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# THE OVERMASTERING DELUSION

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Michael Maw (February 20, 2018)

I found myself standing before a group of students in a large room or auditorium. At the right-side of the room sat many students from Fountainview Academy, where I had just recently visited. As I spoke to the students, I asked them, “Do you feel that Fountainview has prepared you for what is to come? Do you feel you have a solid foundation that will help you succeed as you go on to college or university?”

As I asked this question, suddenly a loud noise of machinery was heard coming from outside the building. This instantly caught the attention of the entire group. Many of the students showed concern and motioned that they wanted to go outside to see what was happening. They had done an important work out in the fields surrounding the building and were alarmed by the noise – feeling that the work was in danger. I tried to assure them that this was not the case, and that what they had built outside would not be torn down. But several students stood up and quickly made their way outside. I immediately followed them.

Outside we saw a large number of trucks, bulldozers, and various other heavy-duty machinery used in demolition. They were parked side by side with their engines still running and drivers at the wheel. The students were upset by what they saw and with courage ran out to meet them, even climbing up into the vehicles and struggling with the drivers to stop them. Out in the fields I saw what looked like white tents or similar structures that the students had pitched all over, and I understood that these men and machines had been commissioned to remove them. But I felt at peace that they would not be successful.

At last the students were victorious and the men climbed out of their vehicles and gathered together. I noticed that they all appeared to be of East Indian descent, and I approached one who presented himself as their leader. He seemed very friendly towards me, and I spoke to him, saying, “We should go up the mountain to pray.”

“That is a very good idea,” he replied. So, I started up the hill with the group of them following along behind me. However, none of the students seemed to follow us but instead they remained near their tents.

Soon we arrived at the top of the mountain where a great white tent had been set up. I made my way through the entrance of the tent and walked forward, intending to go to the opposite side to pray. As I walked, I felt as though the ceiling of the tent was either falling or appeared to be very low, so that I had to reach up with my hand to push it up as I went. At last I reached the far side and turned back to see if the men had followed me.

At this moment there was a strange and awful change. I knew quite suddenly that I was fully awake and not dreaming, and a terrifying scene was displayed before me.

As I turned around to face the right of the tent, everything turned to darkness and an image appeared coming towards me at an incredibly rapid pace. Almost instantly the image came right in front of me, and I saw that it was a portrait of Christ. However, it was not at all like the image I had seen in an earlier experience. I recognized the picture as one that I had seen in the past – a portrait of Jesus from the chest upwards dressed in white with a red sash hanging over his shoulder. However, the face was injured and horrible to look at. The right eye was completely gone as if from a wound, and the skin had healed over the place where the eye had been but was very scarred. The left eye was still in place but had a frightening appearance. It was unlike any eye that I have ever seen before – it seemed to shine with an evil light, and the pupil moved about rapidly looking here and there. It seemed to overwhelm the entire picture so that when you looked at it, that eye consumed you. I remember thinking at that moment, “The all-seeing eye!” It frightened and shocked me so much, that I instantly turned away to cover my face.

At this moment a voice, like the voice of an angel, cried out, “He is coming!” But I looked and saw nothing but darkness. Again, another voice spoke, “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End!” At the sound of this voice I was filled with fear, and even felt a strong sense of my unworthiness.

“Who am I that I should hear the voice of the Lord?” I cried, and I seemed to shake in fear and collapse with a sense of my own sinfulness. But as I spoke these words an impression was given me – is this really the voice of the Lord that has spoken? Then I thought about what I had seen and heard, and a strong realization came to me: this was an overmastering delusion. This was the coming of the evil one, who will work with power and lying wonders to deceive the whole world, and if it were possible, even the elect. I was made to understand that his coming was near and would occur rapidly, just as the image came up before me so quickly.

A sense of fear came over me. Even though I had seen an image of what appeared to be Christ but knew that it was not Him, when I heard the voice speak I was almost entirely convinced that it was the voice of God. I felt totally helplessness in the face of this deception, and so I asked, “What must I do to be saved?”

“Pray!” the response came, and it was spoken with great intensity: “Watch and pray – and study the Word of God that you may escape this deception.”

After this I opened my eyes and turned to look at the clock beside my bed. It read exactly “1:23 AM”. I felt this was a sign from God confirming what I had seen, though I did not understand at that moment exactly what this symbolized. I thought that it represented a countdown of some sort. I then felt an urgency to warn others to prepare for what is coming. For some time, I continued to lay in bed and prayed about what I had been shown. Then at 2 AM I woke up my wife to share with her what I had experienced.

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Just over a month passed from the time I received this experience until God saw fit to show me exactly what these things meant. Although I felt I understood what the white structures in the field symbolized, much of what I had seen remained a mystery to me. I prayed to God asking Him to reveal the truth to me, but His

answer was, “Not yet. In time.” So, I waited and still no interpretation came. I prayed again and this time God said, “I will show you, but you must be patient.” It was not until the night before I was to preach a message on this very subject that God finally showed me the full interpretation. This is itself a lesson, for in the last days the fulfillment of God’s promises will appear to be delayed, and Satan will tempt the followers of Christ to doubt His words – but do not doubt! Though the promise lingers, wait for it – it will come to pass. God’s Word never fails!

On March 23, 2018, as I was preparing notes for my sermon, God revealed the following to me at approximately 9 PM:

*The white structures that I saw in the fields were built over time by students of the Word. Each built their faith on the firm foundation of Truth. And I knew that not one of those truths could be torn down, for Christ cannot lie and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So, when the powers of the earth, symbolized by the East Indians I saw, will attempt to destroy that faith by their temptations, they will be stopped in their tracks. For the wise will build their house on the Rock, and they will not be moved. God’s remnant people will endure a severe struggle against the powers of darkness, but they will come through it victorious.*

*But those who do not know and love the Truth but instead build their faith on that which fails – those who desire the praise and friendship of the world – will have no defense in that day. How easily we are swayed by the world! “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4) When the time comes, they will ignore God’s warning and go along with the crowds up the mount to worship the great deceiver.*

*And what will they find there? A tent full of darkness. For that great white tent represents the temple, the apostate church, comprised of the bodies and souls of men and women who have abandoned truth for error, light for darkness, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof – and so the spirit of Christ has gone from them, and their tent is left desolate. And just as I walked through the tent and had to raise my hand to keep the ceiling from collapsing, so the false apostles of this day vainly try to prop up their teachings with human hands. But their house is built on a mountain of lies, and on that day it will collapse in the presence of Truth. So many have built their faith on a mountain of sand! They trade the wisdom of God for the quicksand of popular human reasoning.*

*It is written, “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:23) And so the image appeared, and I saw that its good right eye was gone. The light of Truth could no longer enter there, but only the consuming power of darkness. How many desire to worship a saviour just like themselves: apparently white on the exterior, with a pleasant glow, but it is a false light – for on the inside there is only darkness. And so, Satan himself will appear before men as an angel of light, even claiming to be Christ himself! And those who do not love the truth will be deceived by him.*

I was amazed by these revelations. In quick succession, the interpretation of each symbol from my experience became clear, like a stream of light flowing into my mind. I praised God for His faithfulness in

answer to my prayers, and then I quickly worked to update my sermon to include these things. The following day I preached this message for the first time at the Chilliwack Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Over a month later, on April 28, I was given the opportunity to present this same message in my own church. As I reviewed my sermon notes, I felt a strong temptation: I was very aware that many wonderful East Indian people were part of my church family, and I felt that if they heard the term “East Indian” in the context of my experience, some might misinterpret it – not realizing that it was a symbol – and become offended. I wanted to avoid this, and so I crossed out the words “East Indian” and replaced it with “men from the East”. However, as soon as I did this God’s Spirit corrected me and I felt an incredible sense of guilt. *“Do not change what the Lord has shown you”* was the command. I was ashamed for my lack of faith, and confessed my sin to God, then changed the words back to what was originally written.

That Sabbath as I stood in front of the congregation, I felt courageous and nervous at the same time: courageous because I firmly believed that God had given the message; nervous because I was unsure of how the church would receive it. My three previous experiences had all been filled with very powerful, uplifting themes – and the messages brought encouragement and hope to the people I shared them with. However, this message was different – it was a warning, and had a very serious tone. Not only that, but it appeared to outline a series of events, using symbols, that would take place in the near future. I knew this would make it more controversial.

After I finished preaching, I went to the back door of the sanctuary to greet people as they left. A young man that I did not recognize was the first to come up to me. He said, “Do you know that the image of the man which you saw, whose right eye was wounded & darkened, is referred to in the Bible?” He then showed me Zechariah 11:17: *“Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”* I was almost speechless and thanked him for sharing this with me, as this verse was new to me. Just as quickly as he came, he left. And I don’t think I have ever seen that young man since.

Others spoke to me as well and were thankful to hear the message, which encouraged me. But I could tell that some were not comfortable with it and gave me a suspicious look as they left the sanctuary. I don’t blame them for this, because I knew it would be challenging even for me to accept it if the roles were reversed. God was good to me though. Later that evening, when I was in a quiet place, I felt the special presence of Jesus come near me, and I heard Him say, *“Michael, I love you.”* These words gave me a wonderful peace, and I felt the approval of God, for He knew the struggle I had gone through in sharing this message.

Soon God provided an opportunity for me to share the message in another church. However, the week before I was to preach, the devil attacked me. All kinds of doubts came into my mind, and I struggled with tremendous discouragement. Satan brought up many of my past sins and I felt totally unworthy to preach. He tried to persuade me that the experience I had in February was nothing more than a crazy dream or the result of a wild imagination. I struggled and prayed for days, but everything seemed dark and it was difficult to feel whether God was with me.

On Thursday night, June 28 – two days before I was to preach – I sat at my desk reviewing my sermon notes. I felt worn out. I wanted to cancel. My faith was being severely tested. Finally, I sent up a simple prayer: “Father, I will do this even though I feel totally unworthy to stand and preach. You don’t have to give me a sign of encouragement because I remember how You have been with me in the past and I choose to believe that You have called me to do this, even though my feelings tell me otherwise.”

Shortly after, I got into bed and picked up the book “Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1” which I had been reading for my evening devotions. I turned to the chapter where I had last left off, but then felt a strong impression, “Go further.” So, I turned to the next chapter. Again, the impression came: “Go further.” So, I turned the pages and skipped ahead until I stumbled onto the 29th chapter, “A Firm Platform”. As I read, the doubts and discouragement disappeared, and I saw that this chapter was tied directly to the things I had been shown in February. I was very encouraged by this, and I felt like a light from Heaven had been sent to brighten the darkness. That night I fell asleep in peace and assurance that God would go with me.

The following evening, we were staying with friends and were talking late into the night. Shortly before we headed off to bed, I shared with them the things I had read the night before – in particular, this passage:

*“I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, and would give no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps – one, two and three – the first, second and third angels’ messages. Said the angel, Woe to him who shall move a block, or stir a pin in these messages.”* (Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, Ch. 29, p. 168)

As the words “one, two and three – the first, second and third angels’ messages” came out of my mouth, suddenly God opened my understanding and I saw the clock sitting on my bedside table at home. Back on February 20, after the experience ended and my eyes opened, I had turned to look at this clock. It read exactly, “1:23 AM”. Up until this point, I did not know if this time had any significance because God had kept the precise meaning from me. But now He made it plain in order to bring encouragement when it would be needed most, and to provide further evidence that this was from Him. The true meaning is this:

## **1:23 AM**

### **The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Angels’ Messages**

This new revelation encouraged me so much that all my doubts disappeared. The following Sabbath I preached the message with confidence, also sharing the significance behind “1:23 AM”. God blessed, and many people spoke to me afterwards saying they were encouraged by it.

After all this my interest in the three angels’ messages skyrocketed. During my experience I had asked the angel a question: I wanted to know how to avoid being deceived in the last days. The angel’s response was, “Watch and pray – and study the Word of God that you may escape this deception.” Immediately after that, I had opened my eyes and seen the time on my clock. Knowing now that 1:23 AM stands for the first, second, and third angels’ messages, it was clear to me that there is a strong link between correctly understanding these messages and avoiding the overmastering delusion.

You can imagine then, that when I stumbled onto the following statement from Ellen White, it caught my attention:

*“These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan.”* (Early Writings 256.2)

If you look up the original context of this passage, “these messages” is clearly referring to the three angels’ messages. And what does an anchor do? It holds something in place – it prevents it from being moved even though great forces may push against it. This aligns very well with what I saw on the morning of February 20. There are challenging times ahead for the church and for Seventh-Day Adventists. In order to avoid being swept away, we must study and share these three special messages so that we may develop faith to withstand the test. Jesus is coming soon! Let’s be ready to meet Him.

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