

# Were, Louis Fitzroy (1896–1967)

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## KAYLE B. DE WAAL

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Louis Fitzroy Were (April 29, 1896 - April 2, 1967) was a pastor, evangelist, and author who worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia and New Zealand from 1919 to 1943.

## Early Life

Louis Were was born on April 29, 1896, in Fitzroy, South Australia.<sup>1</sup> He was the fourth son and third child of Albert and Maud Were.<sup>2</sup> It was while working as a builder that Were became an Adventist in 1914.<sup>3</sup>

## Education and Marriage

On November 11, 1915, Were married Jessie Blanche Henderson, daughter of Alfred Neville and Mary (Duance) Henderson.<sup>4</sup> Jessie Duance was born on February 12, 1895, in Brighton, South Australia.<sup>5</sup> Were worked as a colporteur in 1915 and 1916 before attending the Australasian Missionary College in 1917 and 1918. He graduated from the missionary course in 1918.

## Career/Ministry

Louis Were entered the organized work of the Church in 1919, working in South New Zealand until 1921. The Weres had a daughter, Nancy May, on the March 14, 1922. Were was ordained to the gospel ministry in January 1923. He worked in South Australia from 1927 to 1928, in Victoria from 1928 to 1936, in North New South Wales from 1936 to 1940, and South Australia from 1940 to 1943.<sup>6</sup>

Jessie Were died of cancer at Torrens Park, South Australia on January 6, 1942. She was buried in the Dudley Park Cemetery.<sup>7</sup> On January 25, 1943, Were married Alma Belle Preuss at Auburn, Victoria.<sup>8</sup> She had been born on November 5, 1903, and had graduated from Avondale College as a Bible worker.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly after their marriage, a report reached the Australasian Union Conference leaders that Were had behaved inappropriately. W. T. Hooper was sent to South Australia to resolve the rumor. Consequently, on March 9, 1943, the South Australian Conference executive committee voted to dismiss Were.<sup>10</sup> There was considerable disquiet surrounding the dismissal and the conference president, W. M. R. Scragg, appealed to the Australasian Union Committee without success.<sup>11</sup>

While working as an evangelist in Adelaide, South Australia, before his dismissal, Were had shared some of his biblical views on the book of Revelation in two public meetings. He held that Armageddon was a spiritual rather than a literal conflict. This view opposed that presented in the writings of Uriah Smith.

## Later Life

Were remained loyal and committed to the Church even after he left paid employment. He subsequently produced a number of independent publications. His first dated publication was published in 1945:

*The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message.* Melbourne, Victoria: Louis F. Were, 1945.  
*In the light of His Word: Answers to Questions concerning Prophetic Interpretation and Armageddon.* Adelaide, South Australia: Modern printing, 1947.



Louis Fitzroy Were.  
Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

*The Moral Purpose of Prophecy*, 1949<sup>12</sup>

*The Fall of Babylon in Type and Antitype: Why Emphasized in God's last day message?* Melbourne, Victoria: Louis F. Were, 1952.

*The Woman and the Beast in the Book of Revelation*, 1952

*Middle East Ferments and the Antichrist*, 1958

Those with no date included:

*Mrs. E. G. White, Uriah Smith and the King of the North*

*The Life Triumphant*

*Armageddon and the Advent*

*The Battle for the Kingship of the World: Will the King of the North invade the Holy City*

*Facts Australian Adventists Should Know—of the greatest importance*

*The Trials and Triumphs of Truth: My reply to misrepresentation*

*Before Probation closes*

*The Future Unveiled by God's love*

*God Speaks and Israel Triumphs*

## Legacy

Were developed thirteen principles of Bible interpretation. These principles demonstrated the depth of knowledge Were had attained. He was theologically ahead of his time. The principles included:

1. That the interpretation must reveal Christ and make him the center.
2. To compare Scripture with Scripture for clearer light.
3. The things of Israel now belong to the church.
4. The gospel must be found in every passage and prophecy.
5. The law of growth or development—the principle of repeat and enlarge—the repetition contains an explanation.
6. The law of the world-wide symbolized by the local
7. The law of the significance of Bible names
8. The law governing spiritual interpretations.
9. To observe the deep, inner meaning—not only what is on the surface
10. The design of the Book of Revelation—all the laws of interpretation show that the gathering of the nations to “Armageddon” must commence before probation closes.
11. New Testament principles determine the interpretation of the latter portion of Daniel 11.
12. “Double” and “triple” applications of prophecy: “Rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).
13. The principle of the “triple” application revealed in the Apocalypse.<sup>13</sup>

One of these principles was that “the things of Israel now belong to the church.” In other words, the covenant promises made to Israel in the Old Testament are to be reinterpreted in the context of the new people of God, the church. The coming of Christ re-oriented the understanding and perspective of the New Testament writers. On the road to Emmaus, Christ spoke to the two disciples who were filled with doubt and uncertainty. “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures *concerning himself*” (Luke 24:27; emphasis added). After this time of study, the disciples responded by saying that their hearts burned within them as Christ “opened the Scriptures to us” (Luke 24:32). As the Messiah, Christ recapitulated God's plan with Israel, conquering where Israel had failed. New Testament writers understood Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and interpreted the Old Testament in that light.

Hence, the Old Testament writings took on fresh meaning and spoke in relevant ways to the church, the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). Moreover, when examined, the passages used by John from the Old Testament were not chosen at random, but rather selected from the Old Testament where Israel was depicted as a blessing to the nations. Thus, John carried the divine intention to its intended logical conclusion. For example, the Old Testament covenant claims of God's marriage to Israel (cf. Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14), were now interpreted as Christ's cosmic marriage to his celestial bride (Revelation 19:7-9).<sup>14</sup>

Another principle developed by Were was that what is portrayed locally in the Old Testament is reinterpreted universally in Revelation.<sup>15</sup> David's triumph over Jerusalem when he fought against the Jebusites and his standing as victor with his brave soldiers on Mount Zion (2 Sam 5:6-8) was a case in point. This local victory was recast as a cosmic victory of the Lamb over the dragon and his evil associates (Revelation 12:1-4; 13:1, 11). The Lamb now stood on Mount Zion with the victorious 144, 000 (Revelation 14.1-5). The interplay between the local and universal is also seen in John extending to the nations the promises God made to Israel.<sup>16</sup> John discloses that the apocalyptic consummation will not be Israel-centered but Christ-centered and will focus on the universal church of Christ-followers.<sup>17</sup>

Were continued to publish and lived long enough to see the Church accept many of his positions. He remained committed to the Church and continued to lead others to Christ as a local elder. Some eleven years after his dismissal, Were was offered the opportunity to return to pastoral ministry, but declined the invitation.<sup>18</sup> The principles articulated by Were have been further developed by Hans LaRondelle and the author.<sup>19</sup> They are taught at Adventist seminaries and Bible colleges around the world. Were was an outstanding student of Scripture. His legacy of Christocentric interpretation continues to impact the next generation of students of the book of Revelation.

Louis Were died on April 2, 1967.<sup>20</sup> He was buried in the Kew Cemetery, Victoria. Alma Were died on June 21, 1993, at Coronella retirement Village, Nunawading, Victoria.<sup>21</sup>

## SOURCES

Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes. May 18, 1943. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes. November 28, 1954. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

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Louis Fitzroy Were Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives.

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Were, Louis F. *The Fall of Babylon in Type and Antitype*. Melbourne: Louis Were, 1952.

## NOTES

1. Louis Fitzroy Were Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Were, Louis Fitzroy," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?

2.

- Eric Were, *The House that Were Built: A History of the Were Family from the Conquest to the Colonies* (St. Agnes, South Australia: Eric W. Were, 1980), 61.?
3. Louis Fitzroy Were Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Were, Louis Fitzroy," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
  4. Eric Were, *The House that Were Built: A History of the Were Family from the Conquest to the Colonies* (St Agnes, South Australia: Eric W. Were, 1980), 62.?
  5. Ibid.?
  6. Louis Fitzroy Were Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Were, Louis Fitzroy," document: "Biographical Information Blank."?
  7. W. M. R. Scragg, "Jessie Blanche Were obituary," *Australasian Record*, February 9, 1942, 7.?
  8. H. E. Piper, "Were-Preuss marriage," *Australasian Record*, March 1, 1943, 7.?
  9. Ibid.?
  10. South Australian Conference Executive Committee Minutes, March 9, 1943, South Australian Conference Archives, Prospect, South Australia.?
  11. Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes, May 18, 1943, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.?
  12. See [http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/pdf/1949\\_were\\_moral-purpose.pdf](http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/pdf/1949_were_moral-purpose.pdf)?
  13. These principles can be found in Louis F. Were, *The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message* (Melbourne: n.p., 1945)?
  14. Kayle B. de Waal, *Ancient Words Present Hope* (Warburton, Victoria: Signs Publishing Company, 2015), 19-21.?
  15. Louis F. Were, *The Fall of Babylon in Type and Antitype* (Melbourne: n.p., 1952), 82-89.?
  16. de Waal, *Ancient Words Present Hope*?
  17. Were, *The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message*, 165.?
  18. Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes, November 28, 1954, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.?
  19. See Hans LaRondelle, "The Remnant and the Three Angel's Message," in *The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 879; Hans LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1983), 141.?
  20. Eric Were, *The House that Were Built: A History of the Were Family from the Conquest to the Colonies* (St. Agnes, South Australia: Eric W. Were, 1980), 62.?
  21. Merv Sparrowhawk, "Alma Were obituary," *Record* [South Pacific Division], July 24, 1993, 14.?