THE SYMBOLIC CODE

Vol.12 No.2



DECEMBER , 1956

WHEN AND HOW THE WORK IS TO BE FINISHED
SIGN POSTS ALONG THE WAY

PURPOSE

This publication is dedicated to the mission of conveying to Davidian present truth believers, edifying news and articles of timely significance. This comforter freely gives its time to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and neither collects fees nor charges for its service.

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WHEN AND HOW THE WORK IS TO BE FINISHED
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(The sermon selected for this issue of The Symbolic Code was delivered by Brother V. T. Houteff on March 14 and July 20, 1946.)

Rev. 10:5-7 -- "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

The angel swore that there should be time no longer. I think I understand how we as Seventh-day Adventists interpret "time no longer"; but these two verses when read together clearly show what kind of time is to be no longer, for it is during the time of the sixth trumpet that the angel said there shall be time no longer, but that at the commencement of the sounding of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God shall be finished. What is the mystery of God? -- It is the work of salvation, or the Gospel work. Then during the

period of the seventh trumpet there will be no mystery yet to be finished, for it is to be finished during the sixth trumpet. The angel, therefore, is to be understood as stating simply that probationary time will extend only through the sounding of the sixth trumpet and that is all, because the mystery of God is to be all finished at the time the seventh angel begins to sound.

Now we wish to ascertain what period we are living in. At the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the four angels are to be let loose and they are then to kill a third part of men; and their army, moreover, is to number 200,000,000 "horsemen" and that many "horses." Since no such thing as this has ever happened, it therefore speaks for itself that the sixth trumpet is yet in the future. It has not yet commenced to sound.

In view of the fact that we are not living in the sixth trumpet, let us ascertain whether we may be in the sounding of the fifth trumpet, or whether it, too, is yet future.

Rev. 9:1-6 -- "And the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the

smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

We do not know as yet of a man who really wishes to die and yet cannot die, for there are a great number of ways that he can end his life if he so chooses to do it. Since this scripture says that in the fifth trumpet some men will seek death but death will flee from them, we know that we have not yet come to this part of the fifth trumpet. With this fact in mind we may next ask ourselves the question, Has the fifth trumpet even started to sound?

As the fifth angel sounded a star fell from heaven, and the star is called "he." To "him" was given the key to the bottomless pit, and when he opened the pit smoke ascended out of it. I do not think we can understand whether or not the trumpet has already sounded unless we understand what the smoke and the pit are.

In Revelation 20 we find that the Devil is to be cast into the bottomless pit and he must remain bound there for a thousand years. We as Adventists have been taught that the earth is the bottomless pit, a prison house for the Devil during the millennium and that the angel who has the key to the bottomless pit and who chains the Devil there for a thousand years, is Christ. If Christ is to have the key at the commencement of the millennium then He must have gotten it sometime before. Our subject for today on the trumpets may throw light on that, for Revelation 9 says that locusts came out of the bottomless pit after it was unlocked by the "star" which fell from heaven to earth, and the Bible calls Christ "the bright and morning star."

From our study to this point we may conclude that the star in the fifth trumpet must represent Christ. But let us now further check our interpretation to see if it is correct. The star being designated by the pronouns "he" and "him" and its coming to earth from heaven, clearly identifies the star as a heavenly male being. He also had the key with which to open the bottomless pit. When He opened it smoke and locusts came forth out of the pit, showing also that the pit had been a prison house for the locusts until they were released. The command to the locusts was that they should hurt only those men which <u>have not the seal of God</u> in their foreheads, which shows that they were friends to God's people. Since it is the Devil's aim to hurt

God's people, then the locusts having been freed by the star and commanded not to hurt the sealed ones, shows that they were friends of the star and the star was a friend to them and therefore the star could be none other than Christ.

Our next step is to ascertain who the locusts are and when Christ released them from the bottomless pit.

In Revelation 12 we have a description of the dragon at the time Christ was born. He had seven heads and ten horns, signifying that all the kingdoms (10 horns) of the world and all religions (7 heads) were serving the dragon. Had he not conquered the Jewish church, too, he could not have had seven heads. When the dragon conquered the Jewish church -- God's people at that time, that gave him seven heads. The very fact that the Jews were the ones who had Christ crucified furnished the evidence that the Bible correctly pictured them exactly where they were -- with the dragon. Seeing then that the Devil had all the religions of the earth and all the kingdoms of the earth, represented by the 7 heads and 10 crowned horns on his head, then how much was not the Devil's? -- It was all his. This being true then for God's true individual people within the church the earth had indeed become a bottomless pit, a prison house. There was only one way of escape for them and that was for the Star to come down from heaven and open the pit. That being true, then whom do the locusts represent? -- The Christians.

The fifth trumpet, therefore, sounded when Christ came nearly 2,000 years ago. We find ourselves therefore living in the period of the sounding of the fifth trumpet -- the Christian period -- before the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

But now in this period <u>before the sixth angel sounds his trumpet</u>, some men are to seek death and they will not find it, and would desire to die and death would flee form them. They just could not die, for they would be immune to death. Since we understand that the Lord is going to find a living church besides those righteous who are lying in the graves then from that also we can easily conclude that if these people during the fifth trumpet could not die, then they will live through the sixth trumpet, too, and never die.

To find out what will make these men immune to death, we shall refer to Revelation 7. I doubt that we need to read the chapter, because everyone of us is so well acquainted with it that we can almost quote it verse by verse. You recall that there were four angels stationed on the four corners of the earth, and they were to hold the winds from blowing on the earth and the sea and the trees until the servants the 144,000, are sealed, for when the winds are loosed they will hurt. After they receive the seal, though, the winds will blow but they will not hurt the sealed ones for they have received perfect and absolute protection from all harm. Let us read about a man who long ago received a seal of protection:

Gen. 4:15 -- "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain lest any finding him should kill him."

Cain slew Abel and therefore he deserved to be slain himself. He did not deserve life any longer, but God said that if anybody dare kill Cain sevenfold vengeance would befall him. The Lord put a mark on him for the safety of Cain, and so long as he had the mark no one should dare kill him. What is the mark? -- You may say that the mark is as much as an angel guard present all the time. God set a guarding angel with Cain to protect him from anyone's killing him. Now we come to another marking period, that described in Ezekiel 9.

In this chapter the Lord called the angels who had charge of the city, showing that they had charge of the city perhaps in a way similar to the charge of the angel over Cain. These six angels who have charge of the city are called to come forth and one among them is seen to have a writer's inkhorn. And he is to set a mark on everyone that sighs and cries for the abominations. When the marking is done, then the five other angels which have the slaughter weapons in their hands are to smite everyone who has not the mark. This indicates that the mark in Ezekiel 9 assures safety from the angels' slaughter.

John in Revelation 7, says that he saw 144,000 with the seal of God in their foreheads, and since we understand through Inspiration that this sealing and marking are done to the same people, let us now see what the seal is. To serve as an illustration, let us suppose that this book that I now hold up is an envelope. And let us also suppose that this slip of paper which I have now in my hand is very precious to me and I want to save it from all manner of defacement and destruction. Is it not reasonable that you would expect me to put it into this envelope and seal it well to keep the paper from falling out? Moreover, if you do not want the wrong persons to open your letters you seal them. When God places His seal upon the 144,000, then nobody can hurt them. Do you see then that the winds were held by the angels because the servants of God were not as yet sealed -- under special protection? Unless they were sealed when the winds start to blow, God's people would be left utterly without protection from the danger of the hurting of the winds. Were they sealed, however, before the winds blow, the winds could not harm them.

Let us read

Eph. 1:13, 14 -- "In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

The people spoken of here were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the mystery of God is finished, until the sounding of the seventh trumpet. In other words, they did have the promise that they were sealed for the resurrection day. But the 144,000 are not sealed with a promise of the resurrection, they are sealed for some other purpose. They are sealed for protection from the hurting of the winds. That shows that the 144,000 are not sealed for the resurrection day, but for protection from being harmed by everybody and everything. They are alive at the time they are sealed, and the sealing enables them to live on. And since the message that is to seal the 144,000 is here, we believe that we are now living in the period when God is going to seal first the 144,000 and when they are sealed their destination is God, New Jerusalem, not the grave and the resurrection. Having this explanation, let us now reconsider

Rev. 9:6 -- "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Is it not logical to believe that the reason these men could not die is that they are sealed by God? What else can make men live on and on and no one could kill them? Who, other than God, can give life? And do you suppose that God

is going to extend the life of the wicked? He promises to do that only for the righteous those having the seal of God in their foreheads. Then these that seek death and cannot find it are God's people. They are to live on and on for eternity. At what time will they be made invulnerable to death? Our study today makes plain that it is during the fifth trumpet and before the sounding of the sixth trumpet. If God is going to do this during the period of the fifth trumpet, then the sealing of the 144,000 must take place in the period of the fifth trumpet and not in the sixth. <u>It is then before the sixth angel sounds that some will have the experience of seeking death and not finding it.</u>

(This is a deep subject. If I am not making it clear to you, then you should ask questions, for it is very important. It is not a doctrine to talk about merely to pass the time.)

<u>To repeat, it is "in those days" in the fifth trumpet that some will seek death and will not find it.</u>

In Daniel's time King Nebuchadnezzar approved a decree forbidding any man to make petition to any god or to anyone except himself for thirty days, and further, that if any should violate this law he would be thrown into the lions' den to be eaten by the angry beasts. Daniel, you recall, prayed to God as usual, and in that respect he was seeking death, for he understood

that by praying he was violating the law and that the penalty for it would be death. But when they threw Daniel into the den, what happened to him? -- Death fled from him.

You remember that just prior to this incident involving Daniel, the King of Babylon made a great image all of gold and gathered all his mighty men and all the people there and decreed that when the trumpet sounded everybody must bow down to his image or be thrown into the fiery furnace to burn to death. Only three Hebrew men in the vast throng refused to bow down, saying that the God whom they served is able to preserve them, but if He chose not to save them they would be willing to die anyway, for they would not worship the image. As a consequence of their disobedience to the king's decree the three youth were thrust into the furnace by men who themselves were consumed by the intense heat, whereas the boys came out of the furnace with not a hair even singed, nor was there the slightest smell of smoke upon them. This was another example of men seeking death and not finding it.

Then we know of another man: the Lord Himself. He knew that He was to be killed. But He did not hesitate to "seek death." In this instance, though, death did not flee from Him, but the resurrection brought Him from the grave. Then you remember that Paul knew that if he went to Jerusalem he would not come back, for the enemies of the Truth would slay him. Nevertheless he went,

and thus did he, too, seek death. But death did not flee from him, for he was killed.

Throughout the Dark Ages all who dared accept the Gospel were seeking death, and they found it, too. So we see that history in the period of the fifth trumpet discloses that up to this time Revelation 9:6 has not met its fulfillment. But there will yet be a decree before the fifth trumpet ends, that if men dare to disobey, they must face the threatened penalty of death. Those however, who have been sealed when the decree comes will seek death and death will flee from them. God will not let them die. By faith it is not difficult to understand how this could be, for you know that if God wills that you live you simply cannot die. We already saw a demonstration of that in Daniel's time. Men's lives are in the hands of God, and if He chooses to preserve the lives of some there is none who can snuff them out, not even the Devil. A good example of this was furnished when the Lord made it impossible for the Devil to take the life of Job.

In the time of the fifth trumpet the locusts (Christians) were to torment or hurt only those men which have not the seal of God. And their torment was inflicted by the sting of their scorpion-like tails. Why, though, should Christians torment anyone, some may ask?

It is not difficult to understand this when we recall that Christ's Own ministry was a torment

to the wicked. Though He was gentle and though He healed all manner of diseases and made the common people rejoice in His works, there was another class that were made so miserable by His work which was a continual torment to them, that they crucified Him in order to eliminate it. Likewise when the Christians after the crucifixion became numerous, they too, became an intolerable nuisance to this same class. Indeed, throughout the history of the world God's people have always been a torment to the wicked who wanted to stay wicked.

It was the tails of the locusts that did the hurting. Since the tail is that part of the body which follows behind, it would aptly symbolize followers. And if the followers are symbolized by the tails, then God's leaders (ministers) would be symbolized by the heads. It is the followers or converts that hurt the opposers of the Truth. And that tormenting will also be present in the sixth trumpet, for then there is to be those mighty horses having tails of serpents.

People may not be so impressed with locusts, but 200,000,000 horses and horsemen would be very impressive. Revelation says that they would be present and working during the sixth trumpet. So what are we approaching? -- In just a little while this period will begin. It means that God's army will increase to 200,000,000 strong. That will indeed be a great movement. In fact, the world has never seen anything like

it. They will not only be great, but they will also be invulnerable to death.

We learned that in the fifth trumpet there are only 144,000 sealed ones, but in the sixth trumpet there are to be 200,000,000. Now we want to know what is to cause the increase in number. Let us turn to

Rev. 7:1-8 -- "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of

the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

The 144,000 are sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rev. 7:9 -- "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

Now at first impulse you may tell me that I was wrong a few moments ago when I told you that the number of God's army will grow from 144,000 to 200,000,000. You may say it because this verse says that there will be so great a multitude to be converted that they could not be numbered. But you must not fail to remember that Revelation 7:9 includes not only the 200,000,000 "horses" but also their converts which are represented by the tails. When you add to 200,000,000 leaders the number of their followers, you will have a number so great that it would be innumerable. In order to ascertain how we know that there are more than 144,000 leaders, let us turn to

Isa. 66:12 -- "For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees."

This is talking about the church, Jerusalem, the city.

Isa. 66:13 -- "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

This is a promise which has not yet met its fulfillment. In the next verse we are told that when God does comfort His people, it is to be a sign post.

Isa. 66:14 -- "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies."

The Christian is really going to be converted and their enemies are going to be tormented.

Isa. 66:15 -- "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire."

This gives the reason The Lord will come with anger and fury.

Isa. 66:16 -- "For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."

The angels in Revelation 9 were to slay a third part of men. In that way "the slain of the Lord shall be many."

Isa. 66:17 -- "They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

Those who pose as Christians but obey not the laws of God shall be consumed.

Isa. 66:18, 19 -- "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles."

The Lord is going to come and slay many who claim to be sanctified but are not obedient

to the Truth. Those who escape will go to the nations that have not heard the Truth.

Let us discuss for a few moments what it is that seals God's people as a whole, as a body. You recall that in the days of Joshua the whole nation fell in defeat before their enemy. Then Joshua prayed and God revealed to him that there was a sinner in the camp and that unless he were found and removed, Israel would never stand before her enemies. This illustrates the fact that it is the removing of the wicked from the midst of the church that seals it -- makes it able to live on. You see, then, that the church's danger lurks behind the hypocrites that are in it. For this reason the winds are held until the first fruits are individually sealed, and when all the sinners have thereafter been removed, there will remain only the righteous, thus leaving a sealed church, a holy people that God can put His angels round about to protect (seal) against any molesting thing. And they are the men, who, having escaped the slaughter, constitute the servants of God whom He shall send to all the nations to proclaim His glory.

Isa. 66:20 -- "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord."

Do you not see how the work will be finished? It can be finished in no other way than by a church containing only holy people. In the words of Isaiah, they will bring all their brethren out of all nations in a clean vessel, meaning a clean church. And when they bring in all their brethren, it will result in a great ingathering of souls. That is why there will be 144,000 leaders to start with instead of only 12.

Isa. 66:21 -- "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."

Of those that are gathered, God will take some for priests and Levites. That is what will swell the force to 200,000,000 horses. Their riders are the angels. Workmen whom God thus describes would fear nothing, for they, too, will receive the seal of protection that will make them invulnerable to death. Now you should be able to see what a great people God is to have.

Is it displeasing to God for any to urge His people to study the Bible, to obey His Truth that they may become the great People He has pictured them to be? Can it be? If it is not, then shall we be just like walls through which nothing can penetrate? I am sure that if we are God's people we will be responsive to the revelation of His Truth and we will earnestly set ourselves to the business of knowing His will and obeying it, that we may be His people. Men like that will not talk empty, vain things, but their words will instead

be powerful like fire, smoke, and brimstone. And speaking of fire, where there is smoke there is also fire. Since smoke ascended out of the bottomless pit, fire must have been in the pit. And as fire and smoke and brimstone issued forth from the mouths of the horses, what can it represent but the Spirit of God, the Gospel of Christ? Is not the Spirit of God a number of times represented by fire? The smoke fittingly represents a complete sacrifice burned by fire, consumed by the Holy Spirit. Have we yet made up our mind to sacrifice all -- to be all for God and none for self -- not meaning, of course that we must torture ourselves?

For our closing thought we should remind ourselves that the 144,000 were without guile in their mouths. And the Bible says that he that overcomes his tongue is a perfect man. Are we ever guilty of uttering statements before checking them for accuracy, for justice, for necessity of telling, for edification? Let us learn to speak the right thing at the right time and in the right place. Having learned that, we will have become heroes, for it is a fact that for at least some people to gain the victory on this point they will have to make what will seem to be the supreme sacrifice. Let us not speak evil of other people. Let us not speak discouraging, disheartening things. Always remember that persons who speak thus invariably betray their own low spiritual condition.