Sound Attitude of Seventh-day Adventists toward the Signs of the Times

Byungho Jang

Abstracts—Some Korean Adventists insist that worldwide Sunday laws will be legislated by the United State of America, and accompanied by the Jacob’s trouble. They believe that the global financial crisis will start in America, and surely propel the religious situation of the world toward the time of Jacob’s trouble for the remnant who keep the seventh day as the Sabbath. It means that they accept such a global financial crisis as one of the most important signs of the times, and a time of leaving the cities for rural and mountain areas. However, such social and economic depressions and rumors of Sunday laws here and there in the world would be only partial signs of the times. The Adventists’ eschatological concern regarding the signs of the times should be the latter rain (Joel 2:23; Acts 1:8) and the spread of the message of the Jesus’ second coming. The remnant plays a leading part and they are represented by three angels. The greatest concern of Adventists must be sharing the positive sign, namely, the message of the second coming of Jesus, rather than concentrating on negative and passive signs such as a financial collapse and the prohibition of trade.

Keywords: signs, times, remnant, Adventist, Sunday Law, Jacob’s trouble, second coming, last days

I. Introduction

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As time goes by, an adequate understanding of Seventh-day Adventists’ identity is diminishing. Further, the common misunderstanding has been spread among Adventists, (“Seventh-day Adventist” and “Adventist” or their derivatives are used interchangeably in this paper), that true happiness is experiencing salvation through the cross of Jesus and to live a happy (makarios) life in this world. It seems that the value of spiritual life is decreasing among Adventists as they journey towards an inconceivably glorious heaven (2 Cor 2:9). Indeed many Adventists, who are called to be missionaries in the midst of almost overwhelming apostasy, are taking life easy (Seventh-day Adventist Church, p. 13).

Seventh-day Adventists identify themselves as the end-time “remnant.” They believe themselves to have a distinctive mission amidst the prevailing apostasy. The term, “remnant,” is used to refer to people who “obey God’s commandments and have the faith of Jesus” (Rev 12:17) and in support of their calling to the mission of spreading the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels’ messages (Rev 14:6-12). When the early Adventists first used the term “remnant” (White, 1856), they had self-confidence as “heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:20) and as the only people fulfilling Rev 12:17. James White, one of the founders of the Adventist church, provided biblical evidence for Adventists as the remnant. He applied the war between the remnant and Satan to: (1) the period after 1260 years, (2) the most recent Christians who keep God’s commandments, and (3) Seventh-day Adventists who keep God’s commandments and fulfill the special calling of Rev 12:17. Modern Adventists, who live during the end times, need to reconfirm their identity as the “remnant” as they watch for the fulfillment of prophecy and the second coming of Jesus (Knight, p. 11).

II. The Upright Understanding of Jacob’s Trouble

Seventh-day Adventists commonly believe that two great events, Jacob’s trouble and the Sunday Law crisis, will take place before the Second Advent of Christ. Even though the expressions “Jacob’s trouble” and “Sunday Law” are not expressly used in the Bible, they are important eschatological terms in the Adventist community. Adventists usually divide Jacob’s trouble into a short period of trouble and a great time of trouble. This is based on their understanding of Dan 12:1, and that the short period of tribulation

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