

DID THE DOOR CLOSE IN 1914

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QUESTION BOOK - WHAT PASTOR RUSSELL SAID - **Chronology—Sealing Saints Re 1914**—[pages 79 to 89] Question (1914)—*Do you think the saints will all be sealed by October, 1914, whether they are here or not?* [page 86, last two sentences and page 87, top of page]—“Well there is a further sealing mentioned in the book of Revelation as not having been common to the people of God, but as being opportune, and transpiring, in the end of the age; and we read, you remember, that the four angels are holding back the four winds; that the great time of trouble should not break loose upon the world until the servants of God had been sealed in their foreheads. Now that is a different sealing, you see. As Christians, we have always had, from the beginning of our experiences, the sealing process in our hearts, the character likeness of our Lord made more and more prominent, and so had our fathers and our grandfathers and all the church of Christ had that sealing work going on in the heart. But now this sealing in the forehead signifies the giving, or impressing, intellectually. Has that been going on for a while? Yes, my dear brother, and you know it. Just as surely as you have had any of that sealing in the forehead you are aware that your intellect is sharper and brighter and clearer. You understand God’s character, you understand God’s plan, you understand God’s Word as you never did before. And this sealing process is to continue until what? Until all the number that belong to the Elect Church shall have been sealed in their foreheads. Will there not be many saintly ones of God’s people left in ignorance? Not one! Not one! All of the one hundred and forty-four thousand that shall stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion will all of them be sealed in their foreheads; not necessarily all of the 144,000 in the flesh, because they have been selected throughout the whole age, you know; but all who belong to that class who will be living in the end of this age will have the sealing in this way; and the others that belong to that class, by experiencing the resurrection will get their sealing in a still more thorough manner, if you please; but the entire 144,000 receive this sealing in their foreheads, this intellectual knowledge of which this is a picture. So we believe it must be. So it has been in process...” [see Revelation 9:4, however, where, in the fifth “trumpet” period, it seems some had been sealed in their foreheads.]

Reprints 5883, par. 6 (April 1, 1916): “We rejoice to know that the Truth is thus being spread in every direction, and that the Lord is using the consecrated talents of his servants everywhere for the sealing of his saints in their foreheads—intellectually.—Revelation 7:1-3.”

Reprints 5924, col. 2, par. 2 (July 15, 1916): “The faithful class is pictured to us in Revelation 7:3, 4 and 14:1-5. These are the 144,000 who have the Father’s name in their foreheads. They sing the new song, which none can sing but these 144,000. Oh, we long to be among them!...”

Reprints 5950-5951—“THE HARVEST IS NOT ENDED.” (Sept. 1, 1916). “Some of us were quite strongly convinced that the harvest would be ended by now, but our expectations must not be allowed to weigh anything against the facts. The fact is that the harvest work is going grandly on; it is not ended by any means, As far as our present judgment goes, it would appear that there is a considerable harvest work yet to be done. This is not *discouraging*, but *encouraging* to us. We are glad to know of the grace of God reaching other heads and hearts and blessing them as ours have been blessed. We are glad to know that others are daily coming into blessed relationship with the Lord under the covenant of sacrifice, and are giving evidence of having been begotten of the Holy Spirit. We are glad to note their zeal, and rejoice with them that they, as well as we, can share in this glorious opportunity of making our calling and election sure by the character development which we are daily learning to appreciate as the prime essential of the ‘more than conquerors.’... ”

“At first we were inclined to surmise that the harvest proper had closed in October 1914, and that the work since going on was a gleaning work; but the facts do not seem to bear this out. The progress of the work and the number who ARE being brought to a KNOWLEDGE of the truth and separated to the Lord are far too great to be styled a *gleaning*. Evidently it is a part of the regular harvest...

“It still seems clear to us that the prophetic period known as the Times of the Gentiles ended chronologically in... 1914. The Gentile nations were guaranteed a certain amount of possession and control for a certain period of time. That time having expired, dispossession proceedings are now in process. The winds of strife, WINDS OF WAR, [* see below] ARE LET LOOSE with great damage to the whole world weakening the kingdoms of Europe in respect to their best blood and their financial strength.

[*] Since writing the foregoing we find some further expressions having a bearing on the subject—in Reprints 5715 (July 1, 1915), last two paragraphs: “In view of these favorable factors, we perceive our privilege in giving forth no uncertain sound upon the silver trumpets of Jubilee. Apparently many of God’s servants ARE BEING sealed in their foreheads with this knowledge, this present truth...”

“WINDS OF WAR LET LOOSE

“How plainly now we can see what we saw less distinctly in the past—that the winds of war have been held back for approximately forty years to give opportunity for the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, for the spread of true Bible study all over the world...”

[See also Reprints, bottom article on page 5469, June 1, 1914]

“Our mistake was along the very line that we pointed out, Time and again, we reminded our readers that the parallelism between the Jewish age and the Gospel age could not include anything belonging to the new dispensation. The parallels affected merely the nominal Jewish house *there* and the nominal Christian house *here*. Both were rejected because of failure to be in the right condition of heart for the truths that were due to them—both rejected for destruction. The Jewish system was a church-state affair, paralleled here by the great church-state systems of Europe, whose destruction began in 1914...

“We should not have looked for parallelisms between the starting of the Gospel church and its experiences, and the starting in this harvest time of the heavenly church and its experiences. These are no part to the parallel. The parallel belongs to the nominal Jewish system, which went to destruction and to the nominal Gospel church, which is now going to destruction.

“We imagined that the harvest work of gathering the church would be accomplished before the end of the Gentile Times; but nothing in the Bible so said. Our thought was purely an inference, and now we see that it was an unjustified one. This harvest work belongs to the new dispensation and cannot be identified with the old. Anyway, the harvesting of the Jewish age, gathering ‘Israelites indeed’ into the Gospel church, did not close with A.D. 70, but progressed in various parts of the world thereafter. Quite a good many Jews, doubtless, profiting by their terrible experience, were all the better prepared to be gathered into the Gospel Garner after the destruction of their national polity. Similarly, we may expect that quite a good many will yet be gathered to the heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here...

“Are we regretful that the harvest work continues? Nay, verily; we rejoice and have the pleasure each day of showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; and we delight in seeing how others are being benefited and made to rejoice...

“Our present attitudes, dear brethren, should be one of great gratitude toward God, increasing appreciation of the beautiful truth which he has granted us the privilege of seeing and being identified with, and increasing zeal in helping to bring that truth to the knowledge of others...”

Reprints 5964, col. 2, paragraphs 6, 7 (Sept. 1, 1916): “... Christian baptism to the Gentiles was a new thing. It symbolized the grafting of wild olive branches into the Israelitish olive tree. It was an immersion of aliens into the body of Messiah making them fellow-members with the Jews of the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, whose entire NUMBER was to be 144,000—twelve thousand from each tribe. (Rev. 2:9; 3:9; 7:1-8;

14:1-5) Those taken from among the Gentiles were the wild olive branches grafted into the good olive tree making up the NUMBER which lacked to complete this body of Christ.

“Should Water Baptism Be Practiced Now?”

“Some friends seem to have been in doubt as to whether it is proper to practice water baptism since October 1, 1914, and if so, what words should be used by the administrator in immersing the candidate, especially if he has but lately made a consecration.

“To this we reply; firstly, Just when the membership of the body of Christ will be consummated is not a matter that we are capable of determining with positiveness. Up to that time we may be sure that anyone presenting himself in the proper way was eligible...”

Volume Two, October 1, 1916 Foreword, last two paragraphs: “The author acknowledges that in this book he presents the thought that the Lord’s saints might expect to be with him in glory at the ending of the Gentile Times. This was a natural mistake to fall into...

“Our mistake was evidently not in respect to the ending of the times of the Gentiles; we drew a false conclusion, however, not authorized by the Word of the Lord. We saw in the Bible certain parallels between the Jewish Age and the Gospel Age. We should have noted that these parallels follow the nominal systems to destruction in both cases, and do not indicate the time of the glorification of the New Creation...”

Volume Three, October 1, 1916 Foreword, page I, par. 3—page II, top: “... The work of harvest has progressed and is still progressing—even though at one time we supposed that the Harvest work would have been fully accomplished with the ending of the Times of the Gentiles. That was merely a supposition which proved to be without warrant, for the thrusting in of the sickle of truth and the gathering in of the ripe grain has been progressing since October 1914, as never before. Indeed, the great World War has awakened humanity in a remarkable degree, and more independent thinking is being done than ever before. All this contributes to the breaking of the shackles of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, and the freeing of those who desire to know and do the Lord’s will and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

“We are glad for further opportunities of service to our great King in the gathering of his Elect to Himself, to the Truth. We are glad to see others coming into the Truth and preparing for the ‘Wedding.’ Evidently the ‘door’ is not yet shut...”

[Fourth paragraph from end]: “... As shown in the parable of the pounds and talents, the Master’s judgment concerning worthiness or unworthiness in the Kingdom must pass

upon all of His consecrated ones and the full number of the elect must be found and be glorified by the resurrection ‘change’—because ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’ (1 Cor. 15:50)...”

Scriptural Testimony Examined

There are three passages which seem out of harmony with these later thoughts, that “this sealing in the forehead... intellectually... is to continue until... all of the 144,000 that shall stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion will all of them be sealed in their foreheads... receive this... intellectual knowledge of which this is a picture.” (What Pastor Russell Said—1914—pages 86, 87—even in 1916. (Reprints 5883, 5924) See portions underscored foregoing. Let us examine these:

Isa. 66:7, 8: “Before she travailed she brought forth; before her pains came she was delivered of a man-child... as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children.” See Reprints 1648, 1649.

While the trouble on the world started in 1914 with the kingdoms in World War I, nominal (ecclesiastical) Zion’s plagues to “come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine,” and to “be utterly burned with [Greek, in] fire,” (Rev. 18:8) did not consume her then, forcing “these ‘tribulation saints’” “into freedom.” See Tabernacle Shadows, page 72, paragraph 1.

Ezekiel 9:11: “And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, ‘I have done as thou hast commanded me.’” In 1917 a picture of Pastor Russell, with the closing quotation in this text underneath, was mailed to subscribers. Does this verse apply to the time of his passing beyond the second veil? Though the scene is laid in Jerusalem (Ezek. 8:3; 9:1-4) and parts of it in the courts of the temple (Ezek. 8:7, 14, 16; 10:3, 4) the passage does not say that the man in linen went into the sanctuary to report the matter. If Abel, “being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4; compare also Gen. 4:10), and the works of the “blessed... dead... do follow them” (Rev. 14:13), may we not understand that when the conditions are fulfilled, “the man with the writer’s inkhorn” will report “the matter” completed by the identifying of it in Volume Three, pages 207 (par. 2) to 208, par. 1?

“... We have a clear intimation that the door will be shut in the manner last named” (“by such a condition of affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance”).

A third text is Revelation 7:1-3, quoting from Diaglott and Sinaitic MS.: “And after this I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds of the earth, so that no wind might blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the sun-rising, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud [great] voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to [for them] injure the earth and the sea, saying, injure not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

In verse one the winds were restrained from blowing at all on the earth, sea and trees. The command in verse 3 is to prevent the winds from injuring these, perhaps from preventing some in these three classes from being sealed. Thus the winds might start blowing without preventing those the Lord is seeking, from being sealed. This would permit replacements of some who fell away before 1914 by some who would have to take their places since then who would also have to be sealed in their foreheads.

An alternate interpretation would be to apply the same reasoning to 1914 as to 1881, when it is understood that 144,000 had responded to the “high calling,” some of whom were then or later broken off as Jewish branches that were unfaithful in A.D. 36.

However, Rev. 7:3, 4 may give the impression that the sealing here refers to a permanent sealing, as when the wax into which the seal is impressed crystallizes, permanently, fixing the seal. Of such there will be only 144,000.

Similarly, we might understand the marking in the foreheads in Ezekiel 9 by the “man with the inkhorn” to have been completed so far as he personally was concerned, though his writings continue to complete this work. However, a new work starts when the first is completed, (Ezek. 9:11; 10:1, 2; Rev. 13:16, 17; 15:1, 2, 5-7), and this break is made definite in the language of Rev. 14:16-18. This shows the “reaping” concluded before the final work of demolishing the old order begins.

Babylon and the Spirit Begotten

Were any of the Lord’s people ever in Babylon: Volume Three, page 165, par. 2 to page 166 says: “... Between the time when Babylon is cast off, falls from favor (1878), and the time when the plagues or troubles come upon her, is a brief interval, during which the faithful of the Lord’s people are all to be informed on this subject, and gathered out of Babylon. This is clearly shown in the same verse; for with the message, ‘Babylon is fallen,’ is coupled the call ‘Come out of her, *my people*, that ye... receive not of her [*coming*] plagues.’ This same interval of time, and the same work to be accomplished in it, are also referred to in symbol in Rev. 7:3... The command is given, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have SEALED the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ The forehead sealing indicates that a mental comprehension of the truth will

be the mark or seal which will separate and distinguish the servants of God from the servants and votaries of Babylon. And this agrees with Daniel's testimony: 'The wise... shall understand.' (Dan. 12:10) Thus the classes are to be marked and separated before the plagues come upon rejected, cast off Babylon.

“And that this *knowledge* is to be both a sealing and a separating agent is clearly implied in the verse before considered; for the declaration is first made, that ‘Babylon is fallen,’ and that certain plagues or punishments are coming upon her, before the Lord’s people are expected to obey the command, ‘Come out,’ based upon that knowledge. [N.B. following sentence]—Indeed, we know that all must be well ‘sealed in their foreheads’—intelligently informed—concerning God’s plan, before they can rightly appreciate or obey this command.

“And is it not apparent that this very work of sealing the Lord’s servants is now progressing? Are we not being sealed in our foreheads? and that too at the very proper time? Are we not being led, step by step, as by the Lord’s own hand—by his Word—to an appreciation of truth and affairs in general from his standpoint, reversing our former opinions derived from other sources, on many subjects? Is it not true that the various divisions or sects of Babylon have not been the channels through which this sealing has come to us, but rather that they have been hindrances which prevented its speedier accomplishment? And do we not see the propriety of it, as well as of the Lord’s declaration, that a separating of wheat and tares must occur in the harvest? And do we not see it to be his plan to reveal the facts to his faithful, and then to expect them to show their hearty sympathy with that plan by prompt obedience?...” See also Manna for Feb. 4th.

May we also ask, Does it not behoove any of the Lord’s people who find themselves again overtaken by confusion (Babylon) to obey his voice again by withdrawing their support from mixed doctrine—even though it come from a source still retaining considerable truth and doing many wonderful works? If Bro. Russell had continued with his former denomination or with “The Herald of the Morning” because of their being sources of religious literature, how many of us would have been harvested?

Note: “The reference in previous manuscript to the fact that the Church of England did not join the Evangelical Alliance (of 1846) is found on page x of the 1912 foreword of Volume 4 in a later edition.”

“Note on Previous Manuscript”

“The ‘beast’ of Revelation 17:1, being the ‘eighth’ (king) in verse 11, shows that the beast continues after the seven ‘heads’. (It is the beasts under these seven successive heads.) The Nazi-Fascists came into power after 1799 and even after 1914, too.

“Similarly, Daniel’s fourth beast (Dan. 7:7, 19-26) came into power centuries before the ‘little horn’ appeared. See also Volume Four, page 37 (page 36 in later edition) for the gradual process of consumption of the Babylonish systems.”