

God's Demonstration to Mankind —

# The Last Generation

— By M.L. Andreassen

***The following article is a portion of the chapter, entitled "The Last Generation," from the book, The Sanctuary Service, by M.L. Andreassen. In many respects it is the climax of his message in that book.***

The demonstration which God intends to make with the last generation on earth means much, both to the people and to God. Can God's law really be kept? That is a vital question. Many deny that it can be done; others glibly say it can. When the whole question of commandment keeping is considered, the problem assumes large proportions. God's law is exceedingly broad; it takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It judges motives as well as words. Commandment keeping means entire sanctification, a holy life, unswerving allegiance to right, entire separation from sin, and victory over it. Well may mortal man cry out, Who is sufficient for these things!

Yet, to produce a people that will keep the law is the task which God has set Himself, and which He expects, to accomplish. When the statement and challenge are issued by Satan: "No one can keep the law. It is impossible. If there be any that can do it or that have done it, show them to me. Where are they that keep the commandments?" God will quietly answer, "Here they are, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'" (Revelation 14:12).

Let us say it reverently: God must meet Satan's challenge. It is not God's plan, or a part of His purpose, to subject men to tests that only a chosen few can survive. In the Garden of Eden, God subjected Adam and Eve to the lightest test conceivable. No one can say that our first parents fell because the test was too hard for them. If they fell, it was not because the test was hard or because they had not been provided with strength to resist. The temptation was not held before them constantly. Satan was not permitted to molest them everywhere. He had access to them at only one place, namely at the tree of knowledge. That place they knew. They could stay

away from it if they wanted to. Satan could not follow them everywhere. If they went where Satan was, it was because they wanted to. But even if they went there to examine the tree, they need not have remained there. They could walk away. And even if Satan offered them the fruit they need not take it. But they took it and ate. And they ate it because they wanted to, not because they had to. They deliberately transgressed. There was no excuse. God could not have devised an easier test.

When God commands men to keep His law, it does not serve the purpose He has in mind to have only a few men keep it, just enough to show it can be done. It is not in line with God's character to pick outstanding men of strong purpose and superb training, and demonstrate through them what He can do. It is much more in harmony with His plan to make His requirements such that even the weakest need not fail, so that none can ever say that God demands that which can be done by only a few. It is for this reason that God has reserved His greatest demonstration for the last generation. This generation bears the result of accumulated sins. If any are weak, they are. If any suffer from inherited tendencies, they do. If any have an excuse because of weakness of any kind, they have. If, therefore, these can keep the commandments, there is no excuse for anyone in any other generation not doing so also.

But this is not enough. God intends in His demonstration to show, not merely that ordinary men of the last generation can successfully pass a test such as He gave to Adam and Eve, but that they can survive a test much harder than such as falls to the lot of common men. It will be a test comparable to the one Job passed through, and approaching that which the Master underwent. It will test them to the utmost.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:11). Job passed through some experiences that will be repeated in the lives of the chosen ones of the last generation. It may be well to consider them.

### JOB'S TEST

Job was a good man. God trusted him. Day by day he offered sacrifices for his sons. "It may be that my sons have sinned," he said (Job 1:5). He was prosperous and enjoyed the blessing of God.

Then came "a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." (Job 1:6). A conversation is recorded between the Lord and Satan that concerned Job. The Lord says that Job is a good man, which Satan does not deny, but urges that Job is God-fearing merely because it pays him to do so. He states that if God will take away His mercies, Job will curse God. The statement is in the form of a challenge, and God accepts it. Satan immediately proceeds to do what he is permitted to do. Job's property is all swept away, and his children are killed.

When this happened, "Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, Naked came I out of my Mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (Job 1:20-22).

Satan is defeated, but he makes another attempt. At the next meeting with the Lord, without admitting defeat, he claims that he had not been permitted to touch Job himself. If he had, he claims, Job would have sinned. The statement is again a challenge, and God accepts it. Satan is given permission to torment Job but not to take his life. He immediately departs on his mission.

All that the evil one can do, Satan does to Job. But Job stands fast. His wife counsels him to give up, but he does not waver. Under intense physical pain and mental anguish, he remains steadfast. Again it is recorded that Job stood the test. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." (Job 2:10). Satan is defeated and does not appear any more in the book.

In the succeeding chapters in the book of Job, we are given a little insight into the struggle going on in Job's mind. He is greatly perplexed. Why has all this calamity come upon him? He is not conscious of any sin. Why, then, should God afflict him? He, of course, does not know of the challenge of Satan. Neither does he know that God is depending upon him in the crisis through which he is passing. All he knows is that, out of the clear sky, disaster has come upon him till he is left without family or property, and with a loathsome disease that nearly overwhelms him. He does not understand, but he retains his integrity and faith in God. This God knew he would

do. This Satan said he would not do. In the challenge, God won.

Humanly speaking, Job had not deserved the punishment that came to him. God Himself says it was without cause. "Thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause." (Job 2:3). The whole experiment can therefore be justified only by considering it as a specific test devised for a specific purpose. God wanted to silence Satan's charge that Job served God only for profit. He wanted to demonstrate that there was at least one man whom Satan could not control. Job suffered as a result of it, but there seemed to be no other way. A reward was afterward given him.

Job's cause is recorded for a purpose. While we grant its historicity, we believe that it has also a wider meaning. God's people in the last days will pass through an experience similar to Job's. They will be tested as he was; they will have every earthly stay removed; Satan will be given permission to torment them. In addition to this, the Spirit of God will be withdrawn from the earth and the protection of earthly governments removed. God's people will be left alone to battle with the powers of darkness. They will be perplexed, as was Job. But they, as did he, will hold fast their integrity.

In the last generation God will stand vindicated. In the remnant Satan will meet his defeat. The charge that the law cannot be kept will be met and fully refuted. God will produce not only one or two who keep His commandments, but a whole group, spoken of as the 144,000. They will reflect the image of God fully. They will have disproved Satan's accusation against the government of heaven.

### GOD'S GOVERNMENT ON TRIAL

A serious situation arose in heaven when Satan made his charges against God. The accusations, in reality, constituted an impeachment. Many of the angels believed the charges. They ranged themselves on the side of the accuser. One third of the angels—and that must have been millions—faced God with their leader, the highest among the angels, Lucifer. It was no small crisis. It threatened the very existence of God's government. How should God deal with it?

The only way the matter could be satisfactorily settled so that no question would ever arise again was for God to submit His case to the ordinary rules of evidence. Was, or was not, God's government just? God said it was; Satan said it was not. God could have destroyed Satan. That would not prove His cause just, but would, in fact, count against Him. There was no other way than for each side to present its evidence, produce its witnesses, and rest its case

on the weight of testimony adduced.

The picture, then, is that of a court scene. God's government is at stake. Satan is the accuser; God Himself is the accused and is on trial. He has been charged with injustice, with requiring His creatures to do that which they cannot do, and yet punishing them for not doing it. The law is the specific point of attack, but the law being merely a transcript of God's character, it is God and His character that are the points at issue.

In order for God to sustain His contention, it is necessary for Him to show that He has not been arbitrary, that the law is not harsh and cruel in its requirement, but contrariwise, that it is holy, just, and good, and that men can keep it. It is necessary for God to produce at least one man who has kept the law. In the absence of such a man, God loses and Satan wins. The outcome therefore hinges on the production of one or more who keep the commandments of God. On this, God has staked His government.

While it is true that many, from time to time, have dedicated their lives to God and lived without sin for periods of time, Satan claims that these are special cases, as was Job's case, and do not come under the ordinary rules. He demands a clear-cut case where there can be no doubt, and where God has not interfered. Can such an instance be produced?

### **THE LAST GENERATION**

God is ready for the challenge. He has bided His time. The supreme exhibition has been reserved until the final contest. Out of the last generation God will select His chosen ones. Not the strong or the mighty, not the honored or the rich, not the wise or the learned, but common, ordinary people will God take, and through, and by, them make His demonstration. Satan has claimed that those who, in the past, have served God have done so from mercenary motives, that God has pampered them, and that he, Satan, has not had free access to them. If he were given full permission to press his case, they also would be won over. But he charges that God is afraid to let him do this. "Give me a fair chance," Satan says, "and I will win out."

And so, to silence forever Satan's charges; to make it evident that His people are serving Him from motives of loyalty and right without reference to reward; to clear His own name and character of the charges of injustice and arbitrariness; and to show to angels and men that His law can be kept by the weakest of men under the most discouraging and most untoward circumstances, God permits Satan, in the last generation, to try His people to the utmost. They will be threatened, tortured, persecuted.

They will stand face to face with death in the issuance of the decree to worship the beast and his image (Revelation 13:15). But they will not yield. They are willing to die rather than to sin.

God will remove His Spirit from the earth. Satan will have a greater measure of control than he has ever had before. True, he may not kill God's people, but that seems to be the only limitation. And he uses every permission he has. He knows what is at stake. It is now or never.

God, to make the demonstration complete, does one more thing. He hides Himself. The sanctuary in heaven is closed. The saints cry to God day and night for deliverance, but He appears not to hear. God's chosen one are passing through Gethsemane. They are having a little taste of Christ's experience in those three hours on the cross. Seemingly they must fight their battles alone. They must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.

But though Christ has finished His intercession, the saints are still the object of God's love and care. Holy angels watch over them. God provides them shelter from their enemies; He provides them with food, shields them from destruction, and supplies grace and power for holy living (see Psalm 91). Yet they are still in the world, still tempted, afflicted, tormented.

Will they stand the test? To human eyes it seems impossible. If only God would come to their rescue, all would be well. They are determined to resist the evil one. If need be they will die, but they will not sin. Satan has no power—and never has had—to make any man sin. He can tempt, he can seduce, he can threaten; but he cannot compel. And now God demonstrates, through the weakest of the weak, that there is no excuse, and never has been any, for sinning. If men, in the last generation, can successfully repel Satan's attack; if they can do this with all the odds against them and the sanctuary closed, what excuse is there for men's ever sinning?

### **THE 144,000**

In the last generation, God gives the final demonstration that men can keep the law of God and that they can live without sinning. God leaves nothing undone to make the demonstration complete. The only limitation put upon Satan is that he may not kill the saints of God. He may tempt them, he may harass and threaten them; and he does his best. But he fails. He cannot make them sin. They stand the test, and God puts His seal upon them.

Through the last generation of saints, God stands finally vindicated. Through them He defeats Satan and wins His case. They form a vital part of the plan of God. They go through terrific struggles; they battle

with unseen powers in high places. But they have put their trust in the Most High, and they will not be ashamed. They have suffered hunger and thirst, but now "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:16-17).

They "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." (Revelation 14:4). When at last the doors of the temple shall swing open, a voice will sound forth: "Only the 144,000 enter this place." (*Early Writings*, 19). By faith they have followed the Lamb here. They have gone with Him into the Most Holy Place. And, in the hereafter, only those who have thus followed Him here will follow Him there. They will be kings and priests. They will follow Him into the Most Holy, where only the High Priest can ever enter. They shall follow Him "whithersoever he goeth." They will not only be "before the throne of God" and "serve Him day and night in His temple," but they will sit with Him in His throne even as He also overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne (Revelation 7:15; 3:21).

The matter of greatest importance in the universe is not the salvation of men, important as that may seem. The most important thing is the clearing of

God's name from the false accusations made by Satan. The controversy is drawing to a close. God is preparing His people for the last great conflict. Satan is also getting ready. The issue is before us and will be decided in the lives of God's people. God is depending upon us as He did upon Job. Is His confidence well placed?

It is a wonderful privilege, vouchsafed this people, to help clear God's name by our testimony. It is wonderful that we are permitted to testify for Him. It must never be forgotten, however, that this testimony is a testimony of life, not merely of words. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." It was so with Christ; it must also be so with us. Our lives should be a light, as His life was. To give people the light is more than to hand them a tract. Our lives are the light. As we live, we give light to others. Without life, without our living the light, our words abide alone. But as our lives become light, our words become effective. It is our lives that must testify for God.

May the church of God appreciate the exalted privilege given her! "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 43:10). There must be "no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." (Isaiah 43:12). May we be witnesses indeed, testifying what God has done for us!

God's plan for His people is indeed glorious. You will find it in the Sanctuary Service, which He had Moses and the people build in the wilderness.

For an in-depth study of this great truth, we recommend that you obtain a copy of our tract set, *The Sanctuary Message*. It is still in print as Part One of our *Sanctuary Tractbook*, a 250-page publication, costing \$16, plus shipping and handling. In Tennessee, add .825 tax.

The *Sanctuary Message* consists of a large collection of Spirit of Prophecy statements, with almost no comments, on the inner meaning of the Sanctuary truth.

God's people in the last days will pass through an experience similar to that of Job and Jacob. In that final text, it will be fully shown that the law of God can indeed be fully kept in this life by human beings. The grace of Christ is sufficient for everyone to resist temptation, put away sin from his life, and truly obey the law of God.

The 144,000 will fully reflect the image of God. They will be able to sing a song of experience which will be a standing witness to the universe throughout all eternity.

Oh, my friend, we want to share in that experience! And we can begin now. Character is being developed right now; it will be revealed later in the crisis.

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