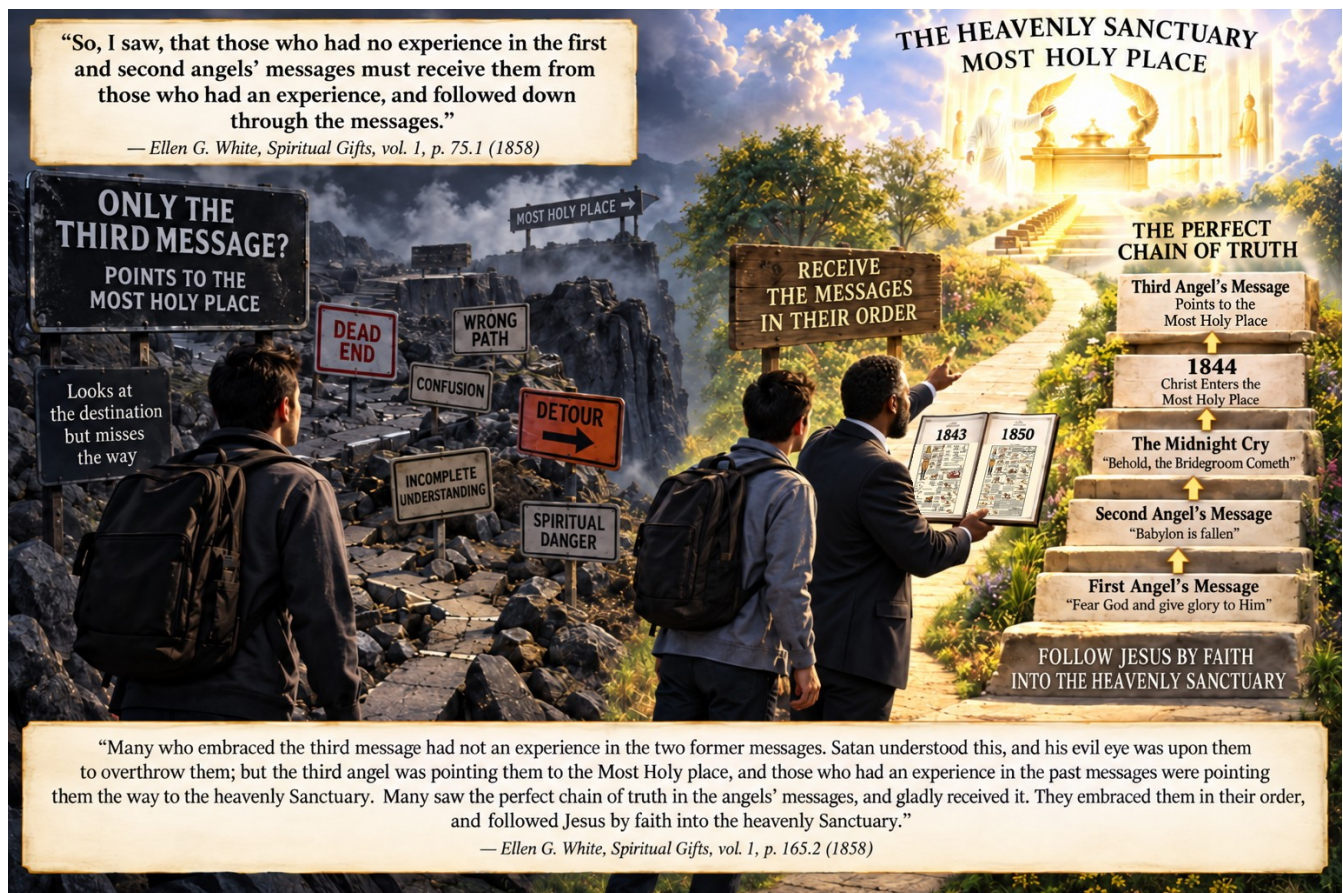


The Perfect Chain of Truth

The Third Angel's Message Embracing the First and Second

A companion study to the heavenly-sanctuary illustration



The third message shows the way while embracing the first and second—not by dispensing with them.

The Conclusion and Its Evidential Testimony

The distinction is between receiving the third angel's message in isolation and receiving it as part of the connected first, second, and third messages. It is not a claim that the third message cannot show the way into the Most Holy place. The Spirit of Prophecy explicitly says that it does.

The conclusion developed in this study is that the third message shows the way while embracing the first and second, not by dispensing with them. Those who lacked the earlier experience were therefore directed to receive the messages from those who had followed through them. The messages were recognized as a connected chain of truth, received in their order, and followed by faith to Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Accordingly, there is no contradiction between the third angel pointing to the Most Holy place and the third message showing the way. The deficiency illustrated is an isolated or partial reception, not a defect in the message as God gave it. The following quotations provide the evidence; the explanatory paragraph notes are the study's synthesis, not additional words attributed to Ellen White.

Q1 • The Perfect Chain Received in Its Order

“Many who embraced the third message had not an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them; but the third angel was pointing them to the Most Holy place, and those who had an experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly Sanctuary. Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages, and gladly received it. They embraced them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly Sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to hold the body. And as individuals receive and understand them, they are shielded against the many delusions of Satan.”

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 165–166, “The Third Angel's Message.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 165.2. Complete paragraph.

Note. This is the governing passage for the illustration above. Some had received the third message without the experience of the former two messages. Those who had that experience pointed them the way into the sanctuary. The outcome was their recognition of the connected truth, reception of the messages in their order, and following Jesus by faith [righteousness by faith]. The paragraph's final two sentences also describe the messages as an anchor and a protection against deception and strong delusions of these last days.

Receiving the Messages and the Experience

Q2 · Receive the Earlier Messages From Those Who Experienced Them

*“So, I saw, that those who had no experience in the first and second angels’ messages must receive them from those who had an experience, and followed down through the messages. As Jesus was crucified, so I saw that these messages have been crucified. And as the disciples declared that there was salvation in no other name under heaven, given among men; **so, also, should the servants of God faithfully and fearlessly declare that those who embrace but a part of the truths connected with the third message must gladly embrace the first, second and third messages as God has given them, or have no part nor lot in the matter.**”*

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), p. 75, “The Resurrection of Christ.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 75.1. Complete paragraph.

Note. The deficiency is receiving only part of the truth connected with the third message. The remedy is not to remain with that partial reception, but to embrace the first, second, and third messages as God gave them. The preceding paragraph concerns Thomas and the testimony of those who had seen the risen Christ; the Spirit of prophecy applies the principle of receiving the trustworthy testimony from those who God used to fulfil the first and second messages, to those who did not personally pass through those earlier messages.

Q3 · Three Messages, Three Steps, One Firm Platform

*“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.** **The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance.** **The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.** I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. **Step by step had God brought them along, until he had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.**”*

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 168–169, “A Firm Platform.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 168.2. Opening excerpt, ending at “platform.”

Note. The three steps are explicitly the first, second, and third angels’ messages. Their experience is described as something God led them through, step by step. In the illustration, the Midnight Cry and 1844 are historical waymarks; they are not to be separated from the steps quoted from this vision. They bridge the gap between the first two messages and the third.

The Sanctuary: Destination and Way

Q4 • The Third Angel Points to the Heavenly Sanctuary

“The third angel closes his message with these words, Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. As he repeated these words he pointed to the heavenly Sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the Most Holy place where Jesus stands before the ark, making his final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers, and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God.”

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), p. 163, “The Third Angel’s Message.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 162.1. Excerpt from the paragraph beginning on p. 162.

Note. This passage identifies the object to which attention and faith are directed: Christ’s ministry in the Most Holy place. It is not a denial of the necessity of the earlier messages. The next paragraph and the later account on pages 165–166 of *spiritual gifts* volume 1 describe how that direction is understood in connection with the believers’ experience.

Q5 • Showing the Way and Illuminating the Earlier Experience

“After Jesus opened the door of the Most Holy the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were to be tested and proved, as God proved the children of Israel anciently, to see if they would keep his law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the Holiest of the heavenly Sanctuary. They followed Jesus by faith into the Most Holy. Again they have found Jesus, and joy and hope spring up anew. I saw them looking back reviewing the past, from the proclamation of the second advent of Jesus, down through their travels to the passing of the time in 1844. They see their disappointment explained, and joy and certainty again animate them. The third angel has lighted up the past, present and future, and they know that God has indeed led them by his mysterious providence.”

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 163–164, “The Third Angel’s Message.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 163.1. Complete paragraph.

Note. Here the third angel does show the way. The people described are the disappointed believers, and their renewed understanding includes looking back over the experience that brought them to 1844. The passage joins the present sanctuary position with the past experience; it does not present the third message as a replacement for that history, but rather a continuation of the threefold message and its experience.

Preparatory Messages and the Light That Follows

Q6 • The Preparatory-Message Parallel

*“I was pointed back to the proclamation of the first advent of Christ. John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Jesus’ coming. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus. **Their opposition to the proclamation of his first advent placed them where they could not readily receive the strongest evidence of his being the Messiah. Satan led on those who rejected the message of John to go still further, to reject Jesus and crucify him.** In doing this, they placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly Sanctuary.”*

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 169–170, “A Firm Platform.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 169.1. Opening excerpt.

Note. Within the same chapter, White first presents the relationship between John’s preparatory testimony and the light that followed. The sanctuary application is part of her own comparison: rejecting the preceding testimony obstructed reception of the later blessing. This supplies the immediate background for her treatment of the Advent messages. Like ancient Israel and John, we have this as a warning today. Those who reject the advent movement and their fulfillment/testimony of the 1st and 2nd messages cannot be benefitted by the 3rd message and the latter rain that follows its reception. As John was rejected which led to the crucifixion of Jesus, so those who reject the Advent Movement have and will crucify these messages.

Q7 • Preparation by the Midnight Cry and Light in the Third Message

*“**Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second, and were not benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the Most Holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they can see no light in the third angel’s message, which shows the way into the Most Holy place. I saw that the nominal churches, as the Jews crucified Jesus, had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the move made in heaven, or of the way into the Most Holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there.**”*

— Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), p. 171, “A Firm Platform.” Paragraph locator: 1SG 171.1. Contiguous excerpt.

Explanation. The context answers the question of isolated reception. The first message, second message, Midnight Cry, and light in the third message appear together in the argument. The Midnight Cry prepares for entering with Jesus by faith; rejecting the former messages prevents discernment of the light in the third. Thus the statement that the third shows the way is not presented independently of the preceding preparation.

The Messages Remain Connected

Q8 • There Cannot Be a Third Without the First and Second

“The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel’s message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.”

— Ellen G. White, Manuscript 32, 1896, “Testimony Concerning the Views of Prophecy Held by John Bell,” November 8, 1896. Textual witness checked: the published manuscript release, 17MR 6.2.

Explanation. The earlier messages are not treated as obsolete because the third is being proclaimed. They are to be repeated, their order shown, and the application of the prophecies leading to the third explained. This expresses the continuing connection on which the study’s conclusion rests.

Q9 • The Third Message Embraces the First and Second

“The theme of greatest importance is the third angel’s message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels.”

— Ellen G. White, Letter 97, 1902, to E. J. Waggoner, July 7, 1902, “Elmshaven,” St. Helena, California, paragraph 3. Original-letter transcription; one complete sentence excerpted.

Explanation. “Embracing” is White’s own word. The third message is described inclusively, carrying the messages of the first and second angels with it. This provides a direct statement of the principle used to read the sanctuary passages together.

Combined Explanation for the Companion Study

Read together, these passages describe one connected work. The third angel points to Christ's ministry in the Most Holy place. Those with experience in the earlier messages help other and are required in order to understand the way. The believers receive the messages in order and follow Jesus by faith. White also describes the third message as embracing the first and second, and states that there cannot be a third without them. [Q1–Q2, Q4–Q5, Q7–Q9]

The third message's work of showing the way is therefore understood here in its connected reception, not its isolated reception. The earlier messages are not discarded once the third is reached. Their truths, order, prophetic application, and experience remain part of the understanding by which faith follows Christ. [Q1, Q3, Q5, Q7–Q9]

The illustration's contrast may consequently be expressed this way: identifying the destination does not remove the need to understand the way. Receiving only part of the truth connected with the third message is not the same as receiving the first, second, and third messages as God gave them. The answer is the perfect chain of truth, received in its order—not the separation of its links. [Q1–Q2]

Source and Transcription Notes

Original publication. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1: *The Great Controversy, Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels* (Battle Creek, Michigan: published by James White; Steam Press of the Review & Herald Office, 1858).

Book Text. Q1–Q7 follow the digital transcription of the 1858 volume. This is a modern typeset transcription of that text, not a photographic facsimile. Paragraph locators such as 1SG 165.2 identify a paragraph that begins on p. 165; the complete paragraph can continue onto the next page.

Quotation treatment. Words and capitalization are retained from the identified textual witnesses. Line wrapping and quotation-mark typography are normalized. Excerpts are identified as excerpts; no internal passages are silently joined. The two final sentences of Q1 are included to restore the complete paragraph beyond the illustration's shorter quotation.

Letters and manuscripts. Q9 was checked in the original-letter transcription of Letter 97, 1902, paragraph 3. Q8 is attributed to Manuscript 32, 1896, but was checked in the published manuscript release rather than collated directly against the full original-document record. Its wording should not be represented as independently autograph-verified. No facsimile verification is claimed for either archival document.

Optional Independent Verification

The study contains the quotations needed for reading its argument. The links below are provided for checking the textual witnesses and the surrounding material.

1858 volume: text and page divisions

Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1. Main digital text used for Q1–Q7.

[Open source](#)

1858 volume: paragraph-locator cross-check

A separate transcription identifies the paragraph locators cited in the study.

[Open source](#)

The resurrection chapter

Original-volume transcription containing 1SG 75.1.

[Open source](#)

Letter 97, 1902

Original-letter transcription; paragraph 3 contains the sentence in Q9.

[Open source](#)

Manuscript 32, 1896: original-document record

Record located; direct collation of the opening quotation remains to be completed.

[Open source](#)

Manuscript 32, 1896: textual witness actually checked

Published manuscript release; 17MR 6.2 contains Q8.

[Open source](#)