



# d'Sozo

REVERSING THE WORST EVIL



# **The Path to Victory**

**MAKING SENSE OF THE PROCESS**

## **A Quick Re-cap**

- 1. 6,000 years ago—The members of the Godhead understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 2. 2,000 years ago—Angels and unfallen worlds understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 3. Near future (hopefully)—The 144,000 will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**
- 4. 1,000 years later—The wicked will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**

# **Some Basic Points**

**“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”**

**—Matthew 24:14**

## **Which gospel is “this gospel”?**

**If the pope could preach an evangelistic series that was broadcast to every person on earth, would the end come?**

**How about Benny Hin, or Jerry Falwell, or James Dobson, or Joel Osteen?**

**Ted Wilson, or Dwight Nelson, or Doug Batchelor, or Mark Finley, or David Asscherick, or Dave Fiedler?**

**The point is, “this gospel” has to be complete, mature, and powerful enough to bring on “the end.”**

# Holding Pattern

**“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying,**

# Holding Pattern

**“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”**

**—Revelation 7:1–4**

# Holding Pattern

“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees **till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.**’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

—Revelation 7:1–4



# **A Utilitarian Analysis**

**“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”**

**—Ephesians 3:10**

# A Utilitarian Analysis

“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

—Ephesians 3:10

# What is the wisdom of God?

- ◆ What plans are being held up?
- ◆ What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?
- ◆ What specifics need to be demonstrated?
- ◆ Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?

# What plans are being held up?

Everything from the sealing on ...

- ◆ Close of probation
- ◆ Time of Jacob's trouble
- ◆ Second coming
- ◆ Reward of the righteous
- ◆ Destruction of the wicked

# **What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?**

- ◆ **Reward of the righteous**
- ◆ **Destruction of the wicked**

**What specifics need to be demonstrated?**



**What specifics need to be demonstrated?**



# **What specifics need to be demonstrated?**

**To justify His government's rulings on the reward of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, God needs to do three things:**

- ◆ Show that there is a good reason some are lost and some are saved**
- ◆ Show that the people He wants to take to heaven are safe to have there**
- ◆ Show that there is nothing more that even God could do to help the wicked**



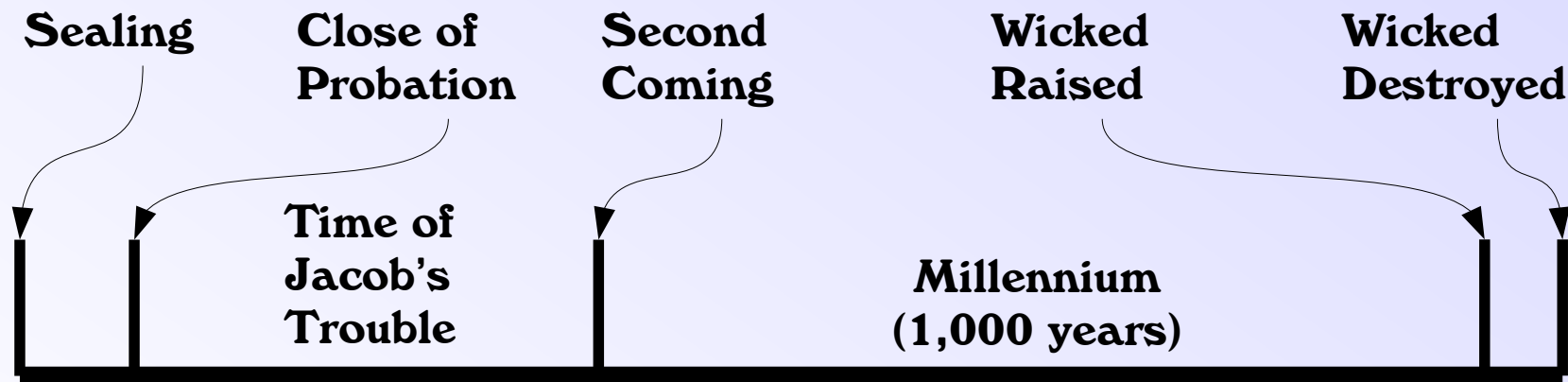
**Can the sealing demonstrate  
what is needed?**

# Basic Information

- ◆ **The seal of God (Rev. 7 and 9) is contrasted with the mark of the beast (Rev. 13)**
- ◆ **A seal—an official sign of authority—gives the essential information (usually the name, title, and jurisdiction) of the individual, organization, or government it represents**
- ◆ **This information is found in the Sabbath commandment: Name—LORD; Title—Creator; Jurisdiction—Heaven and earth**
- ◆ **The mark of the beast is readily identified as the claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday**

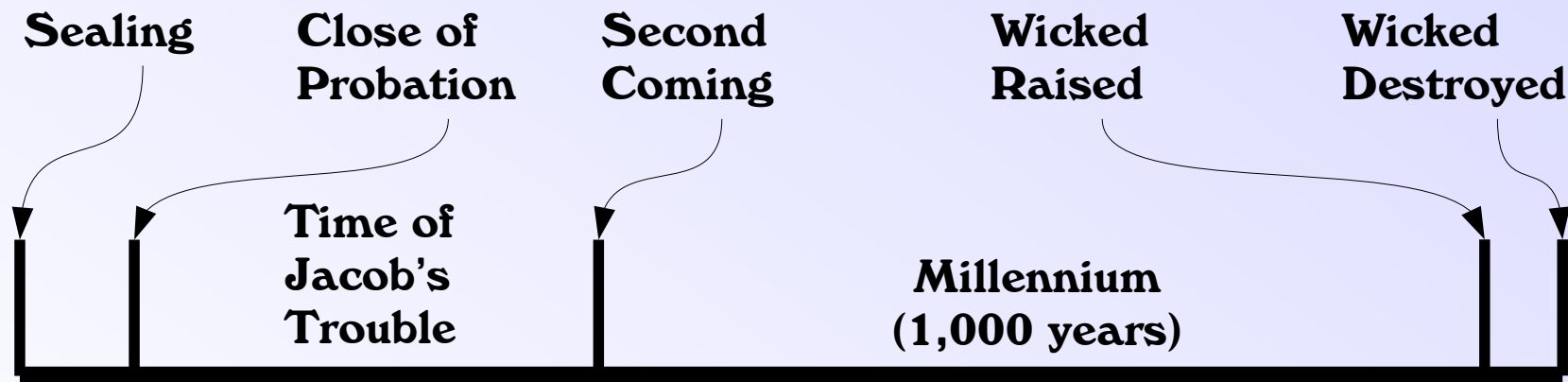
# Basic Information

- ◆ The seal of God is placed in the foreheads of the 144,000 *before* the close of probation.
- ◆ The close of probation marks the end of Christ's work as High Priest in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.



# Basic Information

- ◆ The conflict between the observance of Sabbath and the mark of the beast reaches it's peak during the "Time of Jacob's trouble," when those resisting the combined religious/political authority of the world are condemned to death.



## **How did “Jacob” get into this?**

**“For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’”**

**—Jeremiah 30:5–7**

## **How did “Jacob” get into this?**

**“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’... And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”**

**—Genesis 32:24–30**

# **Job**

**“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”**

**—Job 13:15**

# **Jesus**

**“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”**

**—Mark 15:34**

## **What makes this test special?**

- ◆ **Millions have faced death for their faith—what's the difference here?**
- ◆ **This is not the normal test of martyrdom, because at this time—with no High Priest to intercede in the heavenly sanctuary—the 144,000 feel no sense of God's abiding presence.**
- ◆ **Every sensory input tells them that God is their enemy, that He wants to kill them.**



## **What makes this test special?**

**“Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy.”**

**—*Signs of the Times*, November 27, 1879**

## What makes this test special?

**“Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters His voice from His holy habitation. The captivity of His people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, ‘God is our friend.’”**

*—Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879*

# What the Test Shows

- ◆ **By placing His seal on the 144,000 *before* this most difficult of all tests, God provides convincing evidence that He can correctly identify those who are safe to let into heaven.**

# What the Test Shows

Because...

- ◆ everyone on earth at this time is familiar with “this gospel,” and...
- ◆ *only* those who have faith pass the test, and...
- ◆ *all* those who have faith pass the test...

This test shows that...

- ◆ “faith” is *necessary* for salvation, and...
- ◆ “faith” plus a knowledge of “this gospel” is *sufficient* for complete obedience.

# What the Test Shows

**Martin Luther—**

- ◆ **didn't keep the Sabbath**
- ◆ **was all goofed up on infant baptism**
- ◆ **lived on roast beast, sauerkraut, and beer**
- ◆ **was not the most patient of individuals**

**But he had faith.**

# What the Test Shows

Now Jesus says, “I can teach Martin Luther the details of ‘this gospel’ when I get him to heaven.

“But the investigative judgment has already found that he had true faith—is it OK with everyone if I take him home with Me?”

And there won't be a single voice raised in objection, because *righteousness really is by faith!*

# **Fast forward a thousand years...**

**After a thorough examination of the books of record to answer every question about why this one or that one is not among the redeemed, the time has come to finish sin and sinners for ever.**

# The Final Battle

**“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader.**



# The Final Battle

**“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”**

**—*The Great Controversy*, 664**

# The Final Battle

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the **City of God**. **By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed,** and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”

—*The Great Controversy*, 664

# The Final Demonstration

Would “this same Jesus,”

- ◆ the One who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8);
- ◆ the One who said “[whoever] comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37);
- ◆ the One who has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11)—

would Jesus let a repentant and trusting sinner in?

# The Final Fall of Satan

**“Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God’s justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth.... He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end.”**

*—Great Controversy, 671*

# The Choice Is Ours

**“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.’ To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him.”**

**—Isaiah 45:22-24**



# d'Sozo

## REVERSING THE WORST EVIL

1

This file was originally prepared by Dave Fiedler, but you are welcome to use, share, or adapt it. Just don't make it heretical. Seriously—don't do that. If you happen to find additional information that somehow improves this presentation, please be so kind as to email a copy to me at [dfiedler@AdventistCityMissions.org](mailto:dfiedler@AdventistCityMissions.org).

My book on Adventist History, *Hindsight*, is also available through that address. (\$10 +s/h; free s/h on 5 or more copies). The book upon which this series of talks is based, (same title and subtitle as above) is currently available online from Remnant Publications. The HEALTH program (that's "Health Evangelism And Leadership Training for Him" and I highly recommend the class) operated by Weimar Institute has a supply, and the book is also available in at least some ABC's. If you are interested in box lots (36 copies per box), you could get in touch with me at the email above and I may (or may not) be able to help out on the pricing.

Questions and comments are always welcome, but please don't deprive yourself of sleep or food while waiting for a reply.

The notes for this file are typed out in some length so that readers can more or less re-create the full message of the presentation.

Sometimes there are notes intended to be read *before* the text on the slide, though usually the notes come *after* the text. How can you know? Just look for **CLICK** in the notes. If you see the bright red word, it means that the notes to that point apply *before* some element of the page which, in the original presentation format, would appear when the speaker "clicked" his remote control. It's not totally consistent, but if you're smart enough to be reading this, you're smart enough to figure it out. Any slide with no **CLICK** in it means that you read the slide first, then read the notes, and move on.

# **The Path to Victory**

MAKING SENSE OF THE PROCESS



## **A Quick Re-cap**

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- 4. 1,000 years later—The wicked will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**

**CLICK** and read four items

OK, we saw all this yesterday... except for those who are joining us for the first time now. This is Satan falling like lightning from heaven. And if you're questioning the inspired support for that, you'll need to catch the first meeting on AudioVerse.

But look at the list, and tell me who is missing. The righteous dead. Just hold that thought—we'll come back to them in a bit.

As I said in our last meeting, it's Stage Three that should most interest us, since we actually have a chance to do something about that one. So that's where we'll go now, and we'll start out with...

## Some Basic Points

**“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”**

—Matthew 24:14

4

A familiar verse. Everyone knows the order of events given here. But today I'd like to ask if there is any reason for that order of events.

It's a common assumption that the gospel must go to all the world before the end can come. As we work our way through this topic, we'll find that this assumption is correct—but do you know why?

Here's a hint: It isn't so everyone has a chance to be saved. Billions of people have already died without hearing the gospel. And since Zechariah (13:6) and Paul (Romans 2:13–15) (also DA 638; SD 364; COL 385) talk about “unenlightened heathen” being saved, it looks like God already has a way of dealing with that.

So, why does “this gospel” need to go to all the world?

## **Which gospel is “this gospel”?**

**If the pope could preach an evangelistic series that was broadcast to every person on earth, would the end come?**

**How about Benny Hin, or Jerry Falwell, or James Dobson, or Joel Osteen?**

**Ted Wilson, or Dwight Nelson, or Doug Batchelor, or Mark Finley, or David Asscherick, or Dave Fiedler?**

**The point is, “this gospel” has to be complete, mature, and powerful enough to bring on “the end.”**

Before we answer that question, let's look at this one.

READ title, then **CLICK** and READ four items.

I don't really belong on that list, but the point is, “this gospel” needs to be complete. To whatever extent “my gospel” falls short of that, I will fall short of ever actually finishing God's work—no matter how much I do.

In the Lord's service, quality is always more significant than quantity. Our failure—my failure—to master the “science of salvation” is the greatest hold-up in the Great Controversy today.

And Scripture talks about that hold-up in the Lord's plans.

## **Holding Pattern**

**“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying,**

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**“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”**

**—Revelation 7:1-4**

**7**

**READ**

What’s the hold-up?

**CLICK** for highlighting

## Holding Pattern

“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

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The sealing is holding up God’s plans. It’s also holding up Satan, by the way. He started falling a long time ago, and should have hit the rocks by now. It’s only because we aren’t ready—I’m not ready—for the sealing, that he’s still sort of floating around in mid air.

But why can’t God’s plans go forward without the sealing?

What makes it necessary?

What does it accomplish?

## **A Utilitarian Analysis**

**“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”**

—Ephesians 3:10

I submit that the answer is in this verse...

**CLICK** for highlighting

## A Utilitarian Analysis

**“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”**

—Ephesians 3:10

10

God’s church, people like you and me, are intended to serve as a demonstration of God’s wisdom. Until we’re ready to do that, He has to wait.

So if we’re supposed to demonstrate the wisdom of God, it makes sense that we should ask...



**What is the wisdom of God?**

- ◆ **What plans are being held up?**
- ◆ **What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?**
- ◆ **What specifics need to be demonstrated?**
- ◆ **Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?**

11

That looks like a pretty loaded question, doesn't it?  
Almost presumptuous. After all, who am I to be talking  
as though I understand the wisdom of God?

Well, bear with me a moment, and let's consider what we  
can learn by asking four questions about this specific  
part of God's wisdom that is to be demonstrated to the  
principalities and powers of heavenly places by the  
church:

**CLICK** and read four items

We're going to just walk our way through these in order,  
so our first question is...

**What plans are being held up?**

**Everything from the sealing on ...**

- ♦ **Close of probation**
- ♦ **Time of Jacob's trouble**
- ♦ **Second coming**
- ♦ **Reward of the righteous**
- ♦ **Destruction of the wicked**

12

Well the plans we started out talking about—the "end" that is to come after the gospel goes to all the world.

In other words...

**CLICK**

Everything from the sealing on.

Well, that includes too many details to list here, but five big items stand out—

**CLICK** and read five items

OK hold that thought, and we'll go to our second question, which is...

## What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?

- ◆ Reward of the righteous
- ◆ Destruction of the wicked

13

Remember, this is for the benefit of the “principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” That’s a loyal audience! Don’t they trust Him? **CLICK**

Not co-incidentally, the last two items on the list we just looked at come to mind again. And for good reason: Satan has been complaining about God’s plans on these two issues for several thousand years.

And the unfallen inhabitants of those “heavenly places” have a stake here as well. Remember, sin began in heaven; Lucifer was once their friend...

Angels have good reasons to make sure that God’s plans

1. Don’t endanger heaven.
2. Don’t execute the wicked needlessly.

Our third question is...

**What specifics need to be demonstrated?**



14

Suppose a teacher gave a math test—and everyone flunked! But suppose the teacher announced later that seven students would get passing grades anyway. You'd want to know what made those seven different, wouldn't you? And if the teacher said, **CLICK**

“It's because they have blue eyes,” you wouldn't think it was fair—especially if you didn't have blue eyes!

The problem is that blue eyes have nothing to do with math tests. That's just not a good reason.

What would be a good reason? Well, maybe if the class studied the lesson again, and then took another test. If the seven students showed they had learned how to do the math—that would make more sense.

**Continue with notes on next page**

But does that second test guarantee that they'll never again mess up another math question?

So, does it sound like a good idea to take people to heaven? Even people who have passed a second test? What a risk!

And what about those who failed twice? What if the teacher gave them another chance? Wouldn't they learn sometime? How many chances should someone get before the teacher says, "I give up! This student is hopeless"?

And how can you say that when the consequence isn't just a failing grade—it's eternal death.

So... back to our question—

**CLICK**

## What specifics need to be demonstrated?

To justify His government's rulings on the reward of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, God needs to do three things:

- ♦ Show that there is a good reason some are lost and some are saved
- ♦ Show that the people He wants to take to heaven are safe to have there
- ♦ Show that there is nothing more that even God could do to help the wicked

16

READ slide and then

**CLICK** and READ first item

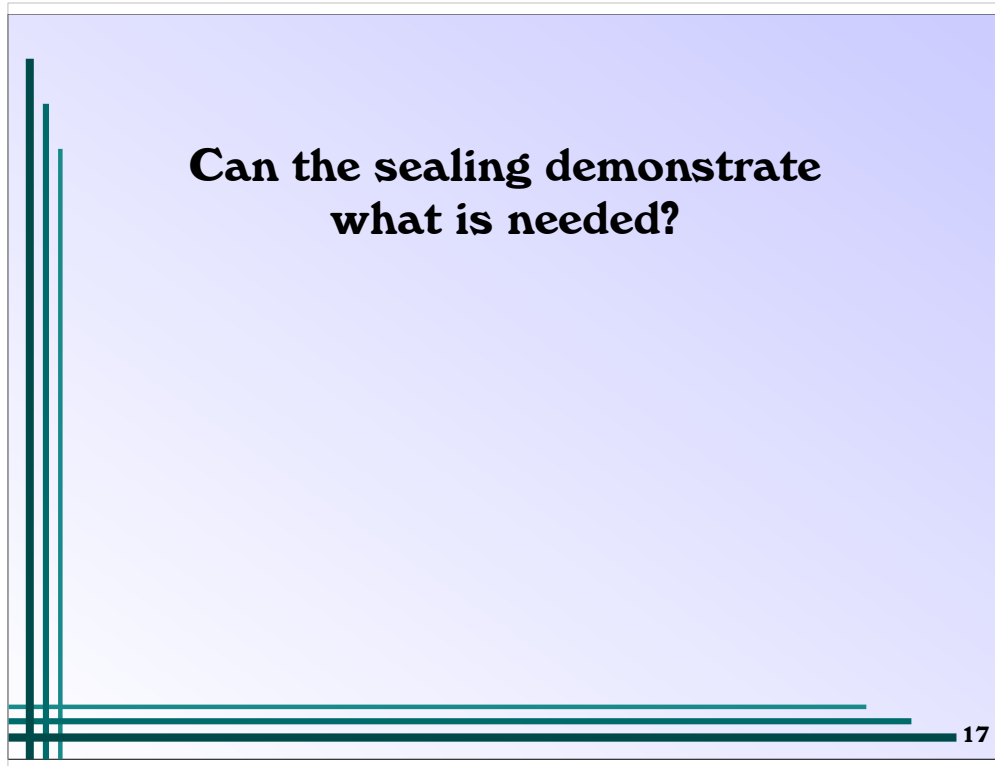
This is necessary to counter Satan's claim that because God's people have sinned, they are no more entitled to salvation than he is. Or, better yet, he deserves salvation just as much as they do!

**CLICK** and READ second item

This allays the concern of the unfallen inhabitants of the universe about taking people like you and me to heaven. The righteous need to be "completely saved."

**CLICK** and READ third item

This establishes God's love and justice as being entirely compatible. The wicked need to be "completely lost."



Here's our fourth question: "Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?"

It's probably no surprise to find that I believe it can, so let's get started by looking at some...

**CLICK**

## Basic Information

- ♦ **The seal of God (Rev. 7 and 9) is contrasted with the mark of the beast (Rev. 13)**
- ♦ **A seal—an official sign of authority—gives the essential information (usually the name, title, and jurisdiction) of the individual, organization, or government it represents**
- ♦ **This information is found in the Sabbath commandment: Name—LORD; Title—Creator; Jurisdiction—Heaven and earth**
- ♦ **The mark of the beast is readily identified as the claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday**

**CLICK** and read four items

So far, so good.

The Sabbath is the seal of God's government.

Knowledgeable and determined opposition to God's authority in the form of Sunday exaltation is the mark of the beast.



## Basic Information

- ♦ The seal of God is placed in the foreheads of the 144,000 *before* the close of probation.
- ♦ The close of probation marks the end of Christ's work as High Priest in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

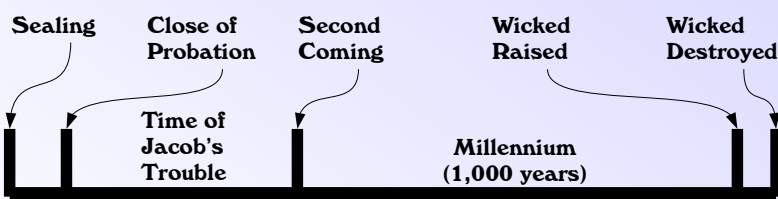


Chart not complete in every detail, not to scale

**CLICK...** READ item one

**CLICK...** READ item two

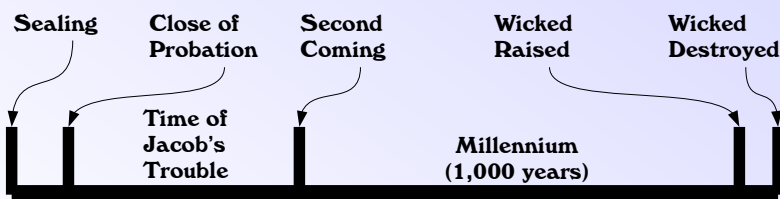
I used to think of the seal of God as a diploma, or some sort of heavenly Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

But it finally dawned on me that the seal is given before the final test. Teachers don't do that! You just don't hand out diplomas before you know whether or not the student has passed finals.

So... what's going on here?

## Basic Information

- ♦ The conflict between the observance of Sabbath and the mark of the beast reaches it's peak during the "Time of Jacob's trouble," when those resisting the combined religious/political authority of the world are condemned to death.



## How did “Jacob” get into this?

“For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’”

—Jeremiah 30:5-7

21

**CLICK** and Read item

(Passing Note: When “labor” and “travail” are spoken of in prophecy, they always have some application to this time)

Jeremiah is the one who put Jacob’s name on this occasion, but he is clearly referring to the story of Jacob’s night of wrestling by the Jabok, which comes from Genesis 32... (on next slide, keep going)

Jacob is returning home after his twenty-year absence when he gets word that his brother Esau is coming with 400 armed men.

This is not a good sign!

Realizing his only hope is God, he spends the night praying. At midnight, someone “attacks” him....

**CLICK** and read

## How did “Jacob” get into this?

“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’... And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”

—Genesis 32:24–30

### READ verses

The One he has been praying to is the same One he has been fighting! What does he believe? That God loves him and wishes him well, or that God hates him and wants him dead?

It’s faith versus sight—and feeling and hearing and smelling and the taste of blood. Which is stronger?

This is the basic test of the time of Jacob’s trouble.

Jacob is not the only illustration of this. Other stories add other insights, but we only have time to briefly mention two of them.

**Job**

**“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”**  
—Job 13:15

**Jesus**

**“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”**  
—Mark 15:34

23

Under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, when to Job it seemed that God was out to kill him, still he maintained his trust and loyalty.

**CLICK** and read

An interesting side note is that this whole test was Satan’s idea! And God went along with it! And lest anyone think this was an insignificant event, just remember that it cost the lives of about 100 people to set up this test for Job.

(Hidden slide after this one gives the math)

But the ultimate example is Jesus

**CLICK**

## **What makes this test special?**

- ◆ **Millions have faced death for their faith—what's the difference here?**
- ◆ **This is not the normal test of martyrdom, because at this time—with no High Priest to intercede in the heavenly sanctuary—the 144,000 feel no sense of God's abiding presence.**
- ◆ **Every sensory input tells them that God is their enemy, that He wants to kill them.**

**CLICK** and read three items, then

**CLICK** for “avenging enemy” quote

## What makes this test special?

**“Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy.”**

*—Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879*

26

After making every sacrifice imaginable to remain true to God’s government;

facing imminent death because they refuse to disobey His commandment;

with no possible hope in anything but God;

That’s when God makes His appearance—not as a helper, but as an enemy.

Do they still trust Him?

Why such a test? Because it has to be the absolute most difficult test of faith possible, ever, under any circumstances. Nothing less can show that they trust God so much that they will do His will even when it doesn’t make sense to them. Nothing less can show that they are “saved enough” to be safe in heaven.

## What makes this test special?

**“Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters His voice from His holy habitation. The captivity of His people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, ‘God is our friend.’”**

—*Signs of the Times*, November 27, 1879

27

Before we go on with our line of thought, I can't resist taking just a moment to show how Ellen White describes the outcome of this test.

**CLICK** and read quote

Isn't it great that the hardest test of all time can be passed by any child who's learned "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know"?



## What the Test Shows

- ♦ By placing His seal on the 144,000 *before* this most difficult of all tests, God provides convincing evidence that He can correctly identify those who are safe to let into heaven.

28

OK, back on our main track again.

What does this test show?

**CLICK** and READ item

The seal is not a diploma!

It's a demonstration of God's wisdom, that helps His loyal subjects feel more comfortable with people like you and me.

But it does more...

## What the Test Shows

### Because...

- ♦ everyone on earth at this time is familiar with “this gospel,” and...
- ♦ *only* those who have faith pass the test, and...
- ♦ *all* those who have faith pass the test...

### This test shows that...

- ♦ “faith” is *necessary* for salvation, and...
- ♦ “faith” plus a knowledge of “this gospel” is *sufficient* for complete obedience.

**CLICK** and read through items

Sorry about the “formal logic” lingo. Don’t worry about technical definitions for “necessary” and “sufficient”; it pretty much means what it says, even in normal English.

This is why the gospel has to go to the whole world. This test can’t be carried out properly without simplifying the situation down to a single variable. Only when the question of knowledge is “standardized” can the role of “faith” be clearly seen.

It’s a bit like working on a car: you don’t do a major engine overhaul and switch gasoline brands at the same time. Your car’s performance might change, but you wouldn’t know why. Stick with one variable.

## What the Test Shows

**Martin Luther—**

- ♦ **didn't keep the Sabbath**
- ♦ **was all goofed up on infant baptism**
- ♦ **lived on roast beast, sauerkraut, and beer**
- ♦ **was not the most patient of individuals**

**But he had faith.**

And why is all this important?

Aside from proving that the 144,000 are safe to let into heaven, this demonstration just happens to be exactly what is needed to take care of that one group of God's creatures who got left out of the four stages of Satan's fall.

Remember them? The righteous dead.

Let's use one of my heroes to illustrate this.

**CLICK** and READ items

## What the Test Shows

Now Jesus says, “I can teach Martin Luther the details of ‘this gospel’ when I get him to heaven.

“But the investigative judgment has already found that he had true faith—is it OK with everyone if I take him home with Me?”

And there won't be a single voice raised in objection, because *righteousness really is by faith!*

READ, then

**CLICK** for final item

Righteousness really is by faith—always has been, always will be.

You may not be like me, but I'm a logical/philosophical kind of guy. I really, really like it when things make sense. The downside of that is that “faith” in something I don't understand is just not naturally appealing.

That's bad news when “righteousness is by faith.”

But God is merciful, and for people like me He came up with a system that makes even “faith” logical.

But we're not done...

## **Fast forward a thousand years...**

**After a thorough examination of the books of record to answer every question about why this one or that one is not among the redeemed, the time has come to finish sin and sinners for ever.**

READ slide, then

You know the story—

Jesus descends on the Mount of Olives. The earth splits to create a great plain, and the New Jerusalem comes to rest. Soon the wicked are raised to life.

After a period of unknown duration during which they prepare their weapons and organize their forces, they are ready to attack the city.

## **The Final Battle**

**“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader.**

## The Final Battle

**“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”**

*—The Great Controversy, 664*

READ and then

Did you catch it? Something amazing just happened.

**CLICK** for highlighting

## The Final Battle

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. **By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.**”

—*The Great Controversy*, 664

They had to shut the gates! Those great big, made-out-of-a-single-pearl gates have been open the whole time!

Maybe I’m reading too much into this. But up to this point, I don’t know of any means by which God has shown the universe that it is absolutely impossible to reclaim those who have rejected faith.

Like the little old lady down the street who grew pretty roses, and gave cookies to the neighborhood children... but never accepted Christ.

Yes, the Book of Record shows a lot, but isn’t there some way to reach her? Just one more chance?

Wouldn’t you ask? Wouldn’t you care?



## The Final Demonstration

Would “this same Jesus,”

- ♦ the One who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8);
- ♦ the One who said “[whoever] comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37);
- ♦ the One who has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11)—

would Jesus let a repentant and trusting sinner in?

READ Would “this same Jesus,” then

**CLICK** for three items and the question

I believe He would—but in all that multitude outside the city, not one can be found who has faith in God’s love.

As the faithful 144,000 pass the hardest of all tests and show the power of faith, so the faithless wicked fail the easiest of all tests and show their total depravity.

Now the entire unfallen universe knows there is nothing more that even God Himself can do to save them. More time will not help. Miracles will not help. Additional demonstrations of love and patience will not help. They just don’t trust Him... at all.

## The Final Fall of Satan

**“Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God’s justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth.... He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end.”**

—*Great Controversy*, 671

37

Next comes the final judgment, with its panoramic presentation of the entire conflict between good and evil.

With this evidence before them, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the justice and righteousness of God. But...

**CLICK** and read

Now, finally, all that must be demonstrated has been shown. It’s time to end the conflict.

## **The Choice Is Ours**

**“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.’ To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him.”**

—Isaiah 45:22-24

God has told us what to expect. It shouldn't be a mystery for anyone who reads the Bible.

The only real question is, “Do we have faith enough to obey?”



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