Saxons, or what we today call the Germans, invaded England, and that's where the term Anglo-Saxon comes from, and eventually many of the pagan beliefs of the Saxons began to gain control in England along with the papacy, keeping in mind that this was long before Martin Luther and the other Reformers came along. And what did the papacy do about the pagan beliefs of the Saxons? Well, they added many of them to their own pagan beliefs. They made converts of the Saxons by incorporating some of their beliefs and practices into their own, and as a result, the Waldenses that determined to remain faithful to the word of God were forced to flee to the mountains, yet God was with them and the truth they possessed was shared with all who would listen.

But finally Rome found these Christians in their mountain hideouts, and those that were able to escape had to flee persecution once again, finding refuge in places like Scotland and Ireland, and as a result, these countries and the surrounding areas received the gospel from them as well.

You know, sometime we tend to think that God has lost control when certain things like this happen to His people, but in reality it turns out to be the way of spreading of the gospel and for the salvation of souls. And again, those of us who will live to see the Lord come are going to go through a similar experience, and if we happen to be among

that number, we shouldn't panic or lose faith, because He is faithful who has promised to keep us in our hour of temptation. (**Revelation 3:10**)

So, as we try to look at this church history from the 30,000 foot level, we can see that God was indeed in control and nothing happens that He is not aware of, and He will work things out to His honor and glory if we will but cooperate with Him. And so, as we look at this history, there were places beyond the reach of Rome where these Christians, for hundreds of years, remained almost totally free from papal corruption, and chief among them were the Waldenses.

However, even though for centuries the churches of the Waldenses did maintain their faith and their independence, the time finally came when their freedom came to an end as Rome insisted upon their submission, and after a time most of the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. But again, there were a few who refused to yield to the authority of the pope and were determined to maintain their allegiance to the God of heaven, regardless of the cost. And they preserved the purity and simplicity of their faith, and were forced once again to leave their homes and raise the banner of truth in foreign lands. And just as God was testing and preparing the Waldenses to accomplish His purpose in the earth centuries ago, He's doing the same thing today for those who are willing to surrender all to Jesus. So let's not complain when things go hard, but cooperate with God, because He's preparing us to give the last message of mercy this world will ever hear in the third angel's message of **Revelation 14:9-12**.

As you can imagine, the faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldenses, was in marked contrast to the false doctrines taught by the church of Rome, because their beliefs were founded upon the word of God, but not so with Rome. As I already mentioned, the church of Rome was basically baptized paganism, and it only got worse as it accepted the pagan beliefs of the Saxons in order to gain converts. And so, the Waldensian church that had to flee into the wilderness, as described in **Revelation 12**, was God's true church, and the church of Rome being Satan's counterfeit.

There was one issue however, that I already touched upon, between the church of Rome and the church in the wilderness as to why they had to be constantly on the move in order to be able to worship the God of heaven according to the dictates of

conscience, and what do you suppose that one issue was? It was the seventh-day Sabbath.

In *The Great Controversy, page 65* it says, “Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the papal power cast down the truth to the ground. The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honor the Sunday as a holy day. Amid the prevailing error and superstition, many, even of the true people of God, became so bewildered that while they observed the Sabbath, they refrained from labor also on the Sunday. But this did not satisfy the papal leaders. They demanded not only that Sunday be hallowed, but that the Sabbath be profaned; and they denounced in the strongest language those who dared to show it honor. It was only by fleeing from the power of Rome that any could obey God’s law in peace.”

And we should know also that history is going to be repeated before the great controversy between Christ and Satan is over. It’s not going to be good enough to satisfy the papacy and apostate Protestantism for seventh-day Sabbath keepers to simply refrain from work on Sunday, but we will be forced to denounce and desecrate the Sabbath or else, and we know what “or else” means, don’t we? **Revelation 13:15** speaks of a death decree for those who refuse the demands of the beast and his image. And the other thing that created problems between the Waldenses and the papacy was the fact that the Waldenses were among the first of those in Europe to obtain a correct translation of the Scriptures from the manuscripts that God protected, as opposed to the manuscripts used by the papacy that forms the basis for their translation of the Bible, and many others that came afterward, and are still coming out today.

Long before the Protestant Reformation, the Waldenses were in possession of the Bible in their own language, which as you search it out, was a form of Latin called “Old Occitan”. And so, some of these Waldensian Christians must have had the ability to translate from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into their native tongue, and it’s the Hebrew and Greek that forms the pure stream I mentioned earlier, which are also the same manuscripts that the King James Bible is translated from.

Now why do I say that the Hebrew and Greek is the pure stream of manuscripts? I say

that for two reasons. #1, in *The Great Controversy, page 65* it says, the Waldenses “had the truth unadulterated,” which “rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution.” And #2, in *Letter 32, 1899* Sister White says, “God had faithful witnesses to whom He committed the truth, and who preserved the Word of God. The manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have been preserved through the ages by a miracle of God.”

And so, the Waldenses were some of the people early on who were the “faithful witnesses to whom God committed the truth,” and who preserved the His word, and the Hebrews did the same with the Old Testament, because in **Romans 3:2** the apostle Paul says, “unto them (**the Jews**) were committed the oracles of God,” and God’s “oracles” or His utterances are what the Hebrew prophets wrote. And so, what we want in a Bible today is the one that has been translated from the Hebrew and Greek and not from the Latin, because the Latin manuscripts have not “been preserved through the ages by a miracle of God,” which means that they have been adulterated, or have a mixture of truth and error. And when it comes to our eternal salvation my dear friends, we don’t want to be fooled by a mixture of truth and error, because that’s what defines what Babylon is.

And here’s another important point to keep in mind. While it’s true that the written word that was preserved by a miracle of God is to be revered and cherished for its vital importance to the welfare of Christ’s church, that word, in and of itself, is not the means of our salvation. Why do I say that? I say that because in **John 5:39, 40** Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, you “Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which (**do what?**) testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” And they didn’t come to Him, did they? Jesus said, you Jews search the Scriptures, the true Hebrew manuscripts, but you reject Me, the One those true Hebrew manuscripts point to.

You see, Jesus is the Living Word, and our salvation is complete in Him. You can have a perfect translation of the Scriptures and read it and study it and know it backward and forward, and you can still miss out on eternal life if you don’t accept and abide in the One those Scriptures point to, isn’t that true? Case in point: the Baptists are the biggest champions there are for the King James Bible, which is translated from those manuscripts that were “preserved by a miracle of God.” But they manage to teach all their Babylonian doctrines from it, don’t they? And because that’s true, we need more

than a perfect Bible. What we need along with that is the abiding presence of Jesus and the same Holy Spirit that inspired holy men of old to write it.

Friends, I became a Christian by experiencing justification by faith long before I knew anything about the Bible and those manuscripts that were preserved by a miracle of God. They became important to me later on as I began to study, and they have kept me from accepting error, but it was Jesus Himself, the Living Word, that saved me, and the written word has kept me on the straight and narrow that will lead me to the Kingdom of God as long as I remain faithful to what it says.

By the way, If you have Ellen Whites writing on your computer you probably won't find the statement where she says, "The manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have been preserved through the ages by a miracle of God." But if you have her Letters and Manuscripts that were released on July 16, 2015, that's where you'll find it.

Because the Waldenses had a faithful version of the Bible and studied it and through the power of the Holy Spirit obeyed it, they knew that the Church of Rome was the apostate Babylon of Revelation and declared it to be so at the peril of their lives. And so, the idea that the papacy is the Babylon mentioned in **Revelation 14, 17, and 18**, and the beast power of **Revelation 13** is nothing new, and yet today this seems like a foreign thought or a conspiracy theory to most Christians, and I have to wonder if this is due, at least in part, to the Biblical manuscripts endorsed by the papacy. Does that make sense? Seems logical to me that they would do everything they could to steer people away from that obvious conclusion.

But be that as it may, here's the big problem the Waldenses ran into: while under the constant pressure of the long continued persecution they faced, some began to compromise their faith, and little by little they began to yield some of the clear teachings in the word of God, much like what has been happening within Adventism over the past 70 years. But praise God a few of the Waldenses held fast the truth at all cost, and we must as well, and not compromise in the least degree what we know to be the truth. Because if you give the devil an inch, he will do what? He will take a mile.

And so, all through the dark ages of apostasy there were Waldensian Christians, even when their numbers were few, who denied Rome's ill-gotten supremacy by rejecting image worship as idolatry; by looking to Jesus and Him alone rather than to man; and by keeping the true Sabbath, and despite opposition and persecution they maintained their faith, even though many of them paid the ultimate price for doing so.

In *The Great Controversy, page 65* it says, “Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains—in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed—the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith.” And again I say praise God, because without their faithfulness down through the centuries, this world would be an even darker place than it is today.

So, now that we have a bit of a background about the Waldenses, let’s see how it applies to us as we watch the last movements being rapidly fulfilled right before our eyes today. And by the way, you’ve probably heard by now about President Trump’s proclamation to make the month of May 2026 “Jewish American Heritage Month” where on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of this past month, he encouraged Jewish Americans “and communities of all backgrounds” to honor the seventh-day Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, but there are a couple problems with that. #1, he refers to the Sabbath as a tradition of the Jews, which it isn’t, because it was instituted at the end of creation week long before there was a Jewish nation. According to **Mark 2:27** Jesus said, “The sabbath was made for man” (**or all mankind**) and not for a certain segment of the population. And #2, it sets a precedence that will make it much easier for the government to make another proclamation for people to keep Sunday as the so called “Christian sabbath” in the near future.

You see, government has no business messing or telling or suggesting to people how they should observe anything listed on the first table of the Decalogue, because that’s between God and the conscience of the individual. We don’t have time to go into it right now, but if you’ll go to my website at [gospel-workers.com](http://gospel-workers.com) and click on the “News” feed at the top right of the home page you can read this proclamation for yourself. But just know this, when the government begins to encourage people to worship on a certain day, even on the Seventh day, it can be a slippery slope from that point forward, and don’t let anyone convince you that there is no separation of church and state in the United States Constitution, because the First Amendment is clear as day that there is. And by the way, do I believe that President Trump understands where this is all going? No I don’t, he may have the best of intentions, but we’re told in *Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 452* that government leaders “who unite in the **(Sunday)** movement do not themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending.” But there is a movement that understands perfectly, and that’s the papacy, just ask the Waldenses.

In the book *Maranatha*, **page 272** Ellen White says, “During the night a very impressive scene passed before me. There seemed to be great confusion and the conflict of armies. A messenger from the Lord stood before me, and said, ‘Call your household. I will lead you; follow me.’ He led me down a dark passage, through a forest, then through the clefts of mountains, **(kind of like the Waldenses, right?)** and said, ‘Here you are safe.’ There were others who had been led to this retreat. The heavenly messenger said, ‘The time of trouble has come as a thief in the night, as the Lord warned you it would come.’” Then she goes on to say how God’s people will be protected during this time.

Also in *The Great Controversy*, **page 725** it says, “As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment-keepers shall withdraw the protection of government, and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, **(like Pilate did to Jesus)** the people of God will flee from the cities and villages, and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, **(referring to the Waldenses)** they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries, and will thank God for the ‘munitions of rocks.’” There are more similar statements like this that could be read, but I think you get the point.

We’re told that the Waldensian churches, in their purity and simplicity, resembled the church of apostolic times, and isn’t that what the remnant church is supposed to be in these last days? In fact we’re told in *The Great Controversy*, **page 464** that, “Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth **(that’s the 7 last plagues)** there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times.”

That’s the group I want to be in, how about you? Just before human probation closes, the same beliefs, the same fervor, the same dedication to the truth, and even the same kind of refuge will be experienced by the remnant church. Doesn’t the word remnant mean that the church in the last days will be cut from the same cloth as at the beginning? And again we’re not talking about any denomination here, but the church that’s described in *The Upward Look*, **page 315**. You should be familiar with this quote, but just in case you’re not, I’ll read it to you, and we would all do well not to forget it. “God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I

in the midst of them' (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church.

"Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides, let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness **(like the Waldenses experienced)**, in the city enclosed in prison walls. The glory of God has penetrated the prison walls, flooding with glorious beams of heavenly light the darkest dungeon. His saints may suffer, but their sufferings will, like the apostles of old, spread their faith and win souls to Christ and glorify His holy name. The bitterest opposition expressed by those who hate God's great moral standard of righteousness should not and will not shake the steadfast soul who trusts fully in God." And I say, Praise the Lord!

The Waldenses lived during the time when copies of the Bible were hand written, and as they went about here and there, they hid them in their clothes and discreetly handed them out to those they believed had a genuine interest, and to people that they believed wouldn't turn them in to church authorities, although I'm sure that happened every now and then and they paid a heavy price for doing so. But I think we have it a bit easier than they did today, don't you? It will be much more difficult in the near future than it is right now to distribute truth filled literature, so we better work while it's day, for the night is coming in which no man can work. And yet knowing this, many of us do next to nothing in the way of scattering truth filled literature like the leaves of autumn as we've been counseled to do. What would the Waldenses think of us when we have all the inspired information we could possibly want, while we sit on our hands and do nothing, or very little? But friends, all of us need to be doing something, and really there's no excuse to do nothing.

We should never forget that the spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. If our hearts have truly been renewed by the Holy Spirit, our very first impulse will be to bring to others a knowledge of the truth, unless we've lost our first love. The Waldenses believed that God required more of them than to just preserve the truth in its purity in their own churches and families, but that a solemn responsibility rested upon them to let their light shine to those who were in darkness. If for whatever reason we are unable to do something for the Lord because of health issues or whatever, we should at least help support those who are doing something, and in that way we will also be doing something and will be rewarded for doing so.

In *The Great Controversy, page 70* it says, Waldensian “ministers were trained as missionaries, everyone who expected to enter the ministry being required first to gain an experience as an evangelist. Each was to serve three years in some mission field before taking charge of a church at home. . . The youth who received ordination to the sacred office saw before them, not the prospect of earthly wealth and glory, but a life of toil and danger, and possibly a martyr’s fate.”

What if these kind of requirements were laid upon those graduating from the seminary at Andrews University today? I’m pretty sure there would be far less men taking courses to become pastors, don’t you? I’ve often thought that every would-be minister ought to be a literature evangelist for a short time and then see if they want to be ordained to the ministry. It would separate the men from the boys, don’t you think? The Waldensian ministers were not guaranteed a big fat pay check every month and medical benefits and retirement income, but had to work at some kind of trade or profession to support themselves and their families while they may or may not receive financial support from those they helped to understand the truth. We have it so easy today and yet we accomplish so little. We need to look to the sacrifice of these faithful Christians of old and get a little inspiration to do something to hasten the Lord’s return, because if we are not hastening that day, we are surely delaying it, and God help us if that’s the case. And I’m preaching to myself here. No matter how much I do I never feel like it’s enough, right? It’s nothing compared to what the Waldenses did and what the Lord has done for us.

Just like us today, I’m sure the Waldenses believed that the end of all things was at hand and that Jesus was coming soon. That’s the way it has always been among God’s people, even though we are separated from them by nearly 2000 years. They were deeply impressed by the Holy Spirit that they had a duty to make known to others the saving truths that had been revealed to them. They saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed in the Bible, and they found comfort, hope, and peace in believing in Jesus, and desired to shed this light upon those who were in darkness because of the errors of the papacy. And today with close to 1 ½ billion Catholics in the world, not counting other religions, we have a duty as well, and the task seems daunting I know, but when the time is right and God has a people prepared, the truth will go like fire in the stubble, and the Internet, I believe, will be one of the main tools the Lord will use to cause the truth to go viral in just a very short time.

Notice what it says in *The Great Controversy, page 612*, “The message **(the final warning proclaimed by the third angel)** will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, **(and what better way for that to happen than through the Internet and the news media and through the satellites orbiting in space?)** the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.” Praise the Lord!

During the dark ages the papacy taught the people back then, and they still teach the same today, that good works and giving money to the church and staying in the church will save them. But all this does is cause the people to look to themselves and yet find no relief from a guilty conscience because of their sins. Martin Luther experienced this same thing before he understood justification by faith when he tortured his own body and made long pilgrimages to Rome trying to obtain peace of conscience, and unfortunately many like him have gone to their graves without ever finding the peace Jesus offers, and because of this the papacy has much to answer for.

You know, I used to wonder if God was fair in not giving all people everywhere a chance to know the truth. But you know, I discovered something. In **Titus 2:11** there’s a wonderful promise about this that says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to **(how many men?)** to all men.” In other words, every person born into this world that has reasoning ability has had at least one opportunity somewhere along the way to know and accept the truth. Whether that’s through hearing the truth from another person, or reading in the Bible, or seeing God in the things of nature, everyone has had a chance. Most people have had many chances, including me, but everyone at least once. Otherwise God would not be a God of Justice.

The Waldenses longed to tell people about the truth and to point them to Jesus as their only hope of salvation. Not to Mary, not the pope or the priest, not by paying indulgences, not by good works outweighing the bad, but by faith in Christ alone. The Waldenses understood that the idea of good works atoning for the violation of God’s

law is based in falsehood. It was false then and it's false now! They also understood that it was Jesus who died as a sacrifice for their sins because as fallen human beings we can do nothing to recommend ourselves to God, and that the only foundation of the Christian's faith is in a crucified and risen Saviour, period!

In contrast, the teaching of the papacy has always been to make people think that the pope and his priests have to be invoked, because God was too stern and mean, and that they couldn't go directly to Him for forgiveness, and that even Jesus lacks sympathy with us in our fallen condition, and that He had to appeal to by His mother, who lies in the grave until the resurrection by the way, to beg her to beg Jesus to be merciful to us. But the Waldenses and their converts whose minds had been enlightened by the word of God did what they could to point these souls to Jesus as their loving Saviour, standing with outstretched arms and inviting all to come to Him with their burden of sin. That was their mission, and that's our mission today, and it has not changed.

Over and over again we read in the Spirit of Prophecy that proclaiming the third angel's message is to be our work and that we should allow nothing else to absorb our attention. And what is the message of the third angel? ***Review and Herald, April 1, 1890***, says it's "justification by faith in verity." Or that we can be pardoned for our sins through faith alone in Jesus Christ. That doesn't mean we can't talk about the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus and other important truths, but let's not forget that being pardoned through faith in Jesus is to be our focus. Once a person understands that and experiences that, the rest will come if they follow on to know the truth.

One of the main teachings of the Protestant Reformation, if you recall, is the priesthood of all believers, and that we don't need the pope or a priest, or Mary or anyone else to plead our case for us. We take it for granted today that we can go directly to God through Jesus Christ as our mediator, but because the people didn't have access to the word of God back then to learn these things, and the papacy did everything they could to make sure they didn't, in their ignorance they were forced to go to the priest. You've heard the old saying I'm sure, that knowledge is power, and that's especially true when it comes to our salvation.

In ***The Great Controversy, page 73*** it says, "Eagerly did the Vaudois (**Waldensian**) missionary unfold to the inquiring mind the precious truths of the gospel. Cautiously

he produced the carefully written portions of the Holy Scriptures. It was his greatest joy to give hope to the conscientious, sin-stricken soul, who could see only a God of vengeance, waiting to execute justice. With quivering lip and tearful eye did he, often on bended knees, open to his brethren the precious promises that reveal the sinner's only hope. Thus the light of truth penetrated many a darkened mind, rolling back the cloud of gloom, until the Sun of Righteousness shone into the heart with healing in His beams. It was often the case that some portion of Scripture was read again and again, the hearer desiring it to be repeated, as if he would assure himself that he had heard aright. Especially was the repetition of these words eagerly desired: 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' 1 John 1:7. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.'"

Through the missionary efforts of the Waldenses, thousands of people were informed about the false claims of the papacy. As the truth of the Scriptures dawned upon their minds they realized that Christ was their priest, not some sinful man sitting behind a curtain; that Christ's shed blood was their sacrifice and their private prayer time their confessional and once they realized these things, they cast themselves wholly upon the merits of Christ repeating the same words uttered by Martin Luther many years later when he was climbing Pilate's staircase and heard the words he had read many times, but until then didn't understand, "the just shall live by faith," or the words of **Acts 4:12** where it says, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Have you come to this same conclusion, friend? I hope so, because this is the way of salvation.

To these individuals who began to understand these things, they could hardly believe it, because it was so different than what they had always been taught. And can you imagine the relief that it brought to their hearts when they understood these things? They must have thought they had been transported to heaven. Why? Because their feet were now planted solidly upon the Rock of Ages and all fear of death was gone, which enabled them to go to prison for their faith if need be, or to the stake and suffer a martyr's death if by doing so they could honor the name of Jesus. And I want that kind of faith and assurance, don't you? Because we're going to need it if we are so fortunate as to live to see the Lord come in the clouds of heaven without dying.

The Waldensian missionaries, for thousands of years, were invading the kingdom of Satan, and as you can imagine, it didn't go unnoticed by the papacy. And the powers

of darkness knew that if the light of truth were allowed to shine without doing something to stop it, it would sweep away the falsehoods that held the people captive and direct their minds instead to God alone, and that's what would eventually destroy the supremacy of Rome. And dear friends, it will do the same today if we do what we can to replicate the work of the Waldenses as we do what we can to invade the kingdom of Satan.

The very existence of the Waldenses was a constant testimony to Rome's apostasy and invited the most bitter hatred and persecution. And because they refused to surrender those Scriptures that had been "preserved by a miracle of God," this was also an offense that Rome couldn't tolerate, and they determined to blot these witnesses for the truth from the face of the earth, and as a result, the most terrible crusades against these people began in earnest.

In ***The Great Controversy, page 76*** it says, "Again and again were their (**the Waldenses**) fertile lands laid waste, their dwellings and chapels swept away, so that where once were flourishing fields and the homes of an innocent, industrious people, there remained only a desert. As the ravenous beast is rendered more furious by the taste of blood, so the rage of the papists was kindled to greater intensity by the sufferings of their victims. Many of these witnesses for a pure faith were pursued across the mountains and hunted down in the valleys where they were hidden, shut in by mighty forests and pinnacles of rock."

Even though no charge could be brought against the moral character of the Waldenses; and even though their enemies said they were peace loving, and a quiet and virtuous people, their only offense was that they would not worship God according to the will of the pope, and for this so called crime they were tortured and killed.

The time had now come for the papacy to try to finish the job of extermination and they were determined that this hated sect had to be totally eliminated for the good of the church. The pope declared that they were like wolves in sheep's clothing and were responsible for seducing Catholics into believing a lie and issued a public decree that something drastic had to be done.

There was a Scottish historian and Presbyterian minister by the name of James Aitken Wylie back in the 1800s that wrote about this decree, and he said the pope called the Waldenses a "malicious and abominable sect of malignants," and if they "refuse to abjure (**recant**)," they were "to be crushed like venomous snakes." This papal decree

called upon all the members of the Catholic church to join the crusade against these heretics, and as an incentive to engage in their eradication, they would be absolved from all their sins when they killed these heretics, and this tells us a lot about the Satanic power behind it, doesn't it? Because it was the same spirit that crucified Christ and killed the apostles; the same that moved the blood-thirsty Nero to destroy the lives of Christians in his day and to rid the earth of those who were beloved of God.

But, notwithstanding the Catholic crusades against them, and the inhumane torture they were subjected to, do you know what the faithful Waldenses that were left did? They continued to send out their missionaries to scatter the truth that the Holy Spirit had given them to bare to the world. They were hunted to death; yet their blood watered the seed sown, and in this way they witnessed for God centuries before the Protestant Reformation ever got off the ground. Scattered over many lands, the Waldenses planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of John Wycliffe in the 1300s, became even more widespread 200 years later in the days of Martin Luther, and will be carried forward to the close of time by those who are also willing to suffer all things for "the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The question is, will you be one of them? Will I? Friends, it's **OUR** job now to take up the torch that has been handed down to us by the faithful of all ages and carry it forward to the end of all things. Let's get out the literature; let's point people to various websites on the Internet where they can read and listen to the truth for this time; let's do everything in our power to uplift Jesus every chance we get, and let's be faithful to our calling.