

Of the Times & Seasons



*And the
Delay of the
Return of Christ*

FOR
4TH
ANGEL
PUBLICATIONS

Kevin Straub

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and the Delay of the Return of Christ

Kevin Straub



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Preface

In this book, you will ...

- Be invited to double earnestness in personal preparation for the Day of the Lord.
- Consider the prophetic parable of Joel 1:2–4, which uncannily corresponds to forty-year generations of Adventism from 1844 into the 21st century.
- Revisit the story of the 1888 message and of Elders Jones and Waggoner, the “first call” messengers to the Advent people. You will understand the impact this story has had upon every generation as it is woven into the tapestry of Adventist history.
- Discover what God intended for the educational and medical work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and where the church deviated from the pattern.
- Meet Elders Wieland and Short, the “second call” messengers to the movement, who lit a fire in Adventism as they came to comprehend the depth and breadth of the 1888 message of righteousness by faith and realized that contemporary Adventism was preaching an evangelical knockoff of the message instead.
- Follow the development of the “great divide” in Adventism over historical and theological issues, as the Wieland and Short claims were denied and as high level meetings between Adventist officials and Calvinist theologians quietly took place.
- Carefully examine the development of the return to the latter rain as it swells to the loud cry of the third angel in the context of a detailed analysis of the differences between the “professed,” “militant,” and “true” (purified) churches of the remnant.

About the Author

Kevin Straub is a graduate of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system, with an education degree, minors in English and Religion, and a specialization in Outward Pursuits. He taught for several years in the Seventh-day Adventist school system as well as the public sector. An avid reader and student of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, he has been actively engaged in promoting the truths of the three angels’ messages and the fourth Angel of Revelation 18 through both speaking and writing. As a Bible worker, He and his wife are regularly involved with short-term independent international ministry tours. The Straubs currently live in Saskatchewan, where they raise horses and maintain gardens and a large greenhouse while continuing their ministry of sharing Bible truth.

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Section I

The Generation of the Restoration and the Midnight Watch

Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?
The watchman said,
The morning cometh, and also the night:
if ye will inquire, inquire ye:
return, come.

(Isaiah 21:11, 12)

Arise,
cry out in the night:
in the beginning of the watches
pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord:
lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children,
that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

(Lamentations 2:19)

Introduction

At this time in history, we are challenged to find within the churches those who will sound the trumpet in clear tones and proclaim the three angels' messages. It is high time that we gain a deeper understanding of the last-day message so that we may be prepared to proclaim it. Sadly, many are asleep, even as most of the organized church is asleep. Is there none who will sound the cry?

It was not the scholarly theologians who had an understanding of this truth [*of the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14*], and engaged in its proclamation. Had these been faithful watchmen, diligently and prayerfully searching the Scriptures, **they would have known the time of night; the prophecies would have opened to them the events about to take place.** But they did not occupy this position, and the message was given by humbler men. Said Jesus: "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35. Those who turn away from the light which God has given, or who neglect to seek it when it is within their reach, are left in darkness. But the Saviour declares: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12. Whoever is with singleness of purpose seeking to do God's will, earnestly heeding the light already given, will receive greater light; to that soul some star of heavenly radiance will be sent to guide him into all truth. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 312)

Joel 2 calls for the sounding of an alarm in Zion. Herein we have our mandate to declare the time of the emergence of a people great and strong in the day of the Lord, who run as mighty horsemen with a message of God's glory for all peoples. This is the time of the creation and rise of the 144,000 remnant elect of God. This is the generation of the restoration, when in the time of the latter rain, God's people—His true church, represented by the wheat, will rise up from the generations that have been devoured by the destroying pests.

Section I details the concept of the cycle of four, forty-year generations with the dividing of each generation into four periods called "watches." It begins with a consideration of the restoration that is to take place in the "fifth" generation of Adventism (which, as we will discover, is the "first" generation of a new set of time cycles). The majority of **Section II** examines the first four generations, according to the mandate given in Joel 1:2–4.

Some might wonder why our study covers the generation of the restoration before the previous four generations of the degradation. We start here because humans are most interested in themselves. We love to talk about ourselves. Thus, we will begin with the generation in which we live—the final generation. As probation is about to close and Jesus is about to come, there is an urgency that drives our interest in the current generation.

We believe that we are in that time of history. We see the fulfilling signs all around, and this study serves as one

more piece of evidence that we are in the very last few minutes before midnight, when time runs out. After the close of probation, we will have already fixed our decision for eternity (Rev. 22:11, 12). This is what makes our generation the most important one. If we never got to the rest of the story to find out how things got to where they are today, we would have covered that which is most important. It is crucial that we know where we are in prophetic history and that we act accordingly, earnestly preparing our souls for the soon-coming “day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10).

Delaying to prepare and wandering from our purpose have constantly marred our history. Nonetheless, the Lord could not and cannot come without a people to come for. His rhetorical question about the time before His return is, “Will I find faith on the earth?” Thankfully, the answer is “Yes, praise the Lord, He will!” As it is written: “Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). We are living in the time in which the 144,000 saints are finally made manifest, when the preparation of the final generation of living saints comes to maturity in the “full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28, 29).

The message of Jesus’ coming was proclaimed over four biblical generations ago, in the era leading up to

1844. He was to come to His temple to prepare a people for the physical redemption at the literal second advent. All things were to have been fulfilled early in that first generation. Yet, four generations have passed. We are now in “overtime”—in an additional generation beyond the first four. How did this delay occur? It was not of God’s design, but it is a natural consequence of a “falling away” among the professed Advent people.

It should be noted that the goal of this book—particularly in **Section II**—is not to bash the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though I will readily admit that the history this book recounts will likely not be easy to read. As a third generation Seventh-day Adventist, I have marveled at the shipwreck of the church raised up to be “the remnant.” It has never been easy to be a trailblazer, and calling attention to sad chapters in the church’s history requires a willingness to bear the cross of being labeled an enemy of the faith, a heretic, a wolf or infiltrator, a smiter, and an accuser of the brethren.

Nonetheless, I humbly present the following exposition of prophecy out of love for the Advent people, for the truth that they were given to develop and proclaim, and for the Savior who gave Himself for His church and called it into being.

May God’s Spirit be with you as you thoughtfully read.

CHAPTER 1.

Cyclical History

The Generation Concept in Ancient and Modern Israel

The Principle of Time Cycles

Human history follows a cyclical pattern of human behavior in the outworking of the principles of sowing and reaping, of cause and effect. Future events cast their shadows before; past events are anticipatory of what will take place in the future. Generations come and go; yet, there is a consistency of human response to the basic issues of the great controversy. The principle of cyclic time is particularly relevant with regard to religious history and the antagonism of the carnal heart toward the purposes of God in advancing the reformation.

The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. **The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past**, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 343, emphasis added)

It is most certainly true that "history repeats itself" (*Signs of the Times*, Nov. 8, 1899). Additionally, as the issues at stake are repeated in the six millennia of historical cycles in the great controversy on this planet, they grow more pronounced and widespread. Each time the conflict between right and wrong—between truth and error—is repeated, it grows more and more intense as it

accelerates toward its inevitable climax.

The cycles of nature and the cycles of history hold some similarity. The wise man Solomon gave great thought to these matters and recorded, in Ecclesiastes 1, some of his reflections on the cycles of nature and history. Notice his conclusion:

The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is no new thing* under the sun. (Eccles. 1:9)

Solomon explained this mystery further in chapter 3:

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past. (Eccles. 3:15)

The *Living Bible* renders it this way:

Whatever is, has been long ago; and whatever is going to be has been before; God brings to pass again what was in the past and disappeared.

However, Solomon did not stop there. He described two very important basic principles, which have always driven the cycles of history. These are: "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26:2), which is the principle of cause and effect, and "to every purpose there is *time and*

judgment” (Eccles. 8:5, 6), which is the principle “time will tell.”

Time and Judgment

Time and judgment are essential elements in everything. The element of time has to do with the sowing, and the results are observed in an assessment, or judgment, of the outcome. If you plant corn seeds, in time the results that come will be judged by the fruit of that plant, which will be corn. This is why we say, “Time will tell,” for it always does.

As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come. (Prov. 26:2)

The curse is the result of the action of the agent and not the result of any arbitrary decree meted out by God.

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. (Eccles. 8:5, 6)

These same principles are also expressed in the New Testament:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Gal. 6:7–9)

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:13–17)

So, misery comes upon man because of what a man has sown. Time will pass, and judgment will come.

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy

positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 537)

The world is watching intently for something to happen, but they do not know what it will be. We know, for we have the sure Word of God to guide us, or, at least, we *should know*, for we have been given the oracles of God and are privy to the revelations given through these inspired channels. We have no excuse for not searching into these things and advancing in knowledge and understanding.

The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men’s hearts to fail them for fear. (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 537)

Great events are about to occur, and God’s people are living as though they have another lifetime.

The Flow of History Relative to God’s People

Let us now apply these principles to the study of God’s dealing with His people and their response to His grace. God, in His wisdom, knows the events of the future even before they come to pass. He understands the cycles of history and has seen them before they occur. That which causes men to fear has already been solved in the mind of the great “I Am.” God is never in a hurry. When we are running out of time, God has eternity!

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 32)

Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; “but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:13. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His

divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 272, 273)

Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isa. 42:9)

And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do. (Gen. 18:17)

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

Let us not miss the significance of this. We do not need to flounder in the darkness. God reveals to His people what is about to take place! He knows the future, and He desires to inform His servants what is to come so that they can cooperate with Him in His work of saving souls. Thus has it always been. God told Daniel when the time of the seventy weeks would be finished so that He could pray intelligently for the fulfilling of the heavenly Father's will.

As we are guided by the Holy Spirit in the study of the prophecies in God's Word, He gives us the vision to go forth and prophesy, as we find in the following words written of old:

The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant. (Ps. 25:14)

The Knowledge of God's Purposes Given to His People

From the greatest to the smallest, God's people are given to know the ways of the Lord.

Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. (Ps. 25:4)

All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. (Ps. 25:10)

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine ... (John 7:17)

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Heb. 8:11)

God communicates His plans for us. He shows them to us for the purpose of restoring us to righteousness.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. (Isa. 13:12)

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isa. 60:1-3)

The Knowledge of the Chosen Generation

The Lord wants us to know the generation in which we are living, and He wants us to understand that we are a chosen generation whose purpose is to perform His will on earth, as Peter declared:

But ye *are* a **chosen generation**, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9, emphasis added)

This calling is ours. Looking down through the generations, God saw the final generation that will be purified and prepared to stand in the sight of heaven as a spotless bride. It is likely that our generation is the one that God saw from the days of eternity ushering in the second coming of Christ. It may well be that our generation provides the elect who will live to see the end of all things. What a privilege! *In our small slot in time, we can be the ones God foresaw making the difference!* He desires that it be so.

Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he. (Isa. 41:4)

This final generation is called out of darkness into God's marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). We recognize ourselves to be the final generation because of the rapidly fulfilling signs, which are the "beginning of sorrows" predicted by Jesus (Matt. 24:8). We are witnessing the formation of the political-religious tyranny that will escalate into the crisis of the "mark of the beast." We are enjoying advances in the understanding of God's character, which were prophesied

to come in the message of the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1, who comes down from heaven having great power to lighten the earth with His glory. So, while we said, “It may well be that our generation provides the elect who will live to see the end of all things,” we really mean that we are that chosen generation that God will make more precious than gold. This generation is extremely important to the closing up of the great controversy.

Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he. The isles saw *it*, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. (Isa. 41:4, 5)

God knows which will be the last cycle and the last generation, and He has revealed these things in His Word. Because He knows these things and reveals His secrets to His servants, He is now revealing to us that we are the last generation. As we understand the “watches” within the generations, we will see that He has pointed out which of these is mostly likely to be the last. May the precious words of Christ be ours, and may we be the ones who fulfill them.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, **ye know** that summer *is* nigh: so likewise ye, **when ye shall see all these things**, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.** (Matt. 24:32–34, emphasis added)

Notice that Christ is talking about that generation that would be looking for His return. He was answering the disciples’ two-part question—

Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Matt. 24:3)

Jesus revealed that, through the events to take place, His followers would know which generation would “not pass.” He is not going to allow the last generation to come without revealing which one it is! To make such an identification does not require time setting, for Jesus declared that His followers would know the *generation* when these things would occur. He declared: “When ye shall see all these things, **know ...**”

The Forty-Year Generation

The Scriptures reveal that the time period required for the maturation of the choice and direction of any generation following the Flood is forty years, or one functional generation. Notice that this is not a *biological* generation but a *functional* one. *Sociologically it has to do with the maturation and fixedness of the choice and customs of the people as a whole.* We see the functional generation illustrated in Scripture:

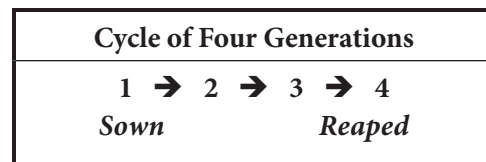
And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. **After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years,** and ye shall know my breach of promise. (Num. 14:33, 34, emphasis added)

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works **forty years.** Wherefore I was grieved with that **generation,** and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. (Heb. 3:7–10)

Time Cycles of Four

That it takes four generations to make up one complete cycle of sowing and reaping is confirmed by God Himself in Exodus 20:5—

for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and **fourth generation** of them that hate me.



Israel clamored for a king so they could be like the other nations. God told Samuel that, in so asking, they had not rejected Samuel, but they had rejected God. At their insistence, God gave them the first king, Saul. This was actually a manifestation of wrath, as we can read in Hosea 13:11, for the seeds of apostasy sown will yield their sure harvest. We will consider this more later.

The Cycle of Four in Israel's Choice for Monarchy			
1	2	3	4
<u>Saul</u> → 40 yrs.	<u>David</u> → 40 yrs.	<u>Solomon</u> → 40 yrs.	<u>Jeroboam/Rehoboam</u> <i>Harvest reaped</i>
Seeds of apostasy division <i>sown in kingly rule</i>			in <i>and war</i>

This cycle of four is seen in the history of world empires after the Flood. The prophecies of Daniel predicted and history has confirmed that there would be only four world-ruling empires. The iniquity sown in the first empire, *Babylon*, developed through the second, *Medo-Persia*, and into the third, *Greece*, resulting in the complete collapse of imperial unity by the time that the fourth empire, *Rome*, had ended.

The Cycle of Four in the History of Empires—Daniel, Chapters 2, 7, 8			
1	2	3	4
<u>Babylon</u> → <i>Seeds of iniquity sown in pride</i>	<u>Medo-Persia</u> →	<u>Greece</u> →	<u>Rome</u> <i>Harvest reaped in the fall of the world empire</i>

The prophet Daniel foretold that, after the collapse of the Roman Empire, any attempt to produce political unity in a world empire would be doomed to failure. Read Daniel 2:40–43 and notice the completeness of the disunity: “... *but they shall not cleave one to another* ...” (Dan. 2:43).

This cycle of four is also seen in the history of Christianity from apostolic times to the times of the great Roman Catholic apostasy, as we see in Revelation, chapter 2, and Second Thessalonians, chapter 2:

The Cycle of Four in the History of Christianity			
1	2	3	4
<u>Ephesus</u> → <u>31–100 AD</u> <i>Mystery of iniquity sown (2 Thess. 2:7)</i>	<u>Smyrna</u> → <u>100–321 AD</u>	<u>Pergamos</u> → <u>321–538 AD</u>	<u>Thyatira</u> <i>Harvest reaped in the development of the papacy (2 Thess. 2:3)</i>
<i>Continued growth of the mystery of iniquity</i>			

The seeds of the “falling away” (2 Thess. 2:3), which were sown in the Ephesus period, developed slowly at first because persecution kept the church pure. After Constantine’s conversion and his Sunday legislation (AD 321), ongoing compromise further developed the apostasy until its fruition in the full “falling away” under papal ascendancy, which dominated Europe for more than a thousand years!

The Generational Cycle in Joel

The prophet Joel, in Joel 1:1–3, explains that it takes four generations to make up one complete cycle of sowing and reaping. That is, it takes 160 years to complete a historical cycle.

The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell **ye your children** of it, and *let your children tell their children*, and their children **another generation**. (Joel 1:1–3, emphasis added)

The four-generation concept for a historical cycle is found in this passage, in that the first generation is addressed as “ye”; the second as “your children”; the third as “their children”; and the fourth as “their children another generation.”

One Cycle of Four Generations			
First	Second	Third	Fourth
“Ye”	“your children”	“their children”	“another generation”
-----	-----	-----	-----
Palmerworm	Locust	Cankerworm	Caterpillar

Going on to the fourth verse, we see that these are four deepening levels of erosion, or degradation, within a cycle of the sowing to sin.

That which the **palmerworm** hath left hath the **locust** eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the **cankerworm** eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the **caterpillar** eaten. (Joel 1:4, emphasis added)

Note the parallel that can be drawn:

- “ye,” devoured by the palmerworm
- “your children,” devoured by the locust
- “their children,” devoured by the cankerworm
- “their children another generation,” devoured by the caterpillar

Again, the concept is that *four biblical generations equal one cycle of sowing and reaping*.

Ancient Israel Establishes a Monarchy and Reaps a Divided Kingdom

In the fourth generation, the kingdom split as the result of the generations of degradation, which began when the people rejected God for a human king to rule over them.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (1 Sam. 8:4, 5)

And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. (1 Sam. 10:19)

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This Book is for Those Who...

- “Sigh and cry” for their church, concerned with the purification of God’s professed remnant people.
- Know little of the history as told outside of official church channels and why there is a “liberal-conservative” tension in the denomination.
- Have an awareness of some or many of the denominational drifts and departures as discussed individually in various independent publications and would like a more comprehensive resource such as this.

Four forty-year generations have entirely passed since 1844. Each one has failed to take hold of the high calling of being in possession of the third angel’s message—the “last message of mercy” for a dying world. The delay in the return of Christ must not be charged to God’s account, as though He is waiting for some celestial time clock to reach a pre-determined mark. Although God knows the day and the hour, He has been waiting for us.

As we look around us at the rapid deterioration of our planet and witness the increasing fulfilment of the signs of His appearing, we get a deep sense that we are getting very close to the end, perhaps even now entering into the time Jesus spoke of as “the beginning of sorrows.” Are we—the first generation of a new cycle of four—that generation that will see the close of probation, the time of trouble, and the return of Christ? Are there any Bible and Spirit of Prophecy evidences that point to it? Read the first section of this book!

In the second section, we take a panoramic view of the history of the movement, giving an understanding of the causes of the long detour into the wilderness travelled by the professed people of God. The prophet Joel points to a story that must be told—a story of the wasting of four generations (Joel 1:2-4). It is important that we hear this story. If we do not know our history as it is, we will continue to perpetuate its mistakes. The message of this book is an alarm clock set to arouse God’s people in the final moments of earth’s history. It is sure to shake the reader. Accept it or reject it—you won’t be able to ignore it!

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