

Focus On Revelation
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1. Jesus Christ – Alpha and Omega

THE METHOD OF RECORDING IT

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION CHAPTER ONE

The word Revelation is derived from the Greek Apocalypse, which means an unveiling or revealing. The gospels are an unveiling of Jesus during his earthly ministry, but the book of Revelation is an unveiling of Jesus after his ascension. It portrays Jesus Christ in his heavenly state, in which He guides and protects his church on earth. It reveals things in heaven and things on earth in connection with the great controversy between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, between Christ and Satan, between the church of Christ and the synagogue of Satan. It is in this light that the great lines of prophecy in the book should be interpreted.

REVELATION COMES FROM GOD

“The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him.” This is God's revelation of Christ. Therefore it is the truth.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

“To show to his servants, things which must shortly come to pass.”

It is to inform God’s people, therefore this book needs to be studied, understood and explained to the people.

THE ORDER BY WHICH REVELATION WAS GIVEN

Four persons were involved in bringing the truth to the people. It involved God the Father, Christ the Son, the angel of God, and the prophet John.”He sent and signified it by his angel through his servant John.” This is the biblical order by which God reveals his truth to his people.

“Who bare record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw.” Verse 2

The word of God which was revealed through the prophet is also called the testimony.”The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” Revelation 19:10.

The spirit of prophecy is the word of God that is revealed through a prophet.

A SPECIAL BLESSING ON THE PUBLIC READER OF THE BOOK

The book opens with a blessing on the reader and it closes with a curse upon any who add to or subtract from any part of it.

“Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep the things which are written therein for the time is at hand.” Verse 3

This means the public reading of the book. At that time and through most of history, letters and news items were publicly announced to the people. This was probably because some were illiterate. In the synagogue service at Nazareth Jesus was given the scripture to publicly read. [Luke 4:16,17] Today the word of God is still publicly read in church services. Then there is a blessing on the hearers of the book. This is probably to encourage people to listen to its messages. Maybe God foresaw how unpopular the book of Revelation would be.

Thirdly, a blessing on those that keep the things that are written in the book. The word ‘keep’ means to continually or habitually keep. This calls for our investigation as to what things God commands us to habitually keep.

THE PERIOD TO WHICH REVELATION APPLIES

“For the time is at hand.” Verse 3

This indicates that the book of Revelation at least applied to John’s day, the first century AD. Through the years some have claimed that the book of Revelation was written only for John’s day, for the seven local churches in Asia Minor, that it was for the time of pagan Rome and the fierce persecutions that were meted out to the church by the Roman Caesars. On the other hand there are some who claim that the book only applies to the last days of earth’s history and everything in it should be interpreted in the light of the last days.

However, the instruction of Christ Himself to John clearly reveals that the messages of Revelation are for the past, the present and the future.

“Write the things which thou hast seen [past tense] and the things which are [present tense] and the things which shall be hereafter” [future tense] Revelation 1:19

In fact, a close examination of the book, as will be shown in later chapters, applies the book to five different periods of time (1).

1. John’s day
2. To scenes in the past
3. To our day, the last days
4. To the close of the great controversy between good and evil

5. To the new earth and the joy and triumph of the saints.

SPECIAL NEED IN JOHN'S DAY

In John's day there was a special need for the messages of that time. John was the only apostle still living - all the others had been martyred. The church of God was in great peril. There was need for special counsel, guidance and comfort.

"The believers' first love was growing cold. The old standard bearers had fallen at their posts and the younger ministers, desiring for something novel introduced new aspects of doctrine that were pleasing but contrary to the fundamentals of the faith. This led to questioning the experiences of the past causing confusion and unbelief.

The eyes of many were turned from Jesus as the author and finisher of the faith, to unimportant trivia. Piety waned and satanic influences seemed to dominate. At this time John was banished to Patmos. Never was his counsel needed more than now. True believers, now a minority, were facing fierce opposition. It looked as if the enemies of the faith would triumph, but Jesus Christ though in heaven, was in charge, 'I am with you always' he had promised and he converted the seeming disaster of John's exile into a marvelous blessing for the church. On Patmos John had the opportunity to receive a revelation from God of Christ and his truth for the enlightenment of the churches that was to strengthen the churches to the end of time."(2)

How often in the history of the church has God turned Patmos experiences into untold blessings for his people. Revelation was written first of all to the seven churches which were in Asia. [Verse 4] Asia refers to western Asia Minor, which was under a proconsul of Rome.

THE GODHEAD INTRODUCED

"Grace be to you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ." Verses 4, 5

The three members of the Godhead are featured

1. God the Father 'which is and which was and which is to come' the unchangeable one. 'I am the Lord, I change not'.
2. The Holy Spirit, likened to 'seven Spirits'. This refers to the seven qualities of the Holy Spirit as presented by Isaiah the prophet. (3)
3. Jesus Christ, who is given three titles:

"THE FAITHFUL WITNESS AND THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD AND THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." Verse 5

"The Faithful Witness". This refers first to Christ's ministry on earth and his earthly witness for his Father. This was a fulfillment of the messianic prediction.

"I have given him [Messiah] for a witness to the people" Isaiah 55:4 What a faithful witness was Jesus Christ to his heavenly Father.

In heaven above Jesus is still God's faithful witness. Upon his testimony concerning the Father, we can safely depend.

"THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD" or "The firstborn from the dead"

The term "firstborn" may mean the "first" or "chief". Jesus was the chief of those who have risen from the dead. He was not the first from the dead in regard to time, but he was the first in regard to importance. At least three New Testament people had risen from the dead before him, namely, Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus and the widow of Nain's son. Jesus' resurrection is the guarantee that all others shall rise: "Because I live you shall live also". [John 14:19] This fulfilled another messianic prediction.

"I will make him [Messiah] my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." Psalm 87:29

JESUS IS "PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH."

Originally, Adam was the prince or ruler of this earth but he lost it to Lucifer. Jesus in his mission to earth won back this world at Calvary.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests of God his Father to him be glory and dominion forever and ever Amen." Revelation 1:5, 6

CHRIST'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

“Unto him that loved [or loves] us”

Though Jesus Christ is at the center of the universe, amid millions of sinless adoring beings, his love for man continues. There is no diminution. As the gospel song says, ‘O love of God, how strong and true, eternal, and yet ever new. Uncomprehended and unbrought, beyond all knowledge and all thought’.

“And washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

The word ‘washed’ can be translated ‘loosed’. He has loosed us from the burden of guilt. However, it may include ‘washing’.

“If I wash you not you have no part with me.” John 13:8

“The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

All other blood defiles, but the blood of Jesus alone washes away our sin. Jesus’ sacrifice is the greatest demonstration of his love for men. ‘Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ [John 15:23] So great was Jesus’ love for mankind that he laid down his life for his enemies - for those who hated and crucified him.

WE ARE MADE SPIRITUAL PRIESTS

The word ‘washing’ is borrowed from the service of the Old Testament priesthood. Before entering the sanctuary to perform their service, the priests washed in the laver in the courtyard. So with believers; before they are initiated into the spiritual priesthood of believers, they must be washed in the blood of the Lamb.”Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the WASHING OF REGENERATION and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Titus 3:5

“And has made us kings and priests unto God and [or even] his Father,” Verse 6

Jesus is the literal priest to God in the heavenly temple. Believers are spiritual priests to God in the spiritual temple on earth. The Greek renders it ‘a kingdom of priests’ reminding us of Israel under the old covenant; ‘you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ [Exodus 19:6]

God’s original plan for ancient Israel, was for them to take the knowledge of the true God to the nations, but they failed. God’s final plan in taking the truth to the nations, is by choosing believers from all nations - the Christian church - and making of them a spiritual kingdom of priests to fulfill his mission.

“But you [Christians] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who bath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Believers, as spiritual priests, are to intercede for men. They also [like priests of old] are to teach men.”Go you and teach all nations” and like the priests of old, they are to offer sacrifices on behalf of mankind. But their sacrifices are spiritual sacrifices.

“Ye also as lively [or living] stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

A DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE

“To him be glory and dominion forever” Verse 6

In the first seven chapters of Revelation there are four doxologies, each one is stronger than the preceding one. This doxology is two-fold. In 4:9-11 the doxology is three-fold, in 5:13 it is four-fold, and the doxology of 7:12 is seven-fold. How deserving is Jesus to receive glory and dominion? He has won back the lost kingdom of this world. To accomplish it, he gave up his glory, even at the risk of losing it forever. He gave up his dominion; he left heaven, he became a man, he lived a life of poverty. He was a servant and

he died, even the death of the cross. He ran the risk of failure and eternal loss, but he conquered and so glory and dominion are rightfully his. How we should praise him!

THE KEYNOTE OF THE BOOK

“Behold he comes in the clouds and all eyes shall see Him.” Verse 7

The first chapter of Revelation emphasizes the Second Advent of Christ and the last chapter emphasizes the same.”Behold I come quickly” “Even so, come Lord Jesus” Revelation 22:12, 22. Almost every line of prophecy in the book concludes with the Second Advent, such as the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the three angels’ messages, the seven last plagues and so on. One Bible scholar declares,

“In one respect there is agreement, the Revelation aims at assuring the church, of the advent of her Lord. It is the book of the Coming One - every school of interpretation will admit this-all appear to unite, in regard to the apocalypse as the book of the advent.” (4)

SIGNIFICANCE OF CLOUDS

“Behold he cometh with clouds”

This accords with the angelic promise at Jesus’ ascension.”This same Jesus will come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.” “A cloud received him out of their sight” Acts 1:9, 11. Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud and he returns with clouds. Some claim that the clouds represent trouble - he returns in the midst of trouble. Others claim it represents obscurity. The term “clouds” is culled from Daniel 7:13, a messianic prediction.

“I saw in the night visions and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days and they [the clouds] brought him [the Son] near before him.” Daniel 7:13

The clouds, it is clear, transport Christ into the presence of the Father. Who is it that transports the Deity? Does the Deity employ a special mode of transport?

“He rode upon a cherub and did fly” Psalm 18:10

“The chariots of God are thousands of angels, the Lord is among them.” Psalm 68:17

Multiplied millions of angels accompany Christ at the Second Advent.”All the holy angels with him” [Matthew 25:31]. In the distance they appear like a vast cloud because of their glory.

“Every eye shall see him”

This denotes the universal extent of the Second Advent. Some believe that this means every spiritual eye, that only God’s people behold Christ. The text says, “All kingdoms shall wail because of him” indicating that all on earth are aware of Christ’s approach to the earth. But how will every eye see him? Is this not a physical impossibility? Those on the other side of the world could not possibly see him, it is said.

Does every eye see the sun? Yes, but not at the same time; so with the population of the world. Every eye sees Christ, but not at the same time. Nowhere does the Bible suggest that every one on earth will see Jesus at the same time, at the Second Advent.

This destroys the secret rapture theory which holds that only the saved are raptured at the Advent, that Christ comes secretly and silently and snatches away the righteous - that the unsaved do not witness the Advent. However, so involved are the unsaved in the Second Advent that even some of the unsaved dead are affected.

A SPECIAL RESURRECTION

“Every eye shall see him and they also that pierced [or crucified] him”

How will they behold Jesus at the Second Advent when they have been dead for just under 2,000 years? This demands a resurrection.

Jesus warned the Jewish leaders who condemned him, that one day, they also would behold his return.

“But Jesus held his peace and the high priest answered and said to him, I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, “Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:63, 64

Do other scripture confirm that there will be a resurrection prior to the Second Advent in which the Jewish leaders could be raised up?

Yes! During the time of trouble immediately preceding the Second Advent.

“At that time shall Michael stand up [or reign] the great prince which stands for the children of thy people and there shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered every name that shall be found written in the book. . . and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting-life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:1, 2

This resurrection is called by some, “the partial resurrection”. There will be some righteous and some wicked involved. Undoubtedly the Roman soldiers that pierced Jesus, and the chief priests, will then be raised from death in order to behold his return. What a contrast this will be, compared with the trial of Jesus. Now the tables will be turned. What a terrifying experience. Those who condemned him so unjustly to the cruelest of deaths, now see him returning as King of kings. The one whom they mocked in his agonies, whom they taunted to come down from the cross if he were really the Messiah, who even at his resurrection spread the lying rumor that his body was stolen by his disciples - they now behold him returning in power and glory, as he predicted at the hour of his trial. Here we see the justice of God displayed. Men may appear to succeed in defying God but finally the warning will be fulfilled, “Vengeance is mine, said the Lord, I will repay.”

WORLD MOURNS IN REMORSE

“All kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of him.”

Why do all kingdoms of the earth wail? Because they know it is doomsday. How do they know?

1. Because in the final proclamation of the last gospel message to the world in what is called “The Loud Cry” of Revelation 18, the whole world will hear the truth of the Second Advent, but unfortunately the majority will reject it.

2. Amid the cataclysmic events, there appears a dramatic sign in the eastern heavens -

“The powers of heaven shall be shaken and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man and then will all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man caning in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 24:29, 30

The shaking of the powers of heaven is described by John -

“The heaven [atmospheric heaven] departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.” Revelation 6:14

At the Second Advent the cloudy atmosphere rolls away, enabling the inhabitants of earth to see into the distant heavens and thus they see Jesus coming with the host of heaven. They appear first, as a small dark cloud in the distance, and this is called, “the sign of the Son of man”. This small cloud must be so unusual, so dramatic that all the world will know what it means. The very event they rejected and ridiculed when it was proclaimed, now in its awful grandeur is taking place. Imagine the remorse and regret of the inhabitants of the world. No wonder, “all kingdoms of the earth shall wail or howl, because of him”. How important to heed the warning of Jesus, “Watch therefore and be you ready for in an hour that you think not, the Son of man cometh” [Matthew 24:34]

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

“I am Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.” Verse 8

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and denote, “all embracing,” “all comprehending”, the self-existent one. The term is used three times in Revelation and it here applies to God, the Father “the Almighty”. “Almighty” is used nine times in Revelation and always applies to the Father, denoting his omnipotence. Some hold that this applies to Christ. It is true that Christ is described in scripture as “the mighty God” in fact, all the titles and prerogatives of the Father also apply to the Son. He is even addressed as “the everlasting Father” [Isaiah 9:6]

JOHN IDENTIFIES HIMSELF

“I John who also am your brother and companion in tribulation in the kingdom and patience of Jesus

Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Verse 9

John gives himself three designations -

1. "Your brother" Though he was a leading apostle, the only one remaining, he still regards himself as a brother to the rest of the believers. No kingly power is revealed here, no "my lord bishop" or "your holiness" etc. , but "brother" in response to the instruction of Jesus, "All you are brethren". There is no class distinction with Christ.

2. "Your companion in tribulation!" Persecution was afflicting the church and John had many fellow sufferers but he was one with them in their afflictions.

3. "In the kingdom and patience of Jesus" i. e. remaining patient in Jesus in the present kingdom of grace. When we abide in Christ, enabling power is given, to patiently endure. We must "through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God". [Acts 14:22]

ISLE OF PATMOS

"In the isle called Patmos"

This island, now called Patino, is situated off the south-west coast of Asia Minor. Ten by six miles in size, almost treeless in Roman times, it was a place of exile for low class criminals. It contained salt mines and it is believed that John was condemned to work in the mines.

"For the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

He was punished on account of the word of God. Notice the term, "word of God" is closely connected with "the testimony of Jesus Christ".

Some manuscripts read "the word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ" indicating that the word of God and the testimony of Jesus are identical. Why was John in Patmos for the word of God?

BACKGROUND OF JOHN'S IMPRISONMENT

"More than half a century had passed since the organization of the Christian Church. During that time the gospel message had been constantly opposed - its enemies had never relaxed its efforts and at last succeeded in enlisting the power of the Roman Emperor against the Christians.

In the terrible persecution that followed, the apostle John did much to confirm and strengthen the faith of the believers. He bore a testimony which his adversaries could not controvert and which helped his brethren to meet with courage and loyalty the trials that came upon them. When the faith of the Christians would seem to waver under the fierce opposition they were forced to meet, the old, tried servant of Jesus would speak with power and eloquence, the story of the crucified and risen Savior. He steadfastly maintained his faith, and from his lips came ever the same glad message – 'that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you'. [1 John 1:1-3]

John lived to be very old. He witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of the stately temple. The last survivor of the disciples who had been intimately connected with the Savior, his message had great influence in setting forth the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. No one could doubt his sincerity and through his teachings many were led to turn from unbelief.

The rulers of the Jews were filled with bitter hatred against John for his unwavering fidelity to the cause of Christ. They declared that their efforts against the Christians would avail nothing so long as John's testimony kept ringing in the ears of the people. In order that the miracles and teachings of Jesus might be forgotten, the voice of the bold witness must be silenced.

John was accordingly summoned to Rome to be tried for his faith. Here before the authorities, the apostle's doctrines were misstated. False witnesses accused him of teaching seditious heresies. By these accusations his enemies hoped to bring about the disciple's death. John answered for himself in a clear and convincing manner, and with such simplicity and candor that his words had a powerful effect. His hearers were astonished at his wisdom and eloquence. But the more convincing his testimony, the deeper was the hatred of his opponents, the emperor Domitian was filled with rage. He could neither dispute the reasoning of Christ's faithful advocate or match the power that attended his utterance of truth; yet he determined he would silence his voice.

John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of his faithful servant, even as he preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. As the words were spoken 'thus perish all those who believe that deceiver Jesus Christ of Nazareth', John declared, 'My Master patiently submitted to all that Satan and his angels could devise to humiliate and torture him. He gave his life to save the

world. I am honored in being able to suffer for his sake. I am a weak sinful man. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled. He did no sin, and neither was guile found in his mouth’.

These words had their influence and John was removed from the cauldron by the very men who had cast him in. Again the hand of persecution fell heavily upon the apostle. By the emperor’s decree John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, condemned ‘for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ’. Here, his enemies thought, his influence would no longer be felt and he must finally die of hardship and distress.” (5)

John proclaimed Jesus Christ as the God-man. His message collided with Domitian the Roman emperor who proclaimed himself the man-god. Under Domitian, emperor worship for the first time, became an issue for the Christians. This was particularly so in the province of Asia, where John’s letters were directed and where John had resided and labored. (6)

PATMOS VISIONS GIVEN ON THE SABBATH

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” Verse 10.

This means that John was in vision.”The Lord’s day” In the Greek it is rendered “the Lord’s”. The word “day” is taken for granted but it is not in the original. This is one of the few-verses in the New Testament used as authority for Sunday observance, but the text gives no clue as to which day is the Lord’s day. To discover which day, it is essential that we examine other scriptures. What Lord was John alluding to? Was it the Roman emperor who was proclaimed Lord at that time? No! Was it the Sun god who also was addressed as lord and had Sunday dedicated to him? It was Jesus Christ – “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” [Ephesians 4:5] Which day is Christ’s day? Which day does Jesus Christ declare he is Lord of? At least eight different scriptures give the answer. The seventh day Sabbath is the Lord’s day. Two verses from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament serve as samples of this truth.

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God” Exod. 20:10 “The Sabbath-the holy of the Lord’ Isaiah 58:13 “The son of man [Christ] is Lord of the Sabbath” Mark 2:28 “The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day” Matthew 12:8

Never does scripture hint that Jesus Christ is Lord of any other day. On the contrary, history clearly reveals that the title of “Lord’s day” for Sunday originated with Sun worship. This was in opposition to the Bible Lord’s Day which was the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

“Our observance of Sunday as the Lord’s day is apparently derived from Mithraism. The argument that has sometimes been used against this claim, namely, that Sunday was chosen because of the resurrection on that day, is not well supported.” (7)

“As a solar festival, Sunday was the sacred day of Mithra; and it is interesting to notice that since Mithra was addressed as Domirinus, ‘Lord’ Sunday must have been ‘the Lord’s day’ long before the Christian times.” (8)

Lucien, the Catholic historian, declared -

“In the year 325 AD Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, [314-337 AD] officially changed the title of the first day, calling it the Lord’s Day” (9)

ANOTHER KEY IN UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK

It has been suggested that just as John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day in receiving the visions of Revelation, so the believer likewise in rightly understanding Revelation must also possess the spirit of truth on the Lord’s Day. In other words, if we do not recognize the significance of the true Sabbath, we will fail to discern the import of certain issues in the great controversy which is the theme of the book.

MEANING OF ALPHA AND OMEGA

“And heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega the first and the last.”

Verses 10-11.

What is the significance of “Alpha and Omega”? These first and last letters of the Greek alphabet correspond with the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet which are Aleph and Tau. The book of Revelation is based on the Old Testament and the two Hebrew letters Aleph and Tau were associated with the high priest of the Old Testament temple.

In this first chapter of Revelation Jesus is also presented as a priest in the heavenly temple and the Aleph and Tau are connected with him. On the breastplate of the high priest of the Old Testament were two stones, these were called the Urim and the Thummin. The Urim

commenced with the letter Aleph and the Thummin commenced with the letter Tau. The purpose of these two stones was to reveal the will of God.

When it was essential to know God's will, the high priest consulted the Lord. If God responded, a bright light for yes, on Aleph, would appear. If the answer was no, a cloud would appear on the stone named Tau. The Aleph and Tau or Alpha and Omega were the medium by which the Father revealed his will to man.

Where is God's medium of revelation in the New Testament? The answer is, Jesus Christ, the "one mediator between God and man".

This is why he is called "the Alpha and Omega" - he is the Revelator.

"The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John 1:18.

"Neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever he will reveal him." Matthew 11:27.

REASON FOR SEVEN CHURCHES

"What thou sees, write in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia." Verse 11.

Why seven churches? It has been understood by numerous godly scholars of yesteryear that the names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian era. The number seven indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.

According to Dr. L. F. Froom in his "Prophetic Faith of our Fathers", over 44 scholars of yester year agree that the seven churches represent the Christian church from the First to the Second Advent of Christ.

A SANCTUARY SCENE

"I turned to see the voice that spoke with me and I saw seven golden candlesticks." V12.

These seven candlesticks or lamp stands were situated originally in the holy place of the Jewish temple. The fact that they are featured in this chapter indicates that we have before us a scene in the heavenly sanctuary above. Revelation consists mostly of a series of sanctuary scenes and in order to understand the book aright it is essential to understand the truth of the heavenly sanctuary for this is one of the main keys in understanding this remarkable book.

SIGNIFICANCE OF "SON OF MAN"

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man." Verse 13.

Though Jesus Christ is God the Son, enthroned in his glorified state, yet he still refers to Himself as "the Son of man". Jesus is still linked with the human family, he is our elder brother, forever limited by human flesh. What a comfort this is to His people amid their conflicts on earth. The one above who represents us is "the man Christ Jesus", possessing the same nature, who met the same temptations and therefore is an understanding and sympathetic high priest.

He is "amid the candlesticks". The candlesticks represent the seven churches, (Verse 20) i. e. the church of God on earth, thus Jesus is pictured amid his people, "Lo I am with you always".

EIGHT-FOLD PICTURE OF RESURRECTED CHRIST

In Verses 13-16 is a description of the glorified Christ. Eight points are presented and eight in scripture is a number frequently associated with resurrection and regeneration.

1."Clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the chest with a golden girdle." Verse 13. This represents kingly and priestly dignity, and applies to Jesus as king-priest of the order of Melchizadek, the priest-king of ancient Salem."Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizadek." (Hebrews 5:6)

2."His head and his hairs were white like wool, white as snow." Verse 14. This does not indicate decay or senility but the venerable sign of knowledge, mature judgment and solid wisdom.

3."His eyes were as a flame of fire." Verse 14. He sees the good and the evil to which he is utterly opposed and aims to consume.

4."And his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace." Verse 15. This suggests treading down in destruction all who choose sin. (See appendix)

5."His voice as the sound of many waters." Verse 15, This denotes his majesty, power and authority as Creator.

6."Out of his mouth went a sharp, two edged sword." Verse 16. This represents the power of Christ's word especially in the execution of judgment.

7."His countenance was as the sun shines in his strength." Verse 16. This signifies his holiness and divinity."Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." (1 Timothy 6:16) It is reminiscent of Moses who after forty days in God's presence on Mount Sinai, his face shone so brightly that he was compelled to put a veil over it, that the people might see his face, (Exodus 34:28-35) So Jesus, in the fullness of his divinity in his glorified state, his countenance "was as the sun".

8."In his right hand seven stars." Verse 16. The right hand denotes power, authority and protection. The fact that the stars are in his right hand denotes a close and protective relationship between Christ and his faithful servants.

There are ten parallels between this passage (Revelation 1:13-17) and that of Daniel 10:5-12. Daniel 10 brings to view, a certain man, who reveals to Daniel the coming king of the north. This man is none other than the Son of God.

"When I saw him I fell at his feet as dead." Verse 17.

This is similar to the experience of Daniel when Christ appeared to him. He lost his natural strength and was then given supernatural power.

SIGNIFICANCE OF "FIRST AND THE LAST"

"He laid his right hand upon me saying to me, Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that lives that was dead and behold I am alive forever more. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:17-18.

This expression "the first and the last" is drawn from the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament where it is used three times, the same as it is in Revelation.

"I the Lord, the first and with the last, I am he." Isaiah 41:4

"I am the first and last and beside me there is no God." Isaiah 44:6 "I am He, I am the first, I also am the last." Isaiah 48:12

What is the significance of this term? It was expressly used by God to encourage and comfort Israel in the time of Isaiah. The prophet was shown that Babylon would become a threat to Israel. In Isaiah 39:1-2 is recorded the visit of the Babylonians to Jerusalem to enquire of Hezekiah's healing. Overcome by the occasion Hezekiah revealed everything he possessed to the Babylonians. Isaiah warned (Verses 3-7) that the Babylonians would return and invade Judah and take everything away. Already Hezekiah had experienced a tremendous invasion of the Assyrians from whom he had been miraculously delivered. (Isaiah 36-37) In chapters 42-45 the prophet declared that though Babylon would conquer the Jews yet God would finally overthrow Babylon. (Isaiah 43:14; 44:26-28)

In the midst of this message of deliverance, God addresses himself as "the first and the last". The term denotes that in the great controversy between Babylon and Jerusalem, between Christ and Satan, God would be first on the field of conflict and also last on the field of conflict. In other words, he will be completely victorious over his enemies and will destroy them. This same message is brought into the book of Revelation. The great controversy between good and evil is the theme throughout the book; the conflict between the church and her enemies. This should, be paramount in every prophetic outline in regard to its interpretation. Thus in the introduction of Revelation, this is a most fitting and powerfully appropriate symbol. Jesus declares himself as victor over the enemies of the people. He is the first on the battlefield - he is fully prepared, he is never taken by surprise, every provision has been made. And he is the last on the battlefield, meaning that the enemy has either been put to flight or destroyed. Jesus is, and will be victorious - the saints will triumph, the powers of evil will go down, Jesus is "the first and the last".

TWO LAWS OF INTERPRETATION

This passage in Revelation one, brings to view certain laws of bible interpretation. There are a number of these laws, one of them being "the law of repetition and enlargement". Another is the law of "the first and the last".

In the first chapter of Revelation these two laws are displayed in the portrayal of Jesus as deliverer and destroyer. (Revelation 1:5-6) It is couched in a form called an “epauados” (10) Eight Old Testament scriptures are employed. The first scripture is from the same book as the eighth scripture. The second scripture is from the same as the second last scripture. The third scripture is from the same as the third last scripture, and the fourth scripture is from the same as the fourth last scripture.

THE EPANADOS OF REVELATION 1:5-16

1. Revelation 1:5 ‘Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness.’ Isaiah 55:4 ‘I have given him (Messiah) as a witness to the people.’

2. Revelation 1:7 ‘Behold he cometh with clouds.’

Daniel 7:13 ‘One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.’

3 Revelation 1:7 ‘Every eye shall see him and they also that pierced him.’ Zechariah 12:10 ‘They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.’

4 Revelation 1:8 ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Isaiah 44:6 ‘I am the first and I am the last and beside me there is no God.’

4. Revelation 1:11 ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last’ Isaiah 48:12 ‘I am the first, I also am the last.’

3. Revelation 1:12 ‘I saw seven golden candlesticks.’

Zechariah 4:2 ‘A candlestick all of gold and his seven lamps thereon.’

2. Revelation 1:13 ‘One like the Son of man.’

Revelation 1:14 ‘His head and hairs were white like wool.’ ‘his eyes were as a flame of fire.’

Revelation 1:15 ‘His feet like fine brass.’

‘His voice as the sound of many waters.’ ‘His countenance was as the sun.’

‘His voice as the voice of a great multitude.’ ‘his face as the appearance of lightning.

Daniel 7:13 ‘One like the Son of man.’

Daniel 7:9 ‘The hair of his head like pure wool.’

Daniel 10:6 ‘His eyes as lamps fire. ‘his feet like polished brass.’

1. Revelation 1:16 ‘Out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword.’ Isaiah 49:2 ‘He has made my mouth like a sharp sword.’

JESUS THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

“I am he that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore.” Verses 17-18.

The Greek renders it “I am the living one (yet) I became dead and behold I am alive (or I am living) forever.” Here Jesus speaks of himself as, “the living one”. This denotes “continuously living” indicating that Jesus has eternal life in himself.

“In him was life and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4.

“That was the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” John 1:19.

“As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” John 5:26.

“In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.” (11) “I became dead and I am alive forever more.” (Greek)

What a world of experience is packed into this verse. It involves the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, his glorious resurrection and his ascension.

HOW CHRIST GAINED THE KEYS OF DEATH

“And have the keys of hell and of death.” Verse 18

Keys represent authority and power, and this tells us that Jesus has authority over death and the grave. In what way? The grave in scripture is likened to a prison - the prison house of Satan. Satan is the author of death.

“Him that had the power (or dominion) of death, that is the devil.” Hebrews 2:14. The grave is a symbol of Satan’s arsenal or stronghold.

“On this rock will I build my church and the GATES OF HELL shall not prevail against it.” (the church) Matthew 16:18.

The gates of hell represent the arsenal of Satan. He claims the dead as his property because they have transgressed the law. In order for Christ to conquer death and the grave it was essential that he enter the arsenal or stronghold of Satan and grasp the keys.

“When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace: but when one stronger than he, shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.” Luke 11:21-22.

Jesus by death, entered Satan’s stronghold.”He took part of the same (flesh and blood), that through death, he might destroy him that had the power (or dominion) of death, that is the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14) In this experience we have a dramatic episode in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Satan mustered all his forces, “principalities and powers”, to keep Jesus imprisoned in the tomb.

Not only were Roman guards keeping their watch. There were unseen watchers. The angelic powers of darkness were undoubtedly present. Had it been possible, the prince of darkness with his hosts would have kept forever sealed, the tomb that held the Son of God. (12)

IN THE RESURRECTION JESUS DISPLAYED HIS DEITY

It was in the tomb, the prison house of Satan, that Jesus displayed his supremacy. On Calvary Jesus displayed the love of God and how marvelous it was. In the tomb, he displays the omnipotence of God.

“Having spoiled principalities and powers (of Satan) he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Margin – “in himself”) Colossians 2:15 “He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.” RSV.

“The devil and all the powers of hell, were conquered and disarmed by the dying Redeemer. The Redeemer conquered by dying.” (13)

“Thus his resurrect-ion and ascension are a public, solemn triumph over the principalities and powers of death. It is striking that the heathen oracles were silenced, soon after Christ’s ascension.” (14)

JESUS’ DEITY WAS DORMANT UNTIL HIS RESURRECTION

In his earthly ministry prior to his resurrection, the creative power of Jesus, his deity, was dormant within him. The miracles he performed were performed by the power of the Father.

“The Father that dwells in me, he doeth the works.” John 14:10.

Undoubtedly heavenly angels played a part in the miracles of Christ. Jesus was not permitted to use his own divine power. That would have given him advantages over his fellowman, before whom he was the great exemplar, Jesus was totally dependent upon his Father.

In his earthly ministry his deity or divinity was quiescent. Otherwise he could never have experienced life like we do upon the earth. In his resurrection however Jesus displayed his deity, his creative power, his omnipotence. He was “Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” Romans 1:4.

JESUS RAISED HIMSELF FROM DEATH

In his resurrection Jesus raised himself from the dead. He raised his humanity from death by his divinity.

“I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” John 10:17-18.

DEITY CANNOT DIE

This means that the divinity of Jesus did not die. He was the God Man. His deity could not die because that is impossible. His humanity died. One of the attributes of deity is immortality or deathlessness.

“Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.” I Timothy 1:17.

God is immortal.”Which in his time shall show who is king of kings. Who only (or alone) has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” 1 Timothy 6:14-16.

“As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given it to the Son, to have life in himself.” John 5:26.

“As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them; even so the Son quickens (makes alive) whom he will.” John 5:21.

Just as “it is impossible for God to lie”, so it is impossible for God to die. If God died, then he is not immortal and therefore not God at all.

(See Psalm 91:2; Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 1:17.) The divinity of Jesus did not die, otherwise it would not have been divinity. On that Sunday morning when the mighty angel flashed from heaven and rolled the stone away, we believe that he flashed a signal to the Son of God. At that signal, the deity of Jesus sprang into action and brought back from death his humanity. What a display of power: Thus Jesus Christ declared with great power that he was the Son of God, or God the Son. He entered the stronghold of Satan, captured his armor, grasped the keys of hell and death and broke forever Satan’s power.

What a fitting introduction in the opening chapter of Revelation, the prelude to the book that foretells the life and death struggles of believers in Christ. The One in charge, the one who leads the church, the Director, is he who has broken the power of death and the grave. What a comfort to the millions of martyrs who are revealed, sacrificing themselves to death for Jesus Christ.

REVELATION CONCERNS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

“Write the things which thou hast seen and the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter.” Verse 19.

This informs us of the period, to which Revelation applies. There are three tenses. The past, the present and the future.

“In the Revelation given to him there was unfolded scene after scene of thrilling interest in the experience of the people of God, and the history of the church was foretold to the very close of time. In figures and symbols, subjects of vast importance were presented to John, which he was to recall, that the people of God living in his age and in future ages might have an intelligent understanding of the perils and conflicts before them.

This revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation on Patmos the disciple received a message, the influence of which was to continue to strengthen the church till the end of time.” (16)

“The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.” Verse 20.

SEVEN STARS ARE TRUE SERVANTS OF GOD

The word “angels” in the Greek is “messenger”. The stars are the messengers of the churches. What do stars represent? The clue is found in the book of Daniel

“The Lord will come down and tread upon the high places of earth. For the transgression of Jacob is all this and for sins of the house of Israel.” Micah 1:3-5.

“And they that be wise [Margin: teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.” Daniel 12:3

The term star, refers to teachers of righteousness those who turn men and women away from sin through the gospel of Christ. They are God’s true and faithful ministers, teachers and servants.

This then is the opening chapter of Revelation. It introduces us to the great lines of prophecy that commence in chapter 2 and continue to the end of the book.

APPENDIX

“FEET AS BRASS” His “feet as fine brass, as if they had burned in a furnace”. (Revelation 1:15) This represents treading down in judgment or punishment.

“God came from Town [or Edom] and the Holy One from Mt. Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light, he had horns coming out of his hand and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth: he beheld and drove asunder the nations.” Habakkuk 3:3-6

“Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.” Job 40:12

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2. Ellen G. White, “Acts of the Apostles,” page 581.
- 3.”And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him [Messiah] the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isaiah 11:2. See under Revelation 4.
4. Dr. Ellicott, Commentary on Revelation page 17.
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7. Gordon J. Laing, “Survivals of Roman Religion,” page 148.
8. Arthur Weigall, “The Paganism in Our Christianity,” page 145.
9. Lucien “Historia Ecclesiastica,” page 145.
- 10.”A figure in which a sentence or member is inverted or repeated backwards; return to the main subject after a digression.”
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15. Ellen G. White, “Desire of Ages,” page 143.
16. Ellen G. White, “Acts of the Apostles,” page 581.

2. Desirable! Fragrant! Faithful!

GOD’S MESSAGE TO THE FIRST CHURCHES OF REVELATION

EPHESUS, SMYRNA, PERGAMOS

REVELATION 2:1-17

EPHESUS

THE CHURCH WHICH WAS DESIRABLE TO GOD

An exposition of Revelation 2:1-7

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write. . .” verse 1

The first church of the seven churches of Revelation was called Ephesus. This was chosen because its name and condition was a fitting representation of the first period of the Christian church.”To the angel in the church” is the original reading. This alludes to the leader or elder.

MEANING OF THE WORD EPHESUS

Ephesus means “desirable” and this was a true description of the early church during most of the first one hundred years of its existence.

The time period extended to approximately 100 AD and corresponds with the white horse period of the first of the seven seals. However, the seven churches do not necessarily correspond with the other periods of the seven seals.

CHRIST’S SPECIAL TITLE FOR EPHESUS

Who, “. . . holds the seven stars. . . and walks in the midst of the seven candlesticks. . .” verse 1

Why does Jesus depict himself in this way to the early church? The early Christians faced a hostile pagan world in fulfilling Christ’s gospel commission. They were the pioneers of the faith and to know that Jesus in heaven above, held them as it were in his very own right hand, the hand of power and authority, was a tremendous comfort and gave a serene sense of security. As Jesus had previously promised,

“My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. . . they shall never perish [eternally] neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand . . . and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” John 10:27-29

This promise is for every servant of God of every age. It also reminds God’s servant that everything he accomplishes is due to Christ who holds and empowers him. Failure to realize this can lead a religious leader to become a “fallen star”.

“Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” Jude 1:13

“And walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” verse 1

The word “walk” denotes ministry, care, watchfulness in regard to his servants. In the Old Testament tabernacle the priests walked to and fro in their daily ministry. Likewise, Jesus Christ, as our great high priest, walks to and fro in the spiritual temple on earth, caring for his faithful servants.

“I know thy works”

Seven times this is stated, denoting Christ’s perfect and complete knowledge of his people.”All things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:13

Jesus notices every mark of loyalty as well as every mark of compromise. He recognizes every act of love even though no one on earth may detect it.

JESUS RECOMMENDS EPHESUS FOR THREE THINGS

“Thy labor and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil” verse 1

1. The word “labor” involves labor with weariness. The early Christians did not make great professions, they were people of action.

“The love of Christ urged them on.” 2 Corinthians 5:14. This was graphically illustrated in the Book of Acts under the power of Pentecost.

“They went everywhere preaching the word” Acts 8:14

In the Roman Empire alone over six million people were won to the faith by 100 AD, i. e. in 69 years. Edward Gibbon declared,

“There is the strongest reason to believe that before the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the faith of Christ had been preached in every province and in all the great cities of the empire” (1)

2 “Thy patience. . .”

The word denotes persevering endurance; not passive but brave and persistent endurance. The early Christians did not give up nor give in.

“The gospel . . . was preached to every creature under heaven” Colossians 1:23

The feats of the early Christians comprise one of the greatest events of history. From 120 people (Acts 1:15) to over six million in 69 years is testimony to the persevering labors of those early believers.

3 “Thou canst not bear them which are evil”

Christ commends the intolerance of the early Christians. He still calls for intolerance within the church of evil people. We are counseled to bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) but we are to “abhor that which is evil.” (Romans 12:9) This is in striking contrast to the usual attitude of most Christians. We tend to tolerate evil in the church with the excuse that such people need our help and sympathy. Jesus gave clear instruction on this matter. After efforts to bring such a person to repentance:

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican” Matthew 18:15-17

This means that such a person must be separated from church membership and viewed as one who needs to be won to Christ. The church of God should be publicly seen to be intolerant of evil.

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.” Psalm 101:3

“No man loves God truly who cannot hate evil” Ellicott’

“We must show all meekness to men but we must show a just zeal against their sins” Matthew Henry

This attitude is the sign of a spiritually healthy church. Tolerance of evil confirms people in their sin. The rebuke of evil can lead to repentance of sin and is a safeguard to the church, especially for the weaker members.

“Thou has tried them which say they are apostles and are not and hast found them liars.” verse 2

The early Christians tested all who claimed to be apostles, teachers, etc. They knew that they were engaged in a spiritual warfare with the great enemy of Christ and so were alert to the attempts of false teachers to influence the church. They therefore investigated, examined and checked every person who claimed to be an apostle, etc. The apostle Paul had specifically warned the Ephesian elders of the dangers to be guarded against:

“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God . . . for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember. . .” Acts 20:28-31

The early Christians did watch and remember.

“Zeal for pure doctrine characterized the Ephesian church.” Ellicott

Who were the false apostles whom true believers found to be liars? They were a group of Jewish believers called “Judaisers”. The apostle Paul called them “false brethren” (Galatians 1:7; 2:4) He warned:

“Beware of dogs [backbiters] beware of evil workers, beware of the Concision.” Philippians 3:2

The word “concision” means “mutilators” and refers to the Judaisers who demanded that Gentile believers be circumcised and keep the ceremonial law of Moses.

“There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”

“Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved.” Acts 15:1, 5.

The Judaizers were a trial to the early church but the leaders tested and rejected them. This should always be the work of faithful leaders of the church.

“And hast borne and hast patience and for my name’s sake hast labored and hast not fainted” verse 3

The early Christians could not bear them which were evil but they could bear persecution and suffering for Christ’s sake. In their marvelous labors in extending the gospel they certainly did not faint. For example, notice the exploits of the apostles themselves

James: Son of Zebedee. Slain by Herod Agrippa 44 AD

Phillip: Preached the gospel in Upper Asia. At Heliopolis in Phrygia he was scourged, imprisoned and crucified in 54 AD

Matthew: Laboured in Parthia and Ethiopia where he was martyred in the city of Nadabah 60 AD by being slain with a halberd.

James the Less: A brother of Jesus, an overseer of the early Jerusalem church. At 94 years he was stoned by his fellow Jews and his brains were dashed out by a fuller’s club.

Matthias: Replaced Judas Iscariot, the traitor. Stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

Andrew: Peter’s brother. Labored in many Asiatic nations. On arrival at Edessa, Syria, he was crucified. Mark: Laboured in Egypt. At Alexandria he was dragged to pieces by a mob of idolaters.

Peter: Peter labored mostly for the Jews. Finally at Rome he was arrested during Nero’s reign and crucified upside down.

Paul: The chief apostle to the Gentiles who labored incessantly in promoting the gospel. Was beheaded by Nero about 68 AD.

Jude or Thaddeus: Crucified at Edessa, 72 AD.

Bartholomew: Labored in several countries. Finally in India he was cruelly beaten and crucified by a mob of idolaters.

Thomas: Labored in Parthia and India. Killed by Hindu priests, by being thrust through with a spear.

Luke: Labored with St. Paul in various countries. Tradition says he was hanged from an olive tree by pagan priests of Greece.

Simon Zealotes: Labored in Mauretania, Africa and Britain where he finally was crucified 74 AD.

John: Labored in Asia Minor. Arrested and sent to Rome where at Domitian’s command he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He was miraculously preserved whereupon the emperor banished him to the lonely isle of Patmos.

Barnabas: Claimed to have been martyred in 73 AD.

Nicodemus: Suffered death at Rome under Domitian.

Timothy: Labored in Ephesus until 97 AD when he was clubbed to death by pagan people. (2)

Every apostle except John died a martyr but through their endeavors the world of that day was turned upside down. The church of the period of Ephesus truly labored for Christ’s sake and did not faint. As Dr. Vaughan declared:

“There is total patience and abhorrence of evil and discernment and again patience and endurance and unwearied exertion. What can be wanting here?” (3)

But finally the early church did begin to falter. What was the problem? It was not sinfulness or heresy or compromise, but. . .

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” verse 4

This represented a decline in the zeal of God's people of this period. When did this commence? Probably after the death of the apostles.

St. Paul had warned that "after my departing-of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things." Acts 20:25-31. Paul was martyred about 68 AD. John wrote Revelation about 96 AD and in his day some false leaders were already in the church. (3 John 1:9, 10)

It appears that after about fifty years the decline commenced."Little by little a change came." (4)

"Zeal began to wane."

"Coldness crept into the church" "piety was rapidly waning" (5)

"She became selfish and ease loving" "The spirit of worldliness was cherished" (6)

CHRIST'S WARNING

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works; or else I will come to thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" verse 5

Here is God's way of true revival in the church of God.

1."Remember from whence thou art fallen"

Christ calls the believer to recount his past experience of how he loved Christ; to remember the original standards and his labors in the hope that he will realize how far he has fallen - to see how love of self has replaced love for Christ.

2 Repent

Seek for a change of mind or attitude which the Holy Spirit will surely give if it is sought for with all the heart.

3 Return or Reform

"Do the first works" Let love be demonstrated by positive action. Love is the fulfilling of the law, love is full hearted obedience. To encourage repentance and reformation Christ warns of the consequences of non-repentance and commends them for their attitude toward false teachers.

"Else I will come to thee and remove thy candlestick out of his place."

The candlesticks in the sanctuary were the light bearers. The removal of the candlestick indicated that it was no longer disseminating the light, and so with a church, the spiritual candlestick in the spiritual sanctuary now on earth. If a church loses its love, it loses its light. Light and love are closely allied."God is love"; "God is light." Therefore, if a church fails to return to its first love, it will have no light and it will be removed from the spiritual temple. It may continue as a professing church of God but it is not recognized as such by heaven.

The study of church history sadly reveals that every church through the centuries, if it has not disappeared through martyrdom, has ultimately had its candlestick removed. Faith in Christ is not inherited and the natural tendency of the human heart is self-love. As Jesus so significantly said,

"He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13 Christ's Commendation of Their Attitude Toward False Teachers
"Thou hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate" verse 6

Christ did not hate the people but the things they did, likewise with the early church. They loved the sinner but hated the sin. Three of the early Church Fathers record the existence of a sect called the Nicolaitanes, in the second century AD. The Nicolaitanes are also named under the Pergamos period. There they are described in detail.

Christ's Appeal to All Believers Concerning the Churches

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit said to the Churches." verse 7

In verse 1, it is Christ who speaks to the church. But here it is the Spirit. What is the significance? The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative on earth. He is the one and only Vicar of Christ.

“When the Comforter is come . . . he shall testify of me” John 15:26 -9

“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear [from me] that shall he speak” John 16:13

It is not only the lessons from Ephesus that believers should heed, but the lessons from all the seven churches. What Christ reveals concerning each church is important instruction for every saint and for every other church of every age.

Main Lessons from the Ephesus Church Letter

1. God holds his true servants firmly in his hand.
2. God takes note of our labors for his cause.
3. God takes note of our attitude toward evil.
4. The danger of declining love and the growth of self love.

“These words [2:4, 5] are applicable to churches in their present condition. The love of God has been lost and this means the absence of love for one another. Self, self, self is cherished and is striving for the supremacy. God rebukes his people for their sins, that he may humble them and lead them to seek his face.” (7)

Promise to the Overcomer

“To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” verse 7

What must the believer overcome? In the Ephesian period it meant responding to the call to remember, repent and return to one’s first love. This meant the denial of self, which is the biggest battle of every believer of every age. The saint who gains this victory is regarded by God as having attained to perfection of character. As one author of great spiritual discernment wrote:

“The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity-when self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within” (8)

This is to be the aim and the daily prayer of every true believer.

“Eat of the tree of life”

This means immortality. Originally in Eden the Lord declared,

“And now, lest he [Adam] put forth his hand and eat of the tree of life and live forever” Genesis 3:22

God “only [alone] has immortality.” 1 Timothy 6:16

Therefore, in the kingdom, in order to maintain immortality, the saved will need to continually eat of the tree of life.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.” Revelation 22:14

“On either side of the river [of life] was there the tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing [service] of the nations.” Revelation 22:2

“Which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

In the original paradise, the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden (Genesis 2:9). Is the original paradise of Eden the same as the paradise of the future, that is promised to the saints? This is answered under Revelation 21 and 22. One thing is certain - the human race in Adam and Eve was banned from paradise and the tree of life, but in Christ, the second Adam, all who believe and follow him will be restored to paradise and to the tree of life and immortality.

SMYRNA

THE CHURCH WHICH TO GOD WAS FRAGRANT

An Exposition of Revelation 2:8-11

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things said the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.” verse 8

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS TITLE

1.”Which was dead and is alive” This expression reminded the saints in this period that what was befalling them, had also befallen Jesus. He already had passed through a similar experience and fully understood their sufferings.

2.”The first and the last” As shown in Revelation 1, this title was drawn from the Old Testament (9) and represented Jesus Christ as being in complete control. He is the victorious one. He is first on the battlefield and he will be the last on the field, indicating complete victory. This is the One who is with his people amid the fierce fires of martyrdom.

Christ Commends His Saints for Three Things

“I know thy works and tribulation and poverty [but thou art rich]” verse 9

Smyrna represented the period of persecution under the pagan Roman Caesars. As the gospel spread throughout the then-known world, the bastions of paganism began to crumble. This brought furious reactions. The surrounding nations resisted the gospel and martyred those who accepted it.

In the Roman empire the rulers finally turned upon the Christians and millions sacrificed their lives for Christ. Sites of many martyrdoms can still be seen today, such as the Circus Maximus, the Coliseum, St. Peter’s Square and other places in Rome. Often Christians were sacrificed in the arenas. Some were tied to poles around the arena, smothered with pitch and set alight. Then the wild beasts were released on the remainder of the Christians in the arena. The remarkable poise, courage and steadfastness of the Christians was a telling demonstration of the power of Christ. As a result, multitudes were influenced to accept the gospel and the saying was coined,

“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church”

This was because wherever martyrdoms occurred, new believers sprang up as a result. Meaning of the Word “Smyrna”

Smyrna means “sweet smelling”. It is derived from myrrh, the Arabian herb, a source of aromatic ointment. When myrrh was crushed, it gave forth a beautiful fragrance. This was a perfect picture of the saints of the Smyrnan period. The saints were crushed in martyrdom, but in their dying they rendered a testimony to their faith in Christ which was so impressive it was like beautiful fragrance to the multitudes. Millions were convinced and accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Myrrh was also used to embalm the dead (John 19:39). In this period the church passed through an experience of death in which the church appeared to be weakened and destroyed. But, in fact, the death

experience actually preserved the church. It purged out corruption and selfishness enabling the church to give forth a sweet-smelling fragrance in its expression of true Christian virtues.

“I know. . . thy poverty”

The earthly possessions of believers were frequently confiscated by the state. Many Christians were forced to hide and worshipped underground in the catacombs. Others were driven out to distant parts. They suffered “the spoiling of their goods”. “They were destitute, afflicted, tormented” Hebrews 11:37

“But thou art rich”

Not materially rich, but spiritually. By their self-sacrifice they “laid up treasure in heaven”. No wonder God permits persecution. Today the church is materially rich but spiritually it is “poor and blind and naked”. Revelation 3:17. This is one of the great lessons of church history. When the church is in adversity it is spiritually enriched, when the church is in affluence it is spiritually poor. This is generally true also of individual Christians. This explains why the church to be translated must first pass through a time of trouble in order to be fit for translation.

“I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan” verse 9

This may apply to the literal Jews in their relentless hostility toward the gospel of Christ. The Jews are not “Jews” in the New Testament meaning of the term. Originally the Jews were those of the tribe of Judah. The word means “praise”.

However, the New Testament shows that the term now has a spiritual connotation and applies only to true believers.

“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision [the mark of the literal Jew] which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the Letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” Romans 2:28,29

This indicates that the true, spiritual Jew is the one who has the praise of God.

“If ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise!” Galatians 3:29

The term “Jew” is a deeply religious term but Satan has led the Hebrew people, especially the leaders, to bring the term into disrepute.

The Jewish synagogues were “fountains of persecution”. This expression was coined in that very period (10) because in them were hatched by the Jewish leaders the slanderous accusations against the innocent Christians. In the Book of Acts the Apostles, the reader may discern behind the persecutions of the early Christians the slanderous lies of the Jewish leaders. (11)

The Jewish leaders inspired others to resist the gospel its they have done through the centuries. By vicious lies they instilled fear in the minds of the pagan peoples concerning the Christian faith. They led the people to blame the Christians for the natural calamities that fell upon society. The persecution of the apostle John by Domitian was due to the false accusations of the Jews to the emperor. In the martyrdom of the saintly Polycarp, the Jews played a leading role.

“Even though he was to be burned on the Sabbath - the Jews were so anxious for Polycarp’s death that they came in large numbers to the stadium bringing faggots for the fire in which Polycarp so magnificently died.”(12)

Satan is the instigator of lies and slander (John 8:44) therefore the synagogues where the lying slanders against the saints were conceived and given birth, were in reality “The synagogue of Satan”.

“Fear none of those things which you shall suffer” verse 10

The initial reaction to this admonition is that it is expecting the impossible. The thought of suffering and martyrdom naturally rouses one’s fears. The instinct of self-preservation causes apprehension. But when God calls a saint to martyrdom the Holy Spirit takes away his fear and gives supernatural courage. One of the astonishing marks of the martyrs was their courage in facing death. They unflinchingly faced the lions.

“They loved not their lives unto death!” Revelation 12:11

As Tertullian, a church leader, wrote to the Roman leader,

“Kill us, torture us, grind us to dust-the oftener we are mowed down by you the more in numbers we grow; the blood of the Christians is seed” (13)

“Behold the devil will cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days.” verse 10

Thirteen Roman emperors initiated or supported the persecution of the Christians but ten of them were more pronounced.

ROMAN EMPERORS WHO PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Trajan, 98-117 AD

There were many popular tumults against Christians. He issued an edict making perseverance in Christianity a capital offence. There were many martyrs including Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem and Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch.

Hadrian, 117-138 AD

The populace at the games and shows clamored for the killing of Christians. He decreed that Christians must be tried and convicted before execution.

Antoninus Pius, 138-161 AD

Magistrates accused the Christians of impiety. In Asia-minor Christians were held responsible for the numerous earthquakes and were violently attacked by the people. Polycarp, the saintly Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred in 156 AD. Before the fire was lit, the judge called on him to renounce Christ and save his life. Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ and he never did me wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?" Fifteen hundred Christians were slain on one occasion and eight hundred on another.

Marcus Aurelius, 161-180 AD

The philosophers falsely accused the Christians of horrible crimes such as incest and feasting on the flesh of murdered children. As a result, there were furious outbursts against Christians, producing one of the most terrible periods of persecution. Many were martyred. Churches were destroyed at Lyons and Vienne. Numbers of apologies were written on behalf of the Christians including Justin Martyr, Athenagorus and Tatian.

Commodus, 180-192 AD

During his reign the usual persecution, suffering and death of Christians occurred because of their renunciation of paganism.

Septimus Severus, 193-211 AD

Numerous Christians were killed in the provinces. Presidents were permitted to persecute Christians whenever they pleased. Laws were enacted forbidding the propagation of the Christian faith.

Alexander Severus, 222-235 AD

Several instances of persecution, but he indicated that Christianity should be tolerated.

Maximus, 235-238 AD

He incited the people and the magistrates to attack the Christians and many atrocities were perpetuated.

Decius Trajan, 249-251 AD

He issued severe edicts against Christians and commanded the governors to utterly exterminate the Christian faith. This was the worst of the martyrdoms to date.

Gallus, 251-253 AD

Persecution continued with Christians being blamed for the various calamities and pestilences.

Valerian, 253-260 AD

Christians were forbidden to meet together - many martyrs.

Aurelian, 270-275 AD

He issued persecuting edicts against the Christians.

Diocletian, 284-305 AD (14)

"He became so puffed up with pride, because of his success as ruler, that he commanded that he should be worshipped as God. He claimed that he was brother to the sun and moon and adorning his shoes with gold and precious stones, he commanded the people to kiss his feet." (15)

This demand led to the fiercest period of persecution under the Caesars. It continued for exactly ten years, 303-313 AD, and we suggest that this was the fulfillment of the prediction that the Smyrian church would have tribulation ten days. Seeing this prophecy employs symbolic terms, any time period mentioned should be interpreted as symbolic time. (16) This would represent ten years on the basis that in symbolic prophecy a day represents a year. (17)

Prior to 303 AD there had been a period of peace and tranquility for the Christians. The faith flourished. Even some of the emperors were favorable toward it. Many in responsible civil positions were Christians. Relatives of the emperors accepted the faith. There were huge congregations in almost every city.

Soon, however, signs of degeneracy appeared. Rivalry and contention among the bishops was prevalent as well as among the church members.

“Fraud, malice and envy prevailed in every congregation.” (18)

Undoubtedly the unconverted were widespread in the church. To save the church, God intervened. He permitted the rise of Diocletian who beset the church with fierce persecution.

1. He issued decrees for the overthrow of Christian temples throughout the Roman empire.
2. He issued a decree for the burning of the Christian scriptures.
3. He issued edicts for the replacement of Christians who occupied positions of responsibility, such as magistrates, etc.
4. He ordered that elders and bishops be cast into prison and tortured in order to force them to engage in idol worship. (19)

EXAMPLES OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS

Several thousand Christians at one place assembled to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The temple was surrounded and locked. The Christians were called upon to offer incense to Jupiter or else be burned alive. The answer came from within: “We are all Christians, Christ is our only God and King. We will worship him and his Father and the Holy Ghost and we are now ready to be offered to God.” The response? The temple was set alight and some thousands of men, women and children were burned alive.

The emperor sent an edict to a certain city in Phrygia commanding the citizens to worship idols. The mayor and other leaders confessed that they were Christians with all those in the city. The result? The whole city and its inhabitants were burned alive.

Eustratius of Arabrace witnessed the endurance of the martyrs. He was so affected that he himself thirsted for martyrdom. He openly professed his faith in Christ. The pagans rebuked him for his madness and vanity. He was arrested, cruelly beaten and burned alive.

Some ancient authorities claimed that in Britain under the Diocletian persecution, “all the Christians were utterly destroyed”. (20)

In Portugal, a beautiful maiden of noble birth became a sincere and devout believer. She turned her back on worldly pleasures. When persecution fell upon her fellow Christians, she took a bold stand. Through much prayer she was given a remarkable spirit of resistance to her persecutors. Her parents moved to the country in order to save Eulalia from martyrdom. But Eulalia was so moved by the Holy Spirit that she stole away by night, traveling through thorny bush and darkness until she reached Emerita, the city from whence her parents had fled. She confronted the tribunal and rebuked them for their slaughter of good people. She said,

“I am one of the Christians, an enemy of your devilish sacrifices. I spurn your idols under my feet. I confess God Omnipotent with my heart and mouth. Isis, Apollo, Venus! What are they? A thing of naught - the work of men’s hands. The emperor falls down and worships a stone. Go to therefore, bum, cut and mangle these earthly members. It is easy to break a brittle substance, but the inward mind thou shall not hurt.”

In fury the judge decreed,

“Hangman, take her, pull her out by the hair of her head and torment her to the uttermost.” Then, sensing her youthful beauty, he changed his attitude and said, “Will you kill yourself, so young a flower? Does not the glittering and golden pomp of a bridal move you? Behold, the instruments prepared for thy terrible death. Either you shall be beheaded with this sword, or else with wild beasts pulled to pieces or be cast into a fiery furnace and be consumed to ashes. If you will take with your fingers a little salt and incense and put it into the censors, you shall be delivered from punishment.

Eulalia did not reply, but instead threw down the idol and spurned with her feet the incense. Her executioners took her, pulled her joints one from the other and with talons tore her sides to the bones. Through it all, Eulalia praised God with singing, “Lord, I will not forget thee. What a pleasure O Christ, to remember your triumphant victories.”

She continued singing without lament or weeping but full of cheer. Her executioners gored her flesh with an iron grate and hurdle and then burned her on every side of her body with flaming torches. When the flame reached her head, she expired in peace. (21)

In Gaul, a Roman legion comprising 6660 men was totally Christian. It was led by a Christian called Mauritius. The legion was ordered by the emperor to attack the Christians. The legion refused. The emperor executed every tenth soldier. They committed themselves to God "with great joy" encouraged by their leader Mauritius.

"He was summoned to the emperor and in his defense declared, 'We are your soldiers, but also the servants of God. We will rather obey him than you. We offer our hands against any other enemy, but to defile our hands with the blood of innocents, that we may not do-behold we cast down our weapons and resist not, for we would rather be killed than kill; and die guiltless than live guilty. We are ready to suffer fire and sword and any other torments. We confess ourselves to be Christians; we cannot persecute Christians, nor will we sacrifice to your devilish idols.'

The emperor ordered another tenth of the legion to be executed. When the remainder still refused to murder their fellow Christians, Caesar ordered the whole army to destroy the Christian legion. The Christian legionnaires made no resistance. They yielded their lives to their persecutors and were slain. (22)

What a telling testimony was borne by the early Christians! As the Revelator declared in chapter 12:

"They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto death." Revelation 12:11

It is abundantly clear that the saints were inspired to martyrdom by the Holy Spirit. So often they appeared to deliberately invite death.

This is not normal and some authors have made the mistake of claiming that the martyrs were overzealous and that many died needlessly. (23) The truth is that the martyrs were given supernatural boldness and courage and supernatural deliverance from pain.

"In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives, did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workman, were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. Thousands were imprisoned and slain; but others sprung up to fill their places. Their living example and dying testimony were a constant witness for the truth; and where least expected, the subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ." (24)

We believe that in the future when God requires martyrs, he will inspire in the same manner, men and women and children, to boldly testify even to the point of inviting death and even challenging their persecutors to martyr them. As in the past, God will use such witnesses to save many that are still in Babylon.

PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER

"He that overcomes, shall not be hurt of the second death" verse 11

What were the believers of the Smyrnanian period to overcome or conquer? Without doubt the fear of suffering and death for the sake of Christ. The reward is that if they overcame they would not be hurt of, (or experience), the second death. Scripture speaks of several kinds of death. There is spiritual death and literal death. Spiritual death is the lack of spiritual life."Dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) which is the lot of all who are not born again in Christ. Literal or physical death is the cessation of physical life and there are two kinds of physical death. The first death is the result of the sin of Adam, the father of the race.

"In Adam all die." 1 Corinthians 15:22

"As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

The first death is temporary. From it all men return. Everyone comes back from the tomb.

"Marvel not at this: For the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29

We are all coming back from death - we have no say, no choice; all return from death. However, we do have a choice as to when we come back. There are two main resurrections, the first resurrection and the second resurrection, the resurrection to life or the resurrection to damnation or judgment, i. e. punishment. We have a choice in which resurrection we come back. Those who are faithful to Christ return in the first resurrection to eternal life.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.” Revelation 20:6

But they who return in the second resurrection, return for punishment and the punishment will be “the second death”. This resurrection transpires at the close of the one thousand years of Revelation 20 and the death that ensues is destruction in the lake of fire. From this death there is no recovery. It is annihilation.

“I saw the dead small and great, stand before God-and they were judged, every man according to his works. And death and hell [grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:12-15

“The lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8

The final fate of the unsaved is not eternal life in torment but cessation of life in destruction. The destruction is “everlasting destruction”

2 Thessalonians 1:9. Thus the promise to the overcomer of the Smyrnian period of the church and to Christians of all periods who overcome is that they will have part in the first resurrection and on them the “second death will have no power”. They will be impervious to the forces of destruction. Nothing will ever hurt them again. What a comfort to the martyrs as they faced their executioners. As Jesus counseled,

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul [or character] but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28

PERGAMOS

The Church Which Amid Popularity Was Faithful. Exposition of Revelation 2:12-17.

“Unto the angel [leader] of the church in Pergamos write.” verse 12.

The name Pergamos means height or elevation. The city of Pergamos was located on a thousand foot high hill making it ideal for defense. Pergamos represents the period of the church when Christianity became popular. The church was exalted by society. This period undoubtedly commenced with the reign of Constantine the Great about 320 AD.

At this time Satan changed his form of attack upon the church. Heretofore he had used persecution, but this purified, strengthened and enlarged the church. He therefore was compelled to employ different tactics. He now made the church popular. Here was great peril.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST’S TITLE

“He which hath the sharp sword with two edges.” Verse 12.

As indicated under Revelation 1:1b, this title denotes the power of Christ’s word especially in the execution of judgment.

“The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. . . all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:12, 13.

Popularity breeds corruption, and Christ’s title suggests that in this period when corruption would pervade the professed church, he will be all-discerning in regard to the condition of his people and will deal with them in judgment. (25)

CHRIST’S COMMENDATION

“I know thy works and where thou dwells, even where Satan’s seat is and you held fast my name and hast not denied my faith. . .” verse 13.

In spite of the fact that believers were in a perilous position of popularity, Christ declares that they were faithful. What was Satan’s seat or throne? The role of Pergamos in the strategy of Satan in his opposition to the cause of God is used to illustrate the problems of the saints in this period. Pergamos was a thriving and powerful center of paganism. It contained renowned memorials to idolatry. There were:

1. The huge altar to Zeus, commemorating their victory over the invading Gauls, the remnant of whom were the Galatians.
2. The famous shrine and temple of Aesculapius, the serpent god of medicine.

3. The center of the worship of Dionysus - the Bull god.
4. A prominent center of the worship of Bacchus and Venus.
5. A great temple to Athena.
6. Temples to the Roman emperors Augustus, Trajan and Severus to whom were given divine honors.

Most of all, Pergamos was then the seat of Babylonian Sun worship, the source of all idolatry, astrology and occultism. In 487 BC, 50 years after the Persians conquered Babylon, the Chaldean system of Sun worship was compelled to flee from Babylon because of Persian hostility. They moved westward and established their center in Pergamos, independent of Persian control.

“The defeated Chaldeans fled to Asia Minor and fixed their central college at Pergamos and took the palladium of Babylon, the cubic stone, with them. Here independent of state control, they carried on the rites of their religion.” (26)

The original seat or throne of Satan was in Babylon. (Isaiah 14:4, 12) He was Babylon’s invisible king. In 487 BC Pergamos was his earthly seat. The Pergamene kings embraced the Babylonian religion and assumed its leadership under the Babylonian title of Pontifex Maximus or Chief Pontiff. It was the state religion. In 133 BC, Attalus III bequeathed the kingdom of Pergamos to Rome with all its offices, political and religious. This is how Satan’s throne was transferred to Rome. Julius and Augustus Caesar were the first to assume the position of Pontifex Maximus. Later the Christian emperor Gratian (380 AD,) rejected the title whereupon it was assumed by Pope Damascus and has ever since been one of the official titles of the bishops of Rome. Pergamos therefore was the connecting link between the two Babylons.

Pergamos represents Satan’s change of tactics in the third period of Christian history. He now attacked the church, not from without but from within. He transferred his throne from paganism to the Christian church. Instead of confrontation he resorted to infiltration. This was in exact fulfillment of St. Paul’s prediction in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [Second Advent] shall not come, except there be a falling away [apostasy] first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped so that he, as God, sits in the temple [church] of God, showing himself [posing] that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5.

The power that fulfilled this prediction was the church at Rome. As one author has written,

“This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of ‘the man of sin’ foretold in prophecy. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan’s power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will. The church was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan, the bishop of Rome. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the church of Rome and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.” (27)

Pergamos was the period of the visible formation and establishment of the apostate church, in other words, the predicted Antichrist. In this period commenced the great cleavage among Christians resulting in the withdrawal of the loyal minority of believers.

“Thou held fast my name and hast not denied my faith.” In the words of the same author,

“After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example to their children and children’s children. To secure peace and unity, they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference and even war.”(28)

The Pergamene period undoubtedly began with the accession of Constantine the Great, the first so-called Christian emperor, and concluded, we suggest, with Justinian in 538 AD. This was the period of amalgamation of church and state. But this apostate church was not the church addressed by Christ under the name Pergamos. The true church of Christ was the separated faithful minority that held fast to Christ’s name and who, unlike their compromising brethren, did not deny the faith of Christ.

“In those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.” Verse 13.

Who was Antipas? There is a tradition that Antipas was the martyred bishop of Pergamos. (29) Probably the name has a symbolic application, just like Balaam and Jezebel in the Thyatira period. Anti as is formed of two words – “Anti” = in place of, instead of,

meaning a substitute or one against or in opposition.”Pas” = an abbreviated form of pater or father. The use of the term “father” in the religious realm savors of authoritarianism and is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:8-12.

With the development of the apostasy in this period there entered the unchristian spirit of authoritarianism. It developed markedly with the bishops of Rome and spread among other church leaders. Finally it infected the pastors and leaders of local churches. Antipas probably represents the faithful believers who stood firmly against the exercise of “kingly power” in the church and as a result were symbolically slain among the people. They were stigmatized, berated, and blackened. They were slain by character assassination and were forced to become social outcasts.

“The faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church.”

CHRIST’S COMPLAINT CONCERNING THESE CHRISTIANS

“Thou hast there, them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication” verse 14.

This is a reference to the experience of Baal-peor as recorded by Moses,

“And Israel abode in Shittim and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.” Numbers 25:1-3.

“And Moses said to them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.” Numbers 31:15, 16.

Baal worship is Sun worship. It is the worship of the principle of fertility and expressed itself in sexuality. This had a powerful pull upon the natural impulses of man and this is why Israel was so frequently led into Baal worship.

The Revelator draws on this experience to picture what was taking place in the Pergamene period with many of God’s professed people. Ancient Israel were led into literal whoredom and idolatry through Balaam’s counsel.

Spiritual Israel in the Pergamene period were led into spiritual whoredom by the counsel of certain false brethren within the church. These, it appears, advocated friendship and compromise with the apostasy of that day. God’s unequivocal counsel in this was clear:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore came out from among them and be ye separate-and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

The Pergamene church tolerated among them those who advocated compromise with false worship. This was the popular trend of the times and the church was lax in its stand. These false brethren were designated as Nicolaitans.

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans which thing I hate.” verse 15.

A number of manuscripts render the clause, “which thing I hate”, as “in like manner”, suggesting that the Nicolaitans held the doctrine of Balaam. (30)

The words “Nicolaitan” and “Balaam” have almost identical meanings -

Nicolaitan is Greek and comprises - conqueror and it “lais” - people = “Conqueror of the people.” Balaam is Hebrew and comprises – ”belang am” = “Destroyer of the people”

The Nicolaitans are first mentioned in the Ephesian church letter.

“Thou hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” Revelation 2:6.

But in the Pergamene period these same people were now right inside the church. This reveals the snare of tolerance. It is important for believers to learn what needs to be tolerated in the church and what should not. To tolerate what God hates is grievous to God and will injure the church.

What were the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitans? They could be likened to the liberals of the early church. They abused St. Paul's emphasis of "God's free grace". They misinterpreted "not under the law" to mean "not under the standard or direction of the law" instead of "not under the condemnation or curse of the law". As a result, they adopted a false freedom which led to licentiousness or sexual freedom. As St. Peter declared:

"Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls which have forsaken the right way and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:14-16.

"For there are certain men crept in unawares ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness [sexual freedom] and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Woe unto them for they have gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward and perished in the gainsaying of Core." [Korah] Jude 1:4, 11.

The Nicolaitans according to some scholars were Gnostics.

"The Nicolaitans were a Gnostic sect who mistakenly traced their origin back to Nicholas, one of the seven deacons. [Acts 6:5.] They held certain impure doctrines and lived impure lives. They held to the pernicious principle that the lower passions were subdued try indulgence." (31)

CHRIST'S WARNING TO PERGAMOS

"Repent or else I will come to thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." verse 16.

Of what is the church of Pergamos to repent? Of tolerating the teachings and practices of the Balaamites or Nicolaitans. How often has the church of God needed this warning? How often has the church become too tolerant? How often has it compromised? Today the church under the label of love, tolerates false doctrine, worldliness and commandment breaking. Those who protest are branded as trouble makers. But whom does Christ commend? Those, who like Antipas, lift up their voices in protest. But like Antipas they are spiritually assassinated in character and reputation.

"I will come quickly."

This appears to mean that Christ will come to Pergamos in judgment and remove its candlestick if it does not repent. (See under Revelation 2:5.)

"I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth,"

This refers to the Nicolaitans or Balaamites. The expression appears to be borrowed from Moses' account of the experience of Israel in Numbers 25, where those who led Israel astray were literally slain with the sword.

"And Moses said to the judges of Israel, Slay ye everyone his men that were joined to Baal-peor. And behold one brought to his brethren a Midianitish women in the sight of Moses and all the congregation-who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle. And when Phinehas the son of Eleazar saw it, he rose up and took a javelin and thrust both of them through so the plague was stayed and those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand." Numbers 25:1-9.

This is a graphic warning to spiritual Israel. All who persist in compromising with the world, which is spiritual adultery (James 4:4) are to be dealt with by the spiritual sword of the Spirit - the Word of God - and severed from among God's people. This is what will stay the plague of the judgments of God upon spiritual Israel.

Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was rewarded for his zeal by being granted the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

"Phinehas has turned away my wrath from Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy behold I give to him my covenant of peace even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God and made an atonement for the children of Israel." Numbers 25:10-14

In spiritual Israel, those who zealously resist the spiritual Balaamites, or Nicolaitans, likewise will be rewarded, by being granted a spiritual priesthood for eternity. They will be made "kings and priests unto God." Revelation 1:6.

THE PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER

“To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna and will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.” verse 17.

The “hidden manna” is an allusion to the pot of manna preserved inside the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies of the sanctuary. Exodus 16:31-35. It was “hidden manna” because no one could see it in the ark except the High Priest maybe, and then only once a year.

It was incorruptible. It was preserved in the ark for 40 years in the wilderness and for over eight hundred years in the Promised Land until 586 BC approximately, when the ark and its contents were hidden by the prophet Jeremiah in a secret cave east of Jordan. (32)

It was food from heaven. It was all-sufficient. It gave life and it kept one free from disease. It represents the spiritual food of the believer (John 6:48-63) the word of God. This word is described in scripture as hidden.

“Thy word have I hid in-my heart that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11.”I have meat [food] to eat that ye know not of.” John 4:32.

“I have esteemed [margin “hid, laid up” Hebrew] the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” Job. 23:12.

“Your life [spiritually] is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3.

This promise to the overcomer represents the fact that in the kingdom he will have provision to maintain life and health throughout eternity.

“A White Stone”

Undoubtedly this is an allusion to the Urim stone - a glittering diamond upon the breastplate of the high priest. Urim means light, which could answer to “white” in regard to color. On the Urim a secret name of God was written. Through the Urim stone special communication was available between the high priest and God. At the request of the priest, if the answer from God was in the affirmative a bright light would shine through the Urim.

“In the stone a new name written”

In the Old Testament the giving of a new name represented the bestowal of honor, promotion and elevation. When Joseph was elevated to be prime minister of Egypt, his name was changed to Zaphnath-paaneah, “The man to whom secrets are revealed.” (Genesis 41:45.)

When Daniel was elevated to stand in the king’s house, his name was changed to Belteshazzar. (Daniel 1:7.) When Jacob was elevated to be a prince with God, his name was changed to Israel. (Genesis 32:27,28.)

To the overcomer this promise represents that he will be elevated to a distinguished position in the kingdom and that he will enjoy an especially close relationship with the Godhead - an access that is intimate and special. When one contemplates the multiplied millions of beings that surround the Father, such a promise is deeply significant. Because of his close and intimate relationship with the Godhead, the overcomer will obtain the hidden manna - he will share a spiritual feast.

In this earthly realm, to be invited to share an intimate meal with the king or queen or president of the nation, would be most precious and privileged. What then, in the kingdom, if one were granted an audience with the Father, knowing that he loves you and will enjoy your company? What anticipation! But do not we

have this privilege already in a spiritual sense? Yes! In secret prayer. In the kingdom we will have literal, visible fellowship with our heavenly Father.

The false prophet Balaam is typical of the apostate church in the period of Pergamos.

BALAAM

1. Balaam was once true to God.
2. Balaam was overcome by the spirit of covetousness - wealth.

3. Balaam was offered a rich reward by Balak, king of Moab, to ruin Israel.
4. Balaam finally fell for the reward and united with Balak.
5. Balaam was warned by a special messenger but to no avail.
6. Balaam counseled = “Lure Israel by an idolatrous feast and immoral pleasure.”
7. Those who led Israel astray were slain with the sword
8. Those who refused to eat things sacrificed to idols etc. were saved and continued to eat of the manna from heaven.

APOSTATE CHURCH

1. The professedly Christian Church was once true to God.
2. The church was overcome by the spirit of covetousness popularity and power.
3. The church leaders were offered rich rewards by Constantine if they compromised, thereby ruining the church.
4. The church compromised and accepted the support of the civil power thereby uniting church and state.
5. The church leaders were warned and opposed by a loyal minority (Antipas) but to no avail.
6. Church leaders lured members from Christ by compromise with paganism which is spiritual adultery.
7. Those that lead spiritual Israel astray, Christ will fight against them “with the sword of his mouth”.
8. Those who rejected the spiritual food of the spiritual Balaamites were saved from spiritual death and continued to eat of the hidden manna - the pure word of God.

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7. Ellen G. White “Review and Herald,” February 25, 1862
8. Ellen G. White “Christ’s Object Lessons,” page 390, 391
9. See the chapter: “Jesus Christ the Alpha and Omega!”
10. Tertullian (early Church Father) “Scorpiace 10”: A. N. F. Volume 3, page 643. See SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 746.
11. Acts 13:45; 14:2,19; 17:5,13; 18:5,6; 21:27. 12. Dr. Edwin Thiele: “Notes On Revelation,” page 48
12. Tertullian of Carthage: “Apology” chapter 50, quoted by Taylor G. Bunch in “The seven Epistles of Christ” page 21
13. Edwin Thiele: “Notes on Revelation” page 42, 43
14. Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs” Clarke’s Edition, page 34

15. In the prophecy of the seven churches, the names of the churches are all symbolic, the titles of Jesus are symbolic, the candlesticks and stars likewise, and the terms Antipas, Balsam, Jezebel, fornication, bed, adultery, rod of iron, Morning star, garments, white raiment, key of David, open door, synagogue of Satan, Jews, pillar in temple, spew out of mouth, cold nor hot, gold, eye salve, the door, sup with him, are all symbolic in application.

16. See Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34

17. Edward Gibbon: "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chapters XVI.

18."Foxe's Book of Martyrs" Clarke's Edition. Page 34.

19. Ibid. page 35.

20. Ibid. pages 37, 38.

21. Ibid. pages 36, 37.

22."The tenderness of the Father causes him to lose sight of the fact that death was sought. . . 'The overzealous often times suffer when there is need of suffering, yet God reads the motive of the heart.'" Steven N. Haskell, "Seer of Patmos" page 52.

23. Ellen G. White: "'The Great Controversy" pages 41, 42.

24. The Pergamene period may correspond with the period of the black horse of Revelation 6. The rider of this horse is pictured as having balances in his hand. One of the applications of "balances" in scripture is that of judgment. Daniel 5:27.

25. William B. Baker."Lares and Penates", pages 232,233.

26. Ellen G. White."The Great Controversy", page 50.

27. Ellen G. White."The Great Controversy", page 45.

28. See the SDA Bible Dictionary "Antipas"

29. The three oldest manuscripts plus the Syriac and the Vulgate render the clause, "which thing I hate", as "in likes meaner". See also Dr. Ellicott on Revelation 2:15.

30. Dr. Edwin Thiele."Outline Studies in Revelation", page 39.

31. 2 Maccabees 2:4-8. This book is found in the Apocrypha. Ellen G. White."Prophets and Kings", page 453.

3. Faith Amid The Flames!

The Church Of Thyatira

THE STIRRING STORY OF THE SAINTS OF THYATIRA

An Exposition of Revelation 2:18-29.

"Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira."

This is the fourth of the seven churches of Revelation. It stands between the period when the church in the Roman empire became popular under Constantine the Great (from about 300-538 AD), and the church of the Reformation period after 1500 AD. This is the period embracing the Middle and Dark Ages in which the Papacy dominated Europe and the true church existed in the wilderness.

This is the central church period of the seven. Twelve verses of scripture are employed to describe it whereas the average number of verses employed to describe the other six churches is 6. 5 verses. Thyatira also covers the longest and the most trying period of the Christian era.

THE TITLE CHRIST ASSUMES

“The Son of God.” Verse 18.

This is the sole use of this title in Revelation. Generally it is “Son of Man”. The term “Son of God” denotes Christ’s deity. In this period

Christ’s position and prerogatives were usurped by the great Antichrist who had seated himself in “the temple [church] of God showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4.) The Son of God had been replaced by the “son of perdition”. The Man of Sorrows by the ‘man of sin’.

“Who has eyes like a flame of fire.”

His all-penetrating gaze detects the good and the evil. The evil he will judge and destroy.”His feet are like fine brass.”

Under Revelation 1:15 this expression is shown to represent the treading down in judgment of all who choose sin and rebellion. (1) How relevant was such a title for this church period, when the saints of God so unjustly suffered at the hands of Antichrist.

Where was the church of God during this period? This was the church described in Revelation 12 as having fled into the wilderness. (Verse 6, 14.) It was not the orthodox, publicly recognized professedly Christian church of the period. In that period, it was proclaimed that there was only one true church and that was the church of Rome. While there may have been a few true servants of God within it, it was not Christ’s church, it was the church represented by the woman of Revelation 17 arrayed in “purple and scarlet”.

Thyatira was noted for its production of purple and scarlet cloth. Its first convert was “Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira” Acts 16:12-14. It still exports purple and scarlet cloth. The church addressed under Thyatira was a church in opposition to the organization led by purple and scarlet ecclesiastics.

Those comprising the true church at this period consisted of various groups, some of whom were isolated in the wilderness regions of the then-known world. In the reign of the Emperor Justinian non-Catholics were compelled by law to become Catholics or have their land and goods confiscated and leave the empire. As a result the true Christians forsook their homes and amid massacre and flight left the areas of civilization of the Roman empire. This was in 538AD. (2) Except for the Church of the East, from this time on, the true church existed in scattered groups. These included the Celtic Christians of the British Isles, the Paulicians of Armenia, the Ethiopians of Africa, the original Waldenses of eastern Spain (3), the Waldenses of North Italy, the Albigenses of South and Western France, the Lollards of England and the Hussites of Bohemia. As Benedict in his history declares,

“Whenever therefore. . . the teams Berengarians, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Waldenses, Albigenses, Leonists or the Poor Men of Lyons, Lollards, Cathari, etc. occur, it must be understood that they intend a people who agreed in certain leading principles, however they might differ in some smaller matters and that all of them were by the Catholics comprehended under the general name of Waldenses.” (4)

THE CELTIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

Evidence suggests that the Christian faith first entered Britain via the Galatians or Gauls, a section of the Celtic race who were converted to Christ by Saint Paul. The most memorable man in Ireland’s ecclesiastical history was St. Patrick (360 AD). He commenced his ministry about 390 AD and in 411 AD he was at the height of his remarkable career. Patrick founded many schools or colleges in Ireland. His Bible was the Latin Itala version, the same as the Waldensian and which was a translation from Lucian’s Textus Receptus. (5) The Bible schools developed into large universities. The church was splendidly organized.

In 430 AD Pope Celestine sent Bishop Palladius as bishop to the Irish but he was shown such disrespect that he soon withdrew. The most famous Celtic centers of learning were at Armagh, Clonmacnoise, Clonard and Bangor. At Armagh over 7000 students attended at one time. So famous did Ireland become that it was called “The Land of Saints and Scholars”. All these centers were based upon the Bible. Ireland led the world in the civilizing of mankind.

The marvelous educational system of the Celtic church, revised and better organized by Patrick, spread successfully over Europe until the Benedictine system, favored by the Papacy and reinforced by the state, robbed the Celtic church of its renown and sought to destroy all records of its educational system.” (6)

The Celtic church continued undisturbed in Ireland until 832 AD when Ireland was invaded by the Danes who attacked and destroyed the many educational centers of the Celtic Church and brought much of the church to ruin. Gradually the Danes accepted the Catholic form of

Christianity and through this channel the Papacy entered Ireland and began to destroy the Celtic Church. When the Danes were expelled in 1014 AD the Irish were enmeshed by Catholicism.

The final blow to the Irish Celtic church was when Pope Adrian IV issued a bull authorizing Henry II of England to invade Ireland in 1171 AD. This invasion aided the Latin clergy in ridding Ireland of the Celtic pastors.

“When Henry II ruined both the political and the ecclesiastical independence of Ireland he also destroyed the valuable records which would clarify what the inner spiritual life and evangelical set-up of the Celtic church was in the days of Patrick. Even this however did not have force enough to blur or obscure the glorious outburst of evangelical revival and learning which followed the work of Patrick.” (7)

THE CELTIC CHURCH IN WALES

The Gothic invasions of Western Rome were critical for the Celtic church. After the Romans withdrew from Britain, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded. (449 AD)

They drove the British and their Celtic church westward where it finally entrenched itself in Wales and became strong. In this period the name of King Arthur of Britain comes to light. According to Gibbon, he ably defended the Celtic church against the Anglo-Saxons. (8)

By 538 AD the Celtic church was led by Dinooth. (530-610) In 597 AD Pope Gregory I sent Augustin and 200 monks to Kent to establish the Catholic faith. The way had been prepared by arranging the marriage of a Frankish Roman Catholic princess to the King of Kent. Augustin established a superficial Catholic church, because when the king died, the so-called Christian Catholics lapsed into Paganism.

Other strategic marriages were arranged by Rome by which the Papacy was able to resist the efforts of the Celtic church among the English.

Up to this time, the center of the Celtic church in Britain was at Bangor in north Wales. The college there was so large that it was separated into seven divisions, each division containing at least 300 young men, which meant that there were 2100 students at least. It was from Bangor that Colombanus and his 13 companions ventured forth to the continent to spread the Celtic faith. The learned Dinooth was the Celtic leader that headed the delegation in the confrontation with Augustin which revealed how much at variance the Celtic faith was with the apostate Roman. Because of the refusal of the Celtic church leaders to submit to Rome, King Aethelfrith of Northumbria attacked the Britons and slew 1200 young Celtic ministerial students who were praying nearby. However the Celtic church continued in Wales, independent of the Saxons, until the Norman invasion. William of Normandy was the Papal instrument in opposing and putting down the Celtic church.

“Little by little however, by intrigue, by flatteries, by threats, supported at every turn. by England’s armed power and seconded by the strong papal influences in Italy and France, the Papal clergy succeeded after seven centuries in obtaining the mastery.”(9)

The Celtic church finally disappeared as an organization under Henry VIII but it is claimed that there were underground remnants of the faith that held fast until the Protestant Reformation came to Britain.

CELTIC CHURCH IN SCOTLAND

The gospel was first taken to Scotland by Colomba, (531-607AD), an Irish prince and member of St. Patrick’s church. He was a product of the educational system of the Celtic church which at that time was the best in the world.

Colomba, with 200 associates, established a college on the Isle of Iona, off the western Scottish coast. His clan, situated in north-east Ireland, had conquered a large section of Western Caledonia, from whence it derived the name of Scotia or Scotland. Iona became a remarkable center of learning and evangelization that made it famous for all time. Eighteen years of study were required before ordination. The Italic version was the Bible they used. Iona was a missionary center for 641 years until destroyed by the Benedictine monks who drove out the Celtic saints.

The Iona missionaries pioneered the gospel among the Picts of Caledonia, the Saxons of England and were also involved in establishing the continental Celtic church.

“The Irish and Scottish churches covered the British Isles and the continent of Europe with their thousands of missionary centers in a short period.”

“The Celtic saints pushed their way southward into the promontories of Kintyre; to the western isles . . . to northern Scotland. . . Caithness, Sutherland and Ross.”

“As early as the middle of the seventh century, or about one hundred years after the founding of Iona, several large and influential mission schools had sprung up in the British Isles.” (10)

Colomba labored in Scotland for 34 years. While the Celtic clergy began to submit to Rome by about 740 AD, yet as late as 1058 AD the Celtic church was still independent and in the main, in harmony with the teachings of the Iona founders. In 1130 the Celtic clergy were dispossessed of their lands and expelled. However, among many of the common people, the biblical teachings of Iona continued underground, fed by Waldensian and Wycliffe missionaries. The faith of Iona flowered once more in the Scottish Reformation of the sixteenth century. (11)

THE CELTIC CHURCH IN EUROPE 538 -700 AD.

The re-establishment of the Christian faith in Europe after the settlement of the Gothic tribes and the destructive influence of Clovis king of the Franks, commenced with the advent of Columbanus and thirteen companions.

Columbanus or Columban, (543-615 AD), was of the Irish church which had been established and nurtured by St. Patrick and which became a great missionary movement of that day. Columbanus was educated and trained for his work at the Celtic college at Bangor. In 573 AD with thirteen companions he was inspired to commence missionary work in Gaul. He set up schools, first in Gaul, then in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Northern Italy. Not only did he implant the true faith amid the people, but he also brought education to benighted Europe.

In England and Scotland, the Irish missionaries were confronted by heathenism. In Europe they were opposed by a corrupt and debased Christianity. Their efforts were crowned with remarkable success as the Celtic faith began to spread throughout Northern Europe. At a time when Pope Gregory I was the enemy of learning, the Celtic schools became not only centers of the gospel, but of learning and of civilization. (12)

“There was a continual stream of missionaries from the churches of Ireland and Scotland, flowing toward the continental church.” (13)

“The Irish and Scottish Churches covered the British Isles and the continent of Europe with their thousands of missionary centers in a short period.” (14)

“Columben introduced into Gaul such a durable monument of the religious spirit of Ireland, that during his life, no less than one thousand abbots recognized the laws of a single superior.” (15)

This mission continued for almost two hundred years when persecution commenced (733 AD). This divided the Celtic church in Europe into separate units, but they retained their faith and witness.

THE CELTIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND

The heathen Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded Britain in 449 AD. They drove the Britons and the Celtic church into the Western regions. It was Aiden, a Celtic missionary, who pioneered the gospel among the English. He was educated at Iona, the thriving and famous university of Columba. Aiden also established a center of learning on the isle of Lindisfarne on the eastern coast of North England. This was modeled after Iona.

Celtic missionaries won two thirds of England to the Christian faith. It was Celtic Aiden not Augustin who was the Apostle to England. He commenced his ministry about 634 AD and labored for 17 years. He was succeeded by Finan who labored for ten years then Coleman who labored for three years. Monasteries or colleges were established at Melrose, Whitby and Tillbery.

“It is no exaggeration to say that with the exception of Kent and Sussex, the whole English race received the foundation of their faith from Celtic missionaries and even in Sussex, it is known that Irish missionaries were at work before the arrival of Wilfrid.” [the Roman Catholic priest] (16)

“Northumbrian Christianity spread over the southern kingdoms.” (17)

In 664 AD the Papacy through the Roman Catholic Queen of North Umbria brought a crisis to the Celtic church. As a result of the Council of Whitby, which was a confrontation of the Roman and Celtic churches, the king sided with Rome, which then gained the ascendance in England. However the work of Aiden, Finan and Coleman, etc. was not in vain.

“The faith represented by the Celtic leaders remained powerful in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and in the southwestern part of England.

Followers of the truth persisted down through the centuries, so that when Wycliffe began his marvelous revival centuries later, his followers are thought by some to have been those, who had maintained from generation to generation the doctrines of Aiden.” (18)

The invasion of the Danes 820 AD checked the spread of Catholicism but also devastated the Celtic churches in England to the Welsh and Scottish borders. Finally, in 1066 AD through the Roman Catholic instrument, William the Conqueror, the Papacy gained the ascendancy in England.

THE CHURCH OF THE EAST 538-1500 AD

Not only had the Christian faith been proclaimed to the west of Palestine, but in harmony with Jesus’ command, the apostles had sallied forth to the north, the south and the east.

Toward the close of the second century Pope Victor I of the church of Rome excommunicated the churches of the East because they refused to accept the Papal pagan Easter. This led to the church in the east becoming independent of Rome and the west and of setting up its own organization and proclaiming the gospel in the vast lands of the east. This section of the Christian church has been called by various names. Many have called it the Nestorian church, but this is an incorrect term. There were four main groups -

1. The Jacobites or Monophysites.
2. The Ethiopian church.
3. The Coptic or Egyptian.
4. The Armenian.

These were all in agreement on the main points of faith, but disagreed on some secondary or minor points.

The Church of the East has been called “The Waldenses of the East”. Generally they were called “Messiahans” or “Messiah People”. They carried the Gospel to India, Central Asia and China. By 200 AD they had planted churches among the Parthians, Persians, Medes, Bactrians, Scythians, Turks and Huns. (19) Their first leader, or catholicos, was Pappas (285 AD). At first they suffered great persecution especially from Pagan Persian rulers which produced many martyrs.

The Church of the East was also called the Assyrian church. They had a distinguished church college at Edessa which included a celebrated school of medicine, but this was closed by the Roman emperor Zeno because they refused to accept the apostate positions of the Catholic Church at Rome. The Assyrian church therefore moved the college to Nisibis, outside the boundary of the Roman Empire. Nisibis’ fame reached even to Oxford, Cambridge and Paris, as one of the greatest intellectual centers of the world. These Christians were the teachers of the Arabs. They used a Bible - unlike the Roman - called the Peshita, from the famous Syrian scholar called Lucian, from whom came the Textus Receptus. The church headquarters were located first at Seleucia, Iraq, and Christian Jews were predominant.

In early Christian times a vast population existed in central Asia with many cities connected by a system of roads and posts. This provided ease of travel for Christian missionaries. In 498 AD the Persian king, Kavad, took refuge with the Turks and Huns in central Asia.

There he found Christians who helped him regain his throne. The Assyrian Christians taught writing to the Turks and also to the Arabs. There is evidence that the Assyrian Christians also developed the alphabets of

Central Asia and the Far East, such as the Mongolian, Manchu and the Soghdian. In Chinese Turkestan, thousands of manuscripts have been unearthed revealing that the Christian faith was once established in those areas. (20)

“In the sixth century . . . Christianity was successfully preached to the Bactrians, the Huns, the Persians, the Indians, the Persarmenians, the Medes and the Elamites. The barbaric churches, from the Gulf of Persia to the Caspian sea were almost infinite. The pepper coast of Malabar and the isles of the ocean, Socotora and Ceylon, were peopled with an increasing multitude of Christians; and the bishops derived their ordination from the catholicos [leader] of Babylon.” (21)

In the period 500-575 AD the leader of the Church of the East was named Aba. During the Arab conquests about 650 AD, this church fared fairly well under the Arabs. When the Arabs set up their new capital at Baghdad the Assyrian Church also transferred its headquarters in 762 AD from Seleucia to Baghdad. (22)

The Arabs were very partial to the Assyrian Christians because of their educational system and also because of their outstanding medical knowledge. Many of these Christians were also employed in the Arab administration of government. (23)

By 1000 AD the bulk of the population of Syria, Iraq and Khurasan (North East Persia) were Christian. They had also made great progress in Central Asia. (24)

By 800 AD numerous missionaries were spreading the faith in India and China. According to one Jacobite writer, the Turks of farther Asia, the Tartars, who live in tents and have no towns, possess the Old and New Testaments in their own tongue. They are ruled by four kings under whom are over four hundred thousand families. All these obey the gospel. This is a total of eight million people.

In 1009 AD Abdisho from Khurasan reported to his leader that two hundred thousand Turks and Mongolians had accepted the gospel. (25)

In 800 AD there was a line of Christian kings in the depths of Scythia by the name of Prester John, Mingana declared that "The Church of the East was the greatest missionary church ever produced." (26) Its territory included Turkestan, Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria and Tibet. At the close of the twelfth century AD all Asia was affected by the rise of Ghengis Khan. He conquered vast regions of Asia even to Europe. He died in 1226 AD. But Ghengis Khan was not a persecutor of the Christians. His wife was an Assyrian Christian.

Why did the fearful invasions of the Mongols suddenly cease? Because there came to the throne of the Mongols, a relative of Ghengis Khan who was a true Christian.

By 500 AD many Christian communities existed in India. This country had been a haven for persecuted Christians from Persia. Many Christians of the Roman Empire who had fled from persecution also went eastwards to Persia and then to India. (27) As Mingana declares

"The fifth century opens with an Indian Christianity which was in such a state of development that she is able to send her priests to be educated in the best schools of the East Syrian church and to assist the doctors of that church in their revision of the ancient Syriac translations of the Pauline epistles." (28)

So powerful was the witness of the Assyrian church in India that the Brahmans [Hindu leaders] were compelled to modify their beliefs and inculcate Christian concepts into Hinduism. They invented Krishna, a counterfeit Christ, which brought revival to Hinduism. (29)

"At the very date 535 AD. . . churches with a complete liturgy were then to be found in Ceylon, Malabar, Socotra and north west India [apparently identical with the Saint Thomas Christians] ministered to by bishops and priests sent from the Patriarch of Seleucia; also in Bactria and amongst the Huns; in Mesopotamia, Scythia, etc." (30)

Records reveal the increasing development of the Church of the East, especially in the south and east of India, and its extension to Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Spice Islands. (31)

In 1500 AD however, when the Catholic Portuguese arrived, there soon followed the Jesuits, who as usual, commenced their diabolical Inquisition. In this way the true church in India was crushed. (32)

China

In 781 AD a marble memorial was erected in Changan (Sian or Sianfu) capital of the Tang dynasty, the highest civilization known in China (618-907 AD). This stone memorial commemorated the advent of Christianity into China. At that time China ruled over most of Asia and its remarkable civilization was significantly influenced by the Church of the East. (33)

The so-called Nestorian monument in Chinese and Syriac languages testifies to the greatness of Christianity (the Assyrian church) in the early centuries in China. This was a fulfillment of the prediction of Isaiah, who foresaw how the Christian faith would find a response in China.

"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou may be my salvation to the ends of the earth. . . Behold these shall come from far, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim." Isaiah 49:6, 12. [Sinim is China.]

The evidence reveals that the Gospel penetrated everywhere throughout central Asia and churches multiplied throughout China. The Syrian language of the Christian missionaries extended far and wide. (34)

"It is astonishing to see how the Assyrian church preserved the unity of its faith throughout its far-flung spiritual domain whether it was in India, Tibet, Turkestan, Persia or China." (35)

"The clergy who led the Church of the East to victory were men of consecration and scholarship."(36) At times they were beset by furious persecution, but the faith continued to expand. As Gibbon declared,

“The Christianity of China, between the seventh and the thirteenth century, is invincibly proved by the consent of Chinese, Arabian, Syriac and Latin evidence.” (37)

As mentioned previously, in 1204 AD the Mongols began their remarkable conquest of Asia and east Europe. Ghenghis Khan and his son Ogatai unified the Oriental nations and opened the way for their advance in civilization. The three nephews of Ogatai succeeded him and their triumph over all the Oriental world coincided with the remarkable success of the gospel via the Assyrian church. These rulers were favorably disposed toward the Assyrian church because they desired their peoples to benefit from the medical learning and the outstanding business skills of the Christians. Under these favorable conditions it is understandable how Christianity spread throughout Asia and was numbered by the millions. .

What became of the church of the East? Four events brought it to ruin -

1. Prosperity led to the undermining of the church. The early spirit of devotion declined and ceremonies replaced spiritual power.

Z. Tamerlane, the fierce and fanatical Moslem, led the Turks in their awesome conquest of all Asia from Russia to China. He was responsible for the destruction of much of the church of the East.

3. The destruction of vast populated areas by the sands of the desert. This area embraced Siberia, Turkestan and north China.

“Between Khotan and China the moving sands of the desert have covered uncounted cities in eastern Turkestan which anciently were the seats of flourishing commerce and prosperous communities.” (38)

“On one occasion three hundred and sixty six cities were buried in twenty-four hours.”(39)

4. The arrival of the Jesuits in China and India with their notorious Portuguese Inquisition. (40)

THE TRUE FAITH IN EUROPE FROM 700 AD ONWARDS

723 AD The Englishman Boniface was sent to Europe by Pope Gregory III in order to counter the Celtic church and convert the Celtic saints to Romanism. (41) In 733 AD persecution against the Celtic church commenced. This was due to the ascendancy of catholic Charles Martel, who in 732 AD defeated the Moslems at Tours. The subjection of the Celtic church in Europe was completed by Charlemagne (800 AD). (42) However, remnants of believers continued in various areas of the continent.

864 AD. The Bulgarians were won to Christ by Greek and Paulician believers who were opposed to Rome. (43) The Paulicians were a large group of true believers who in this period began to migrate from Armenia and Asia Minor into various areas of Europe. The Paulicians have been grossly misrepresented by historians, but now they have been recognized as true Christians who withstood the apostasy of the day. They brought revival to the scattered remnants throughout Europe. (44) Various incidents in Europe reveal the existence and witness of true believers.

1017 AD. The martyrdom of thirteen believers at Orleans, France, including the former chaplain to the queen and others noted for their learning and holiness.

1025 AD. The trial of another group at Arras, France, who were martyred. Their trial revealed that there were many churches of these believers whose doctrines emanated from Northern Italy (Waldenses).

1050 AD. Berengarius of Tours, an ex-Roman Catholic prelate who united with the Waldenses, made a powerful impact upon France, England and Italy. He had thousands of followers. He called the Church of Rome “The Congregation of the Wicked and the Seat of Satan” as did also the Waldenses. He publicly opposed the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, i. e. that the priest turns the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. (45)

1079 AD. Pope Gregory VII decreed that the Latin language be used in all churches in Moravia and Bohemia. This shut the door of truth to the people. (47)

1100 AD. The famous Waldensian “Nobla Lecon” (Noble Lesson) was written. It is a sublime presentation of the origin and the story of the plan of redemption. It is a contribution to world literature in the Romaunt language, from a persecuted and martyred people.” (46)

1104 AD. Peter de Bruys from the French Waldensian Valleys stirred Southern France by his biblical, apostolic preaching. Misrepresented as usual by Rome, finally he was martyred at the stake in 1124 AD.

1128 AD. Henry of Lausanne, a gifted disciple of Peter de Bruys, powerfully proclaimed the gospel to the masses of people, especially in Southern France. His influence was so great that he was assailed by the leading Roman figure, Bernard of Clairvaux, who relentlessly attacked him. He was finally imprisoned and disappeared.

1150 AD. Arnold of Brescia, a powerful and eloquent preacher exposed the errors of the Papacy. He was far ahead of his age. He denounced the union of church and state. He preached in Switzerland, France, Germany and Italy. Even a church synod met to answer Arnold. He was finally burned to death, but he left behind numerous followers.

1175 AD. Peter Waldo of Lyons, France. A wealthy merchant who forsook his riches and proclaimed the gospel and the doctrines of the New Testament. He exposed the Church of Rome as “the man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians 2 and the beast of Revelation. He greatly revived and increased the number of Waldensians throughout Europe. Upon persecution he withdrew to Bohemia and his followers to the Waldensian Valleys. He stimulated the circulation of the scriptures. Rome has fraudulently branded Waldo as the

founder of the Waldenses in order to hide the truth that there were numerous Christian dissenters against Rome centuries before Waldo’s time. (48)

The Albigenses

These were a numerous group of Christian dissenters who resided in the four provinces of Dauphine, Provence Languedoc and Gasconne in South France between the Cottian Alps in the east and the Pyrenees in the south-west. Though of Gaulish or Cis-Alpine nationality, they were identical in faith and doctrine to the Waldenses. (49)

The Waldenses first separated from the established church in the time of Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, and Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, 314-226 AD. They rapidly spread their faith throughout all Europe, but they were particularly numerous in the provinces of South France. Here they influenced the population to such a degree that this region of Narbonne-Gaul became a flourishing, enlightened and independent civilization. To their skilful land cultivation was added that of commerce, art, poetry and music, especially the troubadour or minstrel, many of whom were colporteurs and missionaries. They possessed the New Testament in their own Provençal language, from the Latin “Itala” Bible which had been translated from the uncorrupted Greek manuscripts of Lucian. This led to the development of a pure form of Christianity.

The Albigensian civilization was in striking contrast to that of the rest of the benighted peoples of Europe. Six Roman Catholic councils were conducted to counter the Albigenses, (50) from 1119 to 1229 AD, finally ending in the appalling crusade of extermination under Pope Innocent III. Altogether over one million were done to death.

“In the exposition made by the [Roman Catholic] bishop of Tournay, of the errors of the Albigenses” says Sismondi, “we find nearly all the principles upon which Luther and Calvin founded the Reformation of the sixteenth century.” (51)

REVIVAL IN ENGLAND

At the very time Innocent III was destroying the Albigenses of South France, England was beginning to revolt against the Papal yoke. In 1215, the Magna Carta had been signed in reaction to the Papal dominance of England. The Pope had annulled and declared void the Magna Carta. This was the beginning of England’s emancipation. As she cast off the Papal shackles she began to grow in power and wealth. (52)

It was in this setting that God raised up John Wycliffe (1324-1384). The English barons had begun to free England from the political power of the Papacy, now Wycliffe was to begin to free England from the Papacy’s spiritual power. This outstanding Englishman rose like a brilliant star amid the darkness of the Papal night. A scholar of Oxford university, he began lectures on the Bible in 1360 AD. Soon Wycliffe clashed with the friars - the ignorant and corrupt monks, Franciscans and Dominicans - “who did for the Papacy in the centuries that preceded the Reformation what the Jesuits have done for it in the centuries that have followed it”. These men spiritually ravished the realm and Wycliffe lifted his voice against them. He exploded with scripture the corrupt practice of indulgences and concluded that the Popes were the Antichrist of prophecy. He strongly attacked the Catholic eucharist or transubstantiation and brought to light many fundamentals of the gospel. (53)

Wycliffe leavened the whole land. He influenced scholars through Oxford, the laity through his Lutterworth pulpit, the parliament through debates and the court whose policy he helped to mould. He overthrew the doctrine of the temporal supremacy of the popes and the power of the anathema. Probably his greatest work was the translation of the Bible into English.

“His doctrine spread like-suckers from the root of a tree, complained Knighton, his bitter enemy.” “Among the common people his disciples were innumerable.”

“You could not meet two men on a highway, said his enemies, but one of them is a Wycliffe.” (54)

His disciples were called Lollards, probably from Peter Lollard, the Waldensian missionary whom McCabe declared “paved the way for Wycliffe in England”. (54) Wycliffe,

“Organized a band of preachers - simple, pious, earnest men - who knew the gospel and were willing to preach it at crossroads and market places, in city and village, and rural lane - everywhere, in short.” (55)

They, “Traversed the kingdom, preaching the gospel.”

“Their countrymen flocked to their sermons the soldiers mingled with the civilians ready to defend the preacher. . . Several of the nobility joined their party. . . There followed, wherever the doctrine was received, a reformation of manners and in some places the purging of public worship by the revival of idolatrous symbols.” (54)

“Within ten years of the death of Wycliffe [1395] they petitioned parliament for a reformation in religion.”

But England was not yet ready and the authorities turned upon the Lollards and enacted the first law consigning heretics to the flames. The first martyr was William Sawtre, rector of Saint Orsyth, London. Though others followed, the Lollards kept preaching and “their growth was a torment to the clergy in England”.

Famous among them was the godly Lord Cobham who was burned to death in 1417.

“These simple men, who read the scriptures, believed what they taught and assembled in secret places to worship God, are painted. . . as the most dangerous conspirators - as men aiming at the destruction of society itself and so are to be hunted out and exterminated.” (56)

Despite oppression, the Lollards continued. Their martyrdoms and the edicts issued against them testify to their numbers and influence. They sowed the seed which finally bore fruit in the Protestant Reformation in England.

BOHEMIA

The teachings of Wycliffe developed into two streams -

1. Lollardism in Britain with imprisonment, stake and victory.
2. Hussitism in Bohemia with wars, victories, compromise with Rome and defeat, leaving a persecuted and scattered remnant.

Bohemia was a fertile field for the faith of Christ. Many persecuted Waldensians of the previous decades had found refuge there and they sowed and watered the seeds of truth.

In the 14th century three Catholic priests were raised up to prepare the way for Bohemia's part in the battle for the truth. These were John Militz, Conrad Stickna and Mathew Janovius. All were learned, eloquent and godly. With great power they publicly exposed the abuses of the clergy. Militz, after visiting Rome, wrote over a cardinal's door, “Antichrist is now come and sits in the church.”

Persecution commenced compelling believers to worship in forests and caves. When dying, Janovius prophesied:

“The rage of the enemies of the truth now prevails against us, but it will not be forever; there shall arise one from among the common people, without sword or authority and against him they shall not be able to prevail.” (57)

In the same period Bohemia was politically prepared for her chosen roll. Charles IV, emperor of Germany, who was also Charles I of Bohemia, supported Janovius, desiring reform. He established peace, prosperity

and liberty as well as education in the national tongue. Into this atmosphere was born the celebrated reformer, John Huss (1373-1415 AD).

Of humble origin but of brilliant mind, Huss completed his education at the university of Prague where he then lectured and entered the Catholic priesthood in which he became an eminent preacher. About 1402 he was appointed preacher in the Chapel of Bethlehem, Prague. Because of the deplorable morality of the people, Huss was led to become the conscience of Prague as he proclaimed against the abuses of every class. Turning to scripture for authority he became absorbed in its truth and spirit. Thus was laid the foundation for the Protestant faith.

On top of this was the influence of the writings of Wycliffe which had been introduced into the university and the court and which were also being publicized by the powerful preaching of the Oxford graduate, Jerome, a Bohemian knight. When the reaction came, Huss temporarily departed from Prague, returning later to thunder more intensely against the tyrannical priesthood and the corrupt practices of the three men who were all posing as popes. He climaxed his attack by nailing "six errors" of Rome on the door of Bethlehem Chapel.

Bohemia was stirred. As Huss's biblical knowledge increased, he soon learned of further falsehoods of Rome and finally concluded that "the Pope and his court were members of Antichrist". Bohemia was divided, so Huss again voluntarily forsook Prague and preached among his own people.

At the Council of Constance (1414), Huss and Jerome were tried and condemned to the stake under despicable circumstances. Ere Huss died he repeated his previous prediction,

"It is thus that you silence the goose [the name Huss means goose] but a hundred years hence, there will arise a swan whose singing you shall not be able to silence." (58)

Likewise with Jerome, in his final address he declared,

"In dying I shall leave a sting in your hearts and a gnawing worm in your consciences. And I cite you all to answer to me before the most high and just Judge within a hundred years." (59)

The crime against these two men united all Bohemia - Catholic and anti Catholic - against the Papacy and its political supporters. Huss and Jerome's influence was greater now than while they lived. Their writings were studied as never before.

"Within four years the bulk of the nation had embraced the faith for which he [Huss] died."

The Bohemians resumed the use of the cup in Communion and conducted their services in the national language instead of Latin. In this they rejected the marks of papal submission. However, there were two groups among them. The Taborites, who rejected completely, papal authority, and made the scriptures their sole standard. The Calixtines, who remained nominal Catholics, though in heart opposed.

"The cup became the national Protestant symbol. It was blazoned on their standards and carried in the van of their armies; it was sculptured on the portals of their churches. . . It was ever placed in studied contrast to the Roman symbol which was the cross." (60)

The Papacy called for the extermination of the Bohemian nation and Emperor Sigismund with several German states prepared to perpetrate the crime. But at the right time God had the man to organize and lead the Bohemians, or Hussites, as they were now called.

This was John Troszowski or Ziska, considered to be the greatest military general of all time. After putting down the Catholic resistance in Bohemia, the numerous and magnificent churches and monasteries were wrecked and their immense wealth was confiscated for defense. Ziska then led the Hussites' military campaigns of self-preservation that continued for eighteen years. He was succeeded by Procopius. Against overwhelming odds the Hussites were never defeated. Indisputably, angelic agencies combined with them

to put the Catholic armies to flight. It was a repetition of Old Testament battles when invisible forces came to Israel's aid. (61)

As usual, Rome changed her tactics. Instead of military confrontation she resorted to the wiles of councils. The Hussites, anxious for peace, compromised and signed The Compactata which gave a feeble guarantee of Bohemian faith and liberties. From this compromise with Rome, the prestige of Bohemia waned. They gained no more victories. The tide of national prosperity began to recede. Soon they began to war among themselves. Sigismund the Catholic emperor took the throne, broke his oath, and began the restoration of the Papacy. The Taborites resorted to their city and territory of Tabor, where they flourished.

Forty years after the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome, because of the surrounding error that again appeared to cover the earth, they formed themselves into a separate church called "United Brethren". This aroused bitter enmity and opposition from the rest of their countrymen. As a result, the Taborites "were dispersed in forests and mountains; they inhabited dens and caves, and in these abodes they were ever careful to prepare their meals by night, lest the ascending smoke should betray their lurking places. Gathering around the fires which they kindled in these subterranean retreats in the cold of winter, they read the word of God and united in social worship". (62)

They wondered whether they were alone. Were they the only witnesses remaining in the earth? They sent messengers secretly to various countries of Europe to enquire. In the darkness covering the earth they found isolated believers, like them, objects of persecution. However, in the Cottian Alps of North Italy, they found an ancient church based upon the word of God, in protest against the corruptions of Rome. The Taborites opened communication with the Waldenses and found that in belief, ordination and ceremonies they were in agreement. This brought great joy to the Taborites and inspired them to missionary activity, with an increase of their congregations. They ever remembered the predictions of Huss and repeated by Jerome, that a hundred years would pass before the day would break. This kept

their hopes alive in the night of persecution. When the century ended there were 200 churches of the “United Brethren” in Bohemia and Moravia. From them later came the Moravians, the intrepid missionaries of the eighteenth century.

But within the church of Rome itself, noble men rose up and witnessed against their mother church. Their blood stained the scaffolds and their ashes so often were scattered to the winds. Thomas Conecte, a Carmelite friar, appeared in Flanders and publicly confessed to the abominations practiced in Rome and called for reform.

“All the country listened with enthusiasm, Rome condemned him to the stake in 1432 and his contemporaries declared that he had been translated to heaven.” (63)

Cardinal Andrew, Archbishop of Crayn, the emperor’s ambassador to Rome was struck with dismay when he discovered that the papal sanctity was mere fiction. He addressed Pope Sixtus IV calling for reform but all he received was mockery and persecution. He called for a new council to deal with,

“the sins, vices, unrighteousness, errors and countless evils . . . the reformation of the Catholic faith and the purification of morals.”

He was imprisoned at Basle where he perished in 1484. His prosecutor, the inquisitor Henry Institoris declared,

“All the world cries out and demands a council, but there is no human power that can reform the church by a council. The Most High will find other means, which are at present unknown to us, although they maybe at our very doors, to bring back the church to its pristine condition.” (64)

What an astounding prediction, given in the very period of Luther’s birth. A brilliant light was the Dominican monk, Jerome Savanorola of Florence (1452-1498). Aroused by the corruptions of the church, he preached with great power and conviction. He taught justification by faith and passionately uplifted the crucified Christ before the people. His words were “like flashes of lightning and reverberations of thunder”.

He concluded that the Papacy was Babylon and urged the people to “fly far from Babylon”. Rome in her usual manner arrested, tortured and publicly burnt this superbly gifted, scholarly and saintly man of forty-six years, casting his ashes into the river Arno. A bronze plaque in the square where he was executed reads, “By Unrighteous Sentence”. His death was not in vain. It later convinced Luther that reform of the Church of Rome was hopeless. (65)

In 1484 John Lallier a doctor of the Sorbonne stood against the corrupt and erroneous teachings of Rome. He urged the keeping of the commandments of God and not those of the pope. He said,

“They have ruined the church by their crafty devices. . . since the time of Sylvester [320 AD] the Roman church is no longer the church of Christ.” (66)

John of Wesalia, Doctor of Divinity of Erfurt, attacked Rome’s errors and proclaimed the Bible as the sole source of faith.”It is by the grace of God alone that the elect are saved,” he boldly preached, “I despise the Pope, the church and the councils and I give Christ the glory.” He communicated with the Hussites with whom he found himself in agreement. In his old age he was condemned by the Inquisition and perished in their dungeons in 1482.

Another scholar reckoned by some to be the most remarkable forerunner of the Reformation was John Wessel, a Doctor of Divinity successively at Cologne, Louvain, Paris and Heidelberg. He was surnamed “The Light of the World”. Luther later declared of him,

“Had I read his works sooner, my enemies might have thought that I had derived everything from Wessel, so much are we of one mind.” (67)

Voices continued to multiply indicating that soon the sun was to arise, bringing light to the world.

“The teachings of John Wycliffe of Oxford had spread over all Christendom and had found adherents n Bavaria, Swabia, Franconia and Prussia.” (68)

Another monk of the Franciscans was John Hilten in Eisenach. He was led to study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. He wrote a commentary on them and censured the flagrant abuses of his fellow monks. They imprisoned him in the filthy dungeon below the monastery in 1477. For over 20 years he was imprisoned. Before death, he called the supervisor who abused him because of his doctrines. Hilten said to him,

“I bear your insults calmly for the love of Christ. . . but another shall arise in the year 1516. He will destroy you and you shall not be able to resist him.” (68)

A few years earlier, a few miles away, Martin Luther was born and in 1517 AD he took his stand for Christ and defied the Pope and all he stood for.

We suggest that this ended the period of the church of Thyatira, the longest period of all the seven churches, 538-1517 AD, around one thousand years.

In the light of the above history of this church period, it is significant to notice the message of Christ to his people in this dark and lengthy period.

“I know thy works and charity [love] and service and faith and thy patience and thy works and the last [works] to be more than the first.” Verse 19.

Considering the circumstances of the Thyatiran period, such a list of commendations is remarkable. Of all the seven churches, Thyatira stands second in the abundance of its witness for Christ. The only other church period that excels it is the Ephesian or apostolic church period which witnessed under the power of Pentecost.

Christ highlights the fact that the labors of believers in the latter part of this period were more than in the first or earlier part. The latter part of this period was when the Papacy was more dominant, more autocratic and relentless in her opposition to truth. But in response to this situation, the saints were inspired to greater efforts for Christ. However, Christ reminds his people that there were a few failings among them. This is recorded for the benefit of future believers.

“You suffer that woman Jezebel which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” Verse 20.

Who was Jezebel? The key to understanding the book of Revelation is in ascertaining the Old Testament source from which the imagery is drawn. Revelation is based on the Old Testament. The name Jezebel is associated with King Ahab and the prophet Elijah (69) at a critical period in the history of Israel about 900 BC. Jezebel was the daughter of the King of Sidon who was the priest of Baal or pagan Sun worship. Jezebel, a pagan princess, married Ahab King of Israel and by her dominating influence led Ahab to set up the corrupt apostate worship of Baal. This led the majority of Israel into apostasy.

The prophet Elijah was raised up by God to warn and expose Baal worship and to call Israel to repentance and reform. A devastating drought of 3. 5 years was visited upon Israel and Jezebel turned on the faithful Israelites in persecution and slaughter, at the same time strengthening the grip of Baal upon the people. Ahab and Jezebel rejected the prophet’s call and Elijah predicted the dire results that would come to Ahab, Jezebel and their family. At Mt. Carmel, Baal worship was publicly exposed by Elijah and Israel began to turn away from Baal worship. Finally, the total family of Ahab and Jezebel were destroyed in the exact manner predicted.

This dramatic episode in Israel’s history is a type or picture of the experience to befall spiritual Israel in the Christian era. In prophecy a woman denotes a religious body or church. (70) A corrupt woman denotes the church or religious organization of Satan. Jezebel was a pagan sun worshipper, a prophetess or teacher of it; thus she represents a religious organization of Satan that at heart is pagan sun worship. In other words, it would be of Babylonian origin. Jezebel is identical with the harlot church of Revelation 17 who is attired in purple and scarlet, the exact colors Thyatira produced and for which she was famous. (71)

The following outline will serve to show how the experience of ancient Israel with Jezebel is typical of what has befallen the Christian

PARALLELS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ISRAEL

1. Literal Israel
2. That woman Jezebel
3. Calls herself a prophetess or teacher (of Baal).
4. A whore and a witch (2 Kings 9:22.)
5. Baal-the Sun god of Babylon,

6. Jezebel married Ahab the king
7. Jezebel dominated the king.
8. Through Ahab Jezebel led Israel into apostasy.
9. Jezebel, haughty and intolerant.
10. Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord.
11. Jezebel installed the prophets of Baal.
12. Jezebel influenced Israel to idolatrous feasts that led to immoral rites, etc.
13. In Ahab's name, Jezebel destroyed any who stood in her way.
14. Elijah appeared and called for repentance and reform.
15. Elijah predicted judgments.
16. Three and half years of literal drought.
17. A remnant remained true.
18. True teachers, etc. hidden in caves.
19. Punishment of Jezebel and Ahab.
20. Tribulation and Death.
21. Extinction of Ahab's family.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. Spiritual Israel
2. A religious organization
3. Calls itself the sole teacher of truth but is Spiritual Babylon.
4. A spiritual whore, and riddled with witchcraft.
5. Spiritual Babylon's god is same as old Babylonian's.
6. Spiritual Babylon united with the state (Constantine).
7. Spiritual Babylon dominated political rulers.
8. Through the state spiritual Babylon led the Christian church into apostasy.
9. Spiritual Babylon haughty and intolerant.
10. Spiritual Babylon killed the true teachers of the faith.
11. Spiritual Babylon replaced true teachers with apostates.
12. Spiritual Babylon influenced the church to accept her cup of false doctrines making them spiritually drunk and guilty of spiritual adultery.

13. In the name of the state, spiritual Babylon destroyed any who stood in her way.
14. Special messengers appeared warning of spiritual Babylon's apostasy, calling for repentance and reform. (72)
15. Special messengers predicted judgments.
16. Three and half prophetic years of spiritual drought.
17. A faithful remnant remained true.
18. True teachers and believers hidden in wilderness.
19. Punishment of false church and supporters. . .
20. Tribulation and Death.
21. Deadly Wound - National Ruin - Eternal Oblivion.

Christ's Complaint Regarding Thyatira

"Thou suffers Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants."

At times, Catholic teachers were permitted to promulgate Rome's errors among believers and thereby spiritually seduced them to compromise. This was especially so of some of the religious teachers. With the passing of time resistance to error and popular beliefs lessened, and the errors of Rome infiltrated some groups of the faithful. Writing of the Celtic Church in Ireland, B. G. Wilkinson says,

"So the Celtic Church in Ireland succumbed more or less to papal practices." (73)

"Finally, a traitor to the Celtic Church was found in Celsus, the Celtic archbishop of Armagh, who contrived to have Malachy, a youth instructed in the continental school of Bernard of Clairvaux, deeply permeated by papal teaching, his successor. This Malachy finally reduced Ireland beneath the supremacy of Rome and introduced Roman discipline." (74)

Of the Celtic Church in Scotland the same scholar wrote,

"Within the one hundred and twenty-five years after the death of Columba, the Picts had been swayed enough by the mighty influence of Rome to adopt the Roman Easter." (75)

Of the Church of the East, Wilkinson again declares,

"Because of the doctrines passed on by the Council of Chalcedon [451 AD] the Ethiopian Church, the Coptic Church of Egypt, the Jacobite Church of Syria, and the Church of Armenia broke off all connection with Rome. . . It is true that in spite of the comparative purity of the apostolic faith which they maintained during the supremacy of the Papacy, they gave way at times to some papal or heathen practice." (76)

Of the Waldensian church, Wilkinson, on the authority of J. A. Wylie, says,

"After early schooling, it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of Lombardy or to the University of Paris." (77)

These centers of learning undoubtedly were under the control of Rome.

"And I gave her space [or time] to repent of her fornication and she repented not." Verse 21.

The period of Thyatira continued for approximately one thousand years, the longest of the seven churches but in spite of numerous voices raised from within the Papacy, as well as from without, she refused to repent and reform. The moral corruption and apostasy continued to increase until finally millions of her adherents in disgust turned their backs on Mother Church in the Protestant Reformation.

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds, and I will kill her children with death." Verses 22, 23a.

What is the significance of being cast into a bed? This expression appears to denote affliction or tribulation.”He is chastened also with pain upon his bed.” Job 33:19.

“For the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” Isaiah 28:20.

“I will cast her into a bed [of tribulation] and them. . . into great tribulation.”

The imagery is borrowed from the Old Testament account of the family of Ahab and Jezebel. In response to the message of doom pronounced by Elijah, Ahab displayed a form of repentance and humility, and God delayed the visitation of justice.

“I will not bring the evil in his [Ahab’s] days: but in his son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house.” 1 Kings 21:27-29.

This was fulfilled upon Ahaziah the son of Ahab who took the throne upon Ahab’s death. (2 Kings 22:51-53.) The manner of fulfillment of the prediction was in Ahaziah being injured by a fall and being confined to his bed - his deathbed. In his affliction Ahaziah planned to consult the pagan god Baalzebub but Elijah declared in response,

“Thou shall not come dawn from that bed . . . but shall surely die.”

This was repeated three times. (2 Kings 1:4, 6, 16)

“So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken.” Verse 17.

Did the apostate church and those united illicitly with her suffer affliction or tribulation or death? Maybe this prediction could be applied to the Papacy when she received the deadly wound in 1798 AD? She certainly was afflicted when her political power was torn from her and she lost all support from the political kingdoms of the world. But what of the prediction of “great tribulation” for those who illicitly were in union with Rome? This refers to the political rulers or kingdoms of Europe. During the early Thyatiran period all European powers supported the Papacy. However, some European kingdoms underwent a form of repentance and threw off the papal yoke and became Protestant. These involved England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and Scandinavia. On the other hand, the European kingdoms that continued their support of the Papacy finally did suffer affliction or tribulation. These were Spain, Portugal,

Italy, France, etc. These powers by their support of the Papacy were bled of their wealth and their thrones, or dynasties were overthrown.

“I will kill her children with death.” Verse 23.

In the Old Testament source on which this is based, the instruction to King Jehu was,

“Thou shall smite the house of Ahab. . . that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish.” 2 Kings 9:7-9. [See also Verses 10-37; 10:1-28.]

Who are Jezebel’s children? The seed, or children of God’s woman of Revelation 12:17, are those who are faithful followers. We suggest that the children of the Church of Rome would be her faithful supporters. In what way would they be killed with death? Translators interpret this expression in different ways “With pestilence.” RSV.

“Her children shall I exterminate.” Moffatt.

“Thoroughly exterminating them.” Amplified N. T.

It is claimed that this expression is a “Hebraism” denoting “to slay with most sure and awful death”. (78) In the light of the Old Testament type where God decreed the extermination of the family of Ahab, we suggest that the thought indicated is extermination. If this application is correct, what a warning this is as to where we place our religious allegiance. The man who clings to a false system of religion is warned in the above scripture that for him there is no future - no eternal life, but ultimate extermination.

It is informative to notice that the church period of Thyatira corresponds with the fourth or pale horseman of Revelation 6:8. Upon the pale horse death rode and hell (grave) followed and power was given to kill with sword, hunger, death and beasts. This was abundantly fulfilled in the same period -Thyatira- of Papal supremacy when millions of believers were martyred. It was literal death to the saints but it was spiritual death for the followers of the false church. (79)

“And all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works.” Verse 23.

The thought appears to be that all the churches have witnessed, or know of the visitation of “death” upon the followers of Jezebel, and realize it is a display of God’s justice. He reads the motives of men and metes out justice according to their works. This suggests that an experience has befallen the followers of Jezebel in which “death” in some drastic form has overtaken them. Some believe that this may refer to the terrible visitation of the “Black Death” during 1348-51 AD.

“Hecker estimates a total of 25,000,000 deaths in Europe and this is considered conservative. These terrible visitations were at the time considered judgments from God because of the corruptions that existed in the church and among the nations.” (80)

“Unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine [teaching] and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.” Verses 24, 25.

The “doctrine” or teaching undoubtedly refers to the teaching of Jezebel of verse 20,

“To teach and to seduce my servants to commit [spiritual] fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” [i. e. to absorb pagan idolatrous beliefs.] No doubt this instruction applies to those who had not come under the influence of Jezebel in this period. There were some sections of the true church existing in areas not controlled by Rome. These included branches of the Church of the East or the Assyrian Church.

These people probably would not have known “the depths of Satan”. What are the depths of Satan? They are associated with the doctrines of Jezebel. From whence came the doctrines of Jezebel? The philosophy, teachings and practices of Sun worship came from Babylon. This was the source of all idolatry, astrology, witchcraft, etc. (81)

It was a religion invented by Lucifer, Babylon’s invisible king, (Isaiah 14:4, 12-14) in order to counterfeit the true faith and delude mankind. It was deeply involved in the occult, and frequently changed its front. In Greece, one aspect of Babylonian Sun worship had developed into a form called Gnosticism. They described the inner or hidden meanings of their philosophy as “the depth” or “the deep things of God”, (82) In this verse Christ fittingly declares their doctrine to be “the depths of Satan”.

“I will put on you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.” Verses 24, 25. All that heaven requires is for the believer to be faithful to the light of truth that he already has. We are judged only on what we know or could have known.

“To him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

“That servant which knew his lord’s will shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not-shall be beaten with few stripes.” Luke 12:47, 48.

“Hold fast till I come.”

This expression of Christ coming is repeated six times in connection with the seven churches. Generally, it appears that the expression refers to Christ coming to each particular church in judgment, not necessarily in the Second Advent. (For full comment on this, see under the seventh church, Laodicea, Revelation 3:20.)

“He that overcomes and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.” Verse 26.

Two kinds of “works” are featured here. First the deeds (Greek = works) of Jezebel and her supporters, and the works of Christ. The reward for the works of Jezebel is “great tribulation”. The reward for the works of Christ is “power over the nations”. But the believer is to keep Christ’s works “unto the end” i. e. , to the end of his life.

“He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13.

What are the works of Christ? They are summed up as follows:

“He that believes in me, the works that I do, shall he do also.”

“If you love me keep my commandments.” John 14:12, 15.

“Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13.

The Overcomer’s Reward

“I will give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. Verses 26,27.

In the Thyatiran period the nations dominated by spiritual Jezebel had power over the saints. One day the tables will be turned and the saints will have power or authority over those who have so cruelly misused them. Here is revealed the justice of God. When will the saints have authority over the nations or the unsaved? The word “nations” is a term that also applies to those who are outside of Christ - those who are not God’s people.

The saints will have power over the unsaved during the millennium when they engage in a work of judgment upon the lost.

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” [unsaved world] 1 Corinthians 6:2.

“I saw thrones and they [the saints] sat upon them and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4.

As the Psalmist sang under inspiration,

“Let the saints be joyful in glory. . . let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen [nations] and punishments upon the people. To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all the saints.” Psalm 149:5-9.

During the one thousand years after the Second Advent, one of the privileges granted to the saints will be the responsibility of determining the degree of punishment to be meted out when all stand before the judgment throne and are rewarded according to their works. The very victims of the kings, nobles, and people who so cruelly persecuted and martyred them at the instigation of “Mother Church” will sit in judgment over them and decide the extent of their punishment before they are eternally destroyed. (Revelation 20:12-15.)

“He shall rule them with a rod of iron.”

This is a reference to the shepherd’s crook. On its other end was a length of iron which was used as a weapon of defense or attack against any preying upon the flock. It was an instrument of destruction. It denotes that the overcomers will share in the final administration of justice against those who so cruelly oppressed them, because of their loyalty to Christ. This is confirmed by the remainder of the verse: “as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.”

“Even as I received of my Father.”

The promise to the overcomer was also given to Christ.

“I will give thee the heathen for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron, thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm 2:8, 9.

These identical promises reveal that Christ shares his ultimate victory with his faithful people, especially those of Thyatira.

“And I will give him the morning star.” Verse 28. The “morning star”, is used as a symbol of Christ.

“I am the bright and morning star.” Revelation 22:17.

In the darkest hour of the night this star scintillates against the blackness of the heavens. It is a beautiful harbinger of the coming day. So with Jesus Christ. Amid the darkness of the long night of sin he shines as a scintillating star, declaring to men that ere long the night of sin will end and the day of everlasting righteousness and peace will be ushered in.

But what is meant by the overcomer being given the morning star? We suggest that it denotes a bright, brilliant and distinctive ornament that would be like the morning star against the black background of the sky. When we recall that the great majority of the overcomers of the Thyatiran period were martyrs, such an adornment would be most fitting. As Dr. Doddridge comments on this verse:

“I will give such luster and glory [to the overcomer] that he shall shine in my presence like the morning star when its sprightly and cheerful teams break through the shades of the night and proclaim the approaching sun.” (84)

Another writer has declared concerning God’s high regard for His martyrs:

“God looked upon his faithful martyrs with great approbation. The Christians were greatly beloved of Him because they were willing to suffer for His sake. Every suffering endured increased their reward in heaven.” (85)

“The life that is sacrificed for me is preserved unto eternal glory.” (86) “Every martyr of Jesus has died conqueror.” (87)

“The few Christians [martyrs] were strong in God and more precious in his sight than half a world who bear the name of Christ and yet are cowards in his cause.” (88)

“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit said to the churches.” verse 29.

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4. The Sad Saga Of Sardis

The Protestant Churches Of The Reformation

How And Why Did Pass From Triumph To Defeat?

An Exposition Of Revelation 3:1-6

"To the angel [leader] of the church in Sardis write"

It is generally agreed among students of Revelation that Sardis is associated with the churches of the Protestant Reformation and covers the period approximately from 1517-1750 AD. There is a minority that holds that the Sardis period extends until 1798 AD and even beyond (See Appendix 1)

The Titles Christ Employs

"These things said he that has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars." Verse 1

The term "seven Spirits" is shown under Revelation 4:5 to represent the third person of the Godhead in his continuity and fullness. (1) Why does Christ in addressing Sardis remind his people that He Has the Holy Spirit?

1. To declare his Godhead. As God the Son, He is equal with the Father in his person but in office or position, he is the second person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit, likewise, as the third person of the Godhead, is equal with the Father and the Son, but in office or authority, he is third; He is subject to the Father and the Son. Thus, Christ having the Holy Spirit, He may send him where so ever he and the Father determine.

"I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" John 14:16

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father-he shall testify of me." John 15:26

2 The seven Spirits represent the Holy Spirit in his fullness and only through the power of the Spirit would it be possible to bring spiritual life to Sardis. However, because Christ has the Spirit in his fullness - he is able to bring hope and comfort to the Sardians.

"And the Seven Stars"

The stars are the angels or leaders of the church. Christ has the leaders in his right hand according to Revelation 1:20. Here it simply reads, "he that has the seven stars". Probably it means "in his right hand" meaning in the place of strength and authority. This is encouraging to the leaders of a church that is dying. If a leader is faithful to Christ he will be sustained by divine power.

In this period the question of the deity of the Holy Spirit was to be seriously questioned and attempts made to banish the truth of the deity of both Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus the emphasis on the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit was most timely.

Christ's Complaint

This is one of the most serious complaints of all the seven churches. Christ has nothing by which he can commend this church. Seeing this is the period commencing with the Protestant Reformation, such a complaint is quite devastating. "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Verse 1. Did the Protestant churches have a name for being spiritually alive? What were the churches of the Reformation?

The first church was the Lutheran; next was the Anglican or Church of England and thirdly the Reform Church established by John Calvin. These three were the main religious bodies of the Protestant Reformation that broke with the Church of Rome early in the sixteenth century.

In England the Anglican church was composed of two main schools of thought - the Anglicans and the Puritans or Presbyterians. The Puritans were finally forced to separate by the Act of Uniformity under Charles II when in 1662 nearly 2000 clergy, one fifth of the English clergy, were driven from their parishes as non-conformists. These were the most learned and active of their order. Under the oppressive laws enacted by an Anglican parliament, great suffering befell the non-conformists. These comprised not only Presbyterians but also Independents who later were called Congregationalists as well as Baptists [including Seventh-day Baptists] and Quakers. Thousands languished in the loathsome prisons, the most famous being the Baptist, John Bunyan.

The Presbyterians with the rest of the non-conformists now comprised such a large number that persecution could not continue and English statesmen were obliged to pass the Toleration Act [1689 AD] (2) This granted freedom of religion by law, for the first time in England.

The Lutheran Church comprised most of the Protestants in Germany, Denmark, Scandinavia and part of Holland. The Protestant faith in Sweden was accepted by the royal family with the result that most of the country became Protestant. This brought spiritual and political strength to the kingdom. Later in the Thirty Years War in which Rome endeavored to regain ascendancy in Protestant areas of Europe, it was Swedish arms under the able Protestant Gustavus Adolphus that came to the aid of the beleaguered Protestants of Germany and saved the Protestant cause.

The third main body of the Reformation churches was the Reform Church. This commenced with Ulrich Zwingli of Zurich and was established by John Calvin at Geneva. This group included the Protestants of Switzerland, France [Huguenots] many in Holland and probably all the Protestants of Scotland led by the great John Knox. In England the Puritans were of the Reform Church in doctrine and practice, although many adhered to the Anglican church.

On top of these three groups were the Independents and non-conformists of England, as mentioned heretofore and the Anabaptists who rose in Switzerland spread through Germany and Europe and even England. While some may have been classed as extreme the evangelical Anabaptists were probably closer to biblical truth than any other group of that period. (3) Many Anabaptists were later called Mennonites after Menno Simons, an outstanding Dutch Christian. Finally the Anabaptists in Europe were crushed or driven out by Catholic and Protestant persecution to the disgrace of the Protestants.

All the above groups at their rise were unquestionably led by the Spirit of God and were mightily used of heaven to shed the light of truth to mankind. How, then, did the churches of the Reformation begin to lose their spiritual life and decline? It is considered that there were five causes of decline of the church of that period. These were -

1. The union of the main church bodies with the state.
2. The formation of rigid creeds.
3. Their adherence to certain unscriptural doctrines.
4. The influence of the Counter-Reformation
5. The rise of Deism or the Age of Reason

1. The Union of the Church and State

When a church looks to the state for support it hinders the spiritual development of that church. Faith and spirituality come by the exercise of faith and self-sacrifice. State aid nullifies this and thus the church becomes spiritually impoverished. Its ministry becomes

subservient to the state and thereby the will of Christ is made secondary. This undermines effective preaching of the Word of God whereby the church is made spiritually strong.

“The Primates [leaders] of the English Church have always been selected for their willingness to be the passive instruments of the government.” (4)

Being united with the civil power the church was enabled to enforce its dogmas. In this setting, with the spirit of intolerance that dominated the minds of men of that age, intolerance flourished. The Sardis period was a period of Protestant intolerance and persecution of fellow Protestants.

Even the Protestants themselves who were the victims of persecution generally believed [the Baptists excepted] that it was “the official duty of princes and magistrates to suppress and root out, by their authority, all false ministries to enforce all their subjects whether ecclesiastical or civil to do their duties to God and men.” (5)

“Ecclesiastical intolerance in the clerical order is generally co-existent with negligence in the performance of religious duties.” (6)

“All times of persecution, and all ages which have been distinguished by an intemperate zeal for external uniformity, have been marked by the prevalence of notorious immorality.” (7)

2 The Reformation Churches Became Bound by Their Man-made Creeds

It is understandable why churches form creeds. They help to keep unity. Under the Protestant principles of the Bible being its own interpreter and of every believer being a spiritual priest, the way is opened for numerous differences of opinion. Where there is intolerance and a failure to discern between fundamentals and peripherals, between major truths and minor, serious disruption and confusion can result. This is what led to the formation of their creeds. However, creeds can cause spiritual sterility. A man-made creed could be erroneous in some areas of belief. Truth is always advancing and what may appear through lack of light to be a fundamental today could be discovered to be unscriptural tomorrow.

“The path of the just is a shining light that shines more and more until the perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18 “But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18

As true believers continued to grow in the knowledge of Bible truth they began to discover that some of the fundamental doctrines of their creed did not measure up with scripture. This called for a revision of the creed. But the Reformation churches failed to react aright. Instead of investigating scripture, they stuck to tradition. As the official Lutheran catechism declares:

“God’s word and Luther’s Doctrine pure, Shall to eternity endure.” (8)

By refusing to accept the light of truth a church is placing the opinions of men before the Word of God. This is disloyalty to Christ.

“If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed.” John 8:31

A church must continue to advance in truth. Failure to do so finally means spiritual death.

3 The Fruitage of Erroneous Theology

These were the false doctrines of -

- (a) Sacramentalism
- (b) Predestination
- (c) Original Sin
- (d) False Justification
- (e) Antinomianism
- (A) Sacramentalism

This is the belief that by partaking of holy communion, salvation is administered to the believer. This is in contrast to the evangelical view which holds that salvation is obtained by faith in Christ as our Savior through the proclamation of the gospel and that the Lord's supper is a memorial of Christ's death. Sacramentalism discourages evangelistic endeavor and thereby is destructive of spiritual life in the church.

(B) Predestination

This belief comes from paganism and was introduced by Catholic Augustine into Catholicism and continued into Protestantism through Luther and Calvin who had been Augustinian monks. It is the belief that even before birth one is either chosen to eternal life or to eternal torment. The individual has no choice. It denies individual freedom of the will regarding salvation. This view was held by the majority of Protestant believers in the Sardian period. It is also destructive of evangelistic endeavor because one's destiny is already decided.

Therefore there is no urgency to proclaim the gospel of salvation to the lost. May be this explains why the Protestant church of the Reformation period had little or no compulsion in regard to foreign missions - a sign of spiritual death.

(C) Original Sin

This is the belief that at birth all infants are guilty of Adam's sin and are deserving of God's wrath and curse. This belief misrepresents God and makes him a monster. Scripture holds that infants are counted innocent (9) until they reach the age of understanding (10).

Original sin is a false concept of sin. Sin is the deliberate or willful transgression of God's law. Original sin holds that "sinful nature" is itself sin whether one chooses to sin or not. Original sin demands that the infant be cleansed from its sin. This is the reason for infant baptism. Once the rite is performed, the person is assured of salvation. This belief militates against spiritual growth for it tends to lessen the need for the personal acceptance of the gospel and to live a holy life.

The doctrine of original sin holds that because all are born depraved it is impossible even by the grace of God, for any man to fully obey God. It amounts to salvation in sin, instead of "salvation from sin."

"He shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

It hinders the believer from aspiring to holy living which is obedience to all that God commands."For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5:2, 3

In contrast to the general belief of the day, the General Baptists of Somerset, England, in 1691 agreed upon a Confession of Faith.

"In this Confession the doctrine of original sin, considered as an inherent taint, or as a sufficient cause of eternal condemnation, is denounced as both unscriptural and irrational. The doctrine of reprobation [i. e. no opportunity of salvation for some] is also abjured. The grace of God is declared to extend to the whole world, and if any man fall short of salvation, it is not because God, but because the man himself has so willed it; while the perseverance of the saints is declared to be dependent on their own conduct." (11)

This Confession was a rejection of the Calvinistic belief which permeated all the churches of the period.

"Personal conversion, even in the case of the ministers of the gospel, seems not to have been expected. Baptism, administered in infancy, was supposed to have magical efficacy in procuring salvation; and the partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper was supposed to be a means of grace even in cases of the most immoral and irreligious. The spiritual forces that were involved in the great Anabaptist Revolt had been crushed out. (12)

(D) An Erroneous View of Justification by Faith

This was emphasized by Calvinists in particular. It teaches that justification by faith is forensic only - that the believer is declared judicially to be righteous but it does not involve any inner change within the believer. Biblical justification or pardon teaches that when one accepts Jesus Christ as his substitute for sin, there also occurs an inner change

"Be you transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2 "A new heart [or mind] also will I give you" Ezekiel 36:26

Calvinism also teaches that in justification by faith, one is judged righteous and that therefore there is no need of any future judgment for the believer. His view also holds that once one experiences justification by faith that it cannot be lost. Justification covers his past sins and also his future sins. In principle it is "once saved, always saved". The above views of justification play spiritual havoc with those who espouse them. This was another cause of spiritual decline of the churches of the Reformation.

(E) Antinomianism

This means anti-law or no-law. It is the belief that Christians have no need of the law. This is the natural outcome of particular tenets of Calvinism. While Christ by his atoning death delivers man from the curse or penalty of the law, he does not deliver us from the obligation to keep the law. It is the divine standard for the Christian.

While we are not under the law's condemnation, we are still under its direction. Commandment keeping does not save us from sin's guilt, but it is the outward sign that we are saved by grace.

"If you love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15

"For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous" 1 John 5:2, 3.

Another aspect of Calvinism is that it is impossible for believers, even by God's grace, to keep his commandments, nor is it necessary because Christ has kept the law for us. This deadly doctrine was probably one of the chief causes of the appalling spiritual decline of the Reformation churches.

"The spiritual declension which had been manifest in England just before the time of Wesley, was in great degree the result of antinomian teaching." (13)

4. The Influence of the Counter-Reformation.

This was a powerful, concerted effort by Rome to destroy Protestantism. This movement involved five steps -

- A) The recognition and employment of the Order of the Jesuits
- B) The convening of the Council of Trent
- C) The invention of false interpretations of Bible prophecy in order to remove the stigma from Rome as the Antichrist
- D) The establishment of the Index of prohibited books.
- E) The renewal of persecution.

The main agency employed in the Counter-Reformation was the Society of Jesus - the Jesuits. This organization originated with Ignatius Loyola of Spain, who was inspired by occult powers, with the express purpose of destroying the enemies of the Catholic church, especially Protestantism. (14)

"The Jesuits maintain ignorance and oppose light. They know but one law they call 'authority'. To a superior they submit life and conscience. To their order they sacrifice individuality-They have but one family, one fortune, one end, and all three are included in the word 'community'. And this 'community' as its whole history attests is nothing less than 'a universal conspiracy' against all rights and every power in the world!" (15)

When this society is examined it is indisputable that it is the most diabolical system ever invented and the appalling feature of it is that it is garbed in the pure and lowly robes of Jesus Christ.

While the Jesuits led in all five steps, the one that did most damage was the invention of false interpretations of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. These were deliberately designed to shift the stigma of "Antichrist" from the Papacy to someone else at some other time.

Two schools of thought were invented regarding Antichrist by the Jesuits. These were termed Preterism and Futurism. Preterism proclaimed that Antichrist applied to someone in the past such as the emperor Nero, etc. Futurism projected Antichrist away into the future, near the Second Advent of Christ. It was the powerful proclamation by the Protestant Reformers that the Antichrist was the Papacy, that impelled millions to forsake Mother Church.

"It was this united Protestant stand on the Papacy that became the spring of their reformatory action. It was this clear understanding of the prophetic symbols that led them to protest against Rome with such extraordinary courage and effectiveness, nerving them to break with her and to resist her claims, even unto death." (16)

Rome was desperate to counter the Protestant thrust. She therefore invented these false interpretations in order to counter the Protestant attack. The Jesuits then began a campaign of infiltration at which they are superbly efficient. They entered the universities, seminaries and

churches of the Protestants under disguise and popularized the Jesuit interpretations of prophecy and scripture and undermined with remarkable success the true biblical interpretations of prophecy especially concerning the Antichrist. As Dr. Froom sadly records,

“The Jesuits became entrenched in the universities. They were among the best teachers in the land and held public disputations. Even Protestants began to send their children to them because of the scholastic progress they could make. Thus the great Reformation began to be outflanked in its own fastnesses and its conquests were checked.” (17)

The natural outcome of the Jesuits’ clever counter was that the promulgation of Rome as the Antichrist declined.

“When the Jesuits came to the rescue of the Papacy, they found it in extreme peril: but from that moment the tide of battle turned. Protestantism, which had during a whole generation carried all before it, was stopped in its progress and rapidly beaten back from the foot of the Alps to the shores of the Baltic.” (18)

5. The fifth cause of the decline of the Reformation churches was the advent of the Age of Reason. In the religious realm it began with the reception of Unitarianism [one person in the Godhead] or the rejection of the Trinity. It appears that this was an extreme but natural reaction to the breaking of Anglican church authority over the minds of men [1720 AD] and was “the first form which rationalism took after mental freedom had been finally secured.” (19)

“There was no class in England which did not feel relief from the removal of the weights which had been placed on the free movement of human thought. In no direction was this more visible than in theology. Men everywhere felt that they were at liberty to think for themselves. The natural and immediate result of this feeling was the apparently sudden growth at this period of Unitarianism in England.” (20)

This departure from the orthodox thinking spread not only through Anglican ranks but also through the ranks of the dissenters or non-conformists.

“Unitarianism spread with unexampled rapidity.” (21)

“The doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England. The denomination vanished as suddenly as it had risen; and excepting in literature, has left little visible trace of the greatness of its power.” (22)

“Religion, whether in the Established Church or out of it never made less apparent progress. The churches were characterized by a cold indifferentism. The zeal of Puritanism was almost as unknown as it was unimitated. Everything was changing and until the change was completed they seemed half paralyzed.” (23)

“If they thought much of the deadness, ignorance and corruption around them, they never thought of removing it. Nothing that required great exertion or great sacrifice was either attempted or done during this period.” (24)

At this time [1723] it was admitted by the Baptists that “There was a ‘great decay’ of the Baptist interest in some parts of England.” (25)

By 1700 Rationalism reached its highest development. Under the term of “Deism” the Christian faith came under concerted attack by men of great intellectual ability, high attainments and of true virtue. Their doctrines found thousands of willing believers. It was the fashionable creed. This resulted in the employment of the best Christian thinkers of England to defend the faith of Christ and the Bible as the Word of God. This they did with unrivalled success.

“With such an exhibition of power and scholarship arrayed against it, it is not surprising that Deism, as an intellectual theory, was quickly beaten from the field of controversy and that practical and vital religion did not gain from its defeat. They forgot the internal evidences of the truth of Christianity. They neglected to a lamentable extent, one of the chief means of ‘saving souls’ of treating Christianity as an intellectual creed, a system of morals and a means of virtue. Christian preachers exercised little influence on either the morals or the religion of the people . . . faith as a vital power scarcely existed in less degree, preaching-was cold and heartless.” (26)

“As it is impossible for Nonconformity- to live and extend without its adherents possessing in an unusual measure personal piety and the spirit of self-sacrifice, its comparative decline, under the influences of the age of reason, was very obvious.” (27)

CHRIST’S MESSAGE TO HIS DYING CHURCH

“Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” Revelation 3:2

This immediately indicates that though dying there was hope for Sardis. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against" the church of Christ. [Matthew 16:18] What are "the things that remain"?

No doubt this referred to the elements of true Christianity that still existed in the minds of some of God's people. The Christian faith as held by the Protestant churches had received a buffeting, but all was not lost. Christ calls them to remember how they had been led initially into the light of truth.

"Remember therefore HOW thou hast received and heard and hold fast and repent."

Probably this was a call to remember how the churches of the Reformation began. How the light of the gospel beamed through the darkness of error. Of their simple faith in the word of God and their wholehearted acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord. Of how Christ came first in everything.

"Hold fast and repent"

Hold fast to the word. Repent of any departure from it. Repent of the neglect of their personal relationship with Christ which hindered spiritual growth and ended in dead formalism.

WARNING OF JUDGMENT FOR FAILURE TO TAKE HEED

"If therefore thou shall not watch, I will cane upon thee as a thief and thou shall not lam what hour I will come upon thee." Verse 3

This means that unexpectedly Christ would visit the believers in Sardis in judgment or punishment if they failed to respond to Christ's call. This expression is sometimes applied to the Second Advent of Christ, but its primary application is to the church period when believers were on the point of spiritual death. It represents judgment or punishment. It could apply to the Second Advent only in a secondary sense, but out of context.

God's people were instructed not to expect the Second Advent until AFTER "the man of sin" - the Papacy - had reigned in the Christian church. [2 Thessalonians 2:1-5] This reign ended in 1798 and that date marked the commencement of "The Time of the End" or the last days. (28)

"You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Verse 4

To whom could this description apply in the Sardian period? Some believe that the description applies chiefly to the latter end of the period when the church was experiencing spiritual decline, but this tendency was prevalent throughout most of the Sardian period, as group after group experienced spiritual stagnation. We suggest the following as representing the few names that walked in white. These were the overcomers in this trying period of controversy and intolerance.

1. The faithful evangelical Anabaptists who laid down their lives rather than reject truth and disobey God.
2. The Early Puritans
3. The Brownists who later became the Congregationalists. These included the Pilgrim Fathers.
4. The Baptists, including Seventh-day or Sabbatarian Baptists (29)
5. Those of the Pietistic Movement in Germany.

"The name of Pietists was given-by its enemies, as a term of ridicule, like that of "Methodists" somewhat later in England. . . The Lutheran church. . . by the 17th century had become a creed-bound theological and sacramentarian institution-with almost the absolutism of the Papacy. Christian faith had been dismissed

from its seat in the heart, where Luther had placed it, to the cold regions of the intellect-dogmatic formularies usurped the position-assigned to the Bible alone, and as a consequence-the Bible was neglected in the family, the study, the pulpit and the university. Instead of . . . the priesthood of all believers, the Lutheran pastors had made themselves a despotic hierarchy. In the Reformed church. . . [there was] a dogmatic legalism which imperiled Christian freedom and fostered self-righteousness.

As forerunners of the Pietists. . . [were] powerful voices-bewailing the shortcomings of the church and advocating a revival of devout and practical Christianity. Amongst than were Johann Arndt [author of] "True Christianity" and other theologians inclined to practical

Christianity. The direct originator was Philip Spener. (1635-1705) He was influenced initially by Arndt's writings. At Geneva he was greatly moved by the preaching and piety of the Waldensian professor, Antoine Leger." (30)

Spener laid down six proposals for religious reform -

1. The study of scripture in private meetings
2. The laity sharing in church government
3. The practice of Christianity must attend knowledge of it
4. A sympathetic and kindly treatment of dissidents and unbelievers.
5. Re-organization of theology training in universities, giving prominence to devotional life.
6. A different style of preaching. Instead of pleasing rhetoric, the implanting of Christ in the new man by faith.

Spener deeply offended Lutheran theologians and pastors but some adopted his proposals. The fundamental difference between Lutheranism of the day and Pietism was their conception of Christianity. Pietism held that it chiefly consisted of a change of heart and holiness of life while the orthodox held that it consisted mainly in correctness of doctrines. August Franke succeeded Spener and the Pietists spread over all middle and northern Germany. They shunned all common worldly amusements, such as dancing, the theatre and public games." (34)

The new university at Halle under Franke and other Pietists became Pietism's educational center and wielded great spiritual influence. Count Zinzendorf [1700-1760] was converted to Pietism at Halle. He set up a Pietistic center at Herrnhut where the persecuted Bohemian and Moravian Brethren found refuge and revival. These were the remnant of the Hussites of Bohemia who had been driven out of their country by cruel and prolonged Catholic persecution. They formed the United Brethren and in then was witnessed the greatest example of the survival of the Church of Sardis. They promulgated the gospel among non-Christians and heathen such as had not been seen for centuries. They founded mission stations in Greenland, West Indies, South Africa and America. Eternity will reveal the true extent of their influence. Pietism produced other great Christian leaders who helped revive the faith of Sardis. With them the study of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation was revived. (31)

Around 1700 AD many Pietists migrated from Germany and settled in Southern, Russia, Transcaucasia, Hungary and Rumania. (32) By 1735 persecution broke out against the Pietists and Moravians in Germany from the Lutherans. This led many to migrate. A colony settled in Georgia, America and later with the Moravians were expelled from Germany [1740] large numbers arrived in Pennsylvania where they established their some of these in their spiritual advance were led into the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, including Zinzendorf himself. (33)

"Pietism had run its course before the middle of the 18th century [it] could claim to have contributed largely to the revival of Biblical studies in Germany and to have made religion once more an affair of the heart and the life and not merely of the intellect. It likewise vindicated afresh the rights of the laity in regard to their own beliefs and the work of the church against the assumptions and despotism of an arrogant clergy. It was the last great surge of the waves of the ecclesiastical movement begun by the Reformation; it was the completion and the final form of the Protestantism created by the Reformation." (34)

In other words, it closed the Sardinian period.

"He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Verse 5

The white raiment.

According to verse 4 the white raiment appears to represent moral purity - undefiled. This is the general significance of white in scripture. This involves the righteousness of Christ with which the believer is spiritually clothed. It may also represent the literal clothing of the

saints in the kingdom. This is described as a garment of light [Psalm 104:2] and is a part of the spiritual body which the saints shall possess in eternity. [1 Corinthians 15:42-44. Philippians 3:20,21]

"The book of life"

What are these books that are mentioned throughout scripture? They contain the records kept by heaven concerning the great controversy upon earth. The form of these books need not concern us. Scripture emphasizes that a divine record is kept. The different books are described -

1. The book of life. [Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8; 20:15] This is the birth register of all who are born again as sons or daughters of God. [Luke 10:20]

2. The book of death. This is the sin record of Earth's inhabitants. The wages of sin is death [Romans 6:23] indicating that he whose record is not erased, receives the ultimate penalty.

"Mine iniquity is marked before me, said the Lord." Jeremiah 2:22

"Write it before them in a table and note it in a book, that it maybe for the time to cane" [margin "the latter day"] Isaiah 30:8, 9.

"Behold it [Israel's sin] is written before me." Isaiah 65:6

The book of remembrance. This is the record of righteousness of the saints only. There is no record of the righteousness of anyone who is not a true believer. (John 3:18)

"A book of remembrance was written before God, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name." Malachi 3:16

"Put my tears into thy bottle, are they not in thy book?" Psalm 56:8

Why a record? Not because the Creator needs it, but for the sake of intelligent beings whom God has created. The records will be required when this world comes under judgment. The Old Testament source from which John borrows his imagery is Daniel which means "God is Judge."

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, [or placed] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame and his [its] wheels as burning fire. Thousand thousands [of angels] ministered unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened."

"And behold one like the Son of man [Jesus Christ] came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days [the Father] and they [the clouds] (35) brought him [Jesus] near before him." Daniel 7:9, 10, 13

This is a judgment scene enacted after the reign of the four beasts [or kingdoms] of prophecy, i. e. Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome and the Little Horn. It will be shown later that the Little Horn reigned from 538 - 1798 AD. (36) This judgment is one that involves the people of God, i. e. , those whose names have been recorded in the book of life. It is a process of investigation of the records of the saints to determine the faithfulness of each professor of the gospel.

"For-judgment must begin at the house of God [the church] and if it first begin at us, [believers] what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God." 1 Peter 4:17

Other scriptures give glimpses of Christ's ministry in this judgment. (37). One major feature of this pre advent or investigative judgment of God's professed people is the procedure of "blotting out" of the records. For the overcomer there is only one "blotting out" in this judgment. For the non-overcomer there are two "blottings out". With the overcomer his "sins are open beforehand [by confession] going before [or ahead] to judgment" 1 Timothy 5:24

His sin record is blotted out, through the priestly ministration of Christ.

"He that overcomes, I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Revelation 3:5

"If he [the believer] thin from his sin and do that which is lawful and right-he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he has committed shall be mentioned [remembered] unto him." Ezekiel 33:14-16

"Repent you therefore and be converted, that your sins [sin record] may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall came from the presence of the Lord." Acts. 3:19

With the non-overcomer, however, his sin record is retained but his name and record of righteousness are blotted out of the book of life and the book of remembrance. Concerning the record of his righteousness scripture declares:

“The righteousness of the righteous [professing Christian] shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression if he commit iniquity [and does not repent and forsake) all his righteousness shall not be remembered” Ezekiel 33:12, 13.

“He that denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” Luke 12:9

Concerning his sin record, it is retained and he will be punished according to that record in the final judgment.

“When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby.” Ezekiel 33:18

“Forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin [record] from thy sight!” Jeremiah 18:23 “Cover not their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee.” Nehemiah 4:5

Concerning the name of the non-overcomer whose name had been originally registered in the book of life, his name will be blotted out from that register.

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living [of life] and not be written with the righteous” Psalm 69:28

“Whosoever has sinned [and not repented and forsaken] against me, him will I blot out of my book” Exodus 32:32

“Let their name be blotted out” Psalm 109:13, 14

“Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven.” Deuteronomy 9:14

“The Lord shall blot out his name [who turns from Christ to other gods] from under heaven.” Deuteronomy 29:20

All the above procedure is a part of the heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ in the final phase of his priestly ministration in the heavenly temple. This is the significance of the promise to the overcomer of Sardis. In the sobering investigative judgment his name will not be blotted out of the book of life but Christ will confess his name before God and the attendant angels. Whoever Christ pleads for before God, that one is assured of acceptance. However, his sin record will be blotted out for eternity.

In the light of the truth of the pre advent judgment it may be relevant to discuss the two phases of the blotting out of sin. Confusion has come in this area. The above concerns the blotting out of the sin RECORD by Christ in the heavenly assize.

However scripture also emphasizes another blotting out of sin. This concerns the GUILT of sin. To men, this is more important and more vital and must precede the blotting out of the record of sin, significant as that is. When a man accepts the truth of the gospel, admits himself a hopeless sinner and receives Christ as his Savior and substitute for the penalty of sin and is born again, his guilt is blotted out.

“If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

This cleansing from sin’s guilt is immediate and is also likened to a “blotting out” of sin’s guilt. As King David, in his penitential psalm, wrote under inspiration:

“According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, BLOT OUT my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow-hide thy face from my sins and BLOT OUT all mine iniquities.” Psalm 51:1, 2, 7, 9 (38)

There is a present or current “blotting out” of sin from the believer.

“I am he that blots out [present tense] thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins!” Isaiah 43:25 (39)

“I have blotted out [past tense] as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins” Isaiah 44:21, 22 (40)

Maybe the procedure could be termed as a spiritual blotting out of sin now at conversion and a literal blotting out in the pre advent judgment. The two phases of blotting out are also indicated by St. Peter. His statement has two applications.

“Repeat you therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when [Greek “so that.”] the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” Acts 3:1, 9 (41)

We suggest that the first application was to Peter's day to the blotting out of the guilt of sin and secondly to the judgment. (42) Other scriptures confirm the comforting and marvelous truth that God blots out the - guilt of our sins when we surrender to Christ.

"He delights in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and YOU WILL CAST ALL THEIR SINS IN THE DEPTH OF THE SEA." Micah 7:19

"He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. FOR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST, SO FAR HAS HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS FROM US." Psalm 103:8-13 (43)

"He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit said to the churches." Verse 6

APPENDIX I

What of the claim that the Spirit of Prophecy applies the Sardian church period to the Protestant churches prior to 1844. Of the thirty-six references checked regarding Sardis, thirty-five are applied to the Laodicean church or to individuals in the church period of Laodicea.

Only once does the Spirit of Prophecy apply Sardis to the Protestant churches prior to 1844 and that was to the local churches of North America in 1780 AD. These comprised only a minority of the Protestant churches of the period. The bulk of Protestantism was situated in Great Britain and northern Europe. At that time the great Evangelical Revival was in full bloom and the remarkable era of missions was about to begin. This condition was exactly the opposite of the Sardian period. The application of "Great Controversy" pages 309, 310 was only to a local situation but not to the Protestant churches in general. For an accurate application of the Church of Sardis, see pages 251-257 of "The Great Controversy". This was the period prior to the great Evangelical Revival.

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35. Clouds are sometimes employed in scripture to represent the angels of God. See the author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne," pages 21, 22.
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37. See the Author's "The Angel of Time" and "God's Final Ultimatum."
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5. The Evangelical Revival

THE PHILADELPHIAN PERIOD OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

“To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write; These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that open, and no men shuts; and shuts, and m men opens; I know your work’s behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make then of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”

“Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go m more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Revelation 3:7-13.

The historical view of these messages to the seven churches is that they represent the seven periods of the Christian church from the first to the second advent of Christ. This has been the view of leading Bible scholars down through the centuries and is the view of Seventh-day Adventists.

“The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in the different periods of the Christian era.” Acts of the Apostles, page 585. (1)

The last period of these seven churches is called Laodicea. The meaning of “Laodiceal” is “the judged or justified people”. It comes from two words: “Laos” - people, and “dikaios” - justified” or “judged”. (2) The meaning of the name provides a clue whereby we can ascertain the time period of the final church of Laodicea. We believe that the judging of the people is an allusion to the “pre-Advent Judgment”, or the “Investigative Judgment” in the heavenly sanctuary, which began in 1844 and concludes at the close of human probation. Therefore, the period of Laodicea concerning the judging of the people must commence in 1844 and terminate near the second advent of Christ.

The sixth period is that of Philadelphia. If Laodicea commenced in 1844, then we can logically conclude that the Philadelphian period ended in 1844. At what time, then, did the Philadelphian period commence? To answer this question we must ascertain the time period of the fifth church. The fifth period, that is, the period before Philadelphia, was Sardis. This was the period of the Reformation and post-Reformation churches. This position has been generally held by most scholars through the years. The Philadelphian period then, is the period between the time of the Reformation and post-Reformation churches, and 1844.

When did the Sardis period conclude? In order to answer this we need to ask: “What were the Reformation churches and how did they fulfill the conditions that were predicted of them in the Sardis epistle?” The Reformation bodies that arose at the beginning of the sixteenth century, were the Lutheran, the Anglican and the Calvinistic or Reformed churches. Later the Reformed were also called Presbyterian. How did the Lord describe the church in this period of Sardis? In Revelation 3:1 it tells that they had “a name that thou

lives, and are dead”. In other words, these churches of the Reformation would spiritually decline and become spiritually dead.

It is a recognized fact that this is exactly what happened to the churches of that period. They commenced in glorious fashion when they broke from the church of Rome, but ere long, because of their refusal to walk in the light of the Word of God, and binding themselves about with creeds, they became exclusive.”Rigid and frigid” are the words of the historian in describing the Lutheran church. (3) These churches often became relentless persecutors of those who dissented from them. This was true of the Lutheran, Swiss and Anglican churches.

Who were the dissenting groups of this period? There were the Anabaptists, who existed in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Poland, Moravia, and even England. They were a staunch body of believers who suffered great persecution from their fellow Protestants as well as from the Roman Catholics. Many were martyred for their faith. In England there were the Puritans. These were Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Quakers. The Independents were later called Congregationalists. In Scotland from 1660 - 1688, there were the Covenanters. Eighteen thousand of these were martyred by the Stuart Kings, aided and abetted by the Anglican church.

In France there was a branch of the Reformed church - the Hugenots - who under the reign of their Catholic kings and aristocracy suffered the worst persecution of any Protestant group since the Reformation began. This persecution involved the massacre of St. Bartholomew of 1572 in which upwards of 70,000 were slain and later when the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685 all Protestants were outlawed. About half a million fled France while thousands of others were martyred. (4)

In the message to Sardis the Lord declared “Thou has a name that thou lives and are dead”. Nevertheless, the Lord also said, “Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments anti they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.” Revelation

1:4. No doubt those dissenting groups, generally small in number, but faithful to Christ, even to death, were the faithful few that the Lord marked out in the Sardis period.

When did the Sardis period come to its conclusion? We believe that that period ended in what is called, The Age of Reason, or Enlightenment that came upon Europe from about 1680 to approximately 1750. In this period the philosophy of Deism swept Christendom and under the guise of reason and enlightenment, this anti-Christian philosophy became a powerful instrument in undermining the Christian faith. The churches were seriously influenced by it, and as a result the Christian church in general became paralyzed, and faith in Christ reached an all-time low. In England it made an appalling impact upon society. We believe we are on safe ground in holding that it was this Age of Reason or Deism that crystallized the Sardis condition of the church, i. e. it had a name that it lived, but it was spiritually dead.

Notice what Dr. Fitchett wrote concerning the 18th century - the period in which Deism swept Christendom:

“In some respects, the 18th century is the most ill-used period in English history. It is the ‘Cinderella of the centuries’. No one has a good word to say about it. Carlyle sums it up in a bitter phrase: ‘Soul extinct - stomach well alive.’ The real scandal of England in the 18th century is the general decay of religion which marked its first fifty years. Only by an effort can we realize the condition of England in 1703. Christianity came near its death swoon in that sad age. Green, the historian, said, ‘There was open revolt against religion and against churches in both extremes of English society, The poor were ignorant and brutal to a degree impossible now to realize. The rich, to an almost utter disbelief of religion, linked a foulness of life now happily almost inconceivable.’ The fatal thing in the religion of that age, was that it had ceased to be a life, or to touch life. Christianity in England, at the beginning of the 18th century was a circle of dead fibers.” (5).

Undoubtedly it was in the first part of the 18th century that the Sardis period of the seven churches of Revelation came to its end.

We now return to the sixth period - to Philadelphia, which means “brotherly love”. When we read the message to Philadelphia, we find that it is in stark contrast to that of Sardis. There is not a single complaint made by Christ concerning His people in this period. This indicates that there must have been a dramatic change from the condition of the Sardis period. There must have been a revival of Christian faith, a return to Christ. Was there such a return? Was there such a revival?

It is indisputable that there was a remarkable revival of the Christian faith in the 18th and 19th centuries. What was the origin of this revival? It appears that it originated initially with the Pietists of Germany. (6) In the later part of their existence there rose among them, a leader called Count Zinzendorf. He had a large estate at Hernhuth, near the Czechoslovakian border. Zinzendorf was foremost in this revival in its latter years. One day there came, from Moravia, a band of refugees who had suffered severe persecution from the Roman Catholics. Zinzendorf welcomed them and offered them residence at Hernhuth, where they established themselves as a religious company. Zinzendorf led this group to experience a genuine revival of Christian faith. These were the Moravians. They were inspired to take the gospel to the unconverted and to the heathen in foreign lands. (7) The Moravian movement became one of the most remarkable missionary movements of the Christian era.

The second event that led to the Philadelphian revival, originated at Oxford University. Here was formed the “Holy Club” by a number of young religious scholars, mostly Anglican, who sought for a renewal of spiritual life. Among them were three remarkable characters: George Whitfield, John Wesley and his brother Charles. (8) They were gifted men and undoubtedly the Lord raised them up to turn back the forces of darkness and to revive the Christian faith in Britain, in the English-speaking world and beyond. John Wesley originally was a cold, legalistic churchman, but through the influence of the Moravian missionaries, he found Christ and true salvation, and as a result he became a transformed man. (9) He united with George Whitfield, who pioneered the proclamation of the Gospel to the masses of England, and there began the mighty Evangelical Revival of the 18th century. Their motto was: “The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man”. How relevant was this motto in the light of the sad and wretched times that had befallen the majority of the population.

John Wesley declared, “The world is my parish”, and remember, the message to Philadelphia was: “I have set before thee an open door”.

What was this open door? There are five different applications given in Scripture of the “open door”, and all of these are supported by the Spirit of Prophecy. (10) One application is that it was the door of access, of communication with God. Secondly, it was a door to answered prayer. Thirdly, it was a door to the reception of truth and power to overcome sin. Fourthly, it was a door of missionary opportunity. Fifthly, it was the door into the “holy of holies” of the Heavenly Sanctuary, into which Christ was to enter at the close of the Philadelphia period in 1844.

All five of the above applications were abundantly fulfilled in the great Evangelical Revival of the 18th and 19th centuries. The first four applied to the Revival at its beginning and throughout its career. The fifth one applied to the close of the Philadelphian period. What a revival! It was a powerful exhibition of brotherly love. In order to reach the miserable masses of the under-privileged, Whitfield and the Wesleys were compelled to preach in the open air. At all hours, in all places, and under all conditions they were inspired to proclaim the

simple Gospel of Christ. They were burning and shining lights, and, in turn, they set Britain alight. Thousands upon thousands listened, vast audiences stood in wonder. They saw that these preachers - members of the privileged class - loved them, which was so unusual. The wretched masses, in their hopeless situation learned that God loved them, that they were precious in His sight. As the historian declared:

“The true awakening of the religious life of the English-speaking race dates from Wesley. To say that he reshaped the conscience of England is true, but it is only half the truth. He recreated it. It was dead, twice dead, and through his lips God breathed into it the breath of life again.” (11).

The labors of Wesley illustrate the labor of love of him and his associates. He ministered for fifty-two solid years and preached 45,000 sermons. He traveled about 225,000 miles, mostly on horseback. He wrote 233

books and pamphlets and aided in producing 100 others. He and his brother produced 417 books between them. He labored from sixteen to eighteen hours a day. It was a labor of brotherly love - Philadelphia! He was a remarkable man, gifted by God and used by God.

In Wesley we see the striking fulfillment of the promise given by the Spirit of Prophecy:

“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.” 8 Testimonies, page 19. (12).

If ever there was seen an exhibition of that principle, it was seen in the life and ministry of the beloved John Wesley and also of his companions. The high Anglican churchman, Dr. Knox, declared concerning Wesley:

“Referring to pride, ambition, selfishness and personal gratification of what ever kind; since the days of the apostles, there has not been a human being more thoroughly exempt from all the frailties of human nature than John Wesley.” (12A).

Dr. Skeates declared:

“No man in any age has exceeded him in the skill of organization, or the wisdom of administration.” (13).

No doubt this remarkable ability stemmed not only from the gifts with which he was born, but from his close relationship with Christ. As a result of the complete dedication of Wesley and his fellows there was produced the greatest revival since the times of the apostles. It was a revival affecting not only the hearts and minds of millions, but their very lives, their society, their nation and the world. Initially, through the power of the gospel it transformed individuals by the millions. Secondly these transformed individuals transformed their own environment - their families, homes, their fellowmen - the English-speaking race. The masses of the English people at that time were in such a sordid, poverty-stricken, wretched condition, that it was only a matter of time before they would have exploded in awful vengeance upon the privileged class and destroyed them, as occurred in the terrifying French Revolution. But Wesley and his companions saved England from such an awful experience. The great Revival produced a bloodless revolution through the Gospel.

As Dr. Brady declared:

“The Evangelical Revival was, in fact, a revolution. It was a revolution which had at its heart a love of humanity, not hatred of class.” (14).

When we examine the number and the effects of the social reforms that were inspired by the Evangelical Revival, it beggars the mind. In our day and age, it is difficult to realize the condition of society of England and elsewhere, compared with what it is today. Wesley taught men to look upon every man as his brother. He and his companions engaged in a vast visitation program of the poor, the sick and the prisoners, which was unheard of. Wesley was ordered “to cease preaching at Newgate prison, lest he make the prisoners wicked and also at Bedlam, (insane asylum), lest (he) drive the inmates mad.” (15).

They attacked the legal, political and religious corruption of the day. They influenced the changing of the barbarous prison system which amounted, among other atrocities, to deliberate torture. They altered the savage penal code, which included the death penalty for 160 different violations of the law. They abolished the appalling crimes permitted against the infants of the poor. At birth it was permitted to strangle or starve them to death. They abolished child slavery - the cruel system of child labor. The name that stands prominent in this reform was that of Lord Shaftesbury, a product of the Great Revival.

They attacked bribery and smuggling, the curse of English life, and engaged in a remarkable ministry to the poverty-stricken, which involved the vast majority of the population. They led the poor to Christ, in whom they found forgiveness, acceptance and peace. They taught them self-respect. They taught them to sing. They started schools for the poor. They encouraged them to read, and Wesley even wrote special books for them. They taught the poor the dignity of labor. They taught them skills by which they could be self-supporting, which included even their women. They inculcated the spirit of initiative and independence in

the under-privileged. They raised money to lend to the poor to start them in self-supporting business. They exposed the appalling maladministration of justice to the poor.

Wesley also founded the first free medical dispensary in England. He commenced a program of natural health and temperance, and the drop in the death rate and the rise in public health was the most marked in British history. They attacked the liquor traffic - the populace in that period "was saturated with gin". The reason food was so expensive was because half the corn was used for gin production. They attacked the national obsession of the day - gambling. Society was described as "a vast casino" and it demoralized the people.

The Revival also abolished the cruelty and savagery of the sport of that day which involved the cruel abuse of animals. They reformed the working conditions of the laborers, bringing in reasonable hours and pay and conditions. They inspired the formation of labor unions - and remember, the original labor unions were led by Methodist lay preachers. They abolished the system of slavery. Britain, we may recall was one of the main nations in promoting slavery but, finally, she was the one that brought it to a halt. This also was the result of the great Evangelical Revival - Methodism.

They also instilled into the aristocracy, the principle of social responsibility, using their means to help the poor and shun the extravagance and luxury, to which they were so prone at that time. The Revival created a middle-class in England and this class became the backbone of Britain. They brought into being the voluntary hospital system, which through the decades has been such a blessing to the people. Florence Nightingale and all she stood for was the fruitage of the great Evangelical Revival.

They produced an age of celebrated prose and poetry of the English language. They gave to the English-speaking world the greatest heritage of sacred song and Charles Wesley was the foremost contributor and inspirer. They inspired the Sunday School movement, involving millions of children in learning the Bible and other branches of knowledge. They also revived the faith of many of the Church of England, and this gave birth to the evangelical branch of that church. However, only about five to six percent of the Anglican clergy were affected by the revival. They formed the "Society of Strangers in Distress" - brotherly love again: They revived the flagging spirit of the other dissenting churches - Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist and Quaker. They revived and transformed the church in Scotland which resulted in the tremendous philanthropic and missionary zeal of the Scots, who made such a magnificent contribution in establishing the British Empire. The revival renewed the moral fiber of the British people and it was this that brought greatness to Britain. As the historian has said:

"The true awakening of the religious life of the English-speaking race dates from Wesley. To say that he re-shaped the conscience of England is true, but that is only half the truth. He re-created it. It was dead, twice dead, and through his lips God breathed into it the breath of life again." (11)

In the religious sphere, the Evangelical Revival inspired the formation of Gospel and Tract Societies for the distribution of the Bible to the world. It gave birth to the mighty unprecedented surge of missionary endeavor that took the gospel to the world of the heathen. It inspired the formation of the Y. M. C. A., the Boy Scouts' Movement, homes for orphans and homeless children, such as those of Dr. Mueller and Dr. Barnardo. It inspired the formation of the Salvation Army, for William Booth was a Methodist clergyman. And finally, the Evangelical Revival prepared the way for the Great Second Advent Movement of 1833 to 1844.

You may recall that one of the promises Christ made to the Philadelphia church was: "I have set before thee an open door." One of those doors was the door of mission opportunity. At the close of the 18th century there arose one of the mightiest movements the world has ever seen in connection with foreign missions. In 1792, a sermon was preached by Baptist William Carey, by which God set on fire Christians of all churches. In 1797 Dr. D. L. Leonard declared:

"Christians in every corner of the land are meeting in a regular -manner and pouring out their souls for God's blessing on the world. The efforts most successfully made to introduce the Gospel to the South Seas

have had a most powerful tendency to unite the servants of Christ of every denomination in the bands of brotherly love". (Philadelphia). (16).

Again, Dr. J. A. Seiss declared:

"The era of revivals and missions and united efforts for the general conversion of mankind ensued, such as had not been since the primitive ages, there was a great love and fraternity among Christians." (17).

In 1784 (end of the 18th century), there were only twenty Protestant mission stations in the world, and half of these were Moravian. The Christian church, as such, showed little or no interest in missions, but in 1792, William Carey galvanized Christians into action. From 1792 until 1844, a period of fifty years, we can count at least thirty -six significant events involving the great foreign movement of that time.

It began with the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, and the following year, William Carey, its first missionary, sailed for India. Then was formed the Scottish Tract and Colporteur Society, then the Evangelical Magazine commenced its missionary publication. Next arose the London Missionary Society, and the New York Missionary Society. Then there sailed to the South Seas the missionary ship "The Duff", with twenty-nine missionaries on board. This was the beginning of the great mission program. Then was formed the Netherlands Missionary Society; then the second voyage of "The Duff" with forty-six missionaries. After this the Church Missionary Society was formed by the Church of England, indicating that the evangelical arm of that church was playing its part as a result of the great revival. Then came the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. Soon the "Haystack" group in America began its activities at Williams College, which resulted in a remarkable missionary thrust from the United States. From 1812, Henry Martin sailed for Persia and Arabia, Judson began work in Burma and the Baptist Missionary Union was formed in America. In 1816, John Williams sailed for the Society Islands in the South Seas, the American Bible Society was formed, as well as the Wesleyan Society.

In 1817, Robert Moffatt sailed for Africa. In 1820, Bingham sailed for Hawaii. In 1829, Alexander Duff sailed for India, in 1840, David Livingstone began his remarkable work in Africa. What a period it was! "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" - and no man was able to shut it. It was a marvelous era of opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel to the non-Christian world.

The Lord had said to Philadelphia: "Thou has a little strength, and has kept my word, and has not denied my name". In the great Evangelical Revival of the 18th and 19th centuries, this was truly fulfilled. They entered that open door of missionary opportunity with little human strength but by the grace of God, they kept the faith as they understood it, and were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

The next point in the message to the Philadelphian church was:

"I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I also will keep them from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Revelation 3:11).

What is the meaning of the term "the synagogue of Satan - that say they are Jews and are not"? What is a Jew in the New Testament? A true Jew according to Romans 2:28-29, refers to one who is a true believer: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly of the spirit whose praise is not of man but of God.", and the man who has the praise of God, is the true born-again Christian. Who, then, are these that say they are Jews and are not? Undoubtedly, they are professing Christians that make up the synagogue of Satan, but they are not genuine Christians. Who, then, is the "synagogue of Satan"? Notice this statement from the Spirit of Prophecy:

"Christ speaks of the church, over which Satan presides, as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good and remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrong-doing, but will expel it from the heart and life." (18).

In the time of the great Evangelical Revival, was there any organization over which Satan presided, which professed to be Christian? The one that fulfilled to the very letter this description, was none other than the established church of the day, the Anglican church. If ever a church was responsible for an hour of temptation or trial upon God's people of that period, it was that organization. Historians have been inclined to white-wash the appalling guilt of the established church throughout the centuries. Not only did that religious organization refuse to walk in the light of truth, but she oppressed those who did.

The Anglican church continually opposed the reform and improvement of society. The prelates were guilty of pride, pomp, arrogance and corruption. It is recorded of the bishop of Winchester that "he excused his much swearing by claiming that he swore as a baronet but not as a bishop." (19) In the 18th century, it is claimed only two primates held office, who were even half worthy of office. The Anglican clergy were mostly traitors to England. They were Jacobite in their sympathies and continually supported the Catholic Stuart pretensions to the throne. They resisted social reform and the emancipation of the masses. As one authority has said:

"The attitude of the established clergy was that they were a classical royalist society, and that the lower majority were a vulgar, menial herd." (20).

This explains the attitude over the centuries of many of the clergy of the established church. Dr. Brady, wrote:

"The rapidly increasing industrial population came to account the parish clergy among the most merciless of all the forces of reaction and subjugation." (21).

Likewise Daniel Defoe declared, "The established Church of England was the most intolerant church in Christendom." (22)

Dr. Skeates, writing of the Wesleys and their associates:

“They began the regeneration of a whole people who were sunk in almost heathen darkness. The good they effected, they effected against the will and in spite of the prohibitions of their own church, which again exhibited herself in what was her characteristic attitude as the opponent of all sincere religious life and active religious work.” (23).

“The gentle and sainted Archbishop Leighton had remarked of the Church of England, that in its administration, both in relation to the ecclesiastical courts and pastoral duties, it was the most corrupt he had ever seen.” (24).

This was the condition of the established church of the day, and the Lord correctly termed it, “the synagogue of Satan”. It violently and vehemently resisted the religious revival of Whitfield and the Wesleys. Previously, the Anglican church had supported and aided in the martyrdom of 18,000 Scottish Covenanters. It had been responsible for fining and imprisoning thousands of English dissenters, even from the times of Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I. At one time, 4,000 alone were in prison because they could not pay the severe fines for being dissenters. It was the established church which inspired the mobs to wreck the meetings of the Methodists; to pull down Methodist meeting houses; even to murder Methodist lay preachers. It fought strenuously through the years to retain the oppressive laws against all dissenters. (25).

John Wesley himself spent 52 years in continuous ministry. He proclaimed the Gospel publicly until the very year of his death. But for the first 35 years of his ministry, he suffered violent attacks from the mobs, inspired by the established church. In his journal, he relates how, at his meetings, organized mobs endeavored to destroy the effect of his preaching. (26) Surely the established church was the “synagogue of Satan”. Now notice the prediction concerning the synagogue of Satan. “I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” (Revelation 3:9). Moffatt’s translation says: “Lo, I will make those who belong to the synagogue of Satan, who style themselves Jews. Lo, I will have them come and do homage before your feet and learn that I love you.”

Did those of the established church pay homage to the Evangelical Revival? Did the Anglicans pay homage to the Methodists? In the very time of John Wesley himself, the tide began to turn. At 35 years of age John Wesley was converted to Christ and commenced his life-long campaign. Through human storm and tempest, with the mighty spiritual weapons given by Christ, he waged relentless warfare against the entrenched forces of darkness. After thirty five to forty years of relentless, violent opposition, it began to cease and Wesley’s final years were years of homage - homage of the masses - homage of the people, and even homage of the Anglican clergy. As Dr. Brady, in his account of Wesley’s final years declared:

“Though from his spiritual birthday, late in his 35th year, unbroken peace and increasing joy had reigned within, nevertheless, for at least four decades, he had encountered a succession of violent tempests without. But ere the termination of his 80th year, cloud and storm had well-nigh passed from his horizon, and the veteran prophet thenceforth moved largely in an atmosphere of serenity, veneration and awe. Many, indeed, who had cursed him, now were praying for him. Not a few persons, who long had thundered against him from their pulpits, were now imploring him to preach from those same pulpits.”

“The stiff-necked, ecclesiastical and lay, continued to put on airs and expatiated on the folly of enthusiasm and the madness of the masses, but to multitudes, Wesley finally was an honored and matchless prophet. The tide had turned. The latter years of the great evangelist’s itinerary were a series of triumphal tours. Commonly, as this veteran campaigner for God passed through towns and villages, the streets were lined with excited crowds, gazing with stark admiration and wonder, as if the king were going by. Clergymen - non-conformist and Anglican - turned out everywhere to hear him preach. Even bishops stole sheepishly into his open air congregations. The fury of the anti-Wesley’ mobs was no more.” (27).

How impressive! The prediction to the Philadelphians was fulfilled: “I will have them come and do homage before your feet and learn that I love you.” (Revelation 3:9, Moffatt).

The great evangelical movement became acceptable. It finally received recognition, as it transformed society and the English-speaking world. Many of its leading opponents became its firmest supporters. Even George III, King of England, in acknowledging publicly the influence of the Evangelical Revival on popular education in 1805, declared:

“It is my wish that every poor child in my dominions should be taught to read the Bible.” (28).

This was the fruitage of the great revival. But not only that, Queen Victoria, reigning at the height of the British Empire’s power, was requested by the German Ambassador as to what was the secret of Britain’s greatness. The Queen taking a Bible and handing it to the Ambassador, declared, “This is the secret of England’s greatness”. And what was it that brought the Bible to the British people, and transformed them, making Britain great? It was the Evangelical Revival. It was Methodism. Leading churchmen of the established church - its fiercest enemy - reluctantly at first, but later, have done homage to the Revival and to Methodism.

When one steps into Westminster Abbey, a stronghold of the established church through the centuries, one can see the plaque placed there in honor of John and Charles Wesley. On it is inscribed, "The world is my parish". Thank God for that man and his associates.

Statesmen, historians, educators and other leading lights, by the hundreds, have lauded Methodism to the skies, and rightly so. Thus, the prediction of the Philadelphian period was abundantly fulfilled: "I will have them come and do homage before your feet, and learn that I did love you".

We now have come to the climax of the Philadelphian period. God's people have passed through a time of trial, "the hour of temptation", a tremendous hour of testing lasting for decade after decade, but in which God preserved them. The Philadelphian period climaxed in a great awakening of interest in the prophetic books of the Bible. Dramatic events were taking place that were seen as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. In various parts of the world, scholars were led to the study of the books of Daniel and Revelation. In the first forty years of the 19th century, over twenty landmark events occurred that finally led to the establishment of the Great Second Advent Movement of 1833-44. (29).

It is significant to notice these, for they reveal the tremendous interest in the study of Daniel and Revelation of that period. In 1800 there commenced the famous Bampton lectures entitled "The Divine Origin of Prophecy - Illustrated and Defended". Secondly, the publication of Faber's "Dissertations on the Prophecies"; then Lacunza's Works on "The Second Coming of the Messiah". Following these was Cunninghame's "Dissertations on the Seals and Trumpets of the Revelation", and Freer's contribution called, "The Combined View of the Christian Prophecies". At this time also Joseph Woolf began his proclamation around the world of the Lord's Second Coming. This aroused tremendous interest in the subject. Then there appeared the works of Edward Irving, and the conferences at Albury Park, Surrey, England, of those interested in the near advent of Christ. These Albury Park meetings involved many leading religious scholars of Great Britain. Added to these was Alexander Keith's work, "The Evidence of the truth of the Christian religion derived from the fulfillment of prophecy", and Mason's essays on "Daniel's prophetic numbers of 2,300 days; Irving's Exposition of the book of Revelation. In 1831, William Miller began to preach in the United States. This was the commencement of the Great Second Advent Movement, which was the fulfillment of the First Angel's Message of Revelation 14:6, 7.

It was the Evangelical Revival that prepared the way for the proclamation of the Great Second Advent message. The Revival familiarized society with the Bible as never before. It was a biblically-minded society. Thus when the great prophecies of Daniel and Revelation were proclaimed, people generally were able to appreciate their significance, in particular, the truth of the second advent of Christ. It was from among those who had been influenced by the Evangelical Revival that the Advent message was received and proclaimed to the world. This was a fitting conclusion to the great Philadelphian period of the church, a period of which Christ finds no complaint concerning His people.

In conclusion, let us notice the unique promise to the overcomers of the Philadelphian period: "Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

How often had the Evangelicals been driven out when they proclaimed the gospel to the generation of their day.

"And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem. And I will write upon him my new name." Verse 12

This promise denotes protection, victory, and permanence. It also indicates that they would be objects of beauty in the kingdom of God. (30) They would be like the inscribed pillars in a glorious temple. This was a very fitting promise to the evangelicals of the day, who had suffered much for Christ. It denoted protection. After so much hostility and persecution, this was very meaningful to them."Victory" - they had fought against such over-whelming odds; they had battled for the betterment of mankind and through the proclamation of the Gospel, their efforts did end in victory - but the promise here denotes permanent victory - they would be as pillars in the kingdom.

Finally "objects of beauty". Did they become "objects of beauty" in the society of the day? John Wesley was an adornment of society -of beautiful character, he was a man that reflected the image of Christ. In the kingdom, the overcomers of this period will be objects of beauty."They shall be mine, said the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Malachi 3:17) This beautiful promise has particular application to those of the Philadelphian period. But more than that, this promise is also for every believer of every church period, who sincerely sacrifices for Christ and His fellow-men. In fact the messages to all of the seven churches apply to us today. As we read these messages and, in particular, the message to the Philadelphians, may we apply it to our own individual lives, so that we, like the Philadelphians, will be finally adjudged by Christ, to be without fault and so be ready for translation.

APPENDIX

What of the application of Revelation 3:7-12 concerning Philadelphia that is made by the Spirit of Prophecy? Some ask, "Is not the Spirit of Prophecy application at variance with the application as published in the preceding pages?"

The answer to this query is that there is often more than one application of some scriptures. There are primary applications and there are secondary applications. The historic application as given in this article is a primary application. However, like the messages to the other six churches there is also an individual application. The messages can also apply to the church, today. In this sense they would be classed as secondary applications.

Frequently the Spirit of Prophecy applies the messages of the previous six churches to the seventh or Laodicean church. We believe the application that the Spirit of Prophecy gives, concerning Philadelphia to the time of trouble involving God's people at the end, is a secondary application of that Scripture. However, such an application is in harmony with sound Biblical exegesis.

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6. Blind And Naked But Feeling Fine

An Exposition Of Revelation 3:14-21

“Unto the angel of the Laodiceans write.” Verse 14.

The meaning of Laodicea? It is comprised of two words - “Laos” = people.”Dikaios” = righteous, right, lawful.

Laodicea means - The righteous people, or the judged, or justified people. According to the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel the judging of God's people transpires prior to the Second Advent, commencing in 1844 AD. This is an investigative judgment. (1) On this ground many conclude that the period involving Laodicea is from 1844 AD until the Second Advent of Christ.

Seeing that the seven churches represent the seven periods of the Christian Church, Laodicea, being the seventh would naturally represent the final period. This means that Laodicea must be involved with what scripture describes as “the remnant” (Revelation 12:17), the saints at the end time. The term Laodicea also means a just, or righteous people. This could apply very accurately to the final product of Laodicea, (2) a people ready for translation at the Second Advent of Christ.

The Three Titles Christ Employs

“These things said the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” Verse 14. The Amen.

This term is borrowed from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

“That he who blessed himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth.” Isaiah 65:16.

The expression “God of truth”, in the Hebrew is “The God of Amen”. This is a title of the Messiah, (3) and represents Jesus Christ as the truth. (John 14:6.) This thought was frequently expressed by Jesus when he introduced his teachings by exclaiming, “Verily, verily”, or truly, truly.

“All the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us. . .” 2 Corinthians 1:20.

In Christ “is the source of all certainty and truth.”

The Faithful and True Witness

This is a repetition of Revelation 1:5 where Jesus is described as “the faithful witness”. (4) Likewise in Revelation 19:11. Jesus, at the Second Advent, is described as “faithful and true”. (5) Why are the above two terms used in addressing Laodicea? The Laodicean message is the most drastic of all the seven churches. It is so strong in reproof that the reaction could be that the charge is an exaggeration.

But he who delivers the message is “the Amen” and “the faithful and true witness”. Therefore, his message must be the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

“The beginning of the creation of God”

This description of Jesus is used by some to show that Jesus was a created being, that He had a beginning. While it is true that as is concerned, he was begotten, numerous other scriptures clearly declare that he had no beginning, that he was God the Son, that he came from eternity. The original Greek word for “beginning” is “arche”. What does this word mean? It can be understood in two ways. It may be translated beginning or beginner. (6)

How can one know which is the correct sense? He must allow scripture to interpret scripture. Do other scriptures portray Christ as the Beginner of creation, or the Beginning of creation? Indisputably Christ was the Beginner of creation. He was involved in the creation of all things. He is the Creator.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 1:1, 3, 14.

Christ is,

“The prime source of all God’s creation.” Revelation 3:14. NEB. He is co-creator with his Father.”The Beginner of all creation, its originating instrument.” (8)

Is there significance in the emphasis on Christ as Creator in the introduction to this final church? It is in this final age of history that man has rejected the truth of creation and accepted the alternative concept of evolution. Therefore it is most relevant.

Christ. . .

“Is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [chief] of every creature (7) : for by him [Christ] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth . . . all things were created by him and for him-and by him all things consist.” Colossians 1:15-17.

“In these last days [God] hath spoken to us by his Son. . . by whom also he hath made the worlds.” Hebrews 1:1, 2.

Secondly, if Christ is Creator, then he is also divine, he is God the Son. The ability to create is the mark of deity, which means that Christ is all-knowing.”I know thy works.” Verse 15.

“Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. Because thou art lukewarm I will spew thee out of my mouth.” Verse 15, 16.

Of all the seven churches, Laodicea’s need is the most drastic - so much so that if there is no recovery from it, it will result in complete rejection by God. In what way is this lukewarm condition manifested by the Laodiceans?

“Because you say I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.” Verse 17.

The Laodicea attitude is one of spiritual self satisfaction. He may not literally say it, but within himself he feels assured of salvation. He has the truth, he is on the way to heaven. In other words, he feels that he has spiritually arrived. He believes he is acceptable to God - he feels or senses no need.

What should be the mental attitude of a healthy believer? Saint Paul warns, “Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.”

This means that we are to be aware continually that we are in spiritual danger. This leads to watchfulness, to a realization of one’s own insufficiency and inability. He will know that unless Christ is within he has no hope of reaching the standard. He will be conscious that

there is a continual battle and that that battle is with self and it will not cease until death or translation. Never will he feel that he has "made it".

The problem with believers in Laodicea is that they believe that they are safe, that they have found the truth, that they are on the way to heaven and all is well. Christ declares that such an attitude denotes spiritual wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness and nakedness.

"And knows not that thou are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Verse 17.

This is a shocking revelation and what makes it so serious is that the one who is in this condition, is totally unaware of it. No wonder the condition is described by some as "hopeless".

But the condition of Laodicea is not hopeless. Care needs to be taken here that an incorrect conclusion is not drawn. The Laodicean message has been frequently used as a weapon to attack the people of God and to condemn them as apostate. This scripture does not indicate apostasy but spiritual self-satisfaction. Apostasy among God's people in the end time is to be sought for in other scriptures. In the stern rebuke to Laodicea Christ holds out the cure for its spiritual disease.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou may be rich; and white raiment, that thou may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent." Revelation 3:18, 19.

These two verses cancel out completely that Laodicea is hopeless, or apostate. It is a love message. Christ has to hurt in order to help. He rebukes and calls for repentance, i. e. to turn around, to turn back and the way of repentance is to buy of Christ three particular items which will make one acceptable for heaven. These three are:

1."Gold tried in the fire" Pure gold, spiritual gold. What does scripture describe as being tried by fire. It is the believer's faith,

"That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7.

A tried or tested faith is spiritual gold. But what kind of faith? How is it recognized? It is. . .

"Faith that works by love." Galatians 5:6.

"Faith active in love." NEB and Moffatt.

"Faith which expresses it-self in love." Phillips and Knox.

"Faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love." Amplified New Testament. (9)

This is the first and most serious lack among believers in the Laodicean period. A lack of faith which expresses itself in love. It is not love alone, but faith, active faith which is stimulated by love and expresses itself in love. This is not sentimental love but love as a principle.

In essence it is renunciation of self, unselfishness or selflessness.

"But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. There needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely." (10)

Now while this is the chief lack among God's people in the last days, we believe that care should be exercised not to make a blanket application of Christ's complaint. Are there not those among God's professed people who are earnestly involved in subduing self and looking to Christ for constant aid? The Laodicean must beware of "self" saying to him that all is well, relax, cease struggling. As one discerning Christian warns:

"Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness. . ."

"Men who have lived nearest to God . . . have confessed the sinfulness of their own nature. . . At every advance step in Christian experience our repentance will deepen." (11)

As St. Paul counseled:

“Work out your own salvation with FEAR AND TREMBLING. For it is God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.”
Philippians 2:12, 13.

The complaint with Laodicea is that there is too little fear and trembling in regard to ones personal spiritual attitude. There are some things that believers must be fearful of

“Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ’s will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life. . . Fear lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker, Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose which God, through you, desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life’s pathway without His abiding presence.” (12)

With such an attitude, spiritual self-satisfaction and pride will never gain the ascendancy, instead one will become spiritually “rich”.

The second need of the Laodiceans is to buy of Christ:

“White raiment, that thou may be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” Verse 18.

Here Christ is declaring that in heaven’s sight many Laodiceans are spiritually naked. This should shock us out of our spiritual complacency! What is it that clothes the Christian - that covers completely his spiritual nakedness? It is the righteousness of Christ which is received by faith - by believing that Christ died as my substitute and that the perfect obedience he worked out while on earth is placed to my credit or imputed to me. But more than that. It also involves the reception of Christ’s grace which enables me to be made righteous in character. It is a righteousness that comes solely from Christ and which alone can fit the believer for the kingdom.

“White raiment - Christ’s righteousness imputed to the believer in justification and imparted in sanctification.” (13)

As the previous author so beautifully penned,

“By his perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with his heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” (14)

Does Christ’s complaint suggest that many Laodiceans are not trusting in or applying the righteousness of Christ? Does it mean that they have a head knowledge of salvation but not a heart experience? If “self” is enthroned in the Laodicean’s heart then the above is a natural consequence.

The third need of the Laodicean is to:

“Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”

Christ is saying that those who are lukewarm in Laodicea are spiritually blind. They cannot discern between good and evil nor can they distinguish clearly between right and wrong. This is extremely serious in the light of the tremendous deceptions that are to afflict the people of God in the end time. Because of the coming conflict involving the saints, spiritual eye-salve will be an essential requirement. More than human discernment will be needed to detect sin and deception and to know what to do in the crisis.

It is significant to notice that unlike five of the previous church periods, there is no hint of any opponents from without, nor of any heresies from within Laodicea. We suggest that Satan has no need to attack the church when it is in a lukewarm condition. He has no fears for such a church.

“As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.” Verse 19.

“Rebuke and chasten.” The word chasten means to punish or discipline with the object of reforming.

“To instruct by chastisement”. Here is a prediction as to how Christ is to bring His church to repentance. He is to bring chastisement upon the church. The church is to receive punishment. The Lord must be cruel to be kind.

“When the judgments of God are in the earth, then will the people learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9. (15)

Seeing that Laodicea is the final segment of the church of God, it must therefore be the church that exists at the time of Christ’s return.

This means that seeing Laodicea is in the woeful condition that Christ describes, something exceptional will need to be done for Laodicea in order for God's people to be ready for translation. Is there evidence of some special experience befalling Laodicea that will prepare it for translation? We believe there is.

Other scriptures show that before the Second Advent there is to be a sorting out, a sifting, a dividing of the wheat and the tares within the church of God. (16) This is often termed "the shaking". In the parable of "The Wheat and the Tares", (Matthew 13:24-30) Jesus declared,

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Matthew 13:30.

Later Jesus explained that

"The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall gather out of his kingdom [the church] all things that offend and them which do iniquity." Verses 39-41.

This is alluding to a process in the period of the world's end, when Christ purifies his church. This unquestionably must be the Laodicean church. (17) This purifying process is described as a "gathering out"

and a "gathering in". (Matthew 13:30, 41.) This process is "the shaking" which divides, or polarizes the entire church of God.

How will this process be initiated? We suggest that one of the instruments employed will be the proclamation within the Laodicean church of the Laodicean message. Other scriptures predict that a startling message is to be presented to believers in Laodicea to prepare them for the Advent. The prophet Joel whose predictions now have an end time application to spiritual Israel predicted this special call within the church.

"Blow you the trumpet in Zion [the church], sanctify a fast [abstain from the normal way of life], call a solemn assembly, gather the people. Let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar [in repentance with their flock] and let them say, Spare thy people O Lord, and give not thin heritage to reproach, that the heathen [unsaved] should rule over them [oppress them] wherefore they [the unsaved] should say among the people, Where is their [the saints] God?" Joel 2:15-17.

The apostle James was also inspired to warn God's professed people. This applies specifically to those in the Laodicean condition.

"Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning [of repentance], and your joy to heaviness [godly sorrow]. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up." James 4:7-10.

This is the experience that those in the Laodicean condition will need to pass through in order to be overcomers. Again the prophet Zephaniah reveals the experience that God's end time people must have:

"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired [spiritual Israel]; Before the decree bring forth [probably the death decree] before the day pass as the chaff [day of salvation], before the fierce anger of the Lord [plagues] come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you [Close of Probation and the Day of the Lord]. Seek you the Lord, all you meek of the earth. Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it maybe you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zephaniah 2:1-3.

"O nation not desired." In the Hebrew "not desired" means "not longed for" or "not ashamed". This means: (1) this people is unworthy of God's protection, which is true of Laodicea in its present state, and (2) this people is unashamed in regard to its spiritual condition. It has no sense of its guilt. How true this is of Laodicea. (18) However, this scripture forecasts a special call to God's end time people to seek righteousness (white raiment) and meekness (the opposite of spiritual pride) in order to be hid or protected during the outpouring of God's wrath in the seven last plagues.

The trumpet is to be sounded in Zion. This tells of an alarm, of a crisis which involves the church itself. We suggest that this will eventuate with the sounding by irresistible instruments within the Laodicean church, of the Laodicean message. It will involve a powerful call to repentance and reformation and as a result there will be polarization and those rejecting the call will remove themselves from Laodicea. (19)

We suggest that Christ's message to Laodicea, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent" could involve God's effort as outlined above to bring Laodicea to repentance. There is indisputable evidence that this effort will be successful.

Many of God's people, comprising Laodicea, will finally be cured of the curse of half warmness. Some teach that true believers must leave Laodicea and join the church of Philadelphia. This fictitious claim is fully dealt with elsewhere. (20)

The Greek word "repent" in verse 19 is in the singular, denoting that the call of Christ to Laodicea is an individual call. Repentance is a personal experience, and each individual believer must seek it if he is to be an overcomer.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock."

What door is this? Is it the door of the Laodicean church as a corporate body? No! It is the door of each individual believer's heart.

"If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." Verse 20.

The church of Christ consists of individual believers and the only way Christ may dwell within his church is by dwelling within each individual heart. Thus Christ calls to everyone, every individual, to open the door of his heart, (his mind) and receive Christ. An important truth is revealed in this verse. Christ stands at the door of man's heart and knocks. He does not attempt to open the door. He does not employ compulsion. He does not threaten. He does not endeavor to force the will. He knocks and waits. He will only enter into a man's life at the man's personal invitation. Our Creator holds a sacred respect for the freedom of man's will. Never will he breach this principle.

Here is a revelation of the nobility of the character of our God."I will come into him."

The Greek may read "I will enter into him". This is the mystic union of Jesus and the believer. By the Holy Spirit, Christ enters into the believer and reigns upon the spiritual throne of his heart. This is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27.)

"And sup with him."

This is alluding to the spiritual supper of the Lamb. It denotes the unique fellowship that the believer enjoys with Christ but which is incomprehensible to the world. The ministry of Christ is likened in scripture to the experience of human love, courtship and marriage. The Holy Spirit woos the sinner. If the sinner responds, there takes place a spiritual union or marriage. Christ becomes the spiritual husband and the believer becomes the bride. The bride takes her husband's name. She is now a Christian, a Christian. The husband becomes responsible for His bride. He provides her with everything she needs.

He supplies her garments - the robe of His own righteousness; her food, which is the Word of God and which is likened to spiritual milk, bread and meat. He protects her by providing a spiritual bodyguard - guardian angels, and he assures her that he will never leave her nor forsake her, providing she is faithful. But she always retains the freedom of her will. She is not under compulsion to continue the spiritual marriage relationship. It is based on love and freedom of choice.

"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne." Verse 21.

This is the grandest of the seven promises to the overcomer. It is the crowning promise. It shows that the Laodicean condition can and will be overcome by at least some or even many in this period. God will have a people out of earth's last generation who will be fit for translation at the Second Advent. Their reward will be greater than those of any other period.

Compare the seven rewards of each period -

Ephesus Eat of Tree of Life.

Smyrna Not be hurt of the Second Death.

Pergamos Eat hidden manna, white stone, new name.

Thyatira Power over the nations, rule with rod of iron.

Sardis White raiment, name retained in Book of Life.

Philadelphia A temple pillar, name of God, New Jerusalem, Christ's new name.

Laodicea Sit with Christ on his throne sharing his rule.

The overcomers from Laodicea share the eternal throne of Christ in the kingdom. What a privilege! What a reward! What an honor! Why should those of Laodicea be granted a higher honor than those of any other church period?

1. Because this age, is an age of the greatest affluence, tolerance, compromise and enlightenment. While it is probably the age when it has never been easier to become a Christian, on the other hand, never has it been so difficult to retain ones faith and zeal.

2. Those of the last generation pass through the final crisis of the great controversy. They are involved in the conflict with the beast and his image and his mark.

3. A special preparation is required of them in order to endure the time of trouble and finally to stand ready for translation. The final remnant of Laodicea are those who are described in Revelation 7:13-17. They “come out of great tribulation”. They are “before the throne” or “in the presence” of the throne and “serve him day and night in his temple”. This same group are also on Mount Zion “with the Lamb and are an hundred and forty-four thousand”. (Revelation 14:1.) (See Appendix 2.) This indicates that the final group of overcomers of Laodicea comprise the 144,000. This may be why their reward is so much greater than those of any other church period.

“Even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Verse 21.

Here Jesus Christ reminds his followers that because he overcame so likewise may the believer. Jesus, when on earth, experienced life in exactly the same way as we do. In his humanity he possessed the same nature as we have, he had access to divine power exactly the same way as we may. He had no advantages over us. He showed us how to overcome.

“In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

APPENDIX I

What of the claim that in six of the messages to the seven churches, the truth of the Second Advent is emphasized. This conclusion is based on the expression, “I will come.” However, when each of these expressions is examined, it appears that the reference is to Christ coming in judgment. Notice the six times the term is used:

Ephesus

“Repent. . . or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candle stick out of his place except thou repent.” 2:5.

Smyrna

No mention of Christ coming to this church in judgment. Maybe this is because Christ finds no complaint with this church.

Pergamos

“Repent or else I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” 2:16.

Thyatira

“But that which you have already hold fast till come.” 2:25.

Sardis

“Hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shall not know what hour I will come upon thee.” 3:3.

Philadelphia

“Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” 3:11.

Laodicea

“Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him.” 3:20.

When the above six expressions are analyzed in context, it is doubtful whether any of them could apply to the Second Advent in a primary application. Even the expression as used to Laodicea, the church of the Advent, clearly refers to Christ seeking entrance to the heart. The expressions used to the other five churches appear to be warnings that Christ could come in judgment. If they apply to the

Second Advent it would only be in a secondary sense. The Spirit of Prophecy applies some of the above expressions in this manner. Statements made to some of the previous six churches are re-applied to the Laodicean church.

APPENDIX 2

What of the interpretations of the seven churches as taught by some of the pioneers in the 1844 period? In the fundamental features of the faith, the conclusions of the pioneers, when confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy, were unquestionably correct. However, in secondary aspects of truth, not confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy, care should be taken! Further study on the topic of the seven churches has shown that some of the applications of the pioneers were incorrect. Believers are “to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our lord and Savior Jesus Christ”. 2 Peter 3:18.

REFERENCES

1. See the author's: "Me Angel of Time", and "God's Final Ultimatum to Mea",
2. See the author's: "The 144,000!"
3. 2 Corinthians 1:20,
4. See the author's: "Alpha and Omega", Revelation 1.
5. See the author's: "2 Armies! 2 Suppers! 2 Destinies!"
6. The Greek word translated "beginning" is "arche". Its meaning is dependent on whether it is taken in its passive sense or active sense. The principle that should govern how one takes this word is; which meaning harmonizes with the rest of scripture. The answer is - in its active sense. This means that it should be translated "beginner" and not "beginning".
7. The word "firstborn!" of Colossians 1:15 should not be interpreted to mean that Jesus Christ was originally created, because this flagrantly contradicts many other scriptures. In the Old Testament the term was used to represent the dignity and office of the first or chief of the offspring of the family - the one who inherited special titles, responsibilities and property. However, the "firstborn" was not necessarily the one who was born first. If the first to be born was a female, she was not "the firstborn". Sometimes the first son to be born was not "the firstborn!" as such and did not receive the birthright. Example: Esau and Jacob. Genesis 25 and 26. The word "firstborn" signifies "chief" or "head". "His Is the primacy aver all created beings." Colossians 1:15. NEB.
8. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown on Revelation 3:14.
9. "The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by lave." Ellen G. White. "Christ's Object Lessons", page 158.
10. Ellen G. White. "Christ's Object Lessons", page 160.
11. Ellen G. White. "Christ's Object Lessons", page 160.
12. Ellen G. White. "Christ's Object Lessons", page 161.
13. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, on Revelation 3:18.
14. Ellen G. White. "Christ's Object Lessons", page 312.
15. For further detail on the judgments that will fall upon the last section of the church of God in the last days see: "Philadelphia or Laodicea", by the author.
16. See the author's: "The Mighty Shaking of the Adventist Church".
17. Some claim the church awaiting translation is the church of Philadelphia; but that church had no defect in Christ's sight. (Revelation 3:7-13) The church in the period of the Second Advent how ever, is a church that must have separated from it, any "that offend and which do iniquity." Matthew 13:41.
18. See SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4 on Zephaniah 2:1-3.
19. Ellen G. White: "Testimonies", Volume 1, page 179-184.

20. See the author's: "Philadelphia or Laodicea? Must we Migrate from One Church to Another?" pages 14-23.

7. Philadelphia Or Laodicea?

An Exposition of Revelation 3:14-22.

Should we leave the church of Laodicea and join the church of Philadelphia in order to prepare for translation? This is a call that comes from an increasing number of Adventists who have become disillusioned with the Seventh-day Adventist organization. To answer this question, it is essential to study the question of the Seven Churches of Revelation.

Today, conscientious Seventh-day Adventists, are in a time of great danger. As a result of the attacks upon the Church from within, our beloved church is in a sad situation. Apostasy is rife among us, particularly in the ministry. Among the laity there is a paralyzing half-warmness - the Laodicean condition. With those who are aware of the situation, there is, generally speaking, a longing for action, for reform, for revival, but instead, conditions appear to be worsening. Here is our danger. Our human reactions, while natural, can be contrary to the counsels of God.

The situation in our church today can lead to discouragement, to a loss of faith, to our growing cold- in the faith. Remember Jesus Himself warned of this."Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Undoubtedly this refers to iniquity in the church as well as in the world. We see iniquity within the church as never before, and because of it the love of many is waxing cold. This is the first danger against which we need to watch; that we do not lose faith and that our love for Christ does not wax cold.

The second danger in a situation such as this, is that we can readily conclude that the whole church is apostate, that the situation is hopeless. Maybe, from a human viewpoint, it does appear to be hopeless. But remember if this is God's church, it is not hopeless. If we lose sight of this fact we can be led to listen to the calls "to come out of Laodicea", in other words, to come out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for Laodicea is classed by many, as the Seventh-day Adventist church. Today, we need- to restudy the question of the Seven Churches of Revelation, and the messages in particular to Laodicea and Philadelphia.

The messages to the Seven Churches of Revelation were originally given to seven local congregations. Why seven congregations?

Undoubtedly there were hundreds of other Christian churches in Asia Minor at that time. The reason is that those seven churches, in their names and situations, were fitting parallels, or illustrations, of the experiences of God's people in various periods down through the Christian era.

The Historical school of interpretation has held that the Seven Churches of Revelation represent the entire Christian Church - the seven periods of the Church, from the first to the second advent of Christ. Before the writer are the conclusions of forty-four known biblical scholars of the past who have held this position. (1)

The apostle Paul was inspired to write to seven churches and his messages have a universal application to all Christians. Likewise, John wrote to seven churches and his messages apply to all Christians of every age. The messages to the seven churches represent, in advance, a history of God's people. They do not refer to any one religious organization, as such, but to the true Christian church, in general.

When we analyze the second outline of prophecy in Revelation, - the Seven Seals - they present to us, in advance, a history of the apostate church. It is important to notice this, because it is claimed today that the Laodicean Church is the apostate church. But the prediction of the apostate church is in the Seven Seals, not in the Seven Churches. The Seven Churches represent the history in advance of the true Church of God through the ages.

Is it important for us to study these particular prophecies of Revelation? The prophet declares: "The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention." 8 Testimonies, page 302.

The prophet then records the messages to the three final churches: Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, indicating that these messages are also for us in the end time.

It is also claimed today by some divergent groups that the book of Revelation in its great lines of prophecy, applies only to the last days, the "end time". (2). According to the prophet, this is a mistake. It obscures rather than clarifies our understanding of the book of Revelation. It is claimed that the historic interpretation of Revelation in the past was all right for that day, but it is now out of date. This is unfortunate. Notice what the prophet declares of the prophecies of Revelation:

“They are addressed to those living in the last days of this earth’s history, as well as to those living in the days of John. Some of the scenes depicted in these prophecies are in the past; some are now taking place, some bring to view the close of the great conflict between the powers of darkness and the Prince of heaven, and some reveal the triumphs and joys of the redeemed in the earth made new.” Acts of Apostles, page 584.

This completely refutes the position as held by some who are interpreting Revelation contrary to the historical position of Seventh-day Adventists. In reviewing the prophecy of the seven churches let us notice the relation of Jesus Christ Himself to the seven churches. This is significant.

“I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.” Revelation 1:12-13.

Jesus is amid the candlesticks, and the candlesticks represent the seven churches (Verse 20). Jesus is in the midst of His church. And why is He so pictured? This is an assurance that the people of God are being cared for by Christ.”Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” He is with His church, even the church of Laodicea. He is working for it to save it, to preserve it. The church of God will not be overcome.”On this Rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16.) It maybe embattled - but the church of Christ will not be overcome. The church is built on Christ, protected by Christ, cared for by Christ. It will be saved by Christ and delivered by Christ. The church of God survives. Not one of the seven churches will be lost. Some members of each church period may be lost, but in every one of the seven churches, there are overcomers, conquerors, survivors.

What then is the purpose of these messages to the Seven Churches? Are they to condemn? No! They are to warn, to guide, to reprove and to save. They are “love” messages.

“This revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation. The church was defective and in need of stern reproof and chastisement.” John was inspired to record messages of warning and reproof and entreaty to those who,, losing sight of the fundamental principles of the gospel, should imperil their hope of salvation; but always the words of rebuke that God finds it necessary to send are spoken in tender love and with promise of peace to every penitent believer: Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will cane in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Acts of Apostles, page 583, 587.

This then is the purpose of the seven letters. They are not to indicate that the church is apostate in any one period. These messages were sent to preserve the church, no matter what period it is. When we examine the churches, we find that two receive unqualified praise: Smyrna and Philadelphia; two receive unqualified blame: Sardis and Laodicea and the remaining three receive both praise and blame: Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira.

Does the message to each church apply only to its peculiar period? “The names of the churches are symbolic of the periods, and the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods, and the messages extend to the end of time.” (3). What Christ says to one period may also apply to another. For instance, notice the complaint against the first church period of Ephesus: “You have left your first love.” (Revelation 2:4) Could not that apply to Christians in other periods? Notice the message to Smyrna - the period of pagan persecution: “Be thou faithful unto death.” (Revelation 2:10) Could not that apply to other church periods? What of the complaint concerning Pergamos? “Thou hast also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.” (Revelation 2:15) What was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans?

“Those who are teaching this doctrine today have much to say in regard to the faith and righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that they have only to believe on Christ and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner’s credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. Such teaching is a gross deception. They regard faith as a substitute for obedience. Virtually, they teach both by precept and example that Christ, by His death, saves men in their transgressions, instead of from their transgressions.” Signs Times, February 15, 1897.

Today this doctrine is right in the midst of the Remnant Church. It is a part of the so-called “new theology”. Notice God’s attitude toward this doctrine: “which thing I hate.” (Revelation 2:15)

Let us also note the complaint concerning Thyatira. This was the church of the “Dark Ages” - under papal persecution - the church in the wilderness. God says to the believers in this period: “You suffered that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants.” (Revelation 2:20) Who does Jezebel represent? In prophecy a woman represents “a church”. What church would this be? Without question the Church of Rome. Christ complains that believers were allowing the Church of Rome to teach and to spiritually seduce God’s servants.

Could this complaint apply also today when the ecumenical spirit is pervading the Remnant, and we are playing down the truth in regard to the Papacy – “the man of sin” - the anti-Christ? It surely could. In the message to Sardis, the church of the Reformation, Christ says: “Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.” (Revelation 3:2) Truth was dying in the Reformation churches. After the mighty awakening under the Protestant Reformers, the churches became creed bound and spiritually dead. Is such a situation prevalent in some areas of our church today? Are some things dying? Is there a need for a revival? Scores of times, the Spirit of Prophecy takes passages from the previous six churches of Revelation and applies them to us today - the Laodicean church. This is a principle of interpreting the messages of the Seven Churches of Revelation - they have a universal application as well as applying to each particular church period.

Does each period of the Seven Churches represent a particular church organization of that period? Not necessarily. The Seven Churches represent the church in general - all those who are true believers. Frequently in the past, God has used church organizations to His glory, but, generally, those church organizations ultimately become a hindrance to the cause of God. By refusing to advance in light and truth and becoming intolerant - they fall from grace. Therefore, in that condition, they would not form a part of the Seven Churches - the true church. They could be classed under the apostate church. The Seven Churches refer to the universal church on earth. They represent the true believers wherever they are.

There are five statements from the Spirit of Prophecy that describe the true church of God. These will help us to understand what the church of God really is: “God has a people upon the earth. Who are they? They are those who will purify their souls by obeying the truth as it is in Jesus.” Ellen G. White, General Conference Bulletin April 20, 1901. Again, “The Church on earth composed of those who are loyal to God, is the true tabernacle whereof the Redeemer is the minister.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 931.

“God has a people on the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast fulfilling prophecy and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.” 4 Testimonies, page 307. “God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment; neither is it the various denominations. It is the people who love God and keep His commandments. ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.’”

Where Christ is, even among the humble few, this is Christ’s church, for the presence of the High and Holy One Who inhabits Eternity, can alone constitute a church.” Upward Look, page 315. This means, that if a church organization becomes oppressive to true believers it is not really a part of the church of God.” The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him, who has bought mankind with the blood of His only begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth.” Acts Apostles, page 11.

The messages to the Seven Churches, then, are to true believers - to those who are endeavoring to be faithful, but who are imperfect. Christ sends them messages of reproof, counsel and comfort, in order to purify and preserve them and take them through to the Kingdom.

What of the church of Laodicea? Is Laodicea the church of apostasy as is often taught today? What is the significance of the Laodicean message? There has been great confusion through the years in regard to this. One of the chief weapons used to lead Seventh-day Adventists out of their church is the Laodicean message. It is claimed that Laodicea is apostate and is therefore a part of Babylon.

Let us examine this question very closely. Is Laodicea an apostate church? Is Laodicea the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Do the Seven Churches of Revelation represent the true church of the Christian era, or do only six? What were the views of the pioneers on the question of Laodicea and Philadelphia, and were they correct? What does the Spirit of Prophecy declare on this question? Is it possible to migrate from Laodicea to Philadelphia? If I remain in Laodicea, can I be made ready for translation?

Let us consider the first question: “Is Laodicea an apostate church?” What does “Laodicea” mean? “Laodicea” means “a just people”, or “the judging of the people”. (4). This is very significant. It is the period of the judging of the people. This is the period of the pre-advent - the investigative judgment - when “judgment begins at the house of God,” - when God’s people are judged. This judgment commenced in 1844, and closes before the Second Advent.

Today, the term “Laodicea” is used rather loosely to represent half warmth - a very sad and unfortunate condition, but it does not necessarily mean that. A Laodicean means one who is “a true believer” in the last days -- in the final or seventh period of the church.

This leads to the question: Do the Seven Churches represent the true church, or do only six of the Seven Churches represent the true church? If it were true, as is claimed, that the Laodicean church represents apostasy, then it cannot represent the true church. That means that only six churches represent the true church. This is contrary to reason and conflicts with the Spirit of Prophecy.

“The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian era. the number seven indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time.” Acts of Apostles, page 585.

Laodicea is the seventh period of the true church. Seeing it is designated as being involved with the judging of the people it is logical to define its period from 1844 until the second advent. Philadelphia is the sixth period of the true church. Its period must conclude in 1844 when the period of Laodicea must begin. This means that Philadelphia exists no more. The Philadelphia period is past. It ended in 1844, when the seventh period and the judgment commenced. However, the counsel that God gave to the church of Philadelphia applies to us just as the messages to all the churches apply today. We are to emulate the conditions of the Philadelphian church but we cannot migrate to Philadelphia. Other details concerning Philadelphia will be discussed later. See Appendix.

The messages to the Seven Churches, the Spirit of Prophecy indicates, extend to the end of time. This means that the Laodicean message is for God's people at the end of time. They have a very special need - and so there is a special message for them, the most alarming message of all the seven.

What were the views of the pioneers concerning the Seven Churches, particularly of Laodicea and Philadelphia, and were they correct? In 1854 James White declared:

"Now just as sure as the Philadelphia church is the true church of the last days, just so sure the 144,000 are sealed just before the coming of the Lord." Again, "The 144,000 and the Philadelphia church are identical." Review & Herald, May 9, 1854.

Was James White correct? Undoubtedly he was not. Remember, he lived at the transitional period from Philadelphia to Laodicea, and he expected the advent in a very short time and therefore he could have drawn incorrect conclusions. We now know, as a result of further study and further light that has come to us, that James White, in his conclusions, was incorrect. Likewise, Milton Wilcox wrote:

"Laodicea represents the last phase of apostasy in the Church. It is the waxing cold of a part of the remnant church because of abounding iniquity. God has not one good thing to say to those in Laodicea. Their case is wretched indeed." 'The Seven Churches and The Seven Seals.' Page 9.

Our pioneers believed that both Sardis and Laodicea were hopeless cases, but was this correct? When Ellen White wrote the book, "Acts of the Apostles", in 1911, which was after the time of the pioneers she corrected their views on this subject and indicated very clearly that the Laodicean or seventh period, is the church of the end time - the last church. She never speaks of Laodicea as the apostate church.

Now because the pioneers were mistaken on this detail concerning Laodicea we do not infer that all the pioneers' views should be rejected. On the fundamental aspects of the Advent message they had the truth but in some secondary areas as a result of further study some of their conclusions have had to be modified.

This brings us to the objection that is raised in the message to Philadelphia. It describes how those of the "synagogue of Satan" will worship at the feet of the saints:

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not but do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Revelation 3:7

It is claimed that those who worship at the saint's feet will be Seventh-day Adventists, and therefore we should be leaving the Seventh-day Adventist Church and joining the Philadelphians. Let us examine this assertion.

The term "synagogue of Satan" is first used in connection with the church of Smyrna. It speaks "of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9) Were there any Seventh-day Adventists during the Smyrna period, when the pagan emperors of Rome persecuted the early church? No! The "synagogue of Satan" cannot, therefore, apply to Seventh-day Adventists in Smyrna. What about the church of Philadelphia? It is claimed that the Spirit of Prophecy applies this prediction to Seventh-day Adventists, who will worship at the feet of the Philadelphians.

Let us examine the Spirit of Prophecy statement. In speaking of the saints of God who have gone through the time of Jacob's trouble, and who are now delivered by the voice of God, it says, quoting Revelation 3:9:

"This class were professed Adventists who had fallen and crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh." 'Word to the Little Flock,' page 12.

This is a description of ex-Adventists who had willfully sinned against Christ. It refers to apostate Adventists "who had fallen away". To use such a statement to try to prove that S. D. A. 's will finally admit that they have been in error is a blatant misuse of the Spirit of Prophecy. This practice seems to be done repeatedly by many who separate from Seventh-day Adventists.

The Spirit of Prophecy is very clear what the "synagogue of Satan" represents.

“Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as The Synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan’s work to mingle evil with good and to have the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrong doing, but will expel it from the heart and life.” (Review & Herald, December 4, 1900) 7 Bible Commentary, page 958.

It is crystal clear that the above description of the “synagogue of Satan” applies to the church or churches that reject the law of God. This cannot apply to the Seventh-day Adventist church. In fact the S. D. A. church, when it experiences the second phase of the shaking will fulfill the description given above of the church that God would have. This we will prove further on.

The Spirit of Prophecy is so clear that those who will be on the Lord’s side in the final conflict will be Seventh-day Adventists, not Philadelphians etc.

“The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh day Adventists, because they will not pay homage to the Papacy by honoring Sunday.” Testimonies to Ministers, page 37.

In the light of this statement, seeing the S. D. A. church is classed as Laodicea it is apparent that there are those of Laodicea who will be saved.

If the Laodicean church is apostate as is claimed, if it is rejected, if there is no hope for it, why the counsel to those in Laodicea to buy gold, white raiment and eye salve [Revelation 3:18] This indicates that they are not hopeless cases. Why call to repent, if they are rejected already? Why this love message, as the Laodicean message is described by the prophet? Why the knock on the heart’s door with the call to every man to open the door, that Christ might come in? This is significant.

It is not to a church as an organization that the Laodicean message is given. It is to individual believers, and the Spirit of Prophecy emphasizes this: “Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness.” 1 Testimony, page 187.”Every individual needs to have a decided interest in the invitation of Christ,” referring to Laodicea.

“Let us make an application of the words of Christ to our own individual cases. Are we poor and blind and miserable?” 7 Bible Commentary, page 964, 966.

The messages to the Seven Churches are to individual believers not to a church organization. Another important aspect of the Laodicean message needs to be noted:

“It is not the design of the message to lead a brother to sit in judgment over his brother, but for an individual to search his own heart and attend to his own individual work.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 962.

What could be clearer than that? This is a death blow to those who take the Laodicean message and teach from it that believers must come out of Laodicea, the church of the last days, which they claim is the Seventh-day Adventist church. Such a claim is a mistake. It is a misunderstanding of Scripture and a misreading of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Does the Laodicean church involve only Seventh-day Adventists? “The names of the Seven Churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian era.” (Acts of Apostles, page 585). We have already read what the true church is. The church comprises those who are true believers in Jesus Christ. Where are the majority of true believers? The Spirit of Prophecy states, and we have believed through the years, that the majority of believers are in other churches. This being so, the message to Laodicea must be for those in other churches as well as for Seventh-day Adventists.

“The warning for the last church also must be proclaimed to all who claim to be Christians. It is our work to proclaim this message. Are we putting forth every effort that the churches may be warned? We have a work to do for the ministers of other churches. God wants them to be saved.” 6 Testimonies, page 77.

Is not this significant? Sometimes this statement has been used as, counsel to the ministry to co-operate with non S. D. A. ministers. But the significance of the statement is that we are to present to them the Laodicean message. The Laodicean message is for all who claim to be Christians. It is not to the S. D. A. organization, as such, or to Seventh-day Adventists alone. We do not include here the church organizations that comprise Babylon, but to God’s people that still remain in those organizations. The Laodicean message applies also to them.

“The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 964.

The Laodicean message involves “justification by faith” and is for all people wherever they are. It is a message of hope, of salvation. The Laodicean message is not a message to tear down one particular church organization, even though that organization may have come to a place where many are voicing grave questions concerning it.

“When men form a hollow square and turn the weapons of warfare against the church militant, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials. They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message.” Testimonies to Ministers, page 22-23.

The Laodicean message is to restore, not tear down.”The Lord lays on no man a message that discourages or disheartens the church.” Page 23.

Today, the preaching of the New Theology is discouraging many in the church. There is a great need for messages of rebuke of falsehood, apostasy and deception. Such rebukes are given in order to protect the church. This must be the motive if we are to expose apostasy.

On the other hand there are those at the other extreme, who use the Laodicean message, falsely, to tear down the S. D. A. church. But the Spirit of Prophecy condemns this application.

“He reproves, He rebukes, He chastens, but it is only that He may restore and approve at last.” Page 23.

How powerfully relevant is this statement for this particular time. This is the principle that we, as individual Christians, should pursue as faithful servants. It is clear that the Laodicean message does not apply to one organization, as such, in order to tear it down. Notice how the Spirit of Prophecy includes Seventh-day Adventists in Laodicea.

“The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people.”

“The Laodicean message is applicable to the church at this time.” (i. e. the Adventist church.) “The Laodicean message reveals our condition as a people; that we are lukewarm.”

But it includes other Christians.”The Laodicean message is applicable to all who have received great light and many opportunities, and have not appreciated them.”

“It applies to all who profess to keep the law of God and yet are not doers of it.” (That includes Adventists and non-Adventists.)

“It applies most decidedly to those whose religious experience is insipid, who do not bear decided witness in favor of the truth.”

“It is for those who live for self.” “For those who exalt self.” “It is for half-hearted Christians.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 961-963.

Contrary to popular belief, the Laodicean message is really a message of encouragement and hope. This is exactly the opposite from what is being claimed today by those who separate from us.

“The counsel of the True Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm, as in a hopeless case. The Laodicean message is full of encouragement, for the back-sliding church may yet buy of gold. There is hope for our churches if they will heed the message that is given to the Laodiceans.”

Again: “I saw that this call to the Laodicean church would affect souls,” (i. e. it will bring results.) “The case of those who are rebuked is not a hopeless one.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 966.

“Some I saw would gladly return (to God) those only who zealously repent will have favor with God.” 3 Testimonies, page 144.

This shows that the Laodicean message is to find a response. On the same page, in the same setting, notice this message:

“We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.”

This beautiful but remarkable statement encourages us to press on, to stick to our faith, because God will help us to overcome, and this involves overcoming the Laodicean condition. We can overcome, and many in Laodicea will.

“God’s servants must, by laboring together with Christ, roll away the curse that has made the church so Lukewarm. The chastening reveals a hope of reform.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 966.

What is the curse? It is the lukewarm Laodicean condition. It is possible to roll it away. God’s servants are to labor to do this. Thus the Laodicean Church is not a rejected church. It is not an apostate church, nor is the Laodicean message a call for people ‘to come out of Laodicea’. It is a call to roll away the curse from the church.

The Spirit of Prophecy also informs us that the Laodicean message is especially for ‘idlers in the vineyard’ and ‘it is to rid the church of fanaticism’. Finally, and chiefly, the Laodicean message is to bring about the shaking, in particular, the second phase of the shaking, for the shaking has three phases. The first phase is now in progress, brought about by the introduction of false theories.

The second phase of the shaking will come as a result of the proclamation within the church of the Laodicean message.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Same will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.” 1 Testimonies, page 181.

Very soon, God is to raise up instruments who will proclaim with tremendous power the Laodicean message within the church, and it will bring about the second phase of the shaking.”This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth.”

Notice: “It will lead him to exalt the standard.” Does this not indicate that the standard has dropped, as we are witnessing today? Those who receive the Laodicean message will be led to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth themselves. Here is a message of hope for God’s people today. When the church appears in a hopeless condition, God causes a shaking, and what will the shaking do? It is to purify the church. This is the future prospect for God’s church - the Laodicean church.

In the Laodicean message God reveals His church as being lukewarm - in a fearful condition - that Christ is outside the door seeking entrance. Is it possible to change this condition of the church? The Spirit of Prophecy clearly shows that the Laodicean message is a message of hope and will have a tremendous effect.

Notice these statements that indicate the need for the church to be purified. There are so many among us who feel that there is nothing wrong with the church and that anyone who tries to warn concerning it, is a critic, but the Spirit of Prophecy says differently.

“As Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, pharisaical pride and apostasy.” 5 Testimonies, page 72.

Let us not deny these things. This is what Christ sees among His professed people.

“The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God’s visitation has about come. Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily.” 5 Testimonies, page 209.

The time is coming when God is to intervene in His church. He is going to do something to cleanse it. And isn’t this the question among those who are conscious of the condition of the church today and who “sigh and cry”? They ask: “when is God going to do something? What is going to happen?”

“The work is really retrograding instead of advancing as God designs it should.” 6 Testimonies, page 420.”In some respects the work has deteriorated. While it has grown in extent and facilities, it has waned in piety.” 7 Testimonies, page 217.

This is the exact truth. We have grown in extent and facilities, but has there been growth in piety? Decidedly not, and in the light of this fact we need to individually examine ourselves to make sure that we are not wanting. The church is in need of purification. God alone can do it, and He promises that He will.”The camp needs purging.” 3 Testimonies, page 476. (Referring to the church).

Who will dispute it? Anyone who does is naive, or has buried his head in the sand.

“The days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall better be able to measure the strength of Israel.” 5 Testimonies, page 80.

“The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” 5 Testimonies, page 80.

“He will have a clean and holy church.” 1 Testimonies, page 99.

“The gold will be separated from the dross in the church.” 5 Testimonies, page 81.

“He will purify His church even as He purified the temple at the beginning and close of His ministry on earth.” 9 Testimonies, page 228.

These are startling statements, but they are full of hope. There is hope for Laodicea, the church of God.”As we near the judgment, all will manifest their true character, and it will be made plain to what company they belong. The sieve is moving, (referring to the shaking), Let us not say: ‘Stay thy hand, O God. ’ The church must be purged, and it will be.” 1 Testimonies, page 100.

What a statement! It’s a promise! There is a purging coming, a purging of the church.

“All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.” 5 Testimonies, page 81.

This indicates that those who are false leaders among us are going to be exposed. The church is to be cleansed.

“When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and And increased with goods, in need of nothing.” 8 Testimonies, page 250.

When God intervenes, when God begins to work, the Laodicean condition will be taken away. No longer will God’s people be in the Laodicean state. Those who have refused to receive the Laodicean message will be shaken out.

“Oh, that every lukewarm professor could realize the clean mark that God is about to make among His professed people!” 1 Testimonies, page 190.

“The purging and cleansing will surely pass through every church in our land, that has had great opportunities and have passed than by.” Testimonies Ministers, Page 414.

“When the overflowing scourge shall pass through the earth, when the fan is purging Jehovah’s floor.” 5 Testimonies, page 82.

Judgments are coming on the church, as well as upon the world, and these will cleanse the church.”Unless they repent, the Lord will surely repeat His Judgments. The Lord will send His judgements and will not pardon their persistent determination to be like the people of the world.” Series B, Number 2.”God’s people will be sifted, even as corn is sifted in a sieve, until all the chaff is removed from the pure kernels of grain,” 1 Testimonies, page 431.

Before the latter rain falls, before the Loud Cry sounds, before the final conflict, a special work will be accomplished within the church by the proclamation of the Laodicean message:

“My attention was then turned to the company I had seem, who were mightily shaken.” Early Writings, page 271.

“The Lord will work to purge His church. Just haw soon this refining process will begin, I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of moral defilement. He will thoroughly purge His floor.” Testimonies Ministers, page 373.

The Laodicean message is not to call us out of the church. It is not a message of rejection. It is a message that is to purify.

“What a day is before us! What a sifting there will be among those who claim to be the children of God.” Testimonies Ministers, page 163.

“The Spirit of God must do its work upon the heart. All who have not experienced its regenerating power are chaff among the wheat.”

In other words, if we are not converted, if we have not surrendered to Jesus Christ, if we have had no change of heart, if we have not experienced growth in grace, if we are not walking in the light, we are counted as chaff among the wheat.

“The Lord has His fan in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” 5 Testimonies, page 227. Finally; “There is a limit beyond which the judgments of Jehovah can no longer be delayed.” Prophets Kings, page 417.

Many ask: "How long before the Lord is going to intervene? In the light of the condition of our church today, with its apostasy, and even corruption in some places, we suggest that the Lord will not intervene until His people realize the situation, so that when the Laodicean message sounds, they will be able to make an intelligent decision. The Lord will call for us to either receive or reject the Laodicean message. As the condition of the church deepens in apostasy, the more evident will it be that something is amiss, and this will help prepare God's people for the coming Laodicean message.

And when it sounds it will shake our church to its foundations.

"God has given time for the message to do its work. This fearful message will do its work." 1 Testimonies page 186.

There is no escape. The Laodicean message is coming and it will be "fearful"

"It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their back-sliding."

The Laodicean message, when it comes, will rudely awaken God's people to a realization of what has happened to them, and many will be led "to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel." 1 Testimonies, page 186.

We are accused today of not having God in our midst; that Jesus is at the door knocking, that His presence is not with us. This could be correct. But notice that when the Laodicean message is received, we will "be favored with the presence of Jesus and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel. This is marvelous news! There is hope. The Laodicean church is going through all right, but first of all it goes through the mill. It will be purified.

"Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, and have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." 1 Testimonies, page 187.

Mark well what is required before the latter rain comes. The church must be purified, and this will be brought about by a special proclamation within the church by chosen instruments. They will be so empowered, that they will be irresistible. They will proclaim the Laodicean message within the church and it will have its effect.

This means then that true and faithful Seventh-day Adventists, those who have overcome the Laodicean condition will be involved in the final conflict. The people who will stand on the side of truth in the final crisis will still be "Seventh-day Adventists", not Philadelphians or any other man made title.

"The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh-day Adventists, because they will not pay homage to the Papacy by honoring Sunday." Testimonies Ministers, page 37

What a tremendous statement! Seventh-day Adventists will continue as the people of God. As a result of the Laodicean message, they will be purified and receive the "latter rain". They will present the "loud cry" to the world and the reaction will be the issuance of Sunday laws and persecution. Thus in this light, the church goes through, but it will be a church that has been purified. It will be a church that has been cleansed of its apostasy; a church from which has been shaken out the apostates and the corrupt, whether they are ministry or laity, and the faithful will go through as a pure church. They will accomplish the work that God has designed them to do.

The Laodicean message therefore does not denote rejection, or a call-out from the S. D. A. church. It is a message that will cause the disobedient to leave it. It will prepare true Seventh-day Adventists for the "latter rain", for the "loud cry", for translation. The Spirit of Prophecy on the question of Laodicea, has been misapplied, willfully by some, and because of this we urge those who do this, to heed the warning of the prophet.

"There are those who pick out from the Word of God and also from the 'Testimonies' detached paragraphs and sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these and build themselves up in their own positions, when God is not leading them. Here is your danger. You will take passages in the 'Testimonies' that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from among this people, of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy." "Notebook Leaflets" under 'Methods', Number 4, page 2.

This is exactly what we are hearing today and it is by seemingly sincere, good people. Our appeal to you who are doing this, is to take a second look at the true Laodicean message, and understand its correct significance. The Lord is calling us to the true battleground. Christ calls us to come on side and to fight in the battle where the real issue is; to oppose apostasy, to expose error and by obedient lives, and faithfulness to Christ, bear a testimony to others to help them resist apostasy. In the light of all the instruction from the Spirit of Prophecy, may God help us to understand aright, and to respond to, the Laodicean message.

APPENDIX

On what basis do those who class themselves as “Philadelphians”, advocate separation from the Seventh-day Adventist church? They claim that because the Spirit of Prophecy applies some parts of the message to Philadelphia (Revelation 3:9-12) to God’s people in the final crisis, that therefore the Philadelphian church represents God’s people through to the end.

What is the truth in regard to this claim? We believe that their conclusions are based on an incomplete understanding of the Spirit of Prophecy. It is generally recognized that Scripture often has more than one application. The Spirit of Prophecy often gives more than one application to certain scriptures. This is especially so in connection with the messages to the Seven Churches. The prophet uses scriptures pertaining to the churches of previous periods and applies them a second time to the church period of today-to Laodicea; for example:

“In the message to the church of Sardis, two parties are presented study this message found in the third chapter of Revelation.” (Revelation 3:1-2 quoted.) To the church at the present day this message is sent, I call upon our church members to read the whole of the third chapter of Revelation and to make an application of it.” (Review & Herald, August 20, 1903) 7 Bible Commentary, page 959.

Now because the prophet-applied the message of Sardis to the church of today, does this mean that God’s people of today are of the Sardis church? Obviously not. Likewise, when the prophet reapplies part of the message of Philadelphia to the church of the end time, it does not mean that God’s people of the end time must be of the Philadelphian church. The prophet is simply giving certain scriptures a second application.

The error of the “Philadelphians” is that they dogmatically hold that the second application given by the Spirit of Prophecy is the only application. For this they have no authority. Their only support is from some of the pioneers. But the pioneers were not infallible nor inspired. Surely after one hundred and thirty or more years there should be an advance in light and knowledge in these areas where there has been uncertainty?

James White equated the 144,000 with the Philadelphian church. If he were correct, why did Ellen White later advise caution in regard to the 144,000 and that in a little while we would know who the 144,000 were?

The Philadelphians are also very certain that the Seventh-day Adventist church is Babylon. This is a flagrant disregard of the clear warnings by the Spirit of Prophecy concerning this view. (See Testimonies Ministers, page 32-62) Likewise their claim that Laodicea is apostate and hopeless is also a flagrant disregard of the Spirit of Prophecy.

A further example of their disregard of the Spirit of Prophecy is their view that the “Philadelphian,” will comprise the triumphant people of God, whereas the Spirit of Prophecy declares that those who will be on the Lord’s side in the final crisis will be “Seventh-day Adventists.” (See Testimonies Ministers, Page 37.)

If the “Philadelphians” are found to be so seriously in error in their conclusions as revealed above, should we not beware of their other conclusions in which they hold that true Seventh-day Adventists should forsake the S. D. A. church and be united to the Philadelphian group? Because of their failure to understand the Spirit of Prophecy aright, they do not realize that God is to purge the S. D. A. church before It enters in to the scenes of the final conflict.

In publishing the above answers to the “Philadelphians” the writer desires it to be clearly understood that he is in no way defending or in sympathy with any apostasy within the S. D. A. church. For a reliable exposition of Revelation 3:7-13 and how it so accurately applies to the Philadelphian period of the church, prior to 1844, see the informative tract entitled, “PHILADELPHIA - THE CHURCH OF BROTHERLY LOVE.”

REFERENCES

1. ‘Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers. ’ Dr. Leroy E. Froom.

1A. The view that the Seven Seals represent the apostate church is the historic Seventh-day Adventist view. Today other interpretations are taught by many Seventh-day Adventists but in the exposition of Revelation 4-6 we show that the historic position is the only one that stands up under close investigation.

2 ‘The Sanctuary in the Book of Revelation. ’ Robert Hauser, page 2.

3 ‘The Acts of the Apostles. ’ Ellen G. White, page 585.

4 ‘Outline Studies in Revelation. ’ Dr. E. Thiele page 69.

'Daniel and Revelation. ' Uriah Smith page 391.

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8. Lightning Thundering And Voices

A Glimpse Of God On The Throne

An Exposition Of Revelation 4

In introducing this chapter, it is significant to notice that chapter one of Revelation presents a vision of the Son - the resurrected Christ - as priest, ministering in the heavenly temple. The fourth chapter is a vision of the Father enthroned in the same temple. Chapter five is a vision of the Father and the Son. What is the significance of the Father being brought to view in chapter four? The book of Revelation is primarily a revelation of the Son of God. Nevertheless, the Father is also involved, in fact, all heaven is involved in the great plan of salvation and the restoration of this world to the kingdom of God.

“After this I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.” Revelation 4:1, 2.

It is claimed by some that because this chapter is introduced by the term: “After this” that chapter four occurred after the events of chapter three. However, when we analyze this chapter, we find that the term “after this” really means after the vision of chapters one to three. It is a new vision. There are seven parallels between chapter one and chapter four, indicating that chapter four is an introduction to a new series of scenes that were shown to the prophet.

Seven Parallels

Revelation 1

1:10 “I was in the spirit.”

1:10 “Heard a great voice as of a trumpet.

1:12 “Seven golden candlesticks”.

1:4 “From the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

1:6 “Hath made us kings and priests unto God.”

1:19 “Write the things which shall be hereafter.”

1:12-17 Description of Christ.

1:20 An introduction to the seven churches.

Revelation 4

4:1 “The first voice as of a trumpet.”

4:2 “I was in the spirit.”

4:5 “Seven lamps of fire.”

4:5 “Before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

4:4; 5:9,10 “Has made us to our God, kings and priests.”

4:1 "I will show thee things which must be hereafter."

4:2, 3 Description of the Father.

5:1-5 An introduction to the seven seals.

These parallels indicate that chapter four, like chapter one is also an introduction to a vision - a new vision. Chapter one describes the Son. Chapter four describes the Father. Chapter one is an introduction to the

prophecy of the seven churches. Chapter four is an introduction to the prophecy of the seven seals of Revelation.

"Behold a door was opened in heaven."

What is this door? For over a century it was taught that this door was the door into the heavenly temple, the door into the first apartment. The view held by many today, however, is that this door is the door into the Holy of Holies - the second apartment where the throne of God is generally considered to be. This is based on the message to Philadelphia: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." (Revelation 3:18.) This was the door into the second apartment of the heavenly temple, through which Christ entered in 1844, and which the believer is invited to enter by faith. But is this the same door as in Revelation four? There is no certain evidence for this. The section in Revelation that tells of the open door into the second apartment of the awesome temple is Revelation 11:19.

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament"

On the other hand, the evidence is clear that the door of Revelation 4 is the door of the first apartment."There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." Revelation 4:5.

In the apartment where John was gazing there were seven lamps. In the earthly type - the sanctuary of the Jews - the seven lamps were located only in the first apartment. Therefore, the logical conclusion must be that where John was gazing was none other than the first apartment, the holy place of the heavenly temple.

It is also claimed that the throne in the earthly temple was located only in the Holy of Holies and that Revelation four must be describing the second apartment. It is agreed that in the earthly sanctuary, the Shekinah glory did dwell between the cherubim in the second apartment. Generally speaking, God limited His presence to the "holy of holies". But why did the Father do this? It was done in mercy to man. A veil, several inches in thickness, divided the two temple apartments, in order to hide the glory of God. It was to protect men, because, to sin "God is a consuming fire" and unless He limited His presence, man being a sinner, would be destroyed. Therefore, in order to enable man to approach God, to commune with Him, to get to know Him, God limited His presence to the Holy of Holies - the second apartment. However, in the heavenly temple, there is no sin or sinners, therefore, there is no need of any limitation on the part of the Father. We must not limit the throne of God to any one particular spot. We must not lock the Most High in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary.

It is informative to notice that even in the first apartment of the earthly tabernacle, sometimes the presence of God was manifested in such a way that the priests were unable to enter into the sanctuary at all.

"This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." Exodus 29:42, 43.

God met them at the door of the tabernacle - the door of the first apartment.

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Exodus 40:34, 35.

"And the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth." Numbers 12:4, 5.

Isn't it remarkable? God stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

"And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord spoke unto Moses." Numbers 20:6, 7.

“And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.” 1 Kings 8:10, 11.

This shows that at times God did dwell in the first apartment of the earthly tabernacle; and so in the great antitypical heavenly temple, we can expect the presence of God to preside in the first apartment as well as in the second apartment. Some futile attempts have been made to try and explain away the fact of the seven lamps being in the same apartment as the throne in Revelation four. It is claimed that when John was given this vision, he was in the first apartment and that he looked through into the second apartment, where the throne was, and that right near him was the seven branched candle stick, or the seven lamps. This view flagrantly conflicts with the view of the vastness of the eternal temple.

As one author declares, “As in vision, the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there ‘the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.’ Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven” (1)

It is crystal clear. The scene of Revelation 4 is the first apartment of the great heavenly temple. We now come to a description of the Father Himself, upon the throne.

“A throne was set [or positioned] in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat, was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” Revelation 4:2, 3.

The prophet does not describe the form of the Most High, he describes the colors that surround Him.”Like a jasper:” This is generally a deep-red color, although jasper is also known to be brown, yellow or even green. It is generally thought that it here denotes a deep red. Then the sardine color - from the stone called Sard - an orange or orange-red color. Undoubtedly, this refers to the glory that surrounds the person of the Father. According to other Scriptures, the Father is bathed in eternal fire, and fire has orange reddish hues.

This is confirmed by the prophet Ezekiel who also was given a view of the great God of the universe upon one of His thrones.

“And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone” [bluey-white, a different throne from Revelation four] “and upon the throne was the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire and it had brightness round about.” Ezekiel 1:26, 27.

No doubt these colors describe the glory, the fire, that surrounds the person of the Father in the great eternal temple. As previously noted in Revelation 4:3, there is also “a rainbow round about the throne [i. e. behind and to the sides of the throne] like an emerald.” This must be a magnificent backdrop to the eternal throne.”Like an emerald” denoting a greenish hue. How strikingly beautiful it must be.

Ezekiel also alludes to this backdrop “As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” Ezekiel 1:28.

Why a glorious rainbow as a backdrop to the fiery presence of the Most High? This is very significant. The rainbow denotes the union of mercy and justice. As one author declares,

“As the bow in the clouds is formed by the union of sunlight and shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation full and complete.” (2)

“As the bow in the clouds results from the union of sunshine and shower, so the bow, the rainbow above God’s throne, represents the union of His mercy and His justice.” (3)

The second thing that the rainbow represents is God’s covenant. After the mighty Flood of the days of Noah, in order to comfort Noah, God set the rainbow in the atmosphere to indicate that never again would the earth be overwhelmed with water. The rainbow is also a sign of God’s everlasting covenant that He will save from destruction the repentant members of the race. It is a symbol that our God is a covenant-keeping God. The life-filled universe of God, gazing upon the rainbow, are reminded that the great omnipotent Creator, is a being in whom they can trust, a God who keeps His word - a covenant-keeping Creator. Is there any need for such a symbol in heaven above? Let us not forget that the great enemy has brought God’s character into grave question. Serious doubts have been instilled into the minds of the inhabitants of the sinless universe, but the rainbow continually reminds them that they can trust in their God - that the slanderous lies that were spread concerning Him will not stand.

The Revelator then describes the scene around the throne - “And round the throne were four and twenty seats [or thrones] and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.” Revelation 4:4.

Crowns denote authority, kingship. How is it that there are those by the throne who have kingly authority? Does God share his rule? Does the Creator delegate authority? Yes! He permits others to share in His eternal counsels. But does God require counsel? NO! Our God is omniscient.

“Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” Isaiah 40:13, 14.

God does not need counselors; yet it appears that He shares His counsel with His created beings. God is a great sharer. He is not a dictator, He is not autocratic. As intelligent creatures share in His counsels, in a special sense they come to learn and to know God. The Most High shares His rule with angelic beings. Lucifer, before he fell, shared in the ruler ship of the universe. Lucifer declared:

“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” Isaiah 14:13.

Lucifer had a throne. He had ruling power and many other angels also have ruling power in the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul says:

“Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places” (Ephesians 3:10.) What is a principality? A domain ruled over by a prince. Undoubtedly, an angelic prince. Our God is a great sharer. He shares His rule, He shares his counsel. Our God is a wonderful sharer.

What is the identity of these twenty-four elders? It appears that they have come from the earth:

“Thou was slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation: and has made us unto our God, kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:8-10.

These twenty-four elders say: “You have redeemed us”. This indicates that they must have entered into the scene of the heavenly temple, after Calvary, because they say: “Thou was slain, and has redeemed us to God”. They have white robes, indicating that they are righteous in character, for the “fine linen” [or robes] “is the righteousness of the saints”. (Revelation 19:8.) On earth they had developed Christian characters. They were overcomers. This is the significance of their crowns.

“Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:12.

Some of them could also have been martyrs.”Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10.

They could have been martyred for their faith in God before the first Advent of Christ. They also are “kings and priests” indicating that they are of the order of the Melchizedek priesthood of which Jesus is High Priest. They are priest-kings -assistant priests it seems to Christ in the heavenly temple. The number 24 could correspond to the 24 divisions of the Aaronic priesthood of the Old Testament described in 1 Chronicles 24. The twenty four elders declare that they “were redeemed from the earth”. At what time did this transpire?

The apostle Paul, speaking of Jesus’ ascension to heaven, says, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (Ephesians 4:8.) In the margin (KJV) “captivity” reads: “a multitude of captives.” So when Jesus ascended to heaven, He “led a multitude of captives”. Who and what were these captives? Our God never compels or forces anyone. These captives would be willing captives, undoubtedly voluntary captives of love. At his ascension He led them to the kingdom. But who were they? Scripture gives a clue. . .

“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent from twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection and went into the city, and appeared unto many.” Matthew 27:50-53.

What a dramatic event! After the resurrection of Jesus, there rose from the dead this company who had been victorious Christians, saints, who were probably martyrs. John the Baptist could have been involved in this company. They “went into the holy city and appeared to many.” What was the purpose of their visits to many in Jerusalem? When Jesus rose from the dead, the Roman soldiers were commanded to spread the rumor that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus. This was done to hide the mighty truth of Jesus’ resurrection. In order to counter the rumor, the Lord raised up this special company, who went into the city and appeared unto many, informing them of their own resurrection and iii particular of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, proving that Jesus was the true Messiah. (4) How fascinating are the ways of God!

The Revelator now describes the atmosphere that surrounds the throne of God.”Out of the throne proceeded lightning and thundering and voices.” Verse 5.

What does this mean? Several times in the book of Revelation we have a similar expression. It appears that this is a description of the unceasing, awe-inspiring activity connected with the administration of the universe. We are being given a glimpse here of the throne, the center of control. Our God is a God of action - a God of activity. When we read Ezekiel's vision of the throne, it is significant to notice how he described the movements of the angelic beings, who are the messengers of Jehovah. This description throws light on the expression of verse 5. Ezekiel speaks of:

"The living creatures [having] the appearance of a flash of lightning." Ezekiel 1:14.

"And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings," Ezekiel 1:24.

What a sensational experience!

"And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaks." Ezekiel 10:5.

As these mighty beings take off, like a flash of lightning from the throne and return, there is a sound like thunder. We could have a little whisper of this when we recall the big military air bases and the taking off of powerful fighter aircraft. But what a contrast to the throne of God, the center of the universe, a place of tremendous activity. As the messengers of God at the behest of the infinite, flash their way to and from the throne to the vast universe, "there proceed lightning and thundering and voices". We suggest this is what the apostle is describing when he gazes at the activity and atmosphere of the throne.

The Revelator continues:

"There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God."

We have already referred to the seven lamps of fire, but what is meant by 'the seven Spirits of God'? Are these lamps the seven spirits of God? What is meant by the 'seven Spirits'? This is a term describing the Holy Spirit - the Third Person of the Godhead. Why the 'seven'? It denotes completeness and continuity. Scripture ascribes seven qualities to the Holy Spirit:

"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, [the Messiah] the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:2.

1. "The Spirit of the Lord" denoting His deity
2. The Spirit of wisdom.
3. The Spirit of understanding.
4. The Spirit of counsel.
5. The Spirit of might.
6. The Spirit of knowledge.
7. The Spirit of fear or reverence for the Lord.

"There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God." Revelation 4:5.

Does this mean that the seven lamps are not really there at all, but it is actually the Holy Spirit that is present in the heavenly temple? This requires a detailed explanation. Since the day of Pentecost, 31 AD, the Holy Spirit has resided upon the earth. This person, being divine, is omnipresent, but in a special sense he now resides upon this earth. Jesus said,

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [another Paraclete], that he may abide with you forever." John 14:16.

Abide means to dwell. The dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit is upon this earth. Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]: I will come to you." John 14:10.

We have the great Comforter with us continually. Again Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:7.

The Holy Spirit resides upon the earth as the Vicar of Christ. He is God on earth. He is the Director of the work of God on earth. Thus the seven literal lamps of fire in the heavenly temple represent the Holy Spirit upon the earth.

It is timely at this point to enunciate or repeat an important principle of interpretation. This principle of interpretation has been neglected, but we believe that if it is understood and applied it will save much confusion and error.

Since Pentecost, we live in what the Spirit of- Prophecy describes as “The Dispensation of the Spirit” (5) In the Christian era - the Dispensation of the Spirit - the things of the kingdom of God have two main applications. In the heavenly realm they have a literal application but in the earthly realm of the kingdom of grace, they have a spiritual application.

Today we find that this principle has been reversed. Often when the heavenly temple is spoken of, it is spoken of as a spiritual temple.

Things in heaven are described as being spiritual or wholly symbolic. The reverse is true. According to this law of interpretation, things in heaven have a literal application in the dispensation of the Spirit, and on earth they have a spiritual application. In heaven we have God the Father, a literal God, but we also have a God on earth - God the Holy Spirit. He is a spiritual God, the third Person of the Godhead. In heaven Jesus Christ is present literally, but on earth Jesus Christ is present spiritually.”Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Again, in heaven we have the Holy City - a literal city, but on the earth now we also have a ‘Holy City’. The Scriptures speak of it in Hebrews 12:22, 23 and Revelation 11:2, where it says that the Holy City was trodden underfoot forty and two months, referring to the time of Papal supremacy. Is it a literal city, or a spiritual city? It is a spiritual city, the city of the Christian church. Again, in heaven there is a literal temple, on earth a spiritual temple - of believers. (Ephesians 2:20-22.) In heaven there is a literal throne. On earth there is a spiritual throne, the throne of the heart. In heaven there are literal stones comprising the Holy City. On earth there are spiritual stones forming the Christian church. (1 Peter 2:5.)

In heaven there is a literal priesthood of Christ and the 24 elders. On earth there is a spiritual priesthood - the priesthood of believers. In heaven there is a literal intercessor - Jesus Christ - “the one mediator between God and man”. On earth, however, there is a spiritual intercessor, the Holy Spirit, who makes “intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26.)

In heaven there is a literal altar of incense. On earth there is a spiritual altar of incense, the altar of the human heart. In heaven there is a literal incense, on earth there is spiritual incense. In heaven there are literal offerings of Christ’s blood and righteousness. He pleads before His Father: “My blood, my blood.” His blood and character are literally in His person. His righteousness is literally in heaven - a living righteousness.

On earth, now, there are spiritual offerings - the offerings of prayer, of praise, of thanksgiving. (1 Peter 2:5 and Hebrews 13:15.) The righteousness is a spiritual righteousness received through the Holy Spirit.

In heaven there are literal lamp stands, or lamps. On earth there are spiritual lamps, or candlesticks. They are the seven churches, in other words, the Christian church. (Revelation 1:20.) In heaven there is literal light in the lamp stands. On earth there is spiritual light in the lamp stands - the light of the Holy Spirit - the light of truth.

In heaven there is literal show bread. On earth, in the spiritual temple, there is spiritual bread - the Word of God by which man alone can live. In heaven there is a literal river of life. On earth there is the spiritual river of life. According to John 7:38, 39, it is the Holy Spirit.

There is a literal tree of life in heaven. On earth now, there is a spiritual tree of life - the Word of the living God. In the Kingdom of Glory at the Second Advent there will be a literal resurrection of believers. On earth now, there is a spiritual resurrection of believers - the spiritual rebirth - being “born again”.

In heaven there is eternal life for the believer, literally. Now, on earth there is eternal life for the believer, but in a spiritual sense. In heaven, God’s law is inscribed on literal tablets in the literal ark in the literal temple. On earth, God’s law is inscribed on the spiritual tablets of the human heart, in the spiritual temple of the believer.

Again, believers in heaven, will sit literally with Christ (Revelation 3:21.) “To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne”. But, according to Ephesians 2:6, believers now sit with Christ in heavenly places in a spiritual sense. There is a literal Kingdom of Glory in heaven and there is a spiritual kingdom of grace on earth. Jesus is a literal king in the Kingdom of Glory, but on earth He is a spiritual King.

Here we believe is a great principle which is very relevant today. When it is properly applied, it will help one to avoid error and confusion, particularly in regard to the heavenly sanctuary and the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to make the above principle more clear it is set out overleaf showing the comparisons between the two applications.

“And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.” Revelation 4:6.

This is a vast shining area before the throne of God. When one travels through the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, he is reminded of a location like the above. The practice of the Communist governments when they take over a country is to demolish buildings in the center of the main cities and create a vast square. What is the purpose of the square? It is for their mass parades, their vast assemblies, where the leaders receive obeisance from the people.

In God’s kingdom, in the first apartment of that awesome sanctuary, there is a mighty assembly area called “the sea of glass”. Who will assemble on that? Revelation describes one group that will be there.

“I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire [no doubt reflecting the glory of God] and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” Revelation 15:2, 3.

Isn’t that thrilling? One day, if faithful, all the saints will stand upon that sea of glass.”A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kingdoms and peoples and tongues stood before the throne.” Revelation 7:9.

Millions upon millions of the redeemed will stand upon the sea of glass, as well as the multiplied millions of angelic beings (7:11) who will join in the great heavenly chorus in praise of the Most High. This reveals the vastness of the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary and confirms the description as penned by Ellen G. White -

“The heavenly temple, the abiding place of the King of ‘Kings, where thousand millions minister unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him, that the temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its ‘shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration - no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory.” (6)

AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION THAT HELPS TO AVOID CONFUSION AND ERROR

The Heavenly Kingdom of Glory.

1. God the Father - a literal Person
2. Christ in heaven is present literally
3. A literal Holy City [Revelation 21]
4. A literal temple [Hebrews 8:1-3; Revelation 11:9]
5. A literal throne (Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 22:1)
6. Literal stones [Revelation 21:19]
7. Literal priesthood [Hebrews 2:16-18; Revelation 5:8-10]
8. Literal intercessor “The man Christ Jesus [1 Timothy 2:5]
9. Literal altar of incense [Revelation 8:3} (8)
10. Literal incense [Revelation 8:3, 4] (10)
11. Literal offerings of Christ’s blood and righteousness in His person [Hebrews 8:3; 9:12, 13]
12. Literal lamp stands [Revelation 1:12]
13. Literal light in lamp stands [Revelation 4:5]
14. Literal show bread (13)

15. Literal River of Life [Revelation 22:1]
16. Literal Tree of Life [Revelation 22:2]
17. Literal resurrection of believers [1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17]
18. Eternal life for believer, literally [Revelation 21:4]
19. God's law on literal tables in literal Temple [Revelation 11:19; 15:5]
20. Believers will sit literally with Christ [Revelation 3:21]
21. A literal Kingdom of Glory
22. Jesus will be King - literally

The Earthly Kingdom of Grace.

1. God is spiritual-the Holy Spirit - is God an earth
2. Christ is present spiritually [Matthew 28:20]
3. A spiritual Holy City -the Christian church [Revelation 11:2]
4. A spiritual temple of believers [Ephesians 2:20-221 (7)]
5. A spiritual throne-heart of the believer
6. Spiritual stones-individual Christians [1 Peter 2:5]
7. Spiritual priesthood of believers [1 Peter 2:5, 9]
8. A spiritual intercessor. Holy Spirit [Romans 8:26]
9. A spiritual altar - the heart (9)
10. Spiritual incense (11)
11. Spiritual offerings-prayer praise, thanksgiving, [1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15, 16]
12. Spiritual lamp stands- the seven churches [Revelation 1:20]
13. Spiritual light in the church - Holy Spirit
14. Spiritual bread -Word of God [John 6:51, 63]
15. Spiritual river of life. The Spirit [John 7:38, 39]
16. Spiritual Tree of Life - Word of God (14)
17. Spiritual resurrection of believers - born again [Ephesians 2:1; John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17]
18. Eternal life for believer spiritually [John 5:24]
19. God's law on spiritual tables of spiritual temple of the believer [Hebrews 8:10]
20. Believers sit with Christ in heavenly places, spiritually now. [Ephesians 2:6]
21. A spiritual Kingdom of Grace

22. Jesus is king - spiritually now.

The next scene around the throne is rather strange when it is first read.

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Revelation 4:6-8.

What a scene, these four living beasts! Are they beasts? The Greek word is “Zoa”, and it means “living ones”, or “living creatures”. The term “beast” is an unfortunate translation.

They are “full of eyes before and behind and full of eyes within”. Knox’s translation reads, “they had eyes everywhere, to see before them and behind them”.

Ezekiel, in his vision of the throne, also described these living creatures as. . .”Full of eyes, round about them four.” Ezekiel 1:18.

“And their whole body, and their backs and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even wheels that they four had.” Ezekiel 10:12.

This is significant for it is frequently mentioned.”Teeming with eyes” as one commentator writes. When Zechariah predicted the coming Messiah, he likened Him to a stone with seven eyes: “upon one stone shall be seven eyes”. (Zechariah 3:9.) Again in Revelation 5 where it speaks of the Lamb before the throne, it says He had 19 seven horns and seven eyes.” (Revelation 5:6.) Many scholars believe “the seven eyes” denote perfect intelligence, but probably it means more than that. We believe the key to the mystery is found in the book of Daniel, the book that is closely coupled with the book of Revelation. When Daniel described the heavenly beings about the throne, he employed a significant word.

“I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. . . And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. This matter is by the decree of the watchers and demand by the word of the holy ones.” Daniel 4:13, 17, 23.

These heavenly beings are spoken of as “watchers”. With what would they watch? With their eyes. What would they be watching? The heavenly host is very watchful of us on earth, but in this verse it is referring to heaven. We believe this represents the eternal vigilance, the unwearying watchfulness, the infinite sensitivity of those heavenly beings who wait upon God, the One who, “neither slumbers nor sleeps”. When Jesus alluded to these heavenly beings, He said,

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones [children]; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always [continually] behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 18:10.

The angels of God are continually conscious of, continuously have in sight, the face of God. They are always aware of every expression on the face of God. We suggest that this is the significance of the phrase that they are “full of eyes”. No matter where they are, no matter in what direction they face, they behold the face of God and are supremely sensitive to every sign and every expression from the Eternal One. They are the special messengers of the Most High. As the Psalmist said:

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure.” Psalm 103:19-21.

The expression, “full of eyes” could denote the fact that they are so constructed that they continually observe the face of God and are awake to His every request. These living creatures around the throne appear to be the highest order of angels and they are there to administer the decisions of the Deity and as such we suggest that that is why they are described as being “full of eyes” or eternally watchful.

These four living creatures are also described as having the faces of four different creatures, as well as having six wings each. This corresponds with the description of Isaiah. . .

“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet and with twain he did fly.” Isaiah 6:1, 2.

With two of his wings he covered his face, denoting reverence for the Most High; with two wings he covered his feet, denoting humility, and with two wings he did fly, denoting his response to God's commands.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." Verse 3.

Undoubtedly, these are the same beings that John saw in the fourth chapter of Revelation. Ezekiel declared,

"This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims." Ezekiel 10:20.

Isaiah called them "the seraphims" denoting a special order of angels. There are seraphim and cherubim, special orders of angels who continually attend the throne of God. They are described as having the faces of a lion, an ox or calf, a man and an eagle. Ezekiel indicates that they each have four different faces -

"They four had the- face of a man and the face of a lion . . . the face of an ox-the face of an eagle." Ezekiel 1:10.

An initial reaction to the above description is that these must be extremely grotesque looking creatures, but on reflection, it is true that the face of an animal, especially a domesticated animal, can possess a very appealing and attractive face and being associated with the throne they undoubtedly would be impressive in their appearance. What is the role of the seraphim and cherubim?

"This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel." Ezekiel 10:20. They are under God. They uphold God.

"Above the firmament [or platform of the throne] that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above it." Ezekiel 1:2.

In Ezekiel, chapters 1 and 10 the prophet describes a vision of the throne of God. He saw a gigantic chariot like vehicle approaching from the northern heavens. It was comprised of mighty wheels that were as high as the sky. These wheels were living wheels, formed of the cherubim, and on top of these gigantic living wheels was a firmament [or platform] and on the platform was the throne and on the throne was one "as the appearance of a man". The Spirit of Prophecy states that this was "the eternal One." (16) The special role of the cherubim and the seraphim is to transport the Deity, to transport God. This seems to be God's chosen method, when He travels in state. He travels via the cherubim.

"He rode upon a cherub and did fly." Psalm 18:10.

Once this was thought to be poetic language. We now know that it is exact truth. Our great God is enthroned upon the cherubim, and as they flash their way through the vast regions of space, God, as it were, flies as He travels in state upon His throne.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the Holy place." Psalm 68:17.

But not only is it the Father's chosen method, but also that of the Son. When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, how did He ascend? He was surrounded by a cloud of angels, disappeared from sight and traveled to the kingdom. Did He employ any particular mode of travel? Notice the statement from "Desire of Ages".

"He slowly ascended from among them, drawn heavenward by a power stronger than any earthly attraction. As He passed upward, the awe-stricken disciples looked with straining eyes for the last glimpse of their ascending Lord. A cloud of glory hid Him from their sight; and the words came back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received Him, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the world.'" (17)

The angels of God in the form of a mighty chariot transported the Lord Jesus back to the kingdom. How marvelous! This is their role. But not only that, when God's people ascend to heaven, they too, will travel by this special mode of transport.

'The risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers' aims. Friends long separated by death are united never more to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the city of God. On each side of the cloudy chariot are wings and beneath it are living wheels, and as the chariot rolls upward, the wheels cry: 'Holy' and the wings as they move cry, 'Holy' and the retinue of

angels cry, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty' and the redeemed shout 'Hallelujah' as the chariot moves onward toward the new Jerusalem." (18)

Isn't that tremendous: When we ascend to the Father's house, we too, will ascend in a mighty, living, angelic chariot. A similar picture is presented by the prophet Daniel. In the seventh chapter he tells of the Most High moving His throne from one location to another.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or placed in position] and the Ancient of Days did sit . . . his throne was like the fiery flame and his [its] wheels as burning fire." Daniel 7:9.

Notice how the prophet describes the same scene.

"I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot, go into the holy of holies within the veil and sit down." (19)

Even in the heavenly sanctuary, the Father is transported by the cherubim in the form of a glorious, fiery chariot. The prophet then describes how after the Ancient of Days had been transported to the second apartment of the vast temple, where "the judgment was set", the Son of Man, Jesus, was taken by "the clouds of heaven" into the presence of the Father.

"Behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days and they [the clouds] brought him [the Son] near before him [the Father]." Daniel 7:13.

Who were the "clouds of heaven"? This is a term describing the angels of God. Notice how the prophet confirms this:

"Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat." (19)

What a description! What glory! How vast must be the heavenly sanctuary! The angels of God travel as the lightning. What a sanctuary! What a temple!

Let us now consider the significance of the four faces of these fantastic cherubim. We will apply the principle "literal in heaven and spiritual on the earth". In heaven, there are these four literal living creatures with their four faces. They are a special order of angels associated with the throne. They engage in ceaseless praise of God, declaring: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (verse 8.)

For many years the writer refused to dwell on this. He could not understand or comprehend how intelligent beings could ceaselessly cry, "Holy, holy, holy". Surely the time must come when such a cry would become tiresome and monotonous. He could not understand how a great and intelligent God would permit it. What is the answer to this? The praise could not be tiresome and monotonous, for that is contrary to the spirit of heaven. On what grounds?

Firstly, the praise would undoubtedly be spontaneous. God would accept no other praise. But how could ceaseless praise be continually spontaneous? We suggest that the Person of the Deity is so awe-inspiring, so impressive, so moving, so overwhelming, that the cherubim, as they behold their great and wonderful God, cannot contain themselves.

They gaze upon the face of God. Face exhibits character and God's character is absolute perfection. What a face must the face of the Father be! One day "we shall see His face". When we see that face, we too, will be unable to contain ourselves and will also burst forth into praise. We suggest that this is the spontaneous praise of the living creatures associated with the throne.

A second element connected with this continual praise is that it must undoubtedly express itself in the most delightful and moving music. This would produce a beautiful atmosphere and probably the theme would be sung in countless variations.

Continuing our consideration of the four faces: In heaven there are four literal creatures, with four literal faces like a lion, man, ox, and eagle. What is the significance of these faces? We offer the following suggestions. These four faces present the four aspects of the Deity, particularly of Jesus Christ, God the son. The lion denotes kingliness, or royalty. The man represents humanity, involving mediation and priesthood. The ox represents service and sacrifice and fourthly, the eagle, soaring into the heavens, denotes Deity or Divinity. The four faces could also represent other beautiful aspects of the Godhead. In the lion we have bravery and courage; in the man we have sympathy; in the ox we have patience; in the eagle we have inspiration. Notice also that the face of each of the four creatures is representative of the head of its family. The lion is king of the beasts; man is the head of humanity; the ox is the head of cattle; and the eagle is the king of birds. This could strikingly portray the royalty of the great God of the Universe. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

However, on earth these four faces would have a spiritual application. Scripture reveals this to be so. With Israel in the wilderness, the twelve tribes were divided into four groups around the tabernacle of God. Each of the four groups had a symbol, or a standard. Judah had the standard of the lion. It was a kingly tribe. Ephraim had the standard of an ox or calf. Reuben had the face of a man. Dan had the eagle as their standard. Without doubt these standards were the symbols of the coming Messiah.

When we come to the New Testament, after the Messiah has come, we find in the four gospels the same symbols are brought to view. In the gospel of Matthew we have Jesus presented as the lion, as king. In Mark's gospel we have Jesus presented as the ox, as servant and sacrifice. In the gospel of Luke we have Jesus presented as the Son of man, denoting his humanity. In the gospel of John, we have Jesus as the eagle, representing His Deity, His divinity. (20) These symbols could also represent in the Lord Jesus the traits of courage, bravery, patience, sympathy and aspiration. Jesus, in His earthly existence, fulfilled to the uttermost these beautiful characteristics.

Finally we come to the concluding verse of Revelation 4. The living creatures in heaven are revealed as leading the rest of heaven's inhabitants in worship and praise: "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. And when those living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne." Revelation 4:8.

These four living creatures lead heaven in worship. They proclaim three "Holies". They use three terms for the Deity, "Lord", "God", and "Almighty". They mention three tenses of God's existence, "which was, and is, and is to come." "Yesterday, today and forever." They give glory, honor and thanks; and the twenty-four elders follow the example of the four living creatures. They "cast their crowns down before the throne". Why do they cast their crowns down? In acknowledgement that their victories have been derived through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They then proclaim the worthiness of the Father.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Revelation 4:11

Here is revealed the basic reason for giving glory to God; the true reason why we engage in worship, the real reason that we should give God our all. It is because He made us. He created us, He has the sole right to call for our complete obedience, because He made us. This is the basic reason for worship, for submission to our God. Next, we are given the motive for creation. Why did God create us? Here is the most beautiful point of the whole chapter.

"For Thy pleasure they are and were created." Verse 11.

When God made this world, when He formed our race, when He made you, and me, He made us for His pleasure. He made us to enjoy us. What an inspiration! And even though man has departed from God, he can be reconciled to God through the Gospel, and restored to favor and recreated in God's image. And our recreation and restoration is also for God's pleasure.

When we reach the kingdom, we will experience the marvelous pleasure of God as He receives us. Oh that men could realize the depth of desire in the heart of God to receive man back. He has pleasure in us, and we will have unbounding pleasure in Him. Isn't that thrilling!

One of the most satisfying things in life is to be wanted, to be accepted, for someone to have pleasure in us. What an inspiration to believe, to follow, to obey, to be faithful to our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

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9. The Sealed Scroll And The Scarred Lamb

An Exposition of Revelation Chapter Five

This chapter is a continuation of the vision of chapter four. The fourth chapter revealed God the Father upon the throne, amid the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. He is pictured in the first apartment of the awesome sanctuary in the kingdom of heaven.

Reviewing the earlier chapters of Revelation, it is clear that the first chapter brings to view Jesus Christ, as Priest, amid the seven candlesticks in the first apartment of the great heavenly temple. Chapter four presents the Father as Creator, enthroned, in the first apartment of the same sanctuary before the seven lamps of fire. Chapter five presents the Father and the Son, and demonstrates the worthiness of the Son of God.

“I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?’ And no man (or no one) in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much because no man (or no one) was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.’” Revelation 5:1-9

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK

The book pictured in the right hand of God, is actually a scroll and is sealed with seven seals. When we note the details concerning this book, it is clear that it is a book of primary importance to the heavenly hosts. First of all, it is in the Father’s right hand, denoting power and authority. Secondly, a strong or mighty angel proclaims to the universe concerning it, and thirdly the reaction of John, when he concluded that there was no one able to open the book, was so unusual. In the exalted atmosphere of heaven, it says, ‘he wept much’. This indicates something important about the book. Finally, when they did find one who was worthy to open the book, the overwhelming response of the heavenly hosts to the discovery, speaks of the book’s importance.

THE LION OF JUDAH

In the description of the one who is found worthy, He is called ‘The lion of the tribe of Judah’. Judah was the leading tribe of Israel and the lion was its emblem or standard. The royal house of David, which was also of the tribe of Judah, had the lion as its standard. In the prophecy of Jacob concerning Judah in Genesis 49:8-12, there are a number of predictions concerning Judah in connection with the lion.

The lion denotes kingliness, sovereignty, leadership, courage and strength. These qualities fittingly apply to Jesus Christ in his heavenly state. The lion denotes his Kingliness, his power to deal with his enemies, his power to destroy and to end the reign of Satan and all who support him. The lion speaks of Christ in his justice, as the great Avenger. Revelation 5 presents Jesus Christ as the great Kinsman-Redeemer, and one of the roles of the kinsman-redeemer was to take vengeance upon those who had wronged those who were near of kin.

THE ROOT OF DAVID

Christ is also spoken of as 'the root of David'. This term is drawn from the book of Isaiah.

"There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots" Isaiah 11:1

Jesse was the father of David. This means that a rod (or shoot) would come out of the stem (or stump or family) of Jesse. In other words, Christ would be the offspring of David. Isaiah then declared,

"In that day there shall be a root of Jesse (or David) which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious." Isaiah 11:10

This prophecy was also fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He would be 'the root of David', he would be prior to David. He was not only the offspring of David, but he existed before David. He would be the progenitor of David. This was a great enigma to the Jews, and Jesus in his earthly ministry used this to effectively silence the Pharisees who were always cavilling and trying to embarrass him with tricky questions.

Matthew records how Jesus asked the Pharisees,

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say to him The son of David, He said to them, How then doth David, in spirit (or vision) call him Lord, saying The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make your enemies thy footstool. If David called him Lord how is he his son? And no man, was able to answer Christ a word neither doth any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." Matthew 22:41-46

What a puzzle? The fact that he was 'root of David' indicated that he was not only David's progenitor, but that he existed from eternity. He was God the Son. He was 'in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation'. Philippians 2:6-7. The two terms, the 'lion of Judah' and 'the root of David' therefore, denote Christ's kingship and deity, the fullness of authority and the fullness of power.

WHY CHRIST IS WORTHY

"He has prevailed to open the book and loose the seals."

The word 'prevailed' means conquered. Christ has gained a victory, and this victory has enabled him to take the book. What is the victory that he has gained?

THE LAMB

"And I beheld and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

John sees a lamb. A literal lamb? No, it is Jesus Christ, a literal man, 'the man Christ Jesus'. He is here pictured in his glorified body, forever a man, forever linked with the human race. But why a lamb? Why is he classed as a lamb when he is actually a man? This is a figure of speech denoting the earthly mission of Jesus. When John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the world, he declared, 'Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world' John 1:29. This term denotes the meekness, the humility, the submissiveness, the condescension of the Son of God who made Himself 'of no reputation' and 'took on him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men'.

A LITTLE LAMB

But he is more than a lamb, because according to the original Greek, the word means 'a little lamb'. In the Book of Revelation the word for lamb is always 'little lamb'. Some say 'a pet lamb'. The only other place in the New Testament where this word for 'little lamb' is used, is where Jesus, in addressing Peter said, 'Feed my lambs' John 21:15. What Jesus meant was 'feed my little lambs'. Why is Jesus in his exalted heavenly state, described by such a term? Undoubtedly this expression denotes endearment, a close, loving relationship. First of all it denotes the relationship between the Father and the Son. This precious, close relationship that exists between the Father and the Son is revealed by the Spirit of Prophecy in the beautiful description of the reunion between Jesus and His Father when Jesus returned to Heaven after his death and resurrection.

"All are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and glorify their king. But he waves them back. Not yet, he cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of his Father. He points to his wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. He lifts his hands bearing the print of nails. He approaches the Father. The voice of God is heard

proclaiming that justice is satisfied. The Father's arms encircle the Son and the word is given, let all the angels of God, worship Him." Desire Of Ages, page 884

Here is a beautiful picture of the affectionate nature of the Godhead, the affection between the Father and the Son. Maybe the expression, 'little lamb' also denotes the affection that God and Christ have for us."It could also speak of how Christ is precious to the believer. As the hymn declares 'I am His and He is mine forever'. Jesus can be closer and more precious to us than any earthly person.

A SCARRED LAMB

However the Revelator indicates that Jesus Christ is more than a 'little lamb'. He is 'a lamb as it had been slain'. This does not mean a dead lamb, for Christ is now risen. It means one in whom are the marks of having died, one in whom are the scars of suffering, one who has had a deadly wound but the deadly wound has been healed. Jesus is now in heaven in his glorified body. Is that body then a scarred body? Yes! It is a body that contains the scars of battle. According to surgeons, there are five classifications of wounds. There are contused wounds, lacerated wounds, penetrating wounds, perforated wounds and incised wounds. All of these five types of wounds were experienced by the Lord Jesus in his sufferings and death. In fact, there were seven different places where he was wounded for us. In his two hands, his two feet, his wounded brow, his lacerated back and his pierced side.

Seven places, denoting the fullness of agony, the piercing pain, the extremity of his suffering on behalf of guilty man. But do these scars mar his glorified body? They now are objects of attraction, objects of beauty and praise. Notice the prophet's description of Jesus in his heavenly state.

"His brightness was as the light, and he had horns coming out of his hands, (margin: He had bright beams out of his side) and there was the hiding of his power." Habakkuk 3:4 "He had rays flashing from His hand and there his power was hidden" N. K. J. V.

Undoubtedly from the seven wounds or scars in the glorified body of Jesus, these rays of light beam forth like horns. They declare to the universe the unspeakable sufferings of Christ and the victory that was His. Though Jesus is in the midst of the throne amid the glory of the kingdom, yet the central attraction is 'the lamb slain'. The dominant theme is Christ crucified. The prevailing principle that is highlighted, is self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice in the person of the scarred Son. This is the great principle of God's kingdom. This was the price of redemption, the cost of victory over the usurper, the ransom price for a lost race. This was the payment for the title deeds of the lost inheritance.

SEVEN HORNS

As a result of his victory, Jesus is described as having 'seven horns and seven eyes'. What do these represent? In scripture a horn denotes power. When Jacob foretold the future of the tribe of Joseph he said, "His horns are as the horns of unicorns, with them, he shall push the people together, to the ends of the earth." Deuteronomy 33:7

Clearly, 'the seven horns' is a figurative term to describe the power of the Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly state. 'Seven' denotes full, complete and unending power, in other words, the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus Christ. On earth, Jesus Christ was not omnipotent.

Though He was God in the flesh, he laid aside this heavenly attribute. It was quiescent. He did not exercise his divine power. He laid that aside; he met and lived life on earth as a man. But now his omnipotence is reactivated within him.

Could not the seven horns correspond to the seven horns of light that beam from the seven scars of Christ? 'There was the hiding of his power' Habakkuk 3:4. The New Testament affirms that the sufferings of Christ are the secret of his power and glory.

"We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Hebrews 2:9

"He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth." Philippians 2:8-10

As Jesus was about to ascend to heaven he declared, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18

SEVEN EYES

But Jesus has not only seven horns but seven eyes. This is another figure describing Christ in his heavenly state. Eyes denote intelligence and wisdom, and seven would denote perfect and complete wisdom, in other words the omniscience of Jesus, the all-knowing one. In his earthly existence Jesus of himself was not all-knowing. His divine attributes were inactive, but at his resurrection they became active again. The seven eyes represent the fact that Christ now is all-observant, all-watchful, ever vigilant of his church on earth. We suggest

that the seven eyes apply in a spiritual sense on earth. They apply to the Holy Spirit in his ministry – ‘the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth’. This involves the ministry of the angels who are ‘ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation’. Hebrews 1:14. Angels are the representatives of the third Person of the Godhead, and are under his direction on earth.

ANGELS LIKENED TO THE EYES OF GOD

The expression, ‘sent forth into all the earth,’ is borrowed from the Old Testament and is used to describe the ministry of the angels of God in this world.

“The seven . . . they are the eyes of the Lord that run to and fro through the whole earth.” Zechariah 4:10

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9.

These beautiful scriptures denote that his agencies, ‘the eyes of God’, run throughout the whole earth. Nothing is hid from Christ.

“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their cry.” Psalm 34:15

“The eyes of the Lord, are always upon it, (i. e. the land of Israel representing the realm of the church) from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.” Deuteronomy 11:12

“The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven, his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men!” Psalm 11:14

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.” Psalm 15:3

“His eyes behold the nations, let not the rebellious exalt themselves.” Psalm 66:7

One day, the nations will unite against God’s people to destroy them, but the Lord Jesus, while forever limited within the flesh, as the God man, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the angels, beholds the nations. He is cognizant of every move against his people.

HEAVEN’S RESPONSE TO THE BOOK

The next section of chapter five describes the response to Christ taking the book.

“He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne and when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints.” Verses 7

This denotes gratitude, devotion and worship on the part of the heavenly host. They ‘fell down before the lamb’. This reveals the extreme importance of the book. It also speaks of the concern of heaven for the children of men.

HEAVEN A PLACE OF MUSIC

“Having everyone harps.”

This indicates that heaven is a place of melody. All will be gifted with music. It will be spontaneous. From every individual will come melody and song. Everyone will express his emotions in his own style and part, and together we will make up an orchestra of millions of instruments. There will be no discords, no mistakes, not a single jarring note!

“They have golden vials full of odors (or incense) ”

This will be discussed in the eighth chapter of Revelation. In heaven there is a literal temple, a literal altar, a literal priesthood, and there is literal incense. (See “Literal in Heaven & Spiritual on Earth” in Revelation 4)

IDENTITY OF THE BOOK

“And they sung a new song saying Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou was slain and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and has made us to our God kings and priests and we shall reign upon the earth.” Revelation 5:9-10

Why a new song? Because the book has been taken. This seems to indicate that redemption is now guaranteed. This is why some have concluded that this book of Revelation 5 is 'the book of Redemption'. Dr. Fawcett, declares 'this book is the book of Redemption containing the title deeds to man's lost inheritance' Dr. J. Seiss in "The Apocalypse" is in agreement. [1] The evidence indicates that the book contains the title deeds. One point is very clear and that is that in the eyes of heaven this book is of primary importance. If this is correct, then the identification of the book must be possible. Why such emphasis upon the book if we cannot discover the book's identity? Let us examine the evidence.

The main theme of the book is redemption. When one is finally found to open it, the resounding proclamation is made,

"Thou has redeemed us to God by thy blood." Verse 9.

The angelic host cry "Worthy is the lamb that was slain!" Verse 12

The Lamb's death was the price of redemption. The book of Revelation is based on the Old Testament. It is described as 'a mosaic of the Old Testament' because it is packed with expressions or phrases from the Old Testament. In order to understand the Book of Revelation aright, it is essential to examine its Old

Testament background. Is there any Old Testament book that deals in any way with the question of redemption? In the Book of Leviticus is laid down the law for the redeeming or buying back of inheritances in the land of Israel. At least 5 times in 6 verses the word 'redeem' is used.

THE LAW OF REDEMPTION

'Me land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me, and in all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor and bath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin, cane to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it, then let him count the years of the sale thereof and restore the over plus to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return unto his possession. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold, shall remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year of Jubilee, and in the year of Jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return to his possession.'" Leviticus 25:23-28

This is the law of inheritances in Israel. Under these ancient laws, it was impossible to alienate estates beyond a certain time. If one found it necessary through misfortune to dispose of his land, it could only be disposed of until the year of Jubilee, i. e. the end of the fifty year period. Then all property returned automatically to its original owner or his family. If, in the meantime the owner died, then the nearest of kin could step in and claim it, in fact he did not even have to wait for the Jubilee, providing he could establish legal claim to it and was willing to pay the redemption price.

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

The prophet Jeremiah was inspired to record an actual land transaction that throws light on this question. Jeremiah was commanded by God to buy a parcel of land. The account reveals how the book in the hand of God of Revelation 5 can be none other than a book containing title deeds. It is a book of redemption.

"The word of the Lord came to me saying Behold Hanameel the son of Shallum your uncle, shall come to thee saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is your to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord and said to me, Buy my field I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is your and the redemption is your, buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son that was in Anathoth and weighed him the money, even 17 shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses and weighed him the money in the balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open And I gave the evidence of the purchase to Baruk the son of Nariah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hananteel mine uncle's son, and in presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase and before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison." Jeremiah 32:6-14

Notice that Jeremiah 'subscribed the evidence'. The margin reads, 'I wrote in a book and sealed it'. Thus a record of the land transaction was kept in a book or scroll. According to Weemse,

"For the manner of writing the contract, he who was to buy the ground, wrote two instruments or documents. The one to be sealed with his own signet, the other he showed unclosed, to the witnesses, that they might subscribe and bear witness of that which was written. This, the witnesses did subscribe upon the back of the enclosed (or sealed) instrument." Weemse. 'Judicial Law of Moses.' [2]

This clearly shows that the purchaser wrote two documents - one he sealed, the other he left open for the witnesses to read, and then they signed the sealed scroll, making it authentic. Thus the scroll 'was written within, and on the back side sealed,' with seals or signatures. This coincides with the book of Revelation 5 'written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals'. It undoubtedly concerns title deeds.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

What book of 'title deeds' would God be holding in his right hand? We suggest the title-deeds of some property or inheritance that has been lost, and which is of great concern to heaven. The details concerning title-deeds and lost inheritances is very beautifully brought to view in the ancient story of Ruth in the Old Testament, one of the choicest stories in all literature. Set in the time of the Judges about 1100 BC, this account tells of how an Israelite family, sold their inheritance because of drought and through lack of faith moved into the land of Moab, the land of the enemy. However, it turned out to be a land of death because the father and the two married sons perished. Erelong the remnant of the family, Naomi and Ruth, returned to the land of Israel and sought the lost inheritance. There they found a near relative, a kinsman, one through whom the lost inheritance could be bought back or redeemed. His name was Boaz. Boaz was from Bethlehem. He agreed to pay the debt of Elimelech and Naomi and redeem the inheritance. He also married the childless widow, Ruth, and raised up children in the name of the dead husband, who finally repossessed the inheritance. Now Boaz, in redeeming the inheritance, was also under obligation, if necessary, to avenge the death of the near of kin. The role of the kinsman/ redeemer was twofold: he was a redeemer and an avenger.

BOAZ A TYPE OF CHRIST

The story in the Book of Ruth is a fitting representation of the history of the human race. Adam and Eve were established in Eden by the Creator. (Micah 4:8 calls it 'the first dominion'.) Through disobedience they sold out their inheritance to Satan and went out to the land of enemy, the land of death. But a remnant of Adam's family have sought to return to Eden and regain the lost inheritance. They have found a near kinsman - one of their own race- through whom the inheritance can be redeemed and restored. This kinsman/redeemer like Boaz has come from Bethlehem. Jesus Christ, has paid the debt of Adam's race upon Calvary's cross. By the sacrifice of his life, he has redeemed the lost inheritance. Like Boaz, he also has married the childless widow - the Christian Church - it is his bride. He is her spiritual husband and through this union Christ is raising up children, 'the seed of the woman', who one day, will repossess the lost inheritance - Eden restored. As kinsman/redeemer Jesus Christ will not only restore the inheritance but he will also be responsible for avenging the blood of his brethren. That will be accomplished at the second and third Advents, when he destroys Satan and all who support him.

FULFILLED AT CALVARY

There are ten steps in the reclamation or restoration of the lost inheritance. Nine of those steps were taken at Calvary, the tenth one will take place at the second and third Advents of Christ. Now while Jesus paid the price of redemption at Calvary, it appears that the transaction was not effective until it was ratified in heaven before the witnessing universe. This we believe is the significance of the impressive ceremony in heaven, where Christ, before the assembled hosts, is pronounced as being worthy to take and open the book.

Jesus has won back the title-deeds. He gained the victory at Calvary by his sacrifice. Now, before the universe, according to Revelation 5, this victory is confirmed. A public ceremony is enacted to show that his sacrifice is acceptable. This pinpoints the time when Revelation 5 was fulfilled. It must have been shortly after the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven. The 24 elders declare that as a result of Christ taking the book they 'shall reign on the earth'. This confirms the fact, that by taking the book, the earth, the lost inheritance, was redeemed.

TEN PARALLELS BETWEEN BOAZ AND JESUS CHRIST

A Family in Israel in distrust of God sell their inheritance and dwell in Moab, the land of the enemy.

BOAZ

1. Israel established in Palestine as God's chosen people.
2. The land of Israel - the Promised Land.
3. It was a land of death – father and two sons die.
4. Remnant of the family-Naomi and Ruth-return to land of Israel and seek the lost inheritance.
5. A near relative-A kinsman-is found through whom the lost inheritance can be bought back or redeemed.

6. Boaz pays the debt of Elimelech and Naomi and redeems the inheritance.
7. Boaz married the childless widow (Ruth) and in the name of the dead raised up children who repossessed the inheritance.
8. Boaz - as Kinsman-Redeemer - not only redeemed the lost inheritance but was also under obligation if necessary, to avenge the death of the near of kin.

JESUS CHRIST

1. The human race in Adam and Eve, established in Eden as God's chosen.
2. Typical of the renewed earth, The land of promise Romans 4:13, Hebrews 11:13-16.
3. Adam and Eve - in distrust of God, sold out their inheritance to Satan and dwelt in the land of the enemy.
4. This world is a land of death. 'Death passed upon all men'. Romans 5:12.
5. A remnant of the family of Adam, seek for the lost inheritance, - which will be the renewed earth - Eden restored.
6. A near kinsman is found – 'in all things-made like to his brethren' - through whom the lost inheritance is redeemed and restored (Jesus Christ).
7. Jesus Christ by becoming man and dying upon the cross has paid the debt of Adam's family and thereby has redeemed the lost inheritance of Eden.
8. Jesus Christ marries the childless widow (the church). She is his spiritual bride and He is raising up children (the seed of the women) who will possess the kingdom.
9. Jesus Christ as the true Kinsman Redeemer, not only redeems the inheritance of Eden lost, but he will also occupy it and be responsible for avenging the blood of his brethren. This will be accomplished at the second and third Advents when He destroys Satan and his followers and cleanses and restores this earth to its original condition.

It is claimed by some expositors that the opening of the book, denotes that the destiny of the world is determined and that that occurred in 1844 in the pre-advent judgment. Now it could be true that the reception of the book may involve the world's destiny but the announcement made that the destiny of the world had been determined? This was made after Calvary.

"I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he know that he has but a short time." Revelation 12:10-12

This announcement must have been issued shortly after Calvary because it declares, 'now is come salvation'.

THE UNIVERSAL ANTHEM OF PRAISE

"I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands: Saying with a loud voice. . .

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders, fell down and worshipped him that lives for ever and ever." Revelation 5:11-14

Here we have a glimpse of the heavenly host around the throne of our God. The number of the angels - one hundred million, plus thousands of thousands. What a scene! They are not standing idly by, but are the special messengers of God, 'hearkening to the voice of his word . . . ministers of his, that do his pleasure'. Here they comprise a mighty mass choir. Imagine the stirring, moving, majestic music as they render the sevenfold anthem of praise to the worthiness of the Lamb.

It appears that there are two phases of this anthem. -Verses 11 & 12 contain the sevenfold anthem in praise of the Lamb. Verses 13 & 14 contain a fourfold anthem from creatures in four locations; heaven, earth, under the earth and in the sea, in praise of the Father and the

Lamb. It would, seem that the second anthem could only be rendered when this earth is restored to harmony with the rest of the universe, for only then would ‘every creature. . . on the earth’, render spontaneous praise to the Deity.

However, in the setting of Revelation 5 this mighty anthem of praise bursts forth in response to the Lamb taking the book of redemption. The Spirit of Prophecy reveals that the anthem was sung by the heavenly hosts at the inauguration of Jesus as mediator and High Priest. (Desire of Ages, page 832-835) [3] This probably refers to that part of the anthem in verses 11-12. The Spirit of Prophecy applies the whole anthem to the coronation of Jesus at the second Advent. (Great Controversy, page 648; 8 Testimonies, page 44; Desire of Ages, page 131)

The third application by the Spirit of Prophecy is at Jesus’ coronation at the third Advent, after the millennium. (Great Controversy, page 662-674) A fourth application is made to the days of eternity (Great Controversy, page 651-652; 678) when the redeemed render praise to the Father and the Son. (6 Testimonies, page 368).

Let us now examine the view that Revelation 4 & 5 involve the Investigative Judgment commencing in 1844, and that the sealed book is a book of record. It appears that there are three main reasons why this view is promoted. 1. That Revelation 4 & 5 parallel Daniel 7:9-10 where the judgment scene commencing in 1844 is described. 2. That Revelation 6:10 indicates that judgment is the theme of the vision of Revelation 4-6. 3.

That the Spirit of Prophecy teaches that Revelation five involves judgment. Let us examine these three claims to see if the conclusions drawn are warranted.

1. Do Revelation 4 & 5 parallel Daniel 7:9-10? The facts reveal that there are at least ten contrasts between Revelation 4 & 5 and Daniel 7:9-10.

THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN DANIEL 7 & REVELATION 4 - 5

DANIEL CHAPTER 7

Verse 9

‘The thrones were cast down’ or placed in position; indicating a change of location.

Verse 9-10

The Father is in purest white. ‘Garment white as snow’ ‘Hair like pure wool’.

Verse 9-10

The throne amid shades of fiery red. ‘His throne was like the fiery flame & his (its) wheels as burning fire.’

Verses 9-10

Flames of fiery red from the throne. ‘A fiery stream issued & came forth from before him.’

Verses 9-10

An atmosphere of great solemnity. No praise.

Verses 9-10

No lamps of fire visible.

Verses 9-10

‘The books (plural) are opened. The heavenly court is in session.

Verses 9-10

Books of Record - kept by angels who know the contents thereof.

Verse 10 & 13

Christ is absent when the books are opened. He is ushered into the court scene after their opening.

Verse 10

A judgment scene or court setting in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

REVELATION CHAPTER 4

Verse 2

'A throne was set.' Indicating it is in position. There is no movement or change of location

Verse 3

The Father is in reddish brightness. 'Like a jasper' - crystal brightness. 'and a sardine stone' - reddish.

Verse 3

The throne amid shades of green 'There was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald' i. e. green.

Verse 5

Flashes of brilliant white from the throne. 'Out of the throne proceeded lightning.'

Verses 8-11; 5:9-14

Atmosphere of moving gratitude & continuous praise.

Verse 5

Lamps of fire prominent.

REVELATION CHAPTER 5

Verse 3

A book (singular) is sealed -cannot be opened.

Verses 3-4

No-one knows the book's contents or could look therein. Therefore a different book from those of Daniel 7.

Verses 5-6

Christ is present when the Book is presented; but it is unopened until the final seal is removed i. e. after the second Advent (Revelation 6:14-17)

Revelation 4:5; 5:7-8

An inaugural scene in the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, where Jesus is installed as Priest-King.

The theme is the worthiness & power of the Lamb. There is not a single word concerning judgment in the whole vision, except the lack of it. (Revelation 6:9-11)

REVELATION 6:10 AND THE JUDGEMENT

Does Revelation 6:10 indicate that the theme of the vision concerns judgment? Let us analyze the verse. It concerns the fifth seal which reads,

“When he had opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long O Lord holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them and it was said to them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

What is this saying? Many are mystified as to why some scholars claim that the theme of judgment is revealed in Verse 10. The text tells of a cry for justice. There is a decided lack of judgment. The martyr host that have fallen under the hooves of the fourth horseman are pictured calling for justice, for redress, which is long overdue.

It is not investigative judgment, it is a plea for God to avenge the murder of millions of saints in the period of the fourth horseman. There is no allusion to judgment in the whole vision, there is a complete lack of it. It is exactly the opposite of judgment. Therefore the second ground for believing that Revelation 4 & 5 concerns judgment, likewise must be rejected.

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY EVIDENCE

Does the S. O. P. indicate that Revelation 4 & 5 involve the pre advent judgment? Let us examine the first statement that is used.

“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness, this decision will appear before them in the day that this book is unsealed by the lion of the tribe of Judah.” Christ Object Lessons, page 298. [4]

What is the S. O. P. referring to here? It is an exposition of the parable of the vineyard which Jesus gave, to reveal how the Jewish leaders would murder him and seize the vineyard. [5] The vineyard represents God’s kingdom on earth. The S. O. P. then makes the statement: ‘Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. . . and this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the lion of the tribe of Judah.’ Some conclude that because this fearful crime was registered in the book of Revelation 5 that that book must be the book of records of Daniel 7:9-10 which is involved in the judgment of 1844. But the judgment referred to must be a judgment that is an executive judgment because it says, ‘this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed’. When will the Jewish leaders be resurrected to see their record? The S. O. P. says that it will be ‘in the day that this book is unsealed’. When will the final seal be removed from the book? According to the sixth seal, it will be at the Second Advent. Will the Jewish leaders be alive at the Second Advent ‘for their decision to appear before them’? Yes. The Jewish leaders with others will be resurrected in the partial resurrection as described in Daniel 12:2, Matthew 26:64 & Revelation 1:7.

“Those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opponents of his truth and his people, are raised to behold Him in his glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.” Great Controversy, page 637

“There are those who mocked Christ in His humiliation. With thrilling power came to their minds the Sufferer’s words, when, adjured by the high priest, He solemnly declared, ‘Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’ Matthew 26:64

‘Now they behold Him in His glory. With awful distinctness do priests and rulers recall the events of Calvary. Vividly they recall the Savior’s parable of the husbandmen who abused his servants and slew his son-priests and elders see their own course and their own just doom they seek to flee from the presence of

the King of kings. In the deep caverns of the earth. . . they vainly attempt to hide.” Great Controversy 643-644 [6]

This S. O. P. prediction in Christ Object Lessons, page 298 could also have a second application at the resurrection of the unsaved at the end of the thousand years of Revelation 20. Once again the Jewish leaders will be resurrected and will face their damning record and be judged according to their works. (Revelation 20:12).

If the book of Revelation 5 is not a book of record, why register in it the Jewish leaders’ decision? We suggest that if this book contains the title-deeds, then there would be recorded therein the essential details of every conveyance of the property. Legal authorities declare that the title-deeds should contain an unbroken chain as to when and how each conveyance was transacted, revealing whether it was legal and proper. The reason we suggest that the Jewish leaders’ decision was so registered, was because they took possession of the inheritance. It was illegally transferred by them.

“This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.” Matthew 21:38

They killed the Son of God and seized the inheritance and that dastardly and illegal act was undoubtedly recorded in the title-deeds. In the executive judgment, when they face ‘The lion of the tribe- of Judah’, the Jewish leaders will be called to answer for their awful crime.

A second Spirit of Prophecy statement that is used to try and teach that Revelation 4 & 5 concerns judgment is in 9 Testimonies, page 266-267.

“What will such a one do in the day that the books are opened, and every man is judged according to the things written in the books? The fifth chapter of the Book of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days. There are some who are deceived. They do not realize what is coming on the earth. Those who have permitted their minds to become clouded, as to what constitutes sin, are fearfully deceived. Unless they make a decided change they will be found wanting, when God pronounces judgment upon the children of men.” 9 Testimonies, page 266-267.

Does this passage refer to the investigative judgment of 1844? The context shows that the prophet is writing to certain leaders in Battle Creek in 1909. They were shutting their eyes to truth and persisted in teaching error and leading God’s people astray. They were warned that if they did not repent, they would face the judgment when the books are opened and every man is judged according to the things written in the books.

We believe that the S. O. P. is referring to the executive judgment which involves the second and third advents. It is the executive judgment of the unsaved, not the investigative judgment of 1844. In this setting, the prophet then counsels that ‘the fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who shall act a part in God’s work for these last days.’ In what way? What does Revelation 5 have to do with the executive judgment? That is the day when the book of Redemption containing the title-deeds, will be opened. The seventh seal of the scroll will be removed at the Second Advent and then the book is opened. Then Christ, as the Kinsman/Redeemer will avenge the wrongs done against his people. As ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah,’ he will manifest himself as Judge and Avenger.

The S. O. P. says of those who are guilty of leading others astray, ‘they do not realize what is coming on the earth’. What is coming on the earth? The prophet then describes the terrible events at the close of the sixth seal, in which the lost, flee from the wrath of the Lamb ‘for the great day of his wrath is come.’ Thus the judgment referred to by the prophet, is the executive judgment, not the pre-advent judgment of 1844. The message of Revelation 5, is that though Christ is the lamb slain, who takes away all confessed sin, nevertheless in the day of executive judgment he will deal in awful justice with those who have treated sin lightly and led others astray. There are no grounds whatsoever, for applying Revelation 5 to the investigative judgment. Revelation 5 is the introduction to the seven seals of Revelation.

Understanding Revelation 5 aright, will help us to interpret the seven seals aright. On the other hand an incorrect understanding of Revelation 5 could lead to a faulty interpretation of the seven seals.

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10. The 4 Horsemen Of The Apocalypse

An Exposition of the First Four Seals of Revelation Chapter 6

In introducing the prophecy of the seven seals it is helpful to review chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation. These introduce the seven seals. In Revelation four God is revealed as Creator upon the throne in supreme control. In Revelation five Jesus Christ is brought to view as the

omnipotent Lamb who has conquered Satan and paid the price for the world's redemption. This means that the world's destiny is decided. The saints of God are guaranteed the kingdom and all rebels against God are guaranteed destruction. In the seals, the church of God is revealed in deadly conflict with the powers of darkness and though error and apostasy appear to dominate, yet God is in control.

Christ has the title deeds of the kingdom, the church is assured of final victory.

CONFUSING INTERPRETATIONS

The first four seals involve the celebrated Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Many and varied attempts have been made to interpret these horsemen through the years, and even today there is still much confusion concerning them. The problem with most interpretations of the four horsemen is that they tend to apply the predictions to events that are shallow and inconsequential, whereas the grand prophecies of the Book of Revelation apply to various aspects of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the conflict between the people of God and their enemies.

For example, to apply the four horsemen to the popular worldly interpretation of war, famine, pestilence etc. cheapens the whole prophecy. Why preserve in holy writ, predictions of conditions that have been common throughout history and which have no significance as far as the great controversy between good and evil is concerned?

DO NOT REPRESENT ANGELIC AGENCIES

What then is the significance of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse? The popular view today amongst some scholars is that the horsemen represent angelic powers. This view is based on the Book of Zechariah 1:8-10 and 6:1-8. In Zechariah 1 there is brought to view three horses, red, speckled and white. In chapter six, four chariots are brought to view with red, white, black and bay horses in each. In scripture horses and chariots represent the angels of God.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand even thousands of angels the Lord is among them as in Sinai." Psalms 68:17

In the seven seals however, the four horses are not horses and chariots, they are horsemen - there are no chariots. Therefore to employ the horses and chariots of Zechariah as a basis for this prophecy must be seriously questioned. Moreover in the Book of Revelation angels are always referred to in literal terms particularly in the prophecy of the seven seals. In Revelation 5:2, 11 the angels are distinctly referred to as "angels". In Revelation 7:1, 2 the angels are again designated in literal terms "four angels, holding the four winds". In verse eleven "angels" render praise before the throne.

A HORSE REPRESENTS SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Following the basic law of interpretation of letting scripture interpret scripture, what does scripture declare as to what a horse represents? The answer is found in Revelation itself. In chapter nineteen a white horse is brought to view. This is sometimes spoken of as the fifth horse of Revelation.

"I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness he does judge and make war." Revelation 19:11

This refers to Jesus Christ at the Second Advent. It is a military picture, symbolic of Armageddon. Jesus is pictured riding a white horse. For what reason? "In righteousness he does judge (or punish) and make war". "This is a war picture. A horse denotes war. Verse 13 says "and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses". Do the angels literally ride white horses when they descend to this planet at the Second Advent? No! This is a symbol of Armageddon - the last great conflict. In Smith's Bible Dictionary - a scholarly and authoritative work it declares:

"In the ancient frescoes of all the great nations of the east, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, the horse is not shown as a beast of burden. It is used only for war and processions and sometimes for hunting."

The S. D. A. Dictionary likewise confirms this. It says,

"In contrast with the many texts that speak of the use of the horse for war, there is only one that mentions the horse in connection with agriculture." Page 490

A horse denotes warfare. It does not represent angels. Each horse of the Apocalypse represents a particular kind of warfare which we will endeavor to show.

THE WHITE HORSE

“I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder and one of the four living creatures saying come and see and I saw and behold a white horse and he that sat on him had a bow and a crown was given to him and he went forth conquering and to conquer.” Revelation 6:1-2

The white color denotes purity and righteousness.

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Isaiah 1:18. This is a warfare of righteousness.

BASED ON PSALM 45

Who is the rider of this white horse? To find the answer we need to go back to the Old Testament because the Book of Revelation is based on that. The source from which this symbolism is drawn is undoubtedly the messianic 45th Psalm. In this Psalm, David predicts the coming of the Messiah as a mighty warrior, and a conquering King. This perfectly parallels the first horseman of Revelation. There are five distinct parallels between Psalm 45 and Revelation 6:2

THE FIVE PARALLELS

PSALMS 45

Verse 4

‘In thy majesty ride prosperously.’

Verse 1

‘I speak of things touching the king.’

Verse 4

‘Ride prosperously because of truth, meekness and righteousness’.

Verse 5

‘Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies.

Verse 5

‘Whereby the people fall under thee’ indicating the triumph of the Messiah.

REVELATION 6:2

He rides ‘a white horse.’

The rider has ‘crown upon his head’ denoting kingship.

Rides a white horse denoting purity and righteousness.

‘He that sat on him had a bow in his hand.’ The purpose of a bow is to shoot arrows. Arrows represent the

Word of God. Habakkuk 3:9

He ‘went forth conquering and to conquer’.

These five parallels reveal that the first horseman of Revelation six represents Jesus Christ engaged in a warfare of righteousness and purity.

THE WAR INVOLVES THE CHURCH

When did Jesus Christ wage such a war with the Word of God? After His ascension to Heaven. In what way? By His church on earth. Before he ascended to heaven Jesus Christ commissioned his church to battle with Satan and the powers of hell.

“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2 Timothy 2:3

“Put on the whole armor of God for we wrestle (or war) against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:10-12 margin.

“We do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

It is a spiritual warfare. No carnal weapons are to be used but only the spiritual weapons that Christ has given. The Song of Solomon, in describing the church militant on earth says, it is “terrible as an army with banners”. How true this is of the church when it is pure, faithful and obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. As the great hymn says “Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war.” This warfare against evil is the greatest war ever known. The greatest battle ever fought is the battle against Satan and the powers of darkness. To wage this warfare, moral courage is required. It takes moral strength to be a true Christian.

FULFILLED IN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Did the church of Christ after His ascension go forth conquering and to conquer as Christ commissioned it? Indisputably so. In spite of the power of paganism which was established and protected in the surrounding nations, the gospel of Christ spread like fire in the stubble.

And this in spite of fierce persecution. Two and a half million Christians were done to death by pagan Rome according to some authorities, but in spite of it, five million converts were won to Christ in the first century of the Christian era. The apostle Paul declared of his day, “The gospel is preached to every creature under heaven.” Colossians 1:23. Under the power of Pentecost the then known world heard the gospel. As the author of the book, Great Controversy, declared of those early years of the church,

“Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied—they uttered no complaint—the great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God’s workmen were slain, but his work went rapidly forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. The subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ.” Great Controversy, page 41-42.

What a marvelous picture! The first horseman went forth conquering and to conquer. In the Book, Acts of the Apostles, the author says

“The words of the apostles were as sharp arrows of the Almighty, convicting men of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory.” Acts Apostles, page 45.

The arrows represent the Word of God and how effective they were in the minds of men. Thus the prediction of the first horseman was faithfully fulfilled in the history of the church of the first century A. D.

THE RED HORSE

“There went out another horse that was red and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given to him a great sword.” Revelation 6:3-4

Here is presented a different horse and a different rider. This indicates another kind of warfare.

FAULTY APPLICATIONS

It is claimed by some that the red horse represents “God’s activities on the earth” and that the prediction that “he would take peace from the earth” was a fulfillment of Matthew 10:34-36. This claim must be rejected. Notice these words of Jesus.

“Think not, that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Matthew 10:34-36

This did not apply to the period of the red horse. Jesus' words were fulfilled under the white horse when the church was pure and united and the gospel was powerfully proclaimed and as a result great persecution came. The red horse "takes peace from the earth and they kill one another". In other words he would bring disunity and discord into the church.

It is also claimed that the white horse continues throughout the Christian era. Is this correct? Did the church of Christ continue to conquer? The apostle Paul was shown very clearly that the church would not continue in triumph. It would go astray.

"For I know this, that after my departing (or death) shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears." Acts 20:29-31

What a sad experience for the apostle. After all that he had endured in proclaiming the gospel and raising up churches, finally in the midst of these very churches would come false teachers and apostasy. They would "speak perverse things". In fulfillment of this prediction false teachers did arise and apostasy gradually entered the church.

A DIFFERENT FORM OF ATTACK

Satan resorted to a different attack - he found that persecuting the church only increased its numbers.

"Satan therefore laid his plans to war (notice, it involves warfare) -more successfully against the government of God. The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased and in its stead was substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Now the church was in fearful peril. Most of the Christians at last consented to lower their standard and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism . . . (notice that, "most of the Christians" - the great majority of the church went astray). . . the foul leaven of idolatry thus brought into the church, continued its baleful work. Unsound doctrines, superstitious rites and idolatrous ceremonies were incorporated into her faith and worship. As the followers of Christ united with idol worshippers the Christian religion became corrupted and the church lost her purity and power." Great Controversy, page 42-43.

A sad picture but this is what the red horse represented. Red denotes sinfulness."Though your sins be as scarlet" Isaiah 1:18. After the death of the apostles the church became sinful. A war was mounted against the doctrines and standards of the church."Power was given him (the rider) to take peace from the earth." Those who endeavored to uphold true doctrine and to be faithful to Christ were hated and proscribed. One writer declares of the period:

"As long as persecution continued, the church remained comparatively pure. But as it ceased, converts were added who were less sincere and devoted and the way was opened for Satan to obtain a foothold."

"These apostate Christians uniting with their half-pagan companions, directed their warfare against the most essential features of the doctrines of Christ . . . the doctrine of religious freedom was termed heresy and its upholders were hated and proscribed." Great Controversy, page 44-45.

Peace was truly taken from the earth as far as the church was concerned. There was fierce conflict between truth and error and this is confirmed by recognized church historians. Mosheim declared,

"There was continual war and trouble."

Edward Gibbon wrote,

"The bands of civil society were torn asunder by the fury of religious factions." [1]

Gregory Nazianson said,

"The kingdom of heaven (the church) was converted by discord into the image of chaos of a nocturnal tempest and of hell itself."

Eusebius the Bishop of Caesarea declared,

"We sunk into negligence and sloth, envying and reviling in different ways, and we were almost on the point as it were of taking up arms against each other. Prelates inveighing prelates. . . hypocrisy and dissimulation had risen to the greatest heights of malignity. Pastors deserting the law of piety were inflamed against each other, accumulating threats, rivalry, hostility and hatred."

This was the second period of the church, the red horse. Peace was surely taken from the church. What a contrast to the period of the white horse. In that period the pagans, as they observed the Christians in their fervency, purity and unity said "See how they love one another," but under the period of the red horse they said, "See how they hate one another."

THE GREAT SWORD

"There was given to him a great sword." What does the sword represent? There are three applications in scripture of the sword.

1. It denotes authoritarianism or civil power - the magistrate, the state etc.
2. It denotes division and separation.
3. It denotes retribution, war and slaughter. Only the first two apply to the red horse period. Did the spirit of authoritarianism come into the church? The church leadership became permeated with love of position and a thirst for power.

Even in the days of John, the last of the apostles, this antichristian spirit was entering the church. [2]

"I wrote to the church, but Diotrefes, who loves to have the preeminence among them receives us not. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren and forbids them that would, and casts them out of the church." 3 John 1:9-10

As one author declared,

"As persecution ceased and Christianity entered the palaces and courts of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and his apostles, for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions." Great Controversy, page 49.

Speaking of Constantine the Great, the Roman Emperor who endeavored to unite the church, the same author says,

"He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who (were) inspired by ambition and thirst for power." Great Controversy, page 53.

"When the early church became corrupted, by departing from the simplicity of the gospel in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power." Great Controversy, page 443.

This was "the great sword". McClintock and Strong, writing of this period of church history declare,

"Men, exalted in the scale of society, were eager to extend the power which had been entrusted to them. And they sought to do so by exacting from the people, acquiescence in the peculiar doctrines that they chose to publish as articles of faith."

DIVISION AND DISSENSION IN CHURCH

But the sword also denotes division and separation. Was there division and dissension during this period?

"It required a desperate struggle for those who would be faithful to stand firm against the deceptions and abominations which were disguised in sacerdotal garments and introduced into the church . . . after a long and severe conflict the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood, and idolatry. . . if unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference and even war." Great Controversy, page 45.

As revealed above there was war, but unfortunately, some who determined to stick to the truth and be faithful, at times used carnal weapons, contrary to the instruction of Christ. The red horse then, denotes the emergence of the apostate church. The true church was now under attack especially in its doctrines and standards. The majority, of the orthodox church had become sinful, heretical and political.

THE BLACK HORSE

"When he had opened the third seal I heard the third living creature say Come and see and I beheld, and lo, a black horse and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand." Revelation 6:5

Black is the opposite to white, indicating that it is the opposite to purity and righteousness. Here is pictured the third period of the orthodox Christian church. It suggests a period of unrighteousness-of moral darkness, of error and of apostasy. Was this correct? Did this condition befall the established church of the day? Did the orthodox church, the official church sink deeper into apostasy?

CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE

In this period Christianity became popular and as a result was in great peril. This period begins with the conversion of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, about 300 AD. He affected a bogus conversion to Christianity in order to secure the unity of the empire. He was never a true Christian but in order to persuade the pagans to embrace Christianity, he offered, particularly the lower classes, a white garment and twenty pieces of gold. In response, the pagans swarmed into the rivers and were baptized into the Christian church. In one year alone in Rome, 12,000 men were baptized plus a proportionate number of women and children. [3]

BAPTIZED PAGANISM

The result was that paganism walked into the church. This is the source of all the pagan rites and ceremonies that we now find in the church of Rome and also in many Protestant churches. [4]

“The nominal conversion of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing, and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption, rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies and superstitions were incorporated into the worship of the professed followers of Christ. This compromise between paganism and Christianity, resulted in the development of the “man of sin”, foretold in prophecy as “opposing and exalting himself above God”. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan’s power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.” Great Controversy, page 50.

In this period the great apostasy had become fully developed - the apostate Roman church was now complete. John Dowling declared,

“There is scarcely anything which strikes the mind of the careful student of church history with greater surprise than the comparatively early period at which many of the corruptions of Christianity which are embodied in the Roman system took their rise.” History of Romanism Book 2 Chapter 1, Section 1.

This can be proved to the hilt. The church of Rome often says “we go back to the apostles”. Yes, they may trace their lineage back but it is via the black horse and the red horse. They go back through the line of apostasy. The church of Rome is a breakaway - an apostasy. It is interesting to notice that the paganism with which corrupt Christianity united in that day, was Babylonian Sun worship that had revived in Persia. It was called Mithraism. They worshipped the sun under the name of ‘Aithra. This was the paganism that amalgamated with apostate Christianity. Roman Catholic authorities freely admit that this is so.

“In her work of Christianizing the world, the Catholic church adapts herself as far as possible to her surroundings. She does not reject completely the custom and institutions of a people whose land she enters, but she endeavors to bring these institutions into harmony with her own doctrines. So it comes, we find the early writers of the Roman Catholic church retaining in substance the old myths and legends - changing them only to invest them with a Christian atmosphere.” Catholic Educational Review, March 1921.

Many other authorities could be quoted to prove that this has been the practice of the church of Rome down through the years. [5]

It was in this period that Sunday observance was established in the church. Mithraism celebrated as its chief day of the week, the day of the sun, i. e. Sunday. Authorities are very clear that it was in this period that the observance of Sunday was established in the orthodox church, in place of the true seventh day Sabbath. Dr. G. Murray of Oxford University wrote,

“Mithraism had so much acceptance that it was able to impose on the Christian world its own Sunday in place of the Sabbath. It’s sun’s birthday December 25 as the birthday of Jesus.” ‘Christianity In the Light of Modern Knowledge,’ pages 73-74.

Numerous other statements by historians show that Sunday came from Mithraism and entered the church in the period of the black horse. [6]

BALANCES

“He had a pair of balances in his hands.”

What would the balances represent? [7] The old fashioned balances were scales. In scripture they have three applications:

1. They denote commerce.

2. They denote corrupt dealing.

3. They denote judgment.

All three fittingly apply to the period of the black horse.

COMMERCIALIZATION OF RELIGION

The Papal church now began to engage in the commercialization of religion. People were led to believe that it was essential to pay for the benefits of salvation. If you were baptized you had to pay. If you were confirmed in the faith you had to pay. If you married, you had to pay. If you received forgiveness from the priest you had to pay. When you buried your loved one you had to pay. When masses were said, to get him out of purgatory you had to pay. This commerce became a source of tremendous income for the apostate church. [8]

CORRUPT DEALING - RELICS

The scales also represent corrupt dealing. The most striking evidence of this corruption through the dark or middle ages was the sale of relics - the bones etc. , of so-called dead saints. These were employed to draw people to the churches. The most outrageous claims were made in regard to these relics. Today in catholic centers you may see the relics on display. In Milan cathedral are 12 vials containing the fingers of the 12 apostles preserved in spirits. In St. Marks in Venice there are 8 pieces of the cross, 2 thorns from Christ's thorny crown, some blood of Christ in a vial, a nail from the cross, a lock of the virgin Mary's hair, a bone of St. Paul's leg, a bone of St. Matthew's leg, a bone of St. Phillip's leg, a bone of St. Peter's leg, the finger and tooth of Mark, a piece of St. John the Baptist's head and a piece of St. Stephen's backbone.

While in London in 1956 the author spent some time with a Catholic priest who was in the process of leaving his church. The author queried the priest about many things, one of which concerned the relics. What do the priests really believe about these relics? Do they believe they are the bones of dead saints? No, he said, the priests believe that many of the bones are the bones of dead dogs. What a fraud? What corrupt dealing?

G. R. Balene in describing the relics in Canterbury cathedral before the Protestant Reformation wrote,

"But Canterbury eclipsed them all in the splendor of it's relics. Round the shrine of St. Thomas were 12 complete skeletons of canonized saints - three skulls, four arms and 300 thighs, thumbs, teeth and jawbones. Here too, was part of the Bethlehem manger and of the virgin's bed and the table of the last supper. Here was Aaron's rod that budded and mare marvelous still, the actual clay out of which God had molded Adam." 'A Layman's History of the Church of England,' pages 47-49.

The second thing that was fraudulent, were the promises that the church made to their people if they looked upon the relics. They were promised remission from purgatory of lengthy periods of time, even to thousands of years. How people have been misled through the years!

JUDGEMENT

The third significance of the scales or balances, is that they represented judgment."Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." Daniel 5:27. We suggest that this represents the fact that in this period of the black horse - the church was judged and found wanting and was rejected by God. After long patience with the apostasy, after many warnings, the apostate church was finally rejected.

"Popery had become the world's despot, but the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world. The condition of the world under the Roman power presented a fearful and striking fulfillment of the words of the prophet Hosea. Because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." Great Controversy, 60.

In the period of the black horse the cup of the Roman church's apostasy was filled to the full and it was rejected by God.

SPIRITUAL FAMINE

"I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny." Verse 6.

Wheat and barley were the staple food products of the day."A measure" equaled almost one quart. The penny was the denarius which was equal in value to one day's wages for a laborer. This meant that the cost of common food was exorbitant at 8 to 10 times above the

normal price. This indicated that food was in short supply and denoted a famine. A literal famine or a spiritual famine? Undoubtedly a spiritual famine for the Word of God. The apostate church created such a famine. The Bible was taken away from the people.

“In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men and establish the authority of the Papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the scriptures. It’s sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed.” Great Controversy, page 52

The leaders of the church began to lock up the scriptures in the Latin language, and only the few who understood Latin could read it. The Bible began to disappear from the people and the result was that error increased and superstition soon enslaved the minds of men. Thus began, what is termed in history, the Dark Ages, and how dark they were? [9]

THE OIL AND THE WINE

Notice what the living creature declared in connection with this church period of the black horse: “See thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” Verse 6

Oil represents the Holy Spirit. Wine represents doctrine. Intoxicating wine represents false doctrine. Unfermented wine represents the true doctrines of the Word of God. Some believe oil not only represents the Holy Spirit but also the righteousness of Christ. [10] It is true that when one receives the Holy Spirit, the Spirit imparts to him the righteousness of Christ. In the period of the black horse, did the Holy Spirit and true doctrine disappear? Was the righteousness of Christ still available? God decreed “Hurt not the oil and the wine” in other words let them not disappear let them be preserved. When the apostate church began to dominate the world, God preserved small remnants of people who had in their possession the precious Word of God in its purity. The Waldenses of Northern Italy were one such group. They possessed the Word of God in their native tongue. In this way the Holy Spirit, the righteousness of Christ and true doctrine were preserved. The gospel of salvation was still available to men and women if they should seek it. [11] (What of the claim that ‘the oil and the wine ‘ represents certain people? See Appendix)

THE PALE HORSE

“I looked and behold a pale horse and his name that sat on him was death and hell (or the grave) followed with him. And power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth.” Revelation 6:8

What color is meant by ‘pale’? Is this an improvement? Is it a return towards the whiteness of purity and righteousness?

“The Greek word is ‘chloros’ , which denotes ‘ a greenish, verdant, dun color: green, pale!’ Dr. Strong.

Dr. Ellicott says “the color palid or livid is that deadly greenish hue which is the unmistakable token of the approach of death.”

Phillips translation reads “A horse, sickly green in color.”

The N. E. B. reads “another horse, sickly pale.”

Dalrymple says, ‘The greenish color which appears on a corpse when decomposition begins. The Greek medical writers used the term to denote a pale or bilious complexion. Two versions translate it as ‘pallidus’, whence our word, ‘pallid. [12]

This is how Heaven describes the established church in the fourth period of the Christian era. It denotes decomposition. It indicates corruption. It denotes revulsion. This was how the official orthodox church of the period appeared in the sight of heaven.

CHURCH WAS POLITICALLY SUPREME

This was when the established church of Rome was supreme. Death rode the horse. In that dark apostate period, spiritual death reigned supreme. The church was revealed in all its corruption and repulsiveness. In 538 A. D. when it is suggested that this appalling period began the church leaders assumed a new order. They now were considered as rulers of state whereas heretofore they were considered to be saints. [13] In 538 the church gained political power which rapidly increased until she oppressed all Europe. As Wylie so truthfully declared “the noonday of the papacy was the midnight of the world’: History of Protestantism”. Death rode supreme. [14] It was literal death to dissenters and it was spiritual death to her supporters. Millions of true believers were done to death. [15]

Now, for the first time, I found myself face to face with a terrible demonstration of the truth of these histories. Today we need to be aware of the fact that the Dark Ages have been whitewashed. Catholic historians have been granted permission by their church to falsify history in order to hide the awful guilt of the church. The Dark Ages are now painted as an era of chivalry, peace and stability. [16]

However both Catholic and non catholic historians of yesteryear recorded the slaughter of millions for the crime of dissent from Mother church. [17] It may interest the reader to notice the testimony of the well-known Anglican preacher, scholar and author of last century, Dr. Gratton Guinness

“It was in the early part of the year 1870, that I crossed the Pyrenees on my way from France to Spain. On reaching Madrid I went with Mr. William Green, the friend and biographer of Matamoros, to see the newly opened Quernadero. Some workmen employed in cutting a road across the summit of a low hill close to the city had inadvertently dug into a broad bank of ashes, which had been buried for one or two centuries. Mingled with the ashes they had found a large quantity of charred human bones, together with fragments of rusted iron, and melted lead. The spot was speedily verified as the famous Quemadero, or place of burning, one of twelve places where so called “heretics” were annually burned in Spain, during the reign of the Inquisition.”

“I found the road had been cut through the center of this bank of blackened bones and ashes. The strange stratum displayed seemed about six feet in depth, and covered quite a large area. There, then, exposed to the light of day were the ashes of Spanish martyrs. I stood in silence and looked at the ghastly monument. I had seen before not a little of Romanism on the continent, and in other countries, and had read of the

multitude of martyrs who had suffered cruel deaths in past centuries at the hand of Spanish priests and inquisitors, on account of their faith In the pure gospel of the grace of God, and their opposition to Popish superstitions and idolatries.”

“There, lying before me were the bones and ashes of Spanish confessors and martyrs who had suffered death at the stake. I could examine, and satisfy myself of their character. I could handle them, and did. Reverently I removed some burnt bones from the general mass, and wrapped them, together with a quantity of ashes, in a Spanish newspaper which I still possess, bearing the date of that day.” ‘History Unveiling Prophecy’ pages 393-397

As the author of ‘Great Controversy’ declared,

“Persecution opened out upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity-the accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased the darkness deepened. Those were days of peril for the church of Christ. The faithful standard bearers were few indeed. Though the truth was not left without witnesses, yet at times it seemed that error and superstition would wholly prevail, and true religion would be banished from the earth.” Great Controversy, page 54

In this period there was established the most terrible of all engines of the papacy - the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.” Great Controversy, page 59.

FOUR FORMS OF DEATH

Truly, death rode the pale horse and truly ‘the grave followed with him’. Four forms of death are then listed by which the apostate church destroyed dissenters.”With sword and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth.” Notice the fours here. Four horsemen, the fourth part of the earth, and four methods of killing. Four denotes universality and it represents the well nigh total supremacy of the false church in that period of history.

Of the four methods of killing, it lists the sword, hunger, death and the beast of the earth. Death here may denote pestilence. This prediction was literally fulfilled in the first three methods of killing but in regard to “the beasts of the earth” - there seems to be no evidence on record that God’s people were so martyred at that time. However, this does not necessarily mean, that it did not occur.

Dr. Bickersteth gives these four methods of killing a symbolic interpretation. He says “The sword represents war, crusades, in union with the state.” This was literally fulfilled in this period. Great crusades were inspired by the church, and led by the church against millions of dissenters of the time.”Hunger” denotes spiritual hunger through lack of the Word of God. Thirdly, “pestilence” denotes false doctrine and fourthly “beasts of the earth” represent to wolves in sheep’s clothing” referring of course to the priests and friars of the day.

FOURTH PART OF THE EARTH

“Power was given unto them (death and the. grave) over the fourth part of the earth.”

The church’s influence at that time extended over approximately one quarter of the then known world. There are some who claim that the pale horse period applies to the last days. Unfortunately Babylon’s domination of the last days will not be over a fourth part of the earth - it will be worldwide.”All the world wondered after the Beast,” “All that dwell on the earth shall worship him.” Revelation 13:3,8.

Indicating it is a worldwide power. This pale horse only fits the Dark Ages of church supremacy when the noonday of the apostate church was the midnight of the world.

REASON FOR REIGN OF THE FALSE CHURCH

In the light of these terrible facts of history, why was it that God permitted this reign of Antichrist? Why did Heaven permit such awful tribulation upon his people? This deserves consideration. We suggest at least two reasons. The first reason was to reveal to the on looking universe the true character of Satan's kingdom. Originally God permitted Satan to set up his kingdom on earth in order to reveal to the universe whether Satan's claims were right or not. There they beheld the fearful outworking of Satan's principles in the cruel and bloody history of the false church.

"That gigantic system of religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will." Great Controversy, page 50.

The second reason is a sad one but it seems that it was essential. The reason God permitted Babylon to prevail over his people was in order to preserve the Christian faith, to preserve the purity of the gospel - to preserve His church. History affirms the sad fact that affluence corrupts the church and begets apostasy. On the other hand adversity purifies the church and preserves the faith.

This concludes the first section of the seven seals. The four horseman represent four phases of spiritual warfare.

1. A warfare of righteousness by Christ and his people.
2. A war against the doctrines and standards of God's church.
3. A war against the character and leadership of God's church.
4. A war against the people of God's church.

The final three seals will be dealt with in the next chapter or in the tract entitled "THE FINAL THREE".

APPENDIX

"The Oil And The Wine."

The following statement from the S. O. P. is interpreted by some to mean that it the oil and the wine" represented certain people in the church.

"He who would reform others, must first reform himself. He must obtain the spirit of his Master, and be willing, like him, to suffer reproach, and to practice self-denial. In comparison with the worth of one soul, the whole world sinks into insignificance. A desire to exercise authority, to lord it over God's heritage, will, if indulged, result in the loss of souls. Those who really love Jesus, will seek to conform their own lives to the Pattern, and will labor in his spirit for the salvation of others."

"In order to secure man to himself, and insure his eternal salvation, Christ left the royal courts of heaven, and came to this earth, endured the agonies of sin and shame in men's stead, and died to make him free. In view of the infinite price paid for man's redemption, how dare any professing the name of Christ treat with indifference one of his little ones? How carefully should brethren and sisters in the church guard every word and action, lest they hurt the oil and the wine. How patiently, kindly, and affectionately should they deal with the purchase of the blood of Christ: How faithfully and earnestly should they labor to lift up the desponding and the discouraged! How tenderly should they treat those who are trying to obey the truth, and have no encouragement at home, who have constantly to breathe the atmosphere of unbelief and darkness." 5 Testimonies, page 614-615.

At first glance it appears that "the oil and the wine" is applied to "his little ones", "the desponding and discouraged, those trying to obey the truth and have no encouragement at home". This interpretation of the S. O. P. statement appears to the author to conflict with normal Bible interpretation. If the above is how the S. O. P. uses the phrase, then maybe it is taking it out of context and employing the phrase "in a homiletic manner". On the other hand, could it be that the S. O. P. is warning us to take care of those who are immature, or in discouraging circumstances etc. lest by our lack of sympathy and understanding they be led to look upon the truth of God - the righteousness of Christ and true doctrine - "the oil and wine" - in an

unfavorable light and give up their faith? This would certainly be "hurting the oil and the wine". This view would then harmonize with normal Bible interpretation.

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11. The Three Sealing Of The Saints

The Three Seals That Are Essential For Translation

In the Gospel of Matthew is recorded an account of the burial of Jesus Christ, and how he was sealed in his death.

"The next day that followed the day of the preparation the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was still yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure till the third day, lest his disciples cam by night and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them You have a watch (or guard) go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulcher sure sealing the stone and setting a watch." Matthew 27:62-66.

THE SEAL OF BABYLON

This seal with which they sealed the sepulcher was the seal of the empire of Rome. It was called 'Sigillum Solus', the Seal of the Sun. It was connected with Sun worship and originally came from Babylon. It was a rectangle of squares and in each square there was a number and the total of the numbers amounted to six hundred and sixty six. It was the seal of Rome, the seal of Babylon, and this seal was placed on Jesus' tomb, in an endeavor to keep him in the prison house of death.

"Christ was still a prisoner in his narrow tomb. Roman soldiers were keeping their watch. And there were unseen watchers. Hosts of evil angels were gathered about the place. Had it been possible, the prince of darkness with his apostate army would have kept forever sealed, the tomb that held the Son of God." Desire Ages, page 779.

THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT

But there was another seal with which Jesus was sealed. It was connected with his life, not his death. This seal is alluded to in the gospel of John."For him (Jesus) bath the Father sealed." John 6:27.

This sealing is associated with Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism. It was prefigured in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. When the Israelites brought their offerings for sacrifice, before they could be offered, the animal must be brought to the priest for inspection. If the priest was satisfied that the offering was free from blemish, he would then take 'The Temple Seal' and mark the animal. This sealed the animal for sacrifice, indicating that it was acceptable.

It was the same with the Lord. Jesus. When at his baptism, John the Baptist publicly announced him as 'the Lamb of God', there descended upon Jesus the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove and the voice from heaven which declared, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. ' This was the sealing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

This sealing was an assurance to Jesus that he was accepted, that he had been obedient to God. This was a wonderful assurance to Jesus as he was about to begin his difficult ministry.

BELIEVER IS SEALED BY THE SPIRIT

Now scripture declares that not only was Jesus sealed with the Spirit but the believer in Jesus is likewise sealed with the Spirit.

“After you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Ephesians 1:13.

There is a sealing that occurs simultaneously with our conversion to Christ. The literal Greek renders it, ‘when you believed, you were also sealed’. (Abbott) Thus there is a sealing of the believer as soon as he accepts the Lord Jesus and receives the Holy Spirit.

“He which establishes us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.” 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.

IT INVOLVES A GUARANTEE OF SALVATION

This means that when we receive the seal of the Spirit there is placed in our hearts, an earnest, a guarantee, of salvation, an assurance of forgiveness.

A GUARANTEE OF OWNERSHIP AND INHERITANCE

But more than that. This seal involves an assurance that we belong to God.

“The foundation of God stands sure having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his.” 2 Timothy 2:19.

When we receive the seal of the Spirit we also receive a beautiful assurance that we belong to God, that we are His sons and daughters, members of God’s family. Again this seal of the spirit involves an assurance that one day we will inherit the kingdom.

“You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Ephesians 1:13-14.

In this seal is a pledge of the inheritance that we will receive in the kingdom at the Second Advent. Through the centuries millions of Christians, without any outward evidence, have accepted God’s promise of an eternal inheritance. How can we explain this? This blessed assurance within the believer comes with the seal of the Holy Spirit which we receive at conversion.

“Those who believed in Christ (referring to Pentecost) were sealed by the Holy Spirit.” 6 Bible Commentary, page 1055.

“The Holy Spirit was given to them (the Apostles) in its fullness, sealing them for their work.” Acts Apostles, page 30.

This is the first of the three seals that are essential for the believer.

THE SEAL OF THE LAW

The second seal is a seal with which seventh-day Adventists are usually familiar. This is the seal of the law or seal of the Sabbath.

“Seal the law among my disciples!” Isaiah 8:16.

While this chapter of Isaiah had its initial application to Isaiah’s day, it also has a latter day application. Amongst God’s people, in the latter days, God’s law is to be sealed.

THE SEAL INVOLVES THE SABBATH

This seal is connected with God’s law. Every law, to be valid, must have a seal, therefore God’s law must also have a seal. A seal contains three elements. It must contain the name of the person or authority, his title, and the territory or dominion over which he rules. These three elements are found in one commandment only, of God’s law. That commandment is the fourth commandment, the commandment of the Sabbath. In this command we have God’s name ‘The Lord thy God’; His title, ‘him that made heaven and earth’, Creator; and thirdly, we have the territory or dominion over which God rules, ‘heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is’. Exodus 20:8-11. Only in the Sabbath command are there the three elements that make up the seal of the law.

SEAL FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Other scriptures clearly declare that the Sabbath is the sign or seal between God and his people.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath. . . it is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.” Exodus 31:16.

Who is Israel? In the New Testament the term “Israel” is applied to the Christian church.

“If you be Christ’s then are you Abraham’s seed.” Galatians 3:29.

An Israelite then is one who belongs to Christ. This means that Christians are called to keep the Sabbath and it then becomes the sign or seal between the Christian and God.

SEAL A SIGN OF CREATION

In what way is the weekly Sabbath a sign or seal to the Christian? First of all it is a great sign of creation, that God created all things.

“It is a sign (or seal) between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” Exodus 31:17.

A SIGN OF OUR ORIGIN

The Sabbath is also a sign or seal of our origin. It tells us from whence we came. It takes us back to Genesis where we are informed that ‘God created man in his own image’. Adam was created ‘a son of God,’ (Luke 3:38). Therefore we are descended from a son of God. What a high and holy origin belongs to our race.

A SIGN OF RESTORATION TO GOD’S IMAGE

The seal of the Sabbath also assures us that God intends to restore in us ‘the image of God’, that we have lost.

“Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign between me and you that I am the Lord that sanctify you.” Ezekiel 20:12.

Sanctify means, to make a man holy, to change a man’s character. It means the restoration of the image of God in man.

HOW THE SEAL OF THE LAW IS RECEIVED

How does the believer receive the seal of the Sabbath?

“Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign (or seal) between me and you.” Ezekiel 20:20.

Hallow means to treat as sacred. Thus to receive the seal - means treating the Sabbath as sacred, keeping it holy.

“Those who desire to have the seal of God must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 98.

The Christian is not merely to believe in the Sabbath, he is to keep it. Bible prophecy reveals that in the last days God’s people are to have a special mark placed upon them and that mark is involved with the keeping of his holy Sabbath.

THE SEALING MESSAGE OF THE LAST DAYS

In the seventh chapter of Revelation there is brought to view an unusual sealing work of the last days.

“After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea nor on any tree.” Revelation 7:1.

Winds represent war, strife and commotion, the judgments of God. The agents of heaven are shown, holding back the judgments of God until God seals his people.

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying Hurt not the earth neither the sea nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.” Revelation 7:2.

COMMENCED IN 1844

This is called ‘the sealing message’. Seventh-day Adventists have held that this sealing message commenced in 1844 and concludes at the close of probation. This sealing message is to go to “the servants of God¹ wherever they might be, bringing to their attention the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and encouraging them to hallow the Sabbath and thereby receive the seal of the living God. This sealing message produces the remnant or the final segment of the Christian church, and prepares them for translation. There is only one group

which is fulfilling the prediction of Revelation 7:2. This is the Seventh-day Adventist Movement. This people are proclaiming the truth of the Sabbath throughout the world, revealing the Sabbath, as the seal of the living God.

TWO APPLICATIONS OF REVELATION 7:1-4

According to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy there are two applications of 'the sealing' of Revelation 7. First of all it applies to the seal of the law - the Sabbath, the message of which is to go 'to every nation, kindred tongue and people'.

The second application refers to a third seal - 'the seal of redemption'. This seal is also to be placed upon the foreheads of the saints, prior to the close of probation.

THE SEAL OF REDEMPTION

This seal or 'mark of redemption' is described very fully in the Spirit of Prophecy and is based on the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. This prophecy had its initial, local, and literal application to Israel in Old Testament times. It now has a spiritual, worldwide application to our times, to spiritual Israel - the church.

EZEKIEL 9

"He cried in mine ears with a loud voice saying, Cause them that have charge over the city (Jerusalem) to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate . . . and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in and stood beside the brazen . altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub whereupon he was, to the thresh hold of the house, and he called to the man clothed with linen with the writer's inkhorn by his side, and the Lord said to him, Go through the midst of the city and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing Go ye after him through the city and smite; let not your eyes spare neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children - but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house," Ezekiel 4:1-6.

What a terrible scene! It describes the marking of God's people in the city - representing the church of God, in the last days. Those who do not receive the mark, receive the judgments of God but those who do receive this mark will be protected. This is spoken of as 'the mark of redemption'. It is a seal of protection. This mark is in the form of the Hebrew letter 'Tau' the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

THIS SEAL APPLIES TO THE REMNANT OF THE CHURCH

"By demarcating then in this way the angel marked them as the last of the righteous." Dr. W. Shea 'Sanctuary And The Atonement,' page 287.

This is the righteous remnant. Here we have a marking of the remnant of the woman's seed. Notice the setting. It is in the setting of the investigative judgment. The man that does the marking is clothed with linen, similar to the garments of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. This is a Day of Atonement setting. The man had a writer's inkhorn by his side. This suggests that he is recording, and decisions are being made. This suggests that there is a marking or sealing during the Day of Atonement.

SEALING IN DAY OF ATONEMENT

This coincides with the ritual on the Day of Atonement back in the days of ancient Israel. In the typical scene, there was a sealing on the earthly Day of Atonement.

"As the day (of atonement) draws to its close, the earnestness and intensity increase. It is generally believed that the close of this day is regarded in heaven as a sealing time. If the people have done sufficient repenting they will receive a good seal, which means they have stood the test in heaven. If not, then they fear that they are lost and may die at any time. Hence in their closing prayers of the day, instead of saying 'Our Father our King, write our name in the Book of Remembrance', etc they say, 'Our Father, our King, seal our name in the Book of Life . . . seal our name in the Book of Remembrance.' When the service is ended they greet each other with the salutation 'I hope you have received a good seal'." F. C. Gilbert 'Practical Lessons From the Experience of Israel,' Pages 536-537. 2nd Edition.

As there was a sealing on the typical Day of Atonement, so likewise in the great anti-typical Day of Atonement, in which we now stand. At its close there will also be a sealing of the saints. Ezekiel 9 and Revelation 7 refer to this same sealing.

"This sealing of the servants of God, is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision." Testimonies Ministers, page 445.

Thus while Revelation 7 refers first of all to the sealing of the Law, it has a second application to 'the Seal of Redemption' - the same seal or mark of Ezekiel 9.

TWO PICTURES OF THE SEALING IN REVELATION

In the Book of Revelation there are presented two different pictures of the sealing work. The first sealing is in Revelation 7. The second picture of the sealing is in Revelation 14:1-5. However in Revelation 14 it is not spoken of as the seal. It is described as the 'Father's name written in their foreheads'. The name of God represents the character of God and this represents the same as the seal of Revelation 7. Thus we have two pictures of the sealing? Why? The first reason is that Revelation 14 reveals the character of those who are sealed, and when one reads the beautiful description of the 144,000 there, he realizes that they have reached perfection of character. 'They are without fault before the throne of God.'

On the other hand, Revelation 7 gives the purpose or reason for the sealing. And what is the purpose of the sealing? It is to protect the saints during the time of trouble. The seal is a seal of protection. The angels are commanded to hold the four winds - the judgments of God - until the saints are sealed. Why? Because when the winds are released, when the judgments of God come, only those sealed will receive divine protection.

In Ezekiel 9:6 it says, 'Slay utterly old and young-but come not near any man upon whom is the mark'. It is a mark or seal of protection.

In Revelation 6:14 onwards there is pictured the terrifying events of the sixth seal, when the heavens depart as a scroll and in the distance the unsaved behold the coming Christ. They rush to the rocks and mountains, and the question is forced from their lips, 'The great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?' The answer is given in the next chapter - Revelation 7. The ones who will stand in the day of his wrath are those who are sealed in their foreheads with the seal of the living God. The purpose then of the third seal is to protect the saints.

THREE ELEMENTS IN SEAL OF REDEMPTION

What is involved in the seal of protection? Like the second seal it also is formed of three elements.

"He that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from my God and I will write upon him my new name." Revelation 3:12.

"On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name." Early Writings, page 15.

What is the significance of the three items that comprise this seal? They denote ownership, destiny, and character. First of all the name of God is upon them. They belong to God - they belong to the Father. Secondly the name of the city of God is upon them, the New Jerusalem. This indicates their destiny. They are destined for the New Jerusalem. (7 Bible Commentary, page 970) Thirdly, Christ's new name is in the seal, indicating that it's bearer has the character of Christ.

THE SEAL DENOTES OWNERSHIP

In describing the saints during the final scenes of the last great conflict we read,

"The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that his own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed, 'God, New Jerusalem'. They are God's property, his possession." Testimonies Ministers, page 444-446.

This is the first significance of this final seal that is placed upon the saints before the end. The next point concerning this seal is that it is invisible to human eyes.

AN INVISIBLE SEAL

"It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes can read, for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption." 4 Bible Commentary, page 1161

This is reminiscent of the Passover in Egypt. The destroying angel, when he saw the blood over the doorway, passed over, and the Israelites were protected. When the angels with the seven last plagues pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the last generation of this earth, those who have the Seal of Redemption upon them will be passed over - they will be protected during the time of trouble. (7 Bible Commentary, page 968-969)

TIME OF TROUBLE DESCRIBED

When we read about the time of trouble we certainly will need divine protection.

“The Day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. All hands shall be faint, every heart shall melt.” Isaiah 13:5-7.

“The Day of the Lord is at hand, as a destruction from the Almighty will it come.” Joel 1:14.”The Day of the Lord is great and very terrible, who can abide it?” Joel 2:11.

“Ifie mighty man shall cry there bitterly.” Zephaniah 1:14-18.

“It is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness of gloominess of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring distress upon men . . . it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.” Zephaniah 1;14-15; 2:1-3.

“There shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.” 6 Testimonies, page 408.

“Everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere.” I Testimonies, page 268.

“Soon the dead and dying will be all around us, those only who have the seal of the living God will be sheltered from the storm of wrath that will soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth.” ‘Present Truth,’ page 31, 1849.

Thank God for the seal of protection that God offers his people.

THE TIME THIS SEAL IS RECEIVED

The next point of importance with this seal concerns the time that we receive it. There are some who believe that this sealing is accomplished at the time of the latter rain. This view must be rejected. When we examine scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy on this question, it is very clear that the final seal of God is received by God’s people immediately prior to the Close of Probation. Nowhere does the Spirit of Prophecy state that the final seal is given at the time of the latter rain. To the contrary the Spirit of Prophecy is clear that the final seal will be affixed after the Latter Rain and Loud Cry.

CONFUSION BETWEEN THE 2 SEALS

Because of the confusion between the seal of the law (the Sabbath) and the final seal of redemption, it appears that a statement in Great Controversy has been misunderstood. In the chapter entitled ‘The Final Warning’, which outlines the events of the ‘Loud Cry’, it says:

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controversial . . . when one class . . . receives the Mark of the Beast, the other-receives the Seal of God.” Great Controversy, page 605.

This seal is the seal of the law - the Sabbath - and while individuals accept the truth of the Sabbath, they will be receiving this seal. This could continue until near the Close of Probation when the last of God’s people come out of Babylon. However, the seal of the law, while it is the sign of our sanctification and loyalty, etc. , and is closely associated with the seal of redemption, yet on the other hand, it is quite distinct from it.

The seal of redemption is placed upon God’s people after the formation of the image to the beast. (1 Selected Messages, page 66, 111)

“The image of the beast will be formed before probation closes, for it is to be the great test for the people of God. This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 976.

What is the Image to the beast? When the united Protestant churches ally themselves with the state and issue religious laws - particularly Sunday laws, then the image of the beast will be formed. (7 Bible Commentary, page 976:1) Seeing the image to the beast and Sunday laws come into existence in reaction to the Loud Cry of the 3rd Angel’s Message (Great Controversy, page 607) the final seal of God cannot be affixed to the saints until well after the Latter Rain etc.

THE SEAL IS RECEIVED NEAR CLOSE OF PROBATION

This is confirmed by the following statement:

“When the third angel’s message was closing, the power of God had rested upon his people. They had received the latter rain, the last warning had sounded everywhere. It had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth. I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer’s inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported that his work was done and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus throw down the censer and say, It is done. The angelic host made the solemn declaration, He that is unjust let him be unjust still.” Early Writings, page 279.

It was when ‘the third angel’s message was closing’ that the final seal is given. The angel with the writer’s inkhorn returns to heaven because his sealing is completed and the announcement is then made of probation’s close.

“Just before we entered the time of trouble we all received the seal of the living God, then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 968.

The time of trouble here, refers to the 7 last plagues which commence at the close of probation.

“The living righteous will receive the seal of God prior to the close of probation.” 1 Selected Messages, page 66.

“When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided, there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon his people.” 5 Testimonies, page 213.

These with many other statements in the Spirit of Prophecy clearly show that the final seal of protection is applied just before the close of probation, in fact, it is when the death decree is issued that the seal is affixed.

“When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless forever.” 5 Testimonies, page 216.

What stamp is impressed? The stamp of the seal. And what is the decree that goes forth? It appears to be the death decree. (See 5 Testimonies, page 213)

“While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels unseen were passing to and fro placing upon them the seal of the living God.” 5 Testimonies, page 475-476.

In commenting on the marking or sealing of Ezekiel 9, the prophet states,

“When Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat and put on the garments of vengeance.” 5 Testimonies, page 207-208.

The reception of the final seal then is just before the close of probation.

THE SEAL DENOTES FIXATION OF CHARACTER

The next point about this final seal is what it signifies in regard to character. It denotes permanency of character. It is the sign that the characters of the saints are now fixed, that they have reached a state of permanent stability.

“The people of God are sealed in their foreheads. It is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth both intellectually and spiritually so that they cannot be moved.” 4 Bible Commentary, page 1161

How impressive? When we receive this final seal, we will have developed a stability of character, from which we cannot be moved. We will have reached the stage where we will fully love righteousness, and fully hate iniquity. This could not be said of the majority of us now. There are some things that we may not do but which we do not fully hate. By the time we receive this final seal we will have come to the place in our characters, in our minds, where we fully love righteousness and fully hate iniquity. On the other hand, with regard to the unsaved, it will also denote that they have reached a permanency of character in regard to evil. (Revelation 22:11)

THE SEAL DENOTES ETERNAL SECURITY

This final seal indicates that we are eternally secure.

“The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, never more to be defiled by the corruptions of the world.”

“Now that they are eternally secure from the tempters devices . . . holy angels unseen, were passing to and fro placing upon them the seal of the living God.” 5 Testimonies, page 475-476.

This means that not only are our characters fixed but we are eternally secure, nevermore to be defiled, we will have ceased to commit sin.

“As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.” 7 Testimonies, page 970.

THE SEAL DENOTES PERFECTION OF CHARACTER

We may reflect the image of Christ in a partial degree now, but by the time this final seal is affixed we will reflect the image of Christ fully. We will “retain the image of Christ.” This seal then denotes perfection of character. This is the significance of Revelation 14:1-5. This group that is sealed prior to the close of probation have in their foreheads the name of God.

“A lamb stood upon Mt. Zion and with him an 144,000 having his Father’s name (or character) written in their foreheads . . . these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and to the lamb and in their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

In commenting on this scripture the Spirit of Prophecy says,

“While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels were passing to and fro, placing on them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand on Mt. Zion with the Lamb having the Father’s name written in their foreheads.” 5 Testimonies, page 475-476

The above scripture is a description of the 144,000, the number representing the final group of God’s people who will be translated.

It says ‘there is no guile in their mouth’. This is the character, that God will finally produce in his saints, so that they will be fit for translation.

“The seal of God will never be placed on the forehead of an impure man or women. It will never be placed on the forehead of an ambitious, world-loving man or women one. . . of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God.” 5 Testimonies, page 216

Those who receive the final seal will be overcomers. God will have produced in them a perfect, mature character.

“Those who receive the seal of God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.” Early Writings, page 71.

THE SEAL REVEALS WHAT GOD WILL DO FOR BELIEVERS

Sadly this beautiful truth engenders a negative reaction among many today, but it is the clear unequivocal teaching of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy again and again. Some claim that they become discouraged by it, but this is a lack of faith. It is a promise. It tells us what God guarantees to do for us. This is what the final sealing involves. Our responsibility is to trust and obey. Believe that God will accomplish what he promises.

“Those that overcome the world the flesh and the devil, will be the favored ones that will receive the seal of God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal. Those who are plmm;ng sin and acting it, will be passed by. Only those, who in their attitude before God are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God s protection: those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Savior, who have works corresponding to their avowed faith.” Testimonies Ministers, page 445.

What a standard, but how reassuring: The promises of God are clear that He will accomplish it. ‘It is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ Philippians 2:13.

The seal is “upon those who bear a likeness to Christ in character.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 970.

“They must overcome pride, passion, spiritual slothfulness and make a determined effort for symmetry of character.” 5 Testimonies, page 216.

Here is Heaven’s answer to those who proclaim that we are unable to keep the commandments of God, that we will sin till the Second Advent. The truth is exactly the opposite. We are to gain “victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, over every wrong word and action.” Early Writings, page 71

“Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth, these are receiving the heavenly mould and preparing for the seal of God.” 5 Testimonies, page 216

THE SEAL FOR THOSE THAT SIGH AND CRY

The prophet Ezekiel in his portrayal of the final sealing declared,

“Put a mark (or seal) on the foreheads of the men, that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” Ezekiel 9:4

“The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. Those who have had the greatest light and privileges have become contaminated by the prevailing iniquity. Love for the divine precepts increases with one class, according as contempt for them increases with another class. The time for God’s visitation has about come. Although loathe to punish nevertheless he will punish and that speedily.”

“Those who walk in the light are not to sit in quiet unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves that God will shelter his people in the day of visitation. They should labor diligently to save others.”

“At the time when danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company . . . will be sighing and crying for the abominations. These have been holding forth the words of life had reprov’d, counseled and entreated. But more especially will their prayers arise on behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world. The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. Some repented and humbled their hearts-but the glory had departed from Israel. His presence and power were lacking.”

TWO CLASSES DEVELOP IN THE CHURCH

In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers will be distinguished-by their soul anguish expressed in lamentation, weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, these-will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed-with the unholy works and conversation of the wicked.

They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity and hence are filled with grief and alarm. They see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament, because pride, avarice, selfishness and deception of almost every kind are in the church.

JUDGMENTS FALL ON UNFAITHFUL IN CHURCH

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. Those who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that the Lord is too merciful to visit his people in judgment.

Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift their voice like a trumpet, to show God’s people their transgressions. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins . . . were unrevealed. These persons came to feel secure in their deceptions but he will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide.

Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous, prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference. It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws his presence from those-who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once his faithful servants-but they departed from him and led others into error and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure. The day of God’s vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those ONLY who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. ’ emphasis ours 5 Testimonies, page 208-212.

A SIGN OF RESTORATION OF GOD’S IMAGE

“The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. . . the anguish and humiliation of God’s people, is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin.” 5 Testimonies, page 474-475

PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL SEALING

In the light of the fearful conflict in which we are now entering, what are the essentials in preparing for the final seal of redemption, protection and deliverance?

1. We are to preserve the faith in its purity.

“When the Lord comes forth as an Avenger-, he will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in it’s purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world!” 5 Testimonies, page 210

What is ‘the faith’ that we are to preserve in it’s purity? It is the Three Angel’s messages of Revelation 14. These distinctive messages and no others, prepare God’s people for the sealing.

“The third angel is binding, or sealing them, in bundles for the heavenly garner.” Early Writings, page 89. This tells us of the vital necessity to fully believe and obey the three angels’ messages.

“Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light they knew, their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. However high, my minister may have stood in favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go out into darkness and Satanic delusions, and will lead others in the same path.” 5 Testimonies, page 213-214

“God has shown me that at the very time that the signs of the times are being fulfilled all around us, when we hear as it were, the very tread of the hosts of heaven, fulfilling their mission, men of intelligence, men in responsible positions, will be putting rotten timbers into their character building, material which is consumed in the day of God. They will lose heaven and an eternity of bliss.” Testimonies Ministers, page 446-447

What a solemn and dire warning this is, to everyone who knows the truth for these last days?

2 We are to expect and welcome special trials, as God’s method of purifying us for the final seal.”Those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ’s sake, that they would have trials to pass through that would be keen and cutting, in order that they may be purified and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of God, pass through the time of trouble, and see the King in his beauty.” Early Writings, page 67.

“We will know the conflict of overcoming.” 5 Testimonies, page 215.

3 We are to seek help from God NOW.

“May God help his people now, for what can they do in such a fearful conflict without his assistance! Courage, fortitude, faith and implicit trust in God’s power to save, do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor, and firm adherence to the right, the children of God were sealing their destiny.” 5 Testimonies, page 213.

We must look to Jesus as our pattern or example.

“We are to look to the man Christ Jesus who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. he is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us take our minds off the perplexities and difficulties of this life, and fix than on him, that beholding, we may be changed into his likeness. As we look to him and think of him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 970.

GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PLAN IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

Whether we believe it or not, God will fulfill his plan for his remnant people. He will have a people holy and undefiled, ready for translation.

“A great work was to be accomplished to prepare a people to be sealed with the seal of the living God.” 2 Selected Messages, page 73.

“The great, grand work of bringing out a people, who will have Christ like characters and who will be able to stand in the day of the Lord, is to be accomplished.” 6 Testimonies, page 129.

“In a little while, everyone who is a child of God, will have this seal placed upon him, though united in church capacity, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 969.

Obnly those who receive the seal of God will pass through the gates of the Holy City.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 970

CONCLUSION

Here then are the three seals that are essential for the believer. Which seal is the first in importance? Unquestionably it is the seal of the Spirit. Without conversion, without the possession of the third person of the Godhead, the true reception of the final two seals is utterly impossible.

The seal of the Sabbath is next in importance. It is the outward sign that the believer is cooperating with God in the process of sanctification or holy living - of obedience to all the commandments of God. It is the outward sign that God is preparing believers for the final seal of redemption, which is essential for every saint who passes through the seven last plagues and is translated.

The first seal is given by the Holy Spirit. The second seal is received through the believer’s obedience, when he hallows the Sabbath. The third seal will be affixed by a special ministry of the angels of God.

12. A Shelter In The Storm!

Exposition of Revelation Chapter 7.

“After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.” Revelation 7:1

This does not denote that the prophet now sees things that transpired after the events of Revelation 6, but that after the vision of chapter 6 he sees another representation concerning the saints in the end time.

“I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth.” Scripture reveals that to angels has been delegated by heaven, authority over the various elements. Scripture speaks of an angel having “power over fire” (Revelation 15:8) and “the angel of the waters.” (Revelation 16:5).

The number four denotes universality, telling us that the events predicted are to be worldwide. The four corners of the earth is an Old Testament term which is better translated ‘four quarters of the earth.’ [1] The expression “four angels” represents a worldwide angelic influence keeping in check the forces of destruction.

“Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with natural sight, the world of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God’s people shall be accomplished.” [2]

“The four winds” represent the world wide forces of destruction. Winds in Scripture represent war, strife and commotion, especially when the close of human probation occurs and the judgments of God in the seven last plagues fall upon the rejectors of the truth of God. This picture, as usual, in Revelation, is borrowed from the Old Testament.

The prophet Jeremiah in predicting the destruction of Elam (Persia) declared -

“Upon Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven and will scatter them toward all those winds and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, said the Lord and will destroy from thence the king and his princes.” Jeremiah 49:33-39.)

The prophet Jeremiah, when recording the world’s finale, as a result of letting go the four winds, declared -

“A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, [the unsaved] He will plead with all flesh, He will give them that are wicked to the sword. Evil shall go forth from nation to nation and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coast of the earth and the slain of the Lord shall be from one of the earth to the other.” (Jeremiah 25:31-33.)

The release of the winds of strife by angelic powers undoubtedly will produce “the great whirlwind” of destruction predicted to occur in “The Day of the Lord.” (Zephaniah 1: 14-18; 2:1-3) Some endeavor to symbolize “the earth, the sea, nor the trees.” We suggest that these terms are not symbolic but apply literally to the surface of the planet. When the seven last plagues fall they will seriously affect these areas of the earth. The second plague affects the oceans and the seas. The third plague affects all the water on the

dying planet, and the fourth plague of fierce heat will surely involve the destruction of the remaining forests of the world as well as vegetation in general.

Why are angelic powers commissioned by heaven to hold back the winds of judgment?

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not till we have sealed the servants of ‘our God in their foreheads.” (Revelation 7:2, 3)

An angel in prophecy often represents a message or a movement of God, i. e. a group of believers entrusted with a special message for the world.

This “Ascending from the east” denotes the origin and manner of the message. The east is the location from which any object is first seen when approaching our world from outer space. It is the designated point of the compass from which heavenly powers approach the earth [3]. It is a declaration that the angel or message is from heaven - it is God inspired.

Secondly it declares how the message comes. Like the sun in the east whose early rays are weak and gentle so the sealing message when it rose was small, weak and insignificant, and then like the sun, it gained power and strength until it reaches the zenith of its power in the final proclamation of the gospel, which is called “The Loud Cry.” (Revelation 18:1-4) What is the content of the sealing message? The answer to this is found when it is ascertained what the seal of God is. Scripture reveals three main seals associated with God’s people. The first seal is referred to as “The seal of the Holy Spirit.” It was initially connected with Jesus Christ and is alluded to in the gospel of John “For Him (Jesus) has the Father sealed.” (John 6:27.)

This sealing is associated with Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism It was prefigured in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament When the Israelites brought their offerings for sacrifice, before they could be offered, the animal must be brought to the priest for inspection. If the priest was satisfied that the offering was free from blemish, he would then take ‘The Temple Seal’ and mark the animal. This sealed the animal for sacrifice, indicating that it was acceptable.

It was the same with the Lord Jesus. When at his baptism, John the Baptist publicly announced him as The Lamb of God, there descended upon Jesus the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove and the voice from heaven which declared, ‘This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. ’ This was the sealing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

This sealing was an assurance to Jesus that He was accepted, that He had been obedient to God. This would have been a wonderful encouragement to Him, as He was about to begin His difficult ministry.

THE BELIEVER IS SEALED BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture declares that not only was Jesus sealed with the Spirit but the believer in Jesus is likewise sealed with the Spirit.

“After you believed, You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Ephesians 1:13)

This is a sealing that occurs simultaneously with our conversion to Christ. The literal Greek renders it, ‘when you believed, you were also sealed. ’ (Abbott) Thus there is a sealing of the believer as soon as he accepts the Lord Jesus and receives the Holy Spirit.

“He which establishes us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22.)

THIS SEAL IS A GUARANTEE OF SALVATION

This means that when we receive the seal of the Spirit there is placed in our hearts or minds an earnest, or a pledge, or a guarantee of salvation, an assurance of forgiveness and acceptance.

THIS SEAL IS A GUARANTEE OF OWNERSHIP

It involves an assurance that we belong to God.

“The foundation of God stands sure having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His.”(2 Timothy 2:19)

When we receive the seal of the Spirit we also receive a beautiful assurance that we belong to God, that we are His sons and daughters, members of God's family. This seal is also a guarantee of inheritance. The seal of the spirit involves an assurance that one day we will inherit the kingdom.

"You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Ephesians 1:13-14)

This inheritance we will receive in the kingdom at the Second Advent. Through the centuries millions of Christians, without an outward evidence, have accepted God's promise of an eternal inheritance. How can we explain this? This blessed assurance within the believer is involved in the seal of the Holy Spirit which we receive at conversion. The Holy Spirit is not the seal. He is the sealer. He produces the seal within the believer.

"Those who believed in Christ (referring to Pentecost) were sealed by the Holy Spirit." [4]

"The Holy Spirit was given to them (the Apostles) in its fullness, sealing them for their work." [5]

Every true Christian through the ages has received this seal of the Spirit. This is the first of the three seals that are essential for the believer.

THE SEAL OF THE LAW

The second seal is a seal which is emphasized in the end-time of our world's history. This is the seal of the law or the seal of the Sabbath."Seal the law among my disciples." (Isaiah 8:16)

While this chapter of Isaiah had its initial application to Isaiah's day, it also has a latter day application. Amongst God's people, in the latter days, God's law is to be sealed.

THE SEAL INVOLVES THE SABBATH

The seal is connected with God's law. Every law, to be valid, must have a seal. Therefore God's law must also have a seal. A seal contains three elements. It must contain the name of the person or authority, his title, and the territory or dominion over which he rules. These three elements are found in one commandment only, of God's law. That commandment is the fourth commandment, the commandment of the Sabbath. In this command we have God's name, 'the Lord thy God' - His title, 'Him that made heaven and earth' or Creator; and thirdly, we have the territory or dominion over which God rules: "heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is." (Exodus 20:8-11) Only in the Sabbath command are the three elements that make up the seal of the law.

THE SEAL IS FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Other Scriptures clearly declare that the Sabbath is the sign or seal between God and His people.

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath . . . it is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever." (Exodus 31:16)

Who is Israel? In the New Testament the term "Israel" is applied to the Christian church, to true believers."If you be Christ's then are you Abraham's seed." (Galatians 3:29)

"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of men but of God." (Romans 2:28-29)

An Israelite then is one who belongs to Christ. This means that Christians are called to keep the Sabbath and it then becomes the sign or seal between the Christian and his God.

THIS SEAL IS A SIGN OF CREATION

In what way is the weekly Sabbath a sign or seal to the Christian? First of all it is a great sign of creation, that God created all things.

"It is a sign (or seal) between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." (Exodus 31:17)

THIS SEAL IS ALSO A SIGN OF OUR ORIGIN

It tells us from whence we came. It takes us back to Genesis where we are informed that 'God created man in His own image'. Adam was created 'a son of God,' (Luke 3:38). Therefore we are descended from a son of God. What a high and holy origin belongs to our race.

IT IS A SIGN ALSO OF OUR RESTORATION TO GOD'S IMAGE

The seal of the Sabbath also assures us that God intends to restore in us 'the image of God', which we have lost.

"Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign between me and you that I am the Lord that sanctifies you." (Ezekiel 20:12)

Sanctify means, to make a man holy, to change a man's character. It means the restoration of the image of God in man.

HOW DOES ONE RECEIVE THE SEAL?

The believer receives the seal of the law by his observance of the true Sabbath.

"Hallow my Sabbath and they shall be a sign (or seal) between me and you." (Ezekiel 20:20)

Hallow means to treat as sacred. Thus, to receive the seal, means treating the Sabbath as sacred, keeping it holy.

"Those who desire to have the seal of God must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." [6]

The Christian is not merely to believe in the Sabbath, he is to keep it. The prediction of Revelation 7 then, reveals that in the end time, prior to the Day of the Lord and the judgments of God upon the earth, a divine message is to sound to mankind calling God's servants back to the original rest day as decreed in the fourth commandment. Is such a call being sounded? The Seventh-day Adventist movement holds that this section

of Scripture is part of their bible authority for proclaiming the Sabbath message to the world. In 1844 this call to mankind commenced and today this message is being proclaimed in most areas of the world. The return to the true Sabbath and the observance of God's commandments they proclaim is one of the essentials in order to be ready for Christ's return.

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." (Verse 4)

As shown above the term Israel in the New Testament applies to spiritual Israel, to true, born again Christians. In verses 4-8 are listed the twelve names of the tribes from whom twelve thousand each are sealed. This makes up the number 144,000. These terms are to be understood in a symbolic sense. [7]

The number 144,000 represents the final product of the sealing message. They are the ones who, in answer to the despairing cry of the unsaved of chapter 6:17, will be able to stand when Christ appears in power and glory at the Second Advent. It is not necessarily a literal number. It is a multiple of twelve and in Scripture twelve is associated with church government.

Altogether there were thirteen tribes of Israel, but they are always classed as twelve tribes. This indicates that we need to take care in classing the 144,000 as literal. In the Old Testament the order of the tribes is not always listed in their correct order.

There are approximately eighteen different orders of the tribes. But Revelation 7 differs from all the Old Testament orders of listings. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are missing. This is because these two tribes were involved in apostasy. In their places are the names of Joseph and Levi. However the order of the names of the tribes is changed.

Judah leads instead of Reuben

Reuben is second instead of Simeon.

Levi is eighth instead of third.

Gad is third instead of eighth.

Asher is fourth instead of ninth.

Naphtali is fifth instead of tenth.

Manasseh is sixth instead of eleventh.

Simeon is seventh instead of second.

Issachar is eighth instead of sixth.

Zebulon is tenth instead of fifth.

Joseph is eleventh as usual.

Benjamin is twelfth as usual.

Why this particular order of the twelve tribes? Some believe that when the Hebrew meaning of the names of each tribe is spelt out, a significant description of the character of the 144,000 is presented. The following is a suggested interpretation of the order of the twelve tribes:

Judah Praise God,

Reuben A Son,

Gad A company of sons, redeemed and

Asher Happy, after

Naphtali Wrestling with God in prayer,

Manasseh Forgetting self and the past,

Simeon Hearing God's word and

Levi Joined to God, as

Issachar Servants

Zebulon Dwelling with

Joseph Added joys and blessings, as

Benjamin Sons of the right hand of God.

After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number of all nations, and kingdoms, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10)

The Revelator is now directed from the sealed group of the end time, to the total number of the redeemed saints before the throne in the kingdom of God. What a thrilling picture. The number of the redeemed is beyond human estimation. In spite of the fact that Jesus Christ declared that -

"Straight is the gate and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there he that find it."(Matthew 7:13-14)

Out of the six thousand years of human history and the deadly reign of sin, finally there will be saved through the gospel of Christ a portion of mankind beyond human computation. What a testimony to the power of the gospel and the mercy of God.

The terminology of verses 9 and 10 shows that this marvelous scene is the antitype, a fulfillment of the celebrated feast of tabernacles of Old Testament times. This feast or festival was the final gathering of Israel for the ceremonial year. It was celebrated when the final harvest of the land had been gathered in. It lasted for eight joyful days during which the Israelites dwelt in temporary shelters or booths reminding them of the wilderness wanderings of their forebears. All this was typical of the final ingathering of God's people in the heavenly Kingdom.

THE SONG OF MOSES

“Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:10)

All the glory for the marvelous salvation of the saints will be given to the Godhead. Originally the Trinity covenanted together for the salvation of the race. The Father and the Holy Spirit sent the Son to be incarnated as a man. [8] The Son himself volunteered to be a substitute for guilty man. He was “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”(Revelation 13:8) For six thousand years the Godhead had endured the baleful presence of sin with its heart-rending consequences. The Father had suffered with the son. Their separation in payment for making atonement for the broken law, was beyond human conception. But now it is completed, the fallen race is restored, harmony reigns supreme as men and angels rejoice together around the throne.

“And all the angels stood around about the throne, and about the elders and four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God.” (Revelation 7:11)

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

TYPE

1. This feast was the final festival for the ceremonial year in Israel
2. It was celebrated after Israel had reaped the main and final harvest of the land.
3. Israel camped in temporary booths in old Jerusalem for the feast.
4. Israel kept the feast for seven days amid great rejoicing.
5. The feast concluded on the eighth day.
6. The feast was to remind Israel of their wilderness wanderings.
7. In the feast they carried palm branches which were so frequently used during their wilderness experience.
8. Israel did no servile work during the feast - they rested.
9. Only those who were born Israelites could celebrate the feast.

ANTITYPE

1. It represents the final great gathering of God’s people to the kingdom of heaven.
2. The antitype will be fulfilled after the great final harvest of Spiritual Israel is reaped at the Second Advent.
3. The saints will dwell in “The camp of the saints” in the Jerusalem [Revelation 20:9] However their permanent abode will be in the renewed earth.
4. Seven denotes continuity in Scripture, and speaks of the continual joy of the saints in the kingdom.
5. Eight in Scripture frequently denoted regeneration or resurrection, revealing that the final harvest of the saints involves the resurrection.
6. In heaven the saints also will be reminded of their earthly sojourn in the wilderness of sin.
7. The saints in heaven will “have palms in their hands” reminding them that they were “strangers and pilgrims on earth.”
8. In heaven the saints will cease from their labors and enter into their eternal rest.
9. Only those who are “born again” as spiritual Israelites will celebrate the heavenly feast

The Revelator then hears the resounding anthem of praise in the worship of the Deity. It is seven fold and commences and ends with a mighty “Amen.”

“Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God, forever and ever. Amen.” (Verse 12)

What a moving and impressive event this must be when millions of voices in perfect harmony render whole hearted praise to their Maker.

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?” (Revelation 7:13)

At first glance one might conclude that the elder is referring to the great multitude of verse 9, because they alone are so described. However, when one realizes that all the redeemed will be clothed in white, it may suggest something special about a particular group. The only other group mentioned in the chapter are the saints represented by the number 144,000. Will there be something distinctive regarding the white robes of this group? White robes symbolize righteous character - “the righteousness of the saints.” (Revelation 19:8)

The group symbolized by the 144,000 will reach a degree of character development in which they are described as having the seal of God, or the name of God, and having no guile and without fault. (Revelation 14:1-5) We suggest that they will reach a degree of character development that will be in advance of all other groups of God’s people. This appears to be confirmed in the following verses of the chapter. Another point that suggests that the elder is not alluding to the great multitude is his question - “Whence came they?” Verse 9 clearly states from whence the great multitude came, so it is justifiable to conclude that the elder is referring to the first group in the chapter - the 144,000.

The details in verses 14-17 confirm this conclusion.

“And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of (Greek.) the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Verse 14)

It would not be correct to conclude that the great multitude have come out of the great tribulation. While it is true that Jesus promised His followers:

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33.)

Nevertheless few Christians have suffered great tribulation. Therefore this group must be one that has passed through such an experience. The only one that fits the picture is the 144,000. They sing a special song - denoting a special experience (Revelation 14:3) They stand as a special group in the kingdom of God.

They have “gotten the victory over the beast and his image and over his mark and over the number of his name and stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.” (Revelation 15:2).

This is the great tribulation of the end time “the final conflict” and “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” [9]

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. : (Revelation 7:16-17)

During the seven last plagues, the 144,000 are promised protection. [10] Nevertheless they will suffer some of the effects of the plagues. These effects will be famine and pestilence, causing hunger and thirst. The sun also will scorch the unsaved with unrelenting fire. [11]

The saints will cry to God day and night for deliverance from their pursuers as a result of the death decree that will be issued against them. [12] This explains why this special group is promised a highly privileged position in the kingdom.

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day night in his temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Verses 15,17.)

This promise corresponds with the promised privileges to the 144,000 of Revelation 14. They also are very close to the throne and to the Lamb.

“I looked and lo a Lamb stood on the mount Zion and with him an hundred forty and four thousand. And they sung a new song before the throne. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:1, 3, 4)

This privileged group “serve Him day and night in His temple.” (Verse 15) In the renewed earth when the New Jerusalem becomes the capital of God’s kingdom on earth the Revelator states:

“And I saw no temple therein: [the New Jerusalem] for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it.” (Revelation 21:22)

This does not mean that there is no longer a great temple in God’s kingdom, but that the temple is no longer situated in the holy city. It could also mean that the purpose of the temple is changed. No longer is it the center of the drama of how the Deity deals with the sin question. Sin has now been eliminated from the universe. Undoubtedly the temple wherein the 144,000 serve God, will be employed for grander purposes.

A view that has become popular of recent times is that “the great multitude” of verse 9, is the actual number of the symbolic 144,000. This view was presented originally by Taylor G. Bunch in the 1940’s. While this commentary leans to the 144,000 as being a symbolic number, it totally rejects the above view, on the following grounds.

If the final number of the redeemed living on the earth at the Second Advent amounts to such a vast host of people, then the biblical concept of “the remnant” is totally destroyed. It means that well nigh the total inhabitants of earth will be saved at the Second Advent. Today, experts are well able to estimate the approximate population of the globe. It is quite certain that the number is not beyond computation. But “the great multitude” is beyond computation, for “no man could number” them. Scripture is very certain that only a minority of the race at any period of human history will be saved in God’s kingdom and this is especially so of the final generation of mankind.

“Strait is the gate and narrow is the way and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:14)

“Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.” (Luke 18:8)

“The dragon was wroth with the woman [the church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.” (Revelation 12:17)

It is informative to notice the description of the redeemed when they finally reach the kingdom. The prophet describes the four different groups of the saved before the throne of God.

1. Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Savior with deep, intense devotion.
2. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void.
3. The millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith.
4. And beyond is the “great multitude, which no man could number of all nations, and kingdoms, and people and tongues. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph. [13]

A SECOND APPLICATION OF REVELATION 7

According to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy there are two applications of ‘the sealing’ of Revelation 7. First of all it applies to the seal of the law - the Sabbath, the message of which is to go ‘to every nation, kindred tongue and people.’ [14]

The second application refers to a third seal - ‘the seal of redemption.’ This seal is also to be placed upon the foreheads of the saints, prior to the close of probation.

THE SEAL OF REDEMPTION

This seal or ‘mark of redemption’ is described very fully in the Spirit of Prophecy and is based on the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. This prophecy had its initial, local, and literal application to Israel in Old Testament times. It now has a spiritual, worldwide application to our times, to spiritual Israel - the church.

EZEKIEL CHAPTER 9

He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

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.

What a terrible scene! It describes the marking of God's people in the city - representing the church of God, in the last days. Those who do not receive the mark, receive the judgments of God, but those who do receive this mark will be protected. This is spoken of as 'the mark of redemption'. It is a seal of protection. This mark is in the form of the Hebrew letter 'Tau' the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

THIS SEAL APPLIES TO THE REMNANT OF THE CHURCH

"By demarcating them in this way the angel marked them as the last of the righteous." [15]

This is the righteous remnant. Here we have a marking of the remnant of the woman's seed. Notice the setting. It is the setting of the investigative judgment. The man that does the marking is clothed with linen, similar to the garments of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. This is a Day of Atonement setting. The man had a writer's inkhorn by his side. This suggests that he is recording, and decisions are being made. This suggests that there is a marking or sealing during the Day of Atonement.

A SEALING ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN

This coincides with the ritual on the Day of Atonement back in the days of ancient Israel. In the typical scene, there was a sealing on the earthly Day of Atonement.

"As the day (of atonement) draws to it's close, the earnestness and intensity increase. It is generally believed that the close of this day is recorded in heaven as a sealing time, If the people have done sufficient repenting they will receive a good seal, which means they have stood the test in heaven. If not, then they fear that they are lost and may die at any time. Hence in their closing prayers of the day, instead of saying 'Our Father our King, write our name in the Book of Remembrance', etc. they say, 'Our Father, our King, seal our name in the Book of Life. Seal our name in the Book of Remembrance. When the service is ended they greet each other with the salutation 'I hope you have received a good seal'." [16]

As there was a sealing on the typical Day of atonement, so likewise in the great anti-typical Day of Atonement, in which we now stand. At its close there will also be a sealing of the saints. Ezekiel 9, and Revelation 7, refer to this same sealing.

"This sealing of the servants of God, is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision." [17]

Thus, while Revelation 7 refers first of all to the seal of the Law, it has a second application to 'the Seal of Redemption' - the same seal or mark of Ezekiel 9.

THE SEALING IN REVELATION

In the Book of Revelation there are presented two different pictures of the sealing work. The first sealing is in Revelation 7. The second picture of the sealing is in Revelation 14:1-5. However, in Revelation 14 it is not spoken of as the seal. It is described as the "Father's name written in their foreheads," The name of God represents the character of God and represents the same as the seal of Revelation 7.

Thus we have two pictures of the sealing? Why? The first reason is that Revelation 14 reveals the character of those who are sealed, and when one reads the beautiful description of the 144,000 there, one realizes that they have reached perfection of character.

"They are without fault before the throne of God."

On the other hand, Revelation 7 gives the purpose or reason for the sealing. And what is the purpose of the sealing? It is to protect the saints during the time of trouble. This seal is a seal of protection. The angels are commanded to hold the four winds - the judgments of God - until the saints are sealed. Why? Because when the winds are released, when the judgments of God come, only those sealed will receive divine protection.

In Ezekiel 9:6 it says - 'Slay utterly old and young but come not near any man upon whom is the mark'. It is a mark or seal of protection. In Revelation 6:14 onwards, there is pictured the terrifying events of the sixth seal, when the heavens depart as a scroll and in the distance the unsaved behold the coming Christ. They rush to the rocks and mountains, and the question is forced from their lips, 'The great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?' The answer is given in the next chapter - Revelation 7. The ones who will stand in the day of His wrath are those who are sealed in their foreheads with the seal of the living God. The purpose then of the third seal is to protect the saints.

THREE ELEMENTS IN THE SEAL OF REDEMPTION

What is involved in the seal of protection? Like the second seal it also is formed of three elements. However these three elements are quite different from the three elements of the seal of the law. This denotes that the seal of redemption, is a different seal from the seal of the law. The Revelator declared:

"He that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and He shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and The name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." (Revelation 3:12)

The spirit of Prophecy confirms that the three elements of this verse apply to the third seal, the seal of protection, or "the mark of redemption."

"On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem and a glorious star containing Jesus new name." [18]

What is the significance of the three elements that comprise this seal? They denote ownership, destiny, and character. First of all the name of God is upon them. They belong to God - they belong to the Father. Secondly the name of the city of God is upon them, the New Jerusalem. This indicates their destiny. They are destined for the New Jerusalem. Thirdly, Christ's new name is in the seal, indicating that its bearer has the character of Christ.

THE SEAL DENOTES OWNERSHIP

In describing the saints during the final scenes of the last great conflict we read,

"The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that his own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed, 'God, New Jerusalem.' They are God's property, his possession." [19]

This is the First significance of this final seal that is placed upon the saints before the end. The next point is that it is invisible to human eyes.

AN INVISIBLE SEAL

"It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes can read, for the destroying angels must see this mark of redemption." [20]

This is reminiscent of the Passover in Egypt. The destroying angel, when he saw the blood over the doorway, passed over, and the Israelites were protected. When the angels with the seven last plagues pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the last generation of this earth, those who have the Seal of Redemption upon them will be passed over - they will be protected during the time of trouble.

TIME OF TROUBLE DESCRIBED

When we read about the time of trouble we certainly will need divine protection.

“The Day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. All hands shall be faint, every heart shall melt.” (Isaiah 13:5-7)

“The Day of the Lord is at hand, as a destruction from the Almighty will it come.” (Joel 1:14) “The Day of the Lord is great and very terrible, who can abide it.” (Joel 2:11)

“The mighty man shall cry there bitterly.” (Zephaniah 1:14-18)

“It is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and destruction, a day of darkness and gloominess of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring distress upon men. It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.” (Zephaniah 1:18; 2:1-3)

“There shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.” [21]

“Everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere.” [22]

“Soon the dead and dying will be all around us, those only who have the seal of the living God will be sheltered from the storm of wrath that will soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth.” [23]

Thank God for the seal of protection that God offers his people.

THE TIME THIS SEAL IS RECEIVED

The next point of importance with this seal concerns the time that we receive it. There are some who believe that this sealing is accomplished at the time of the Latter Rain. [24] This view must be rejected. When we examine Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy on this question, it is very clear that the final seal of God is received by God’s people immediately prior to the Close of Probation. Nowhere does the Spirit of Prophecy state that the final seal will be affixed at the Latter Rain before Loud Cry.

“Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God’s people is finished, we shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit of God.” [25]

CONFUSION BETWEEN THE TWO SEALS

Because of some confusion between the Seal of the Law (the Sabbath) and the final Seal of Redemption, it appears that a statement in Great Controversy has been misunderstood. In the chapter entitled ‘The Final Warning’, which outlines the events of the ‘Loud Cry’, it says:

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controversial. When one class receives the Mark of the Beast, the other receives the Seal of God.” [26]

This seal is the seal of the law - the Sabbath - and while individuals accept the truth of the Sabbath, they will be receiving this seal. This could continue until near the close of Probation when the last of God’s people come out of Babylon. However, the Seal of the Law, while it is the sign of our sanctification and loyalty, etc. and is closely associated with the Seal of Redemption, yet on the other hand, it is quite distinct from it.

The Seal of Redemption is placed upon God’s people after the formation of the image to the beast.

“The image of the beast will be formed before probation closes, for it is to be the great test for the people of God. This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed.” [27]

What is the Image to the beast? When the united Protestant churches ally themselves with the state and issue religious laws - particularly Sunday laws, then the image of the beast will be formed. Seeing the image of the beast and Sunday laws come into existence in reaction to the Loud Cry of the third Angel’s Message, [28] the final seal of God cannot be affixed to the saints until well after the Latter Rain

THE SEAL IS RECEIVED AT CLOSE OF PROBATION

The four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father, and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads. [29]

“When the third angel’s message was closing the power of God had rested upon his people. They had received the latter rain, the last warning had sounded everywhere. It had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth. I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with an writer’s inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported that his work was done and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus throw down the censer and say, It is done. The angelic host made the solemn declaration, He that is unjust let him be unjust still.” [30]

It was when ‘the third angel’s message was closing that the final seal is given. The angel with the writer’s inkhorn returns to heaven because his sealing is completed and the announcement is then made of probation’s close.

“Just before we entered the time of trouble we all received the seal of the living God, then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds.” [31]

Notice that “all” receive the seal just before the time of trouble. The time of trouble here, refers to the seven last plagues which commence at the close of probation.

“The living righteous will receive the seal of God prior to the close of probation.” [32]

“When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided, there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon his people.” [33]

These with many other statements in the Spirit of Prophecy clearly show that the final seal of protection is applied just before the close of probation, in fact, it appears that when the death decree is issued, then the seal is affixed.

“When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless forever.” [34]

What stamp is impressed? The stamp of the seal. And what is the decree that goes forth? It appears to be the death decree. [35]

“While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels unseen were passing to and fro placing upon them the seal of the living God.” [36]

In commenting on the marking or sealing of Ezekiel 9, and the period to which it applies, the prophet declares:

“When Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat and put on the garments of vengeance.” [37]

This means then that the marking or sealing of Ezekiel 9, is immediately before the close of probation. What of the claim that probation closes for S. D A’s before the world? - See Appendix “A”

THE SEAL DENOTES PERMANENCY OF CHARACTER

The next point about this final seal is what it signifies in regard to character. First of all it denotes permanence of character. It is the sign that the characters of the saints are now fully mature, that they have reached a state of permanent stability.

“The people of God are sealed in their foreheads. It is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth both intellectually and spiritually so that they cannot be moved.” [38]

How impressive? When we receive this final seal, we will have developed a stability of character, from which we cannot be moved. We will have reached the stage where we will fully love righteousness, and fully hate iniquity. This could not be said of the majority of us now. There are some things that we may not do but which we do not fully hate. By the time we receive this final seal we will have come to the place in our characters, in our minds, where we fully love righteousness and fully hate iniquity. On the other hand, with regard to the unsaved, it will also denote that they have reached a permanency of character in regard to evil.” (Revelation 22:11)

THE SEAL DENOTES ETERNAL SECURITY

This final seal indicates that we are eternally secure.

“The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, never more to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices, holy angels unseen, were passing to and fro placing upon them the seal of the living God.” [39]

This means that not only are our characters fully established, but we are eternally secure, nevermore to be defiled, we will have ceased to commit sin.

“As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.” [40]

THE SEAL DENOTES PERFECTION OF CHARACTER

We may reflect the image of Christ in a partial degree now, but by the time this final seal is affixed we will reflect the image of Christ fully. We will “retain the image of Christ.” This seal then denotes perfection of character. This is the significance of Revelation 14:1-5. This group that is sealed prior to the close of probation have in their foreheads the name of God.

“A lamb stood upon Mt. Zion and with him an 144,000 having his Father’s name (or character) written in their foreheads. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and to the lamb and in their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

“While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels were passing to and fro, placing on them the seal of the living God. These are they shall stand on Mt. Zion with the Lamb Father’s name written in their foreheads.” [41]

The above scripture is a description of the 144,000, the number representing the final group of God’s people who will be translated. It says ‘there is no guile in their mouth’. This is the character, that God will finally produce in his saints, so that they will be fit for translation.

“The seal of God will never be placed on the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed on the forehead of an ambitious, world-loving man or woman, one of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God.” [42]

Those who receive the final seal will be overcomers. God will have produced in them a perfect, mature character.

“Those who receive the seal of God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.” [43]

THE SEAL REVEALS WHAT GOD WILL DO FOR BELIEVERS

Sadly this beautiful truth engenders a negative reaction among many today, but it is the clear unequivocal teaching of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy again and again. Some claim that they become discouraged by it, but this is a lack of faith. It is a promise. It tells us what God guarantees to do for us. This is what the final sealing involves. Our responsibility is to trust and obey. Believe that God will accomplish what he promises.

In commenting on this Scripture the Spirit of Prophecy says,

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, will be the favored ones that will receive the seal of God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal. Those who are planning sin and acting on it will be passed by. Only those who in their attitude before God are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection. Those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Savior who have works corresponding to their avowed faith.” [44]

What a standard, but how reassuring! The promises of God are clear that He will accomplish it. ‘It is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ (Philippians 2:13)

The seal is “Upon those who bear a likeness to Christ in character. They must overcome pride, passion, spiritual slothfulness and make a determined effort for symmetry of character.” [42]

Here is heaven’s answer to those who proclaim that we are unable to keep the commandments of God, that we will sin till the Second Advent. The truth is exactly the opposite. We are to gain -

“Victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love the world, over every wrong word and action.” [43]

“Those who are distrustful of self who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth, these are receiving the heavenly mould and preparing for the seal of God.” [45]

THE SEAL FOR THOSE THAT SIGH AND CRY

The prophet Ezekiel in his portrayal of the final sealing declared

“Put a mark (or seal) on the foreheads of the men, that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” (Ezekiel 9:4)

“The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. Those who have had the greatest light and privileges have become contaminated by the prevailing iniquity. Love for the divine precepts increases with one class, according as contempt for them increases with another class. The time for God’s visitation has about come although loathe to punish nevertheless he will punish and that speedily.”

“Those who walk in the light are not to sit in quiet unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves that God will shelter his people in the day of visitation. They should labor diligently to save others.”

“At the time when danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company will be sighing and crying for the abominations. These have been holding forth the word of life had reproved, counseled and entreated. But more especially will their prayers arise on behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world. The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. Some repented and humbled their hearts but the glory had departed from Israel. His presence and power were lacking.”

TWO CLASSES DEVELOP IN THE CHURCH

In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers will be distinguished by their soul anguish expressed in lamentation, weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, these will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed with the unholy works and conversation of the wicked.

They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity and hence are filled with grief and alarm. They see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament because pride, avarice, selfishness and deception of almost every kind are in the church.

JUDGMENTS FALL ON UNFAITHFUL IN CHURCH

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. Those who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interest of the people had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that the Lord is too merciful to visit his people in judgment.

Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift their voice like a trumpet, to show, God’s people their transgressions. These dumb dogs that would bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. The abominations of which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far worst sins were unrevealed. These persons came to feel secure in their deceptions but he will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide.

Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous, prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference. It is with reluctance that the lord withdraws his presence from those who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once his faithful servants but they departed from him and led others into error and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those ONLY who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land.” (Emphasis ours) [46]

SIGHING AND CRYING

“The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. . the anguish and humiliation of God’s people, is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin.” [47]

PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL SEALING

In the light of the fearful conflict in which we are now entering, what are the essentials in preparing for the final seal of redemption, protection and deliverance?

1. We are to preserve the faith in its purity.

“When the Lord comes forth as an Avenger, he will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world.” [48]

What is ‘the faith’ that we are to preserve in its purity? It is the Three Angel’s messages of Revelation 14. These distinctive messages and no others, prepare God’s people for the sealing.

“The third angel is binding, or sealing them, in bundles for the heavenly garner.” (Early Writings, page 89) This tells us of the vital necessity to fully believe and obey the three angels’ messages.

“Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light. They knew their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. However high any minister may have stood in favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go out into darkness and Satanic delusions, and will lead others in the same path.” [49]

“God has shown me that at the very time that the signs of the times are being fulfilled all around us, when we hear as it were, the very tread of the hosts of heaven fulfilling their mission, men of intelligence, men in responsible positions, will be putting rotten timbers into their character building, material which is consumed in the day of God. They will lose heaven and an eternity of bliss.” [50]

What a solemn and dire warning this is to everyone who knows the truth for these last days?

2 We are to expect and welcome special trials, as God’s method of purifying us for the final seal.”Those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ’s sake, they would have trials to pass through that would be keen and cutting. In order that they may be purified and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of God, pass through the time of trouble, and see the King in his beauty.” [51]

“We will know the conflict of overcoming.”(5 Testimonies, page 215)

3 We are to seek help from God NOW.

“May God help his people now, for what can they do in such a fearful conflict without his assistance! Courage, fortitude, faith and implicit trust in God’s power to save, do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor, and firm adherence to the right, the children of God were SEALING their destiny.” [52]

We must look to Jesus as our pattern of example.

“We are to look to the man Christ Jesus who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us take our minds off the perplexities and difficulties of this life, and fix them on him, that beholding, we may be changed into his likeness. As we look to him and think of him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.” [53]

GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PLAN IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

Whether we believe it or not, God will fulfill his plan for his remnant people. He will have a people holy and undefiled, ready for translation.

“A great work was to be accomplished to prepare a people to be sealed with the seal of the living God.” [54]

“The great, grand work of bringing out a people, who will have Christ like characters and who will be to stand in the day of the Lord is to be accomplished.” [55]

“In a little while, everyone who is a child of God, will have this seal placed upon him. Though united in church capacity, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him.” [56]

“Only those who receive the seal of God will pass through the gates of the Holy City.” [57]

CONCLUSION

Here then are the three seals that are essential for the believer. Which seal is the first in importance? Unquestionably it is the seal of the Spirit. Without conversion, without the possession of the third person of the Godhead, the true reception of the final two seals is utterly impossible.

The seal of the Sabbath is next in importance. It is the outward sign that the believer is cooperating with God in the process of sanctification or holy living - of obedience to all the commandments of God. It is the outward sign that God is preparing believers for the final seal of redemption, which is essential for every saint who passes through the seven last plagues and is translated.

The first seal is given by the Holy Spirit. The second seal is received through the believer's obedience, when he hallows the Sabbath. The third seal will be affixed by a special ministry of the angels of God.

APPENDIX

An erroneous claim is being made by some that the probation of the S. D. A. church will close before that of the world; that those who proclaim the Loud Cry of Revelation 18 are sealed at the commencement of the Latter Rain and at that time their probation closes etc.

There is no scriptural or Spirit of Prophecy evidence for this view whatsoever, unless it is from a misreading of the prophet's words. This view of the Close of Probation of S. D. A's originated initially with "The Shepherds' Rod" offshoot. Surprisingly some are continuing to advocate this error in the ranks of The Remnant. [58]

The S. O. P. plainly declares that the C. O. P. will come suddenly upon all when Jesus leaves the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

PROBATION CLOSES FOR ALL WHEN JESUS LEAVES THE MOST HOLY PLACE

"When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with his servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sunsets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. Probation closes; Christ's intercessions cease in Heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth, are found sleeping." (2 Testimonies, page 191)

"The Lord is proving anti testing his people. Angels of God are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. Probation is almost ended, and you are unready. Oh that the word of warning might burn into your souls! Get ready' Get ready. ' Work while the day lasts; for the night cometh when no man can work The mandate will go forth. He that is holy let him be holy still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. The destiny of all will be decided." (2 Testimonies, page 401)

"When Jesus rises up in the most holy place and lays off his mediation garments and clothes himself with the garments of vengeance in place of the priestly attire, the work for sinners will be done. The period of time will then have come when the mandate will go forth, 'He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ' All will be tested before Jesus leaves his position in the most holy place. The probation of all closes when the pleading for sinners is ended and the garments of vengeance are put on." (2 Testimonies, page 691)

REFERENCES

1) See Isaiah 11:12. The Hebrew word for "corners" maybe translated extremities, quarters, or wings. ' Dr. James Strong.

2) 7 Bible Commentary, page 967.

3) Ezekiel 46:1-2; Matthew 24:27; Revelation 16:12.

4) 6 Bible Commentary, page 1055

5) Acts of Apostles, page 30.

6) 7 Bible Commentary, page 98.

7) Revelation is a book of symbols and it is based on the Old Testament. In order to understand Revelation aright, it is essential to check with the O. T. to ascertain the source of the imagery employed. The O. T. method of numbering was by the heads of families. If the 144,000 is interpreted according to this principle, then the number would amount to many more than the literal figure.

- 8) Isaiah 48:16
- 9) Revelation 12:17; 13:15-17; 15: 2; Daniel 12:1.
- 10) Psalm 91:1-16; Isaiah 33: 14-17; Daniel 12: 1.
- 11) Revelation 16:8-9.
- 12) 2 Timothy 3:1, 12-13; Revelation 13:15; 16:5-7.
- 13) Great Controversy, page 665.
- 14) 7 Bible Commentary, pages 970; 980, 981; 6 Testimonies, page 350. 8 Testimonies, page 117.
- 15) Doctor William Shea."The Sanctuary And The Atonement," Page 287.
- 16) Doctor F. C. Gilbert."Practical Lessons From The Experience of Israel." 2nd. Edition, Page 536-537.
- 17) Ellen G. White Testimonies Ministers, page 445.
- 18) Ellen G. White, page 15.
- 19) Ellen G. White, Testimonies Ministers, Page 444-445.
- 20) 4 Bible Commentary, Page 1161.
- 21) 6 Testimonies, Page 408.
- 22) 1 Testimonies, page 268.
- 23) "Present Truth" 1849. page 31.
- 24) Dr. E. Gane."Enlightened By the Spirit," page 109-127. It is reported that this view was originally introduced by the offshoot group called "The Shepherd's Rod." Some find authority for this error by quoting 9 Testimonies, page 97. However this statement makes no reference whatsoever to probation closing for the saints. It refers to "those who would not enter," i. e. those who reject the truth, not to those who are faithful to the truth.
- 25) 1 Selected Messages, page 111.
- 26) Great Controversy, page 605.
- 27) 7 Bible Commentary, page 976.
- 28) Great Controversy, page 607-609.
- 29) Early Writings, Page 38.
- 30) Early Writings, Page 279.
- 31) 7 Bible Commentary, page 968.
- 32) 1 Selected Messages, page 66.
- 33) 5 Testimonies, page 213.
- 34) 5 Testimonies, page 216.
- 35) 5 Testimonies, page 213.

- 36) 5 Testimonies, page 475-476.
- 37) 5 Testimonies, page 207-208.
- 38) 4 Bible Commentary, page 1161.
- 39) 5 Testimonies, page 475-476.
- 40) 7 Testimonies, page 970.
- 41) 5 Testimonies, page 475-476
- 42) 5 Testimonies, page 216.
- 43) Early Writings, Page 71.
- 44) Testimonies Ministers, page 445.
- 45) 7 Bible Commentary, page 970. 5 Testimonies, page 216.
- 46) 5 Testimonies, page 208-212
- 47) 5 Testimonies, page 474-475
- 48) 5 Testimonies, page 210
- 49) 5 Testimonies, page 213-214
- 50) Testimonies Ministers, page 446-447.
- 51) Early Writings, page 67.
- 52) 5 Testimonies, page 213.
- 53) 7 Bible Commentary, page 970.
- 54) 2 Selected Messages, page 73.
- 55) 6 Testimonies, page 129.
- 56) 7 Bible Commentary, page 969.
- 57) 7 Bible Commentary, page 970.
- 58) See "Error In Adventist Robes" by Elder A. P. Cooke

13. The 144,000

WHO? WHEN? WHY?

Two chapters in Revelation bring to view this significant number of 144,000. These are Revelation 7 and 14. The main description is in Revelation 14.

"I looked and lo a lamb stood on Mount Zion and with him an hundred and forty four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters and as a voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures, and the elders, and no man could learn that song but the one hundred and forty four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the lamb whithersoever he goes. These were

redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:1-5

What a description of this special group of people. They exist in the last days of the world’s history, prior to the Second Advent of Christ. The above passage of scripture is located between Revelation 13 and the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14:6-12. Revelation 13 reveals the united powers of earth under Satan, who will oppose God and his people in the last days. Revelation 14:6-12 gives God’s answer to Satan’s final effort. In between these two, are located the 144,000. In other words they are in the center of the great final conflict that ensues before the second advent of Christ.

The 144,000 are pictured as being “with the lamb.” This is in contrast with the rest of the world who are pictured as being with the Beast.

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship (or obey) him (the Beast) whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the lamb.” Revelation 13:8

The 144,000 are also pictured as being on Mount Zion. What is Mount Zion? It is a symbol of the kingdom of God.

“But you are come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” Hebrews 12:22

Originally Lucifer’s high and privileged position was on Mount Zion, “upon the mount in the sides of the north” Isaiah 14:13. The Psalmist enquired, “Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place?” Psalms 24:13.

Some have already ascended to the hill of the Lord. Enoch is there, having been translated without seeing death. Moses is there. He was resurrected and taken to heaven and later appeared on the Mount of transfiguration. Elijah is there for he also was translated without seeing death. Another group of saints is there. These were resurrected when Jesus was resurrected and ascended with him to heaven.

They have since been associated with Christ in the services of the heavenly sanctuary. (Revelation 4 & 5.) Thus in answer to the Psalmist’s question: “Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord?” The answer comes that finally the 144,000 will stand on Mount Zion as a special group.

When we read Revelation 7 it reveals that the 144,000 are of the 12 tribes of Israel. In the New Testament era an Israelite is a true Christian.

“If ye be Christ’s then are you Abraham’s seed, (Israelites) and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29.

“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly . . . in the flesh, but he is one inwardly . . . in the spirit . . . whose praise is not of men but of God.” Romans 2:28-29

This means that one who is ‘born again’, a true child of God - has the praise of God - he is an Israelite. Why does Revelation 7 mention the twelve tribes and a certain number from each tribe? In scripture, names are significant. A name denotes character and the name of the tribe denotes the particular characteristics of that section of the 144,000. When we examine Revelation 7 we find that two of the tribes are missing. These are Dan and Ephraim. Those two tribes were unfaithful and therefore they are not counted amongst the people of God in the last days. The term Israel has a spiritual significance. The word Israel means ‘overcomer’, ‘a prince with God’, or, one who is ‘God-ruled’. This represents God’s people through the ages who have given themselves to Jesus Christ, who have accepted him as their king and have been ruled as it were, by Christ. The 144,000 also are a special group in the Christian church, of various characters, who have overcome - who have allowed God to rule in their lives. They have overcome the evil conditions of the world in the last days and are victorious in Christ.

The next point to note is that the 144,000 have God’s seal in their foreheads.

“I heard the number that were sealed and there were sealed 144,000.” Revelation 7:4

This reveals the period of time in which the 144,000 exist. The final seal of God is given at the close of probation. This is generally believed to be one year before the Second Advent of Christ.

(For an exposition of the seals of God see the tract or chapter “When God Seals His Saints”.)

The seal of God also involves the keeping of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. God declares:

“Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign (or seal) between me and you that you might know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:20

The Sabbath is the sign (or seal) that reveals to whom we really belong in the last days. In Revelation 14 it indicates that instead of having the seal in their foreheads, the 144,000 have God's name in their foreheads.

"I saw an 144,000 having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Revelation 14:1

This indicates that the seal and the Father's name are synonymous. As stated above, in scripture a name denotes character. Therefore in this application of Revelation 7:1-4 the seal also represents God's character. It indicates that the 144,000 have reached a stage of spiritual development in which their characters have become like Christ's character. They have reached a stage of character development where they are ready for translation. The 144,000, by the grace of God have reached perfection or maturity of Christian character. In the last days God sets himself to produce a group of people that reflect his image and the outward sign of this, will be the true observance of the seventh day Sabbath.

"I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezekiel 20:12

The Sabbath is a sign that God is sanctifying his people, or making them holy, of perfecting their character. Thus in the last days, there will be two groups - two strikingly contrasting groups. There will be the followers of the Beast who will reveal the character of Satan, and there will be the followers of the Lamb, who will reveal the character of Jesus. One will have the Mark of the Beast, and the other will have the Seal of God.

The next point in connection with the 144,000 is that they have experienced great tribulation or passed through great trouble or persecution.

"These are they that have come out of great tribulation." Revelation 7:14

There are two main tribulations in the Bible that involve the people of God. There is the tribulation of the Dark Ages as recorded in Matthew 24 and the second tribulation which commences just before the 7 last plagues and climaxes in "The Time of Jacob's Trouble". The 144,000 also sing the song of Moses and the lamb of Revelation 15:2-3. What is the song of Moses? It was a song sung by Israel after they had passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea when God marvelously delivered them from Egyptian bondage. When Israel looked back and saw their enemies destroyed and realized that after hundreds of years of cruel captivity they were forever free, they burst into a song of gratitude to God. The song of Moses denotes deliverance from earthly foes. But what of the song of the lamb? This song is a song of deliverance from spiritual foes, from Satan, and the thralldom of sin. Thus the song of Moses and the Lamb, that the 144,000 will sing, will be a song of their experience.

Now the scripture indicates that all the redeemed will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb because all have been delivered by the Lamb. All have been delivered from spiritual foes. But the redeemed will sing only a part of the song, because a special section of the song, the 144,000 alone can sing, for 'no man could learn that song but the 144,000.' Revelation 14:3. They sing a particular portion of it because they have gone through an experience that no other group on earth, has passed through before. They will be delivered from 'the beast and his image.' They will be delivered from earthly powers that have united together against God in the last days. They will be delivered from the evil world that will be intent on destroying them. And of course like the rest of the redeemed they also have been delivered from the guilt and power of sin.

"I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire and then that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, Thou King of saints." Revelation 15:2

What a song that will be! A song of marvelous deliverance. The next point concerning the 144,000, is that they do not experience death. They "were redeemed from the earth. These were redeemed from among men." Revelation 14:3-4.

The 144,000 are redeemed from among the living. In other words they do not die. Speaking of the righteous dead who will be resurrected, the prophet says 'I will redeem them from death.' Hosea 13:14. i. e. from the grave, but the 144,000 will be redeemed from the earth, from among men, from the living. Therefore they do not die, they do not see death. They are living at the time when Christ returns, and behold him when the eastern heavens part asunder. They see the small dark cloud in the distance, which turns into a glorious white cloud. What an event! What a privilege to behold it!

Does this mean then that only 144,000 will see Christ come? Is this the total number saved from among the living at the second advent? Not necessarily. The 144,000 is a number which is featured in the Book of Revelation and Revelation is a book containing symbolic prophecy. In Revelation, numbers can also be symbolic. For example, the Book of Revelation is based on the Old Testament and in order to understand it aright, we must always go back to the Old Testament. The Book of Daniel is very closely connected with the Book of

Revelation. We cannot understand Revelation without the Book of Daniel. Likewise with many of the other great books of the Old Testament they are necessary for the understanding of the Book of Revelation.

Now the Old Testament method of counting, was not by counting single individuals but by counting the heads of families. Therefore when Revelation speaks of 144,000 it could mean 144,000 heads of families. If this is correct then 144,000 could involve many more people.

Another point to consider is that the number 144,000 is a multiple of 12 ($12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$). 12 is the number of the church of God throughout scripture especially concerning church government. There were 12 tribes, 12 patriarchs, 12 apostles and the number 144,000 is the number of the Remnant church in the last days. It is a multiple of 12. 12 is associated right through scripture with church government. The number of patriarchs before the flood was 12 if Shem and Japheth are included in Genesis 5. After the flood there were 12 patriarchs. The church in the wilderness consisted of 12 tribes. Actually there were 13 tribes altogether, if you count the Levites, but only 12 are ever mentioned because 12 denotes the number of God's church. There were 12 judges of Israel and 12 apostles in the early church. The New Jerusalem, mentioned in Revelation 21 and 22 has the number 12 mentioned 12 times. This includes the number 144 of Revelation 21:17 which in the original is 12×12 .

The number 12 denotes ruler ship and it is connected with Israel, which means 'God ruled.' The number 144,000 therefore, we suggest, is a symbolic number of the Remnant church that stands ready for the second advent - ready for translation. In Revelation 7 there are two tribes that are missing in the list. These are the tribes of Dan and Ephraim. This indicates that the Israel of Revelation cannot be literal Israel because in literal Israel there were thousands belonging to Dan and Ephraim. The reason that these two names are missing is because they persisted in disobedience Dan means 'judging'. He represents those who persist in destructive criticism, those who are backbiters, the slanderers in the church of God. For them, like Dan, if they do not repent, there is no inheritance.

The word Ephraim means, 'those joined to idols'. That name represents those amongst God's people who mix with the world and are unfaithful to Christ. The scripture says,

"Whosoever will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Jams 4:4 We cannot belong to the world and belong to Christ at the same time.

It is important to note that the order of the names of the tribes given in Revelation 7 is also very significant. In the Old Testament the list of the 12 tribes always starts with Reuben, the first-born son. But in Revelation we find that the tribes are not listed in order of birth. What is the reason? The order of names given in Revelation conveys a very significant message. The first name is Judah - which means 'praise'. The second name is Reuben 'a son'. The next is Asher which means 'happy'. Next is Naphtali which means 'wrestling', then Manasseh which means 'forgetting'. After this is Simeon which means 'hearing'. Levi means 'joined'. Issachar means 'service'. Zebulon means 'dwelling', Joseph means 'added' and Benjamin means 'son of the right hand'. If we put all these together in their order in sentence form, they speak a very beautiful message. Here it is:

"Praise God, a son, a company of sons, redeemed and happy, after wrestling in prayer, forgetting self and the past, hearing God's word, joined to God as servants, dwelling with added joys and blessing, as sons of the right hand."

This is a description of the condition that the 144,000 will reach by the grace of Jesus Christ in the last days. The next feature brought to view concerning the 144,000 is that,

"These are not defiled with women, for they are virgins." Revelation 14: 4

Some have concluded that the 144,000 must be all males, but in the Greek 'virgins' applies to both male and female. It does not mean that the 144,000 are unmarried, because scripture is clear that marriage does not defile.

"Marriage is honorable and the bed is undefiled." Hebrews 14:4

What then is the significance of the statement, 'They are virgins'? We suggest at least two reasons. The first reason is that they are morally pure. 'The blood of Christ has cleansed them from all sin.' In a time of extreme moral corruption and perversion, the 144,000 have resisted the all-pervading immorality, and have overcome.

The second reason is that women in prophecy represent churches. When we read Revelation 17 there is brought to view, 'Babylon the Great', the counterfeit religious organization inspired by Satan - she is called 'the Mother of Harlots'. This means that there are daughters - daughter churches - who are following in the steps of the mother church.

On analyzing Revelation 17 we find that the great 'Mother Church' is none other than the church of Rome and the harlot daughters are those churches which have come out of Rome but who now follow in the mother's footsteps. These are the apostate churches of

Protestantism. The 144,000 'are not defiled with women'. They are not defiled with the harlot churches of Christendom. In other words, the 144,000 have come out of Babylon, They have obeyed the call:

"Come out of her my people that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4

The 144,000 have not been defiled by the false doctrines and practices of spiritual Babylon. The next point concerning the 144,000 is that

"They are the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4

What is meant by the first fruits? It means first in importance, not necessarily the first in regard to time. Jesus Christ is described as 'the first-fruits of them that slept'. (the dead) 1 Corinthians 15:20. Jesus was not the first to rise from the dead but he was the first in importance to rise from the dead. Because of his resurrection, all others can be raised. 'Because I live ye shall live also' John 14:19. In the Old Testament the first fruits were the best fruits or the chief fruits of the crop, not necessarily the earliest of the fruit.

"All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first fruits of then, which they shall offer to the Lord." Numbers 18:2

"The first (margin chief) of all the first fruits." Ezekiel 44:30

This means then that the 144,000 are not just the first to be reaped, in the great harvest at the Second Advent of Christ, but they also represent the best of the harvest. The 144,000 are without fault.

"There is no guile in their mouths for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5 This tells us what God plans to accomplish with the last generation of believers.

"Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12

Generally in our endeavor to keep the commandments of God our obedience is imperfect. However, God accepts our best effort. While we are growing in grace, His righteousness covers our lack. But with the last generation who are awaiting translation, they will indeed come to the state where they fully 'keep the commandments of God'. This is very significant. We believe that in a special way the 144,000 will be used by heaven to vindicate the character of God.

From the beginning, one of Satan's leading accusations has been that it is impossible for his people to keep his law. However God exposed the falsity of Satan's accusation by showing that Jesus while on earth, in the same nature as man, perfectly kept the commandments of God. In a final demonstration, in the last generation of earth, the weakest generation of all time, God displays to the universe that these also can keep the commandments of God. This demonstration will be made when there is no mediator between God and men, when the high priestly intercession of Christ has ceased, when the Holy Spirit has completed His work on earth. This final generation, which has inherited all the weaknesses and degeneration of the ages,

out of it, God will take a people and make them without fault. 'There is no guile in their mouth'. What a demonstration of the grace of God this is going to be!

This could explain why the Dragon is so enraged against the Remnant and endeavors to blot them out of existence. This explains the great tribulation through which the 144,000 pass. God permits Satan to try them to the uttermost. Satan exerts super efforts to cause them to sin but he fails. The 144,000 justify God. They prove before the universe that God's law can be kept.

The final feature concerning the 144,000 is that they stand "with the lamb."

"A Lamb stood on the mount and with him a 144,000. They follow the lamb whithersoever he goes." Revelation 14:1, 4.

This means that not only have they been delivered, but a glorious privilege and reward will be theirs. Will there be special rewards that God will give to his people? While we are saved by grace alone, while eternal life is a gift, while we cannot reach the kingdom by our own works, yet for the works that we do accomplish by his grace, God will accordingly reward us, in the kingdom.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple and he that sits on the throne will dwell among them. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them into living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:15, 17.

This reveals the tremendous privilege that will be given to this group. They will probably be at the headquarters of God's kingdom - 'they are before the throne' they are 'in the temple'. They have a position of high responsibility. They escort Christ, they are 'with him'. It is

believed by some that they will take the place of the fallen angels - not that they will become angels - but they will take the place of the fallen angels. What a privilege!

But what of the view that the 144,000 is a number representing “the great multitude that stand” before the throne, and who have come out of great tribulation. (Revelation 7:9, 14)

At first glance one may be led to draw such a conclusion but on analyzing the whole chapter, the above conclusion must be completely rejected.

After introducing the 144,000 in Verses 4-8, John then beholds “a great multitude which no man could number of all nations” (V9). This means that this group is innumerable - they cannot be numbered. What good news that so many of the human race are going to be in the kingdom. Today, even with our population explosion it is still possible to number the world’s population. Now if the saints at the end time are so abundant that no man can number them, then the saints would comprise the great majority of the world’s population.

If this conclusion is correct this means that the biblical doctrine of the remnant is untenable. Do the exponents of the above view believe that God’s people in the end time will be a remnant or do they believe that they will comprise the majority of the population?

The only conclusion is that the great multitude of Revelation 7:9 comprises the saved of all ages as the Spirit of Prophecy so clearly states. (“The Great Controversy” page 665) God’s people have always been a minority - a remnant “Fear not little flock for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32)

For the same reason the conjecture that the 144,000 proclaim the “Loud Cry” and win “the great multitude” must be rejected. If the number won in the Loud Cry amounts to an innumerable group of people, who would be left to support the leaders of Babylon and persecute the great multitude?

But what of Revelation 7:13-17? “What are these in white robes and whence came they?” The only ones described as having white robes are “the great multitude” (Verse 9). If this were correct then the 144,000 cannot be clothed in white. This is unthinkable because the white robes represent “the righteousness of saints” (Revelation 19:8) and all the redeemed will be so clothed.

It is quite obvious as to who comprise the great multitude and from whence they have come, for V9 says that they are from “all nations and kingdoms and people and tongues”. The elder of Verse 13 must be referring to a group in white robes which is distinctive. The distinction is that they “came out of great tribulation” Verse 14. The Greek reads “the great tribulation”. Those who endure the final time of tribulation are “the remnant” of Revelation 12:17 not “a great multitude which no man could number”. Note the contrasts between the 144,000 and the great multitude.

THE 144,000 THE GREAT MULTITUDE

1. A limited number. An unlimited number.
2. Of the 12 Tribes of Israel. Of all nations, kingdoms and tongues.
3. Sealed in their foreheads No mention of being sealed
4. Exist in last days From all ages (8 Testimonies, 44-45. Great Controversy, 665)

It is informative to recall the description given by the prophet of the redeemed when they stand before the throne, as recorded ;n Great Controversy p 665. At least four groups are pictured in their order.

1. The 144,000 or those represented by that number “Those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan. . . and have followed their Savior with deep intense devotion.”
- 2.”Those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void.” This would include faithful Seventh-day Adventists.
- 3.”The millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith.”
- 4.”Beyond is the ‘great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kingdoms and people and tongues. . . with white robes and palms in their hands’.” Great Controversy, 665.

12 IDENTIFICATION MARKS OF THE 144,000

1. A special group that exist in the last days.
2. They are Israelites - of spiritual Israel true Christians.
3. They are sealed: which involves the observance of the true Sabbath and receiving the mark of protection at the Close of Probation.
4. They are not defiled by the teachings and practices of Babylon.
5. They attain to perfection of character.
6. They experience the Great Tribulation of the End Time.
7. They are victorious in the conflict with the Beast and his Image.
8. They will experience being without a mediator.
9. They vindicate God by displaying to universe that man can keep God's law.
10. They do not experience death.
11. They represent the living righteous who will be translated.
12. They receive a special reward in the kingdom.

PARALLELS BETWEEN REVELATION 7:1-17 and REVELATION 14:1-5

1. 144,000 in number V4 144,000 number V1
2. Seal of God in Foreheads Name of God in Foreheads
3. Seal received in the End Time Name received in End Time
4. Washed their robes Not defiled
5. Come out of the Great Tribulation Located in center of the conflict (Between Revelation 13 & Revelation 14:6-12)
6. They are before the throne They are before the throne
7. Special reward in the kingdom Special reward in kingdom

The question may then be asked, 'Can I be among those represented by the 144,000?' If one is permitted to live until the Second Advent and his trust in Christ continues, and he follows Christ "with deep intense devotion", the answer is yes. You may have the privilege of being one of that number.

The 144,000 'follow the lamb whither so ever he goes'. If we follow the Lamb now by his grace, we will surely follow Him in the Kingdom.

How do we follow Christ? In obeying him. 'If you love me' he said 'keep my commandments'. God help us to 'follow the Lamb whither so ever he goes', till we finally, stand before the Throne, with all the millions of the redeemed.

14. Silence In Heaven

The Final Three

The Last Three of the Seven Seals of Revelation.

The seven seals are divided into two groups of four and three. The first group comprises the four horsemen. Each one is introduced by “a living creature” in the heavenly sanctuary who invites all to behold what each seal reveals. These four horsemen represent four forms of warfare involving the church of God in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

We now examine the three final seals. The fifth seal deals with the vindication of the martyrs of the church. The sixth seal deals with the preparation of the church in the time of the end, for the second advent of Christ. The seventh seal deals with the deliverance and reward of the church at the Second Advent.

THE FIFTH SEAL

“When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the sound of them that were, slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them and it was said to them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled.” Revelation 6:9-11.

“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain” or as the Greek has it, “had been slain for the word of God”. This refers to the millions of martyrs slain under the pale horse of the fourth seal.”

It refers to martyrdoms in the past, not to a then current period of martyrdoms as is taught by some today. They “cried from under the altar.” This indicates that they were already martyred. What is the altar? Weymouth says, “the foot of the altar.” The altar was the place in the sanctuary courtyard where the blood of the sacrifices was poured out. In the New Testament the Jewish sanctuary represents the true sanctuary in heaven above. But the court which was outside the sanctuary proper, is where the altar of burnt offerings stood. That altar in the court represented Calvary, which was situated on the earth. The blood of the martyrs was poured out on the earth, and so the altar represents the earth. The blood of the martyrs was certainly in the earth or under the altar of the earth.

What is the significance of the souls, “crying out.” Are these disembodied spirits, as many conclude? Such a conclusion gravely misrepresents God. To represent the martyrs as being in the presence of our God, under an altar, crying for vengeance, gives an unfortunate picture of heaven. The word “souls” in scripture is often used to mean persons.

“While the ark was a preparing wherein a few that is eight souls were saved by water.” 1 Peter 3:20.

How many people were saved by water at the time of the flood? Eight persons, and Peter described them as of eight souls.” If the altar is on the earth, then the above description must represent an earthly scene. This is confirmed by sound Bible scholars, such as Ellicott, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, great scholars of yesteryear. These scholars held to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but they never used these verses to teach that doctrine. Rather they believed that it represented, in a dramatic form, the need of redress of the millions of martyrs who had been slain under the fourth horseman. A similar picture is given in Genesis where the Lord came to Cain after he had slain Abel,

“And the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said I know not, am I my brother’s keeper? And he said, What has thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood cries to me from the ground.” Genesis 4:9-10.

Abel’s murder called for redress and so with the murdered millions of martyrs. The fourth horseman had galloped on leaving in his wake the innocent blood of millions of believers. Hardly a hand was raised in their defense. They were victims of the apostate church. As the author of Great Controversy declares,

“In the 13th century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the Papacy, the Inquisition. The Prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the hierarchy the mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.” Great Controversy, page 59. [1]

It is informative to read in the papers of Leonid Schoner, who was beheaded in Rottenburg, Bavaria, in 1528, the following prayer, as written by him. This illustrated the need of redress for the martyrs.

“We are scattered like sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens which have flight in the rocks. Our chambers are in holes and crags. The world still rolls and rests not; it revels as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? Let it come up before thy throne. How precious in your eyes is the blood of the holy ones. Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in Thee alone, And in none besides. But neither comfort or rest nor peace on this earth but he who hopes in Thee shall never be confounded.” [2]

Many are familiar with the poem by John Milton penned in response to the news of the massacre of the Waldenses in Northern Italy.

“Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold. Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old, When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, Forget not: in Thy book record their grows, Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold, Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled Mother with infant down the rocks, their moans The vales redoubled to the hills, and they to heaven, Their martyred blood and ashes sow Over all the Italian fields, where still doth sway The triple tyrant; that from these may grow A hundred fold, who, having learned Thy way, Early, may fly the Babylonian woe.” [3]

When the martyrs were done to death for their faith, they were clothed as it were, in the blackest garments of infamy. They were pictured by Mother Church as the vilest of criminals. They were spurned by society as scarcely human. They were looked upon as having the bodies of humans but the spirits of demons. They were deemed unworthy of the smallest mercy and deserving of the cruelest of deaths. In some of the museums of Europe, there are paintings of a typical Auto da fe. These were public martyrdoms and they give an idea of what occurred when a martyr was burned at the stake.

The martyr was stripped and tied to the stake while the firewood was heaped around him. A pulpit was then set up and a crowd assembled. A spokesman for Mother Church mounted the pulpit, and proclaimed the glories of Mother Church and the miserable character of the dissenter. The martyr was pictured in the blackest of hues, his guilt was so monstrous that there was more pity shown for the cringing purse snatcher or for the most violent murderer. The majority of the crowd would applaud as the martyr was consigned to the flames. The martyrs were universally regarded as the enemies of God. They were clothed in the blackest of black.

In response to the cry of the martyrs as symbolized in this fifth seal, the Lord vindicated their deaths. How did God vindicate them? It says “and white robes were given to everyone of them” Verse 11. What is the

significance of white robes? How could white robes vindicate the death of millions of martyrs? White robes, represent first of all, overcomers.

“He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” Revelation 3:5

White robes also represent the righteousness of saints.

“The fine linen, clean and white is the righteousness of saints.” Revelation 19:8

In this fifth seal, the evil, vile, heinous heretics are seen to be righteous and godly saints. In what way? How could these martyrs be clothed in white? How were they now seen to be saints instead of sinners? How were they now recognized as righteous instead of reprobates? What events transpired that transformed public opinion so dramatically? It was the Protestant Reformation. And how did the Reformation change the opinion of the world, concerning the martyrs? In the Reformation Catholic priests and scholars were led to read the Word of God, and as a result, their eyes were opened. They saw the true gospel and then recognized who were the true saints. They were shocked into the realization of the fallen apostate condition of Mother Church. When they studied the prophecies of Daniel, and Revelation, they discovered that Mother Church was not the true church, but the Antichrist, “the man of sin,” “the harlot church,” “the little horn,” “the ten-horned beast.” In other words the enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If Mother Church was the Antichrist, then those who had dissented, those that were martyred, must have been the people of God. They must have been saints. They must have been righteous. Thus the mighty gospel proclamation by the Reformers of the 16th century, opened the eyes of the world, and the martyrs were now seen, not clothed in black, but clothed in white saints of God. These horrible heretics - so called were now seen as the favorites of heaven. What a dramatic change! What a reversal of public opinion. Thank God for the glorious Protestant Reformation.

It is interesting to notice the comment here of Dr. Ellicott,

“There is also a sense in which a white robe is given to them in the eyes of men. Those whose names have been cast out as evil, have been honored by a repentant posterity with the robe of tardy praise. After generations garnished the sepulchers of the righteous that their fathers slew. The excommunicated in one age, are often the canonized of the next, for the dull world learns slowly and its purest honors are posthumous.” Commentary on Revelation, page 88.

The fifth seal is an exposure of the apostate church through the great Protestant Reformation. As a result, revival and restoration came to the true church.

LATER MARTYRDOMS

The fifth seal concludes by encouraging the martyrs that they

“Should rest yet for a little season until their fellow servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled.” Verse 11.

Will there be further martyrdoms before the close of Probation? In the coming time of trouble, when the worship of the beast and his image is enforced, all those who will not comply, will be threatened with death. Revelation 13:15-17.

This experience is confirmed, we believe, by the Spirit of Prophecy:

“When the fifth seal was opened John saw beneath the altar the company that were slain for the Word of God-After this came the signs described in the eighteenth of Revelation, when those who are faithful and true are called out from Babylon.” 7 Bible Commentary, page 968. [4]

What are “the scenes described” (not fulfilled) in Revelation 18:1-5 that are referred to in the latter part of the fifth seal? Revelation 18:1-5 describes The Loud Cry, The Call out of Babylon and the ensuing

persecution which climaxes in the death decree (Verse 5). [5] These are the scenes in which the future martyrdoms will occur and for which the martyrs of the Dark Ages are instructed to wait.

“Many who shall be convinced of the truth, will come on the side of God’s commandment keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyred for Christ’s sake in standing in defense of the truth.” 3 Selected Messages, page 397. [6]

The martyrs are told “to rest (or wait) for a little season” until the final martyrdoms are fulfilled. Why are they to wait? Because there is a time appointed when all the martyrs of Christ are to be avenged.

“Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night to him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.” Luke 18:7-8.

This verse refers particularly to the saints in the time of Jacob’s trouble. They will be avenged first of all in the seven last plagues and then at the Second Advent. The wrath of God in the seven last plagues is poured out upon those “who worship the beast and his image.” They will have been responsible for the death of the martyrs in the last days. The martyrs of the great tribulation of the Dark Ages will be avenged at the third advent when their persecutors will rise in “the resurrection to damnation” John 5:29.

There are some who claim that the fifth seal applies to the end time. This must be rejected because the end time is covered by the sixth seal. The fifth seal must therefore cover the period prior to the time of the end. The fact that the martyrs who cry for redress in the fifth seal are instructed to rest for a little season until the final group of martyrs meet their fate indicates that they must exist prior to the end time otherwise there would be neither time nor room for the second group of martyrs to exist. The Spirit of Prophecy applies the cry of the martyrs to the past:

“In the 13th century was established the most terrible of all the Inquisition. The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.” Great Controversy, page 59. [7]

There are two statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that need to be examined in connection with the fifth seal.

“The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which the prophets have described as the time of Jacob’s trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from the martyrs’ graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults, ‘How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ The Lord is doing his work. All heaven is astir. The judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate his insulted authority. The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God’s commandments, who revere his law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image.” 5 Testimonies, page 451. [8]

Here the prophet shows when the cry of the saints during Jacob’s trouble will be heard and their sufferings avenged. This will commence at the close of probation when God begins to mete out punishment upon the persecutors of his people. The second statement reads,

“From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest of criminals but the day is near when ‘God is judge himself.’ Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. ‘The rebuke of his people shall He take away.’ White robes will be given to everyone of them. And they shall call them the redeemed of the Lord.” Christ Object Lessons, page 182-183.

In this statement the prophet again reveals the time when God will avenge his people. The phrases taken from the fifth seal and used in the above settings are not an exposition of the fifth seal. The phrases are

borrowed from Revelation 6 and are used out of context in a homiletic sense. Such uses of scripture are allowable in preaching and writing.

THE SIXTH SEAL

We now come to the sixth seal of Revelation. This seal is different from the other six seals because it is couched in literal language, whereas the other six are all in symbolic language.

“I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal and lo there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig free casts her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Revelation 6:12-13.

Some attempt to symbolize sections of the sixth seal, but this is inconsistent. Either the seal is symbolic or literal. One commentator gives the first half of the seal a symbolic application, but the second half a literal application. This effectively destroys the impact of the prediction. [10] It turns an orderly, logical exposition of scripture into something that is hazy and uncertain. Why is the sixth seal in literal language when the other seals are symbolic? We suggest two reasons:

1. There would be a problem in trying to symbolize the final cataclysmic events prior to the Second Advent. How would one symbolize an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon turning to blood, and the literal falling of the stars?
2. The events of the sixth seal are couched in literal terms so that God’s people would not fail to recognize them as the signs of the end. Most of the events of this seal were foretold by Jesus in the Gospels. They were given as warning signs of the last days, and of the special need of the saints to be ready for the Second Advent. We believe that God couched them in literal terms so that His people would not fail in recognizing them.

When Jesus described the events associated with the Second Advent, he listed seven events - the darkening of the sun, the moon not giving its light, the stars failing, the powers of heaven being shaken, the sign of the son of man, the mourning of the unsaved, and the actual appearing of Christ. Six of the seven events listed in Mathew 24:29-30 are repeated in the sixth seal of Revelation. Three of the events of Matthew 24 involve the sun, the moon and the stars, in the same order as in the sixth seal. These signs were to occur “immediately after the tribulation of those days” i. e. the tribulation during the papal supremacy. The last martyrdom of that period occurred in 1762 AD. Immediately after that, “the sun would be darkened and the moon would not give it’s light.” This was fulfilled in 1780 AD which was indeed after the tribulation. However in the sixth seal the darkening of the sun was preceded by a great earthquake.

“Did such an earthquake occur that would fitly represent the opening of the sixth seal? In the record of earthquakes between 1600 and 1800 AD approximately 1,800 destructive earthquakes occurred, [11] Of these, the greatest and most spectacular was the Lisbon earthquake of November 1, 1755, 25 years prior to the darkening of the sun. History confirms that the Lisbon earthquake was the greatest known to that time, which had a profound affect upon European society.

“The effects of the Lisbon earthquake-were distributed very nearly 4 million square English miles of the earth’s surface. A most astonishing space and greatly surpassing anything of its kind ever recorded in history.” ‘History & Philosophy of Earthquakes’. J. Nourse, page 334 (1757)

“The great earthquake of 1755 extended over a tract of at least 4 million square miles-it pervaded the greater proportion of the continents of Europe, Africa and America. All Africa was shaken by this tremendous convulsion. The city of Lisbon contained about 150,000 inhabitants. Mr. Barretti says, 90,000 persons are supposed to have been lost on that fateful day.” Robert Sears. ‘Wonders of the World,’ pages 50, 58, 381.

“Among the earth movements which in historic times have affected the kingdom of Portugal, that of November 1, 1755 takes first rank; as it does also in some respects, in all recorded earthquakes-in 6 minutes 60,000 persons perished.” ‘Earthquakes’ W. H. Hobbs, pages 142-143, (1907).

“By far the most spectacular earthquake of earlier times was that of Lisbon in 1755. This has some claim to be regarded as the greatest earthquake on record. The disaster shocked all Europe and the moralists and the wiseacres were not slow to make capital of it.” ‘About Earthquakes’ G. A. Eiby, pages 141-142 (1957).

“Probably the most famous of all earthquakes is that which destroyed Lisbon on November 1, 1755. Alexander Van Humboldt stated that the total area shaken, was four times that of Europe.” ‘Earthquakes’ Encyclopedia Britannica (1961 Edition) Volume 7, page 848.

This earthquake profoundly affected all strata’s of society,

“The Lisbon earthquake-put both the theologians and philosophers on the defensive . . . for many weeks, as we see in the letters and memoirs of that time, people in distant parts of Europe went to bed in alarm, relieved in the morning to find that they had escaped the fate of Lisbon one night more.” ‘Life of Voltaire’ J. Parton. Volume 2, pages 208-209.

This earthquake indeed was recognized as a sign of the end.

“The earthquake made all men thoughtful. They mistrusted their love of the dram and filled the churches instead.” ‘Life of Voltaire’ S. G. Tallentyre, page 319. (1903).

In that very year 1755, Englishman John Biddolf, composed a poem recognizing the Lisbon quake as a sign of the last days.

“Who can with curious eyes this globe survey

And not behold it tottering with decay?

All things created God’s designs fulfill,

And natural causes work his destined will.

And that eternal Word, which cannot lie,

To mortals has revealed in prophecy

That in these latter days such signs should come,

Preludes and prologues to the general doom.

But not the Son of man can tell that day;

Then, lest it find you sleeping, watch and pray.”

‘Poem on the Lisbon Earthquake’ John Biddolf, London 1755.

The next events in the sixth seal are the darkening of the sun, the moon being turned to blood and the stars falling from heaven. Verses 12-13. As mentioned previously, this is a repetition of the prediction of Jesus as recorded in three of the gospels. Jesus had predicted that “immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened” Matthew 24:29. The tribulation ceased in 1762 with the death of a Protestant pastor in France. In 1773 the Jesuits, the chief instigators of persecution, were temporarily outlawed by Pope Clement XIV.

The prediction concerning the sun was fulfilled in the famous Dark Day of May 19, 1780, which affected chiefly the north-eastern area of North America. The true cause of this event is not known. It was not the result of an eclipse but it caused consternation in most places where it was observed.

“The Dark Day, May 19, 1780 - so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In sane places, persons could not see to read cannon print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o’clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known.” Webster’s Dictionary (edition 1869).

“That this darkness was not caused by an eclipse, is manifest by the various positions of the planetary bodies at that time; for the moon was more than one hundred and fifty degrees from the sun all that day and as to the moon, she was at that time more than forty hours motion past her opposition.” ‘Our First Century’ 1776-1876. R. M. Deveas. ‘The Wonderful Dark Day-1780.’ page 95.

“Dark Day, Men Filled With Awe and Alarm. Refers especially to May 19, 1780, which was very dark in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, causing great alarm.” ‘The Universal Cyclopaedia’ ‘Dark Day’ (1900)

The darkening of the sun occurred in the northeast of North America. Why in such a limited area of the world? Scripture does not reveal the reason, but we suggest two reasons why this might have been.

1. The Christian churches of the day had become very worldly, and the truth of the Second Advent was neglected together with the signs that had been mentioned by Jesus. This was especially true of the churches of North America. As the author of Great Controversy declared,

“The heavenly signs were given to arouse Christians particularly in North America.” Great Controversy, page, 309. [13]

2 A second reason is that soon after, in the area where these sky signs appeared, a remarkable revival of interest arose in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and these Christians recognized the events as the signs given by Jesus, warning of his return. (7 Bible Commentary, page 779) [14]

Whatever the cause of the darkening of the sun, it certainly occurred at the time predicted and met the specifications of the prediction. [12] The same night when the moon arose - it was a full moon, indicating that it was not an eclipse - it appeared red like blood. But ere long it completely disappeared from sight and the blackness of the night was so deep that even horses lost their way.

“At night it was so inky dark that a person could not see his hand when held up, nor even a white sheet of paper.” ‘History of Weare, New Hampshire’ 1735-1888. (1888).

“Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible, but by the help of some artificial light.” Dr. Samuel Tenney, 1785, ‘Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society,’ Volume 1, 1792.

“The darkness of the following night was so intense that many who were but a little way from home, on well-known roads, could not, without extreme difficulty, retrace the way to their own dwellings.” ‘Sketches of the History of New Hampshire’ John W. Whiton (1834).

The next event listed in the seal is the falling of the stars.

“The stars of heaven fell to the earth even as a fig tree casts her untimely (or green) figs as she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Revelation 6:13.

This refers not to the fixed stars as such, but to meteors. Did meteors appear after the Dark Day of 1780 in such a way as to constitute a fulfillment of this prediction? Have not there always been falling stars? Meteors have been traced back only as far as 902 AD. Very little was known or understood concerning meteors till 1798 AD. At that time two German students reported their observations and conclusions in regard to meteors. [15]

“The first spectacular fall of meteors was in 1799 AD. It was observed mostly in central and South America. (‘The Ancient Leonids,’ pages 80-82, 84. W. Fisher.)

The most spectacular fall was in 1833.

“The most magnificent meteor shower on record.” ‘The Ancient Leonids,’ pages 79-80.

“For nearly four hours the sky was literally ablaze. More than a billion shooting stars appeared over the United States and Canada alone.” P. Millman ‘The Telescope.’ (May-June 1940)

It startled the population and many recognized it as a fulfillment of the prediction of Jesus and of the sixth seal of Revelation. It is interesting to notice the manner in which the stars were predicted to fall. “Even as a fig tree casts her untimely (or green) figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” The stars were not to fall like ripe figs - directly in a straight line to the ground - but like figs under pressure, which snap off and fly away in the wind. Eyewitnesses’ accounts of the falling stars confirm this description.

“It may be doubted, whether any description has surpassed, in accuracy and impressiveness, that of the old negro in Virginia, who remarked ‘It is awful, indeed, sir, it looked like ripe crab-apples falling from the trees, when shaking them for cider.’ J. T. Buckingham ‘The Meteoric Shower,’ pages 47-48 (1834).

“This language of the prophet has always been received as metaphorical. It was literally fulfilled in the phenomena of yesterday, so as no man before yesterday had conceived to be possible that it should be fulfilled. And how did they fall? Neither myself nor one of the family heard any report; and were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt to illustrate the appearance of the heavens as that which St. John uses in the prophecy.” Henry Dana Ward ‘The New York Journal of Commerce,’ November 14 (1833).

“The observers saw that the meteors’ darted away from a single point in the sky; the meteors ‘were like the ribs of a gigantic umbrella.” W. J. Fisher ‘The Ancient Leooids’ (1934).

With the falling of the meteors, in 1799 and 1833, there commenced a new division of astronomy called “Meteoric Astronomy”. It was discovered that these falling stars which were called Leonids, (because they appeared under the constellation of Leo) came in cycles of 33. 25 years. The first fall was in 1799. 33. 25 years later in 1833 came the next fall, and the third fall came in 1866. This third fall was seen in Britain, Europe, Africa and parts of Asia. Many scientists concluded that the Leonids would appear every 33. 25 years. Thus when the next 33. 25 years arrived in 1899 there was great expectation. The world was alerted to watch but there was great disappointment.

The Leonids did not appear. They still race through outer space, but there are no regular spectacular appearances. Why is this? We suggest that if the Leonids had come regularly every 33. 25 years, they would not have been seen as special signs of a coming event in the history of the world. These celestial events occurred at a particular time as signs, to mark the commencement of the final era in the history of the world, called “the time of the end”. This term is derived from the book of Daniel. It began at the close of 1260 years of papal supremacy which concluded in 1798. Around that important date in prophecy the celestial signs occurred. First of all the sun in 1780, then the moon the same night, then the stars in 1799, 1833 and 1866. In these signs God was telling mankind that the last days had begun. Thus, ever since 1798, we have been in the time of the end, the last days. Christians should have been expecting the second advent ever since 1798.

It is informative to note the correspondence between the events of Matthew 24:29-30 and the events of Revelation 6:12-17 in the sixth seal.

REVELATION 6:12-17	MATTHEW 24:29-30
1. Great earthquake	Not mentioned
2. Sun darkened	Sun darkened
3. Moon as blood	Moon unlit
4. Stars fall	Stars fall
5. Atmospheric heaven departs	Heavenly powers shaken
b. Great earthquake	No mention
7. No mention	Sign of Son of Man
8. Flight and Cry of Unserved	Populace mourns
9. Coming of Christ	Coming of Christ

Altogether there are nine events and it is enlightening to compare the details of these dramatic awe inspiring scenes of the Second Advent.

We now stand between Verse 13 and Verse 14. The next great event in history, as far as this line of prophecy is concerned is described thus,

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” Verse 14.

What heaven is this that departs as a scroll? It is not the third heaven - for that is where God’s throne is. Undoubtedly it is the first heaven, or atmospheric heaven. However at the Second Advent other areas of space will be affected. Jesus said, “the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” (Matthew 24:29) This refers to the powers of the second heaven, the sun, moon and stars. Both the first and second heavens will be disturbed when Christ in power and glory streams through space to this planet. The apostle Paul confirms this fact.

“I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Hebrews 12:25-27.

At the Second Advent not only will our planetary system be greatly disturbed, but our planet, it appears, could be affected in its rotation upon its axis.

“The powers of heaven are the sun, moon and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon and stars will be moved out of their place. They will not pass away but be shaken by the voice of God. Dark heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back, then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God.” Early Writings page 41. [16]

“The heavens departed as a scroll” or “The atmosphere parted and rolled back”. This probably refers to the cloudy atmosphere, not the air that surrounds the planet, otherwise all life would cease. Associated with the awesome atmospheric disturbances is a violent upheaval upon the earth.

“And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” This mammoth earthquake is also described under the 7th plague.

“There was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great-and the cities of the nations fell. And every island fled away and the mountains were not found.” Revelation 16:17-21.

What an earthquake! It is the destruction of the world’s civilization. As the author of Great Controversy writes,

“The firmament (atmosphere) appears to open and shut. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury.

There is heard the shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom and Gomorrah for wickedness, are swallowed up by the angry waters. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low, the lordly palaces upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.” Great Controversy, page 637-638. [17]

We now come to the actual appearance of Christ in the heavens. As a result of the atmospheric disturbances the world’s inhabitants will be able to see into the vast distance. They behold the “sign of the son of man, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30. The sixth seal then describes the reaction of the unsaved when they behold Jesus Christ coming in the distant heavens.

“And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and chief captains and the mighty men and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains,” Revelation 6:15.

Why do they hide? Because they know it is doomsday. And how do they know? Because the message of His coming has gone to every nation, especially in the ‘Loud Cry’ of Revelation 18. All classes of the unsaved, have supported the false church and now in despair they call to the mountains and rocks to “fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.” Verses 16-17.

This fearful flight of the unsaved, reveals that when Christ returns, he comes gradually to the world. He does not come in a sudden, blinding flash and snatch away his people. For the unsaved to flee to the mountains it would need a certain amount of time, indicating that Christ must gradually approach the earth.

In this fateful final scene is heard the prayer of despair. They have rejected him, who is the Rock of ages, and now they pray to the mountains and rocks to hide them from his face.”Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne.” What a tragedy? Here we have a dramatic demonstration of divine law.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7.

These supporters of the apostate church had turned away from the truth of Christ, now they turn away in despair from the face of Christ. They had refused to fall upon the Rock and be broken in conversion, now they plead for the rocks to fall on them. They had hid themselves from the light of God’s law, now in agony they hide themselves from the light of the glory of Christ. They had rejected the call to stand for Christ, now they cry, “Who shall be able to stand?”

They failed to apply “the blood of the lamb,” now they feel “the wrath of the lamb”. They despised “the day of salvation”, now they despair, in “the great day of his wrath.”

Seven classes of the unsaved are presented here. These represent all humanity, from the highest to the lowest. Birth, position, power, talent, mean nothing now, just as they meant nothing with God all along. What a lesson for man today! We dare not look to those admired by the world, for a lead in the things of God. Beware of the opinions and example of the world's leading lights, for one day they will rush to the mountains and rocks in utter despair.

At this hour two intensive prayers will be heard - the prayer of the majority who have followed the popular way - they will pray to the rocks and mountains, and the prayer of the minority - the remnant - who have followed the Lamb, keeping his commandments. Their prayer will be,

"Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25:9.

How they so patiently waited! They waited through persecution, through the death threat, through the plagues, through pursuit by the mobs; they have waited with tremendous endurance and now at last their Savior finally appears. What unutterable relief that will be? Between the sixth and seventh seals is the seventh chapter of Revelation. Why is this chapter so inserted? Undoubtedly it is placed there to answer the desperate question, "Who shall be able to stand?" All should know the answer to that question - it is the most vital of all questions for earth's last generation, and the answer is found in Revelation seven. John beheld four angels holding back the four winds, denoting the judgments of God. Why are they holding them back?

"I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice, saying hurt not the earth till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:1-3

The only man who will stand when Christ comes is the man who has the seal of-God in his forehead. A second reason why this chapter is placed between the sixth and seventh seals, is that chapter 7 reveals the final destiny and reward of those who have stood faithfully for Christ.

Thus the close of the sixth seal reveals the fall of the apostate church. By then the apostate church will be worldwide, involving all the unsaved."All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of Life." Revelation 13:8. On the other hand, it reveals the sealing of those who comprise the true church and assures them of deliverance at the second advent.

SEVENTH SEAL

"When he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Revelation 8:1.

What a contrast! A seeming anticlimax. To the contrary, this seal is one of the most thrilling of the seven. Under the sixth seal were tremendous upheavals. The great earthquake, the sun blacked out, the moon as blood, the stars falling to earth, atmospheric disturbances, a second mighty earthquake - the world's population stricken with terrifying panic and then - silence! Why the silence?

There are two reasons for the silence. Normally in the presence of God there is continual music and praise."They rest not day nor night, crying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Revelation 4:8.

What could bring silence to heaven? Once before there was silence in heaven. Its glorious atmosphere was turned to one of grief. Why the grief? Has sorrow ever afflicted our Heavenly Father? The answer is yes. His heart was afflicted with sorrow when he gave his only begotten son, when, to save our guilty race, he had to withdraw his presence from his beloved son as he hung upon the cross; when amid the fearful darkness, Jesus, in that agonizing death cry, exclaimed, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" Upon the cross, Jesus the beloved Son, died of a broken heart. As the author of "Desire of Ages" declares,

"God suffered with his son. Angels beheld the Savior's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, his nature weighed down with a shuddering mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating his beams of light, love and glory from his beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in his sight is sin." Desire of Ages, 693. [18]

But why the silence at the Second Advent? Will there be any event that could bring sorrow again to the heart of God? Yes. At the Second Advent all the unready, all the unsaved, will meet their doom.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in the saints." 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10.

The second advent brings about the destruction of the millions of the unsaved. What a shocking and tragic event this will be? And this tragedy will grieve the heart of God.

“As I live, said the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die.” Ezekiel 33:11.

We suggest that this is the first reason for silence in heaven at the Second Advent. But why the half hour? This suggests a second reason for the silence in heaven. This is a symbolic prophecy therefore the half hour is symbolic *time. In prophecy symbols extend to the Second Advent. This means that the year-day principle still operates of a day for a year. A half hour is 1/48 of a Bible year. A bible year contains 360 days. Therefore 1/48 of 360 equals 7. 5 of our literal days.

THE HALF HOUR OF PROPHECY

A Half Hour = 1/48 of a Day.

One Day = One Year.

A Bible Year = 360 Days. Therefore

A 0. 5 Hour = 1/48 of 360 Therefore

A 0. 5 Hour = 7. 50 Days

This would mean that there is silence in heaven for 7. 50 literal days. Some claim that there is no prophetic time of less than one day. This is pure assumption and must be rejected, for there is no suggestion of it in scripture. It is also claimed by some that all prophetic time ended in 1844. “Time shall be no longer.” Revelation 10:6. But this refers to the prophetic periods of the book of Daniel of which there are four p the 1260 years, the 1290 years, the 1335 years and the 2300 years. When it says that “there shall be time no longer,” it is speaking of the great chronological time periods of the book of Daniel. All chronological time ended in 1844. There is no longer any more chronological prophetic time after 1844. In other words there are no prophetic dates after 1844. However in symbolic prophecy, when time is mentioned it is still symbolic time until the Second Advent. After the Second Advent, time then reverts back to literal time. Symbols cease at the Second Advent, and this is why the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 must be interpreted as literal years - not symbolic.

What then is the significance of the 7. 50 literal days in connection with the Second Advent? When Jesus Christ returns to this world, heaven will be emptied of its inhabitants, except the Father. [20] All the angelic host accompany Christ to the world.

“When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” Matthew 25:31.

The Second Advent will be the greatest display of power and glory ever witnessed.

“He shall come in his own glory and in his Father’s and of the holy angels.” Luke 9:26.

All the inhabitants of heaven, and probably the leaders of other worlds as well as others, will accompany Christ. But the Father remains alone, awaiting the return of his Son with the saints. Undoubtedly He waits in silence. There is no praise because none is present to produce it. The sinless universe for six thousand years has intently witnessed the great controversy on earth. Now, in the great climax of the controversy, in the grand finale of the war between good and evil, in the battle of Armageddon the unnumbered hosts of heaven are present to witness the scene.

“The armies which were in heaven followed him and he shall smite the nations and he shall rule (or destroy) them with a rod of iron, and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the mighty God.” Revelation 19:14-15.

We suggest that the Father waits for 7. 50 days. Why 7. 50 days? The time taken for the cataclysmic events of the Second Advent undoubtedly will be very short, for Jesus said, “Behold I come quickly.” Why then 7. 50 days? One answer is suggested by the author of “Early Writings,”

“We were changed and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. We all entered the cloud together and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns and with his own right hand placed them on our heads, he gave us harps of gold and palms of victory.” Early Writings, page 16. [19]

The reason for the seven day period for the saints' ascension is not stated but if the saints are to spend seven glorious days on their return journey to the kingdom, that leaves just half a day for the events of the second advent, i. e. Jesus' journey from heaven to earth, the resurrection of the just, the destruction of the unsaved, and the translation of the living saints. Then the saints of God begin that epic journey of seven awe inspiring days through outer space, back to the Father's house. What a marvelous prospect! In that great reunion day all the saints will return together to the kingdom. There we shall receive the promised reward.

"I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kingdoms and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the lamb clothed with white robes and palm in their hands, and cried with a loud voice saying Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10.

Imagine the glorious experience when we finally stand before the throne, and see the face of our wonderful God.

"They shall hunger no more neither thirst anymore . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:13, 17.

"And there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4.

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5. Ellen G. White."Christ's Object Lessons," page 179.
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8. Ellen G. White."Testimonies to the Church," Volume 5, page 451.
9. Ellen G. White."Christ's Object Lessons," pages 182-183.
10. Dr. Desmond Ford, "Crisis," volume 2, page 378.
- 11."British Association for the Advancement Of Science."
12. One modern investigator, on the basis of news paper reports of that time, has advanced the opinion that the Dark Day of May 19, 1780 was caused by forest fires. This has led some to seriously question the event as constituting a fulfillment of the prediction. In answer we would suggest that to base a conclusion upon newspaper reports is very questionable and should not be taken very seriously. M. Sprengel."Adventist Review," May 22, 29; June 5, 1980.
13. Ellen G. White."Great Controversy," page 309.
14. S. D. A. Bible Commentary. Volume 7, page 779.
15. J. C. Hickey."Introducing the Universe," Pages 85-86.
16. Ellen G. White."Early Writings," page 41.
17. Ellen G. White."Great Controversy," Pages 637-638.
18. Ellen G. White."Desire of Ages," page 693.
19. Ellen G. White."Early Writings," page 16.

20. Some claim that God the Father also accompanies Jesus Christ when he returns to this world. However there is no actual scriptural statement that upholds this view. The Second Advent is always associated with Jesus Christ. Surely if God the Father who is the first person in the Godhead, is coming to this world there would be abundant evidences of it in scripture and/or the S. O. P.

15. The Seven Trumpets

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

In introducing this subject let us first of all discuss the question, Do the trumpets have a secondary end time application? This view is held by an increasing number of Adventists today. The historic SDA position is that only the seventh trumpet has an end time application.

Do the other six trumpets also apply to the time of the end? The following statement is used as authority for this position,

“Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded, vial after vial poured out one after the other upon the inhabitants of the earth.” 3 Selected Messages, page 426. See also “The Appendix,” pages 16-17. [1]

On the basis of this statement it is concluded that the trumpets are yet future. What is the answer to this view? There is no hint whatsoever in the above statement that it is an exposition of the prophecy of the 7 trumpets of Revelation. In fact it appears that the term “trumpet” is used in a general sense of a call to battle in the coming crisis of the church. The phrases used in the full Spirit of Prophecy statement certainly confirm this.

“In this last conflict the Captain of the Lord’s host is leading on the armies of heaven and mingling in the ranks and fighting our battles for us. We would lose faith and courage in the conflict, if we were not sustained by the power of God. Every form of evil is to spring into intense activity. Evil angels unite their powers with evil men—they will not yield the last great final contest without a desperate struggle and all the world will be on one side or the other of the question. The battle of Armageddon will be fought and that day not find none of us sleeping. The Captain of the Lord’s hosts will stand at the head of the angels of heaven to direct the battle. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another, on the inhabitants of the earth.” 3 Selected Messages, page 425-426. [2]

The term trumpet is employed as a call to battle, to stand up and be counted in the great conflict before us. Are the seven trumpets identical with or associated with the seven last plagues? The statement reads, “Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded, vial after vial is to be poured out.” Some conclude that if this refers to the seven trumpets then the trumpets are associated with the plagues. This is not necessarily so. The word “vial” does represent a plague, but the expression could refer to other plagues that may fall upon mankind before the close of probation. Already there are evidences of a plague epidemic. The A. I. D. S. disease is even labeled “the wrath of God”! Undoubtedly we will see other epidemics which will be so devastating that the population of the earth could be lowered.

In connection with the 7 trumpets of Revelation, the term plagues is used.

“The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues (or trumpets) yet repented not of the works of their hands.” Revelation 9:20.

The seven trumpets were certainly a type of plague upon the inhabitants in the areas where they applied, but they are not the seven LAST plagues. The seven plagues just prior to the second advent are the LAST plagues, indicating that there were other plagues beforehand. (See Appendix for another misuse of S. O. P. statement. page 16.)

The setting of the trumpets clearly indicates that the first six were fulfilled before 1844 AD. In the introduction to the trumpets an angel offers the prayers of the saints at the altar of incense in the heavenly temple. This ministry was performed in the first apartment of the sanctuary which continued from Christ’s ascension until 1844 when it transferred to the second apartment of the heavenly temple. In the sixth trumpet also, it says,

“I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.” Revelation 9:13.

This is another first apartment scene indicating that the sixth trumpet was taking place during the time when the ministry of Christ was in the first apartment, i. e. before 1844 AD. But what of the similarities between the trumpets and the plagues?

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TRUMPETS AND PLAGUES

On the surface it appears that the trumpets and plagues are identical, and many scholars have drawn this conclusion. However not only are there similarities but there are a greater number of differences between the plagues and trumpets, as the following diagram reveals.

SEVEN TRUMPETS

1. Upon the earth Revelation 8:7
2. Upon the sea Revelation 8:8
3. Rivers & fountains of waters Revelation 8:10
4. Sun smitten Revelation 8:12
5. Air darkened Revelation 9:2
6. Great River Euphrates Revelation 9:4
7. Mystery of God finished Revelation 10:7
8. Lightning, voices thundering, earthquake, great hail Revelation 11:19

SEVEN PLAGUES

1. Upon the earth Revelation 16:2
2. Upon the sea Revelation 16:3
3. Rivers & fountains of waters Revelation 16:4
4. Upon the sun Revelation 16:8
5. Darkness Revelation 16:1
6. Great River Euphrates Revelation 16:12
7. "It is done" Revelation 16:17
8. Voices, thunders, lightning, great earthquake, hail Revelation 16:18

THE DIFFERENCES SO THEY ARE NOT IDENTICAL TRUMPETS

Six symbolic. One literal

First. 4 affect 33% of the Earth's surface

First. 'Hail, Fire & Blood. '

Second. 33% sea turned to blood. 33% sea creatures die

Third. 33% waters turned bitter

Fourth. 33% Sun, Moon, stars smitten, 33% day turned into darkness.

Fifth. Smoke from pit - darkness. Locusts torment for 5 months

Sixth. Angel (spirits) loosed from Euphrates. Myriads of horsemen kill 33% of men.

Seventh. Gospel concluded. Events extend to End of Millennium.

PLAGUES

6 literal. One symbolic

First 4 are worldwide

First 'Noisome & grievous sore.'

Second. Sea as blood of dead man.

Third. All drinking water becomes blood.

Fourth. Sun more active - men smitten with fierce heat

Fifth. Papal kingdom filled with darkness

Sixth. Euphrates dried up and Evil spirits unite whole world against God.

Seventh. Great earthquake. Cities of world fall. Ends at the Second Advent.

These differences (and there are many more) show that the trumpets and plagues are entirely separate and distinct. How then shall we interpret the seven trumpets of Revelation? The historic SDA view is that the first six trumpets apply to the downfall of the Roman Empire and the seventh trumpet refers to the downfall of the whole world when it becomes, as it were, a revived Roman Empire under the papacy. The positions currently taught by our leading S. D. A. academic institutions follow those of Dr. Edwin Thiele. Dr. M. Maxwell in "God Cares II" admits the same. [3]

The first trumpet, it is claimed, deals with the destruction of Jerusalem, The second deals with the fall of Western Rome, the third, with the pollution of the gospel by the papacy. The fourth trumpet deals with Christ's heavenly ministry being obscured by a false system of mediation. On the fifth trumpet, their position agrees with the historic SDA view, that it refers to the Arabs. Likewise with the sixth trumpet, that it refers to the Turks. This appears to be the current view concerning the seven trumpets. [4]

Will this modern Interpretation stand up under investigation? There are some serious questions concerning it. For example, the first trumpet is applied to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This event occurred 25 years before John began to write Revelation, and when he wrote he was shown "things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). Therefore the destruction of Jerusalem would barely come into the picture, because it was already history. The destruction of Jerusalem was a fulfillment of other great predictions made many centuries before. Moses in Deut. 28:49-68 gave a very detailed prediction concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

Daniel, in Daniel 9:26-27 predicted the same and Jesus in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and particularly in Luke 21 also predicted that event. The second point where this interpretation is under question is that in the first trumpet "all green grass was burnt up." and this it is claimed, symbolized God's people flourishing in righteousness. (God Cares Volume 2, page 237). [5] But in the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were not flourishing in righteousness - it was exactly the opposite. They had reached the height of rebellion against God, and they were no longer God's people. Their probation as God's people, had ended in 34 AD.

The third point under question is the third trumpet where it mentions a "star falling from heaven" and that it represents Satan. In scripture a star represents a leader. While Satan was the leader of the angels, it could refer to another leader. In Revelation 1:20 the leaders in God's church are likened to stars. Daniel 8:10 indicates the same. In Jude 1:13 apostate leaders are referred to as "wandering stars".

"The stars of heaven are under God's control; he fills them with light; if he did not, they would become fallen stars, so with his ministers." Gospel Workers, page 13-14. [6]

A falling star then may not only refer to Satan but to human leaders - even religious leaders. We will show that there is another interpretation of the third trumpet that is far more satisfactory. Another claim that must be questioned is that in the second trumpet a mountain is cast into the sea, and this represents the Gothic invasions that overthrew the Roman Empire. [7] But it is only one mountain that is cast into the sea, one kingdom, for a mountain in scripture represents a kingdom, whereas the Gothic barbarians that invaded the Roman Empire and brought it to its end involved at least six different peoples or tribes or kingdoms. Probably ten different peoples or more - such as the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Huns, the Vandals, the Suevi, the Burgundians, the Heruli and others. The mountain is cast into the sea - it is connected with the sea, and history is quite clear that only one Gothic power had association with the sea. Again in the third trumpet the falling star, called wormwood, is claimed to represent the polluting of one third of the world by Rome's apostasy of the middle ages. [8] But Rome's apostasy affected almost the whole then known world, not just a third of it. According to Revelation 2:20 even some of God's people were infected with the apostasy. In the fourth trumpet a third of the sun was darkened etc. which it is claimed represents Christ's heavenly ministry being obscured by the papal priesthood, the counterfeit system of mediation. [9] But the papal counterfeit obscured not just a third of the world of the day but more like nine tenths of it. We believe that we should look for a more satisfactory interpretation of the first four trumpets.

Will the historic SDA view stand up under the microscope of scripture? When we re-examine the historic Adventist interpretation there are some things we need to consider. Is every item mentioned in the trumpets to be taken as symbolic? It is generally understood that the trumpets are symbolic, but how much is symbolic and how much is literal? In this area there is confusion. Can the symbolic and literal be employed in the one description? Scripture often combines the two. The symbolic and literal are employed together, and it is important to differentiate between the two. For example notice the following psalm.

“Thou has brought a vine out of Egypt and has cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou prepared room before it and did cause it to take deep root and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs to the sea and her branches to the river.” Psalm 80:8-11.

Here is a combination of symbolic and literal.”Thou has brought a vine out of Egypt”.”Egypt” is literal and “vine” is a symbol of Israel.

“You has cast out the heathen” (literal) “and planted it” (symbolic).”Though prepared room before it” (literal) “and did cause it to take deep root”, (symbolic) and, “it filled the land” (literally) “the hills were covered with the shadow of it” (symbolic) and “the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars” (symbolic) “She sent out her boughs” (symbolic) “to the sea” (literal sea - Mediterranean) “and her branches to the river.” (Literal Euphrates River). A similar pattern is found in Jeremiah 3:6; Ezekiel 27:26; Ezekiel 32:6-7 and Hosea 13:15. Therefore it is necessary to determine what is symbolic, and what is literal in the wording of the seven trumpets.

In examining the first six trumpets it appears that generally the initial terms used to describe the trumpet are in symbolic language, while the effects of the trumpet in the first three are expressed in literal terms but in the fourth trumpet they are expressed in symbolic terms. In the fifth and sixth trumpets the initial description again is in symbolic language with one or two exceptions but the explanation of the symbols is in literal language, except for a couple of points. The effects of the fifth and sixth trumpets are mostly in literal language.

The historic SDA position is not original with them. It has been held by many scholars of yesteryear, prior to 1844. [10] What does a trumpet represent in prophecy? In scripture the trumpet was employed for four different reasons.

1. To proclaim the various festivals of Israel such as the Sabbath, New Moons, New Year, Holy Convocations and Feasts.
2. To summon Israel to prayer and praise.
3. To proclaim the time of each advance of the camp of Israel in their wilderness journeyings toward the Promised Land. [11]
4. A call to arms, or a warning of an enemy invasion. The fourth reason appears to be one that applies to the seven trumpets.

A trumpet denotes an invasion of enemy forces. This is made very clear by Jeremiah,

“Blow you the trumpet in the land, cry, gather together and say, Assemble yourselves and let us go into the defended cities.”

It denotes an invasion is imminent, enemy forces are at hand.

“I am pained at my very heart. My heart makes a noise in me, I cannot hold my peace because thou has heard oh my soul the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” Jeremiah 4:4-5, 19.

The trumpet denotes an alarm of war. The historic Adventist position is that the -first six trumpets denote a military invasion against the mighty Roman Empire. [12] The seventh trumpet denotes an invasion against this rebel world by Christ and the armies of heaven, when “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord.”

What evidence do we have that the Roman Empire could be the object of the first six trumpets? This undoubtedly is the crux of the matter. Have SDA’s been justified in applying the first six trumpets to the downfall of the Roman Empire? We offer the following reasons.

In John’s day, when Revelation was written, according to Edward Gibbon, the greatest authority on Rome, “The Roman Empire filled the world.” It was a Roman world. John was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, a victim of Roman oppression. Secondly, the scene of the trumpets is described at least four times, as “the earth”, also “the sea”, vegetation and waters. What do these represent? Undoubtedly a part of this world. The world of New Testament times, until the fifth century, was the Roman world. In Luke 2:1 it mentions how a decree from Augustus Caesar went forth for “all the world to be taxed”. What world? The Roman world.

Secular authors in those years recognized that the world of that day was indeed the Roman world. (Ovid & Dionysius “Horae Apocalypse.” Elliott, Volume 1, page 359) [13] Sir Isaac Newton the famous scientist, who spent over 40 years in the study of prophecy in commenting on Revelation 8:5 and the fire being cast upon the earth, says,

“Such a fire was cast upon the earth, the Roman world, the territorial platform of prophecy.” [14]

There is a third reason why the trumpets refer to the Roman world. The first four trumpets are linked together. Likewise the last three. The terms used in the first four trumpets denote invading, destructive, military powers which are employed to punish apostate peoples. What historical drama in history back to the time of John the Revelator meets such a specification? There is only one and that is the downfall of the Roman Empire, by the barbarians who swept over Western Rome and ended that empire. The first four trumpets deal with Western Rome, the fifth and sixth deal with Eastern Rome. Notice the telling comment on this point by Dr. Albert Barnes, (the noted Presbyterian scholar of the 1850’s)

“There are four of these “trumpets”, and it would be a matter of inquiry whether there were four events of sufficient distinctness that would mark these invasions or that would constitute periods or epochs in the destruction of the Roman power. At this point in writing I looked upon a chart of history, composed with no reference to this prophecy, and found a singular and unexpected prominence given to four such events extending from the first invasion of the Goths and Vandals at the beginning of the fifth century to the fall of the Western empire AD 476. The first was the invasion of Alaric king of the Goths, AD 410; the second was the invasion of Attila king of the Huns, AD 447; a third was the sack of Rome by Genseric king of the Vandals, and the fourth resulting in the final conquest of Rome, was that of Odoacer king of the Heruli.” ‘Notes on Revelation 8.’ [15]

The fourth point indicating that it was the Roman world, is that the trumpets are described as “divine judgments on God’s professed people in apostasy.” Revelation 9:20 confirms this. Where did apostasy develop in the early Christian church? In the Mediterranean world, the Roman world, in the Christian church in the Roman Empire, and finally it centered in the church at Rome itself.

What political powers and people supported and protected this apostasy? The Roman Empire after the Caesars became Christian. Were there any other powers or people at that time that could fit this specification? Not one. Therefore the first six trumpets must apply to the Roman Empire. Dr. M. Maxwell correctly comments,

“It is noteworthy that the century of disasters (378-476 AD) we have been talking about, befell Rome after she had adopted Christianity. The Roman Empire had become in a sense an apostate people of God, ripe for experiencing the judgment of God, inflicted by her enemies.” God Cares, Volume 2, page 240. [16]

There is another point, as to why this prediction of the 7 trumpets must apply to the Roman Empire. Seven times in the five trumpets the “third part” is specified. The third part of what? The only satisfactory application of this point is that it was the third part of the Roman Empire. There were a number of divisions in the history of Rome, but there was one in particular that neatly fitted the prediction at this particular time. Three divisions were formed in the time of Constantine. The empire was divided between him, Licinius and Maximin, and these three divisions existed at the time of the barbarian invasions of the empire.

No other application of “the third part” satisfactorily fills the prediction.

“In the time of Constantine the Roman Empire was divided into three great sections: to Constantine was assigned Gaul, Spain, Britain, Italy, Africa; to Licinius the Illyricum prefecture; to Maximin, the Asiatic provinces and Egypt.” Dr. Cumming, ‘Apocalyptic Sketches,’ Volume 2, page 53. [17]

“Either Diocletian or after him Constantine, made Illyricum one of the four prefectures. This prefecture included Pannonia, Noricum, Crete and the entire Balkan peninsular except Thrace, which was attached by Constantine to the prefecture of the East. The whole peninsular exempt Thrace was still known as Illyricum.” Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911 Edition, Volume 14, page 326. [18]

“Each one included its third of the Mediterranean or Roman sea, as well as its third of the land: and each one also its characteristic stream of the three great frontier rivers, the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates.” ‘Horae Apocalypticae’ E. B. Elliott. Volume 1, page 342. [19]

This is a completely satisfactory explanation of “the third part,” that is involved in five of the six trumpets. It is significant to notice that other prophets predicted the fall of Rome. In the primary prophecy of Daniel, (after dealing with the first three universal kingdoms) it says of the fourth or iron kingdom, “it shall be divided”. Daniel 2:41. This fourth kingdom was pagan Rome. In the prophecy of the four beasts of Daniel 7 the four kingdoms are again presented and of the fourth or Roman kingdom it says “the ten horns out of this kingdom (Rome) are ten kings (or kingdoms) that shall arise.” Daniel 7:24. The first four trumpets reveal how the ten kingdoms were formed out of the Roman Empire. Maybe this is one of the purposes of the first four trumpets. Jesus Christ also predicted the end of the Roman Empire in connection with old Jerusalem.

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles (the Ram Gentiles) until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:24. (i. e. The Roman Gentiles.) The sixth trumpet reveals how the Roman gentiles’ empire came to its end in the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. Before that the Arabs under the fifth trumpet, had broken the power of the Roman Gentiles over Jerusalem.

It is informative to recall that the early Christians believed that according to 2 Thessalonians 2 the Antichrist, or Man of sin, would not appear until after Pagan Rome was removed.

“Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day (the coming of Christ) shall not come, except there come a falling away (or apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all who is called God or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God (the Christian church), showing himself, that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The majority of Protestant scholars through the years have been quite clear that this prediction was fulfilled in the Bishop of Rome. The apostle continues,

“Now you know what withholds (or restrains) that he (the Man of sin) might be revealed in his time.”

“You know what restrains” i. e. restrains the Man of sin.”For the mystery of iniquity doth already work only he who now lets (or restrains) will let (or restrain) until he be taken out of the way.” Verses 5-7.

The one who restrained the ‘Man of sin,’ was understood to be Pagan Rome. Is it not true that the papacy, the man of sin, did not come to political power until pagan Rome, gave its power and seat, and great authority to the Papacy by removing its capital from Rome to Constantinople? (Revelation 13:2) The early Christians believed that the Roman Empire “which filled the world” must end before antichrist would reign. Such an event, being so world shaking, would be of importance to the people of God and therefore it is understandable that the first six trumpets should apply to the downfall of the Roman Empire.

Why the temple scene of Revelation 8 in the introduction to the trumpets?

“I saw seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censor, and there was given to him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censor and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into (or upon) the earth: and there were voices and thunders and lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” Revelation 8:2-6.

It is indisputable that this temple scene is involved with the trumpets. Why much incense? Because there was much prayer from the saints. The prayers of the saints were being heard and as a result, “the censor is filled with fire and cast into the earth.” Verse 5. Some conclude that this represents the close of probation but this must be rejected. Why the fire? Fire does two things. It purifies or destroys, purifies or punishes. Here it purifies the prayers of God’s saints and punishes the saint’s oppressors. It punishes the apostates.”Fire is cast upon the earth.” It represents the judgments of God, the visitations of justice in the form of the trumpets. It is not the close of probation as such, unless it be the close of probation in a local sense of the Roman Empire.

The trumpets were God’s response to the prayers of the saints. When God answered the much praying of the saints - he sent the trumpets upon the earth. Matthew Henry, the elder statesman of Bible commentators wrote,

“These prayers that were thus accepted in heaven, produced great changes upon earth. The same angel with the same censor took the fire of the altar and cast it into the earth and this presently caused strange commotions, voices and lightning and thunders and an earthquake.” Commentary on Revelation 8. [20]

Jameson, Fawcett & Brown, noted Anglican scholars declare,

“The hot coals off the altar, cast on the earth, symbolized God’s fiery judgments about to descend on the church’s foes in answer to the saints’ incense-perfumed prayers, which have just ascended before God.” Commentary on Revelation 8. [21]

How marvelous is the power of the saints’ prayers! What would challenge the saints to much prayer that could result in the judgments of the trumpets upon the Roman Empire? We suggest it was the great apostasy. The “falling away” of 2 Thessalonians 2 had taken place, “the man of sin” had risen. Constantine had amalgamated church and state, and much of the Christian church had been brought to ruin. The true faith was in peril, the majority of Christians had gone astray. True believers knew that antichrist would

come, that apostasy would arise, and now, staring them in the face throughout the church of the day, was stark idolatry. Saint and martyr worship were flooding the church. We suggest that this is what led to much prayer. The cause of God looked hopeless and no doubt only one resort remained to the saints, and that was prayer and the result of their prayers ascending to the temple was the sending of divine judgments upon the apostasy, in the form of the trumpets.

There is a great lesson here for the saints today, because God's church is also in the midst of apostasy. We also are to send our prayers to the sanctuary making sure that they are purified with the merits of Christ. Maybe the way that God will answer our prayers will be to once again send judgments, but this time, judgments on the church. Maybe the Lord will have to be drastic in order to bring his church into line so that it may receive the latter rain.

"When the judgments of God are in the earth, then will the people learn righteousness." Isaiah 26:9.

This is the clear prediction of the Spirit of Prophecy in regard to the church of God in the last days. In this introduction to the study of the seven trumpet³, may the Lord help us to take care, that our interpretations will stand up under the microscope of scripture. Faithfulness to Jesus Christ, involves faithfulness to his word.

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16. Visigoths - Vandals - Huns & Heruli

The First Four Trumpets of Revelation An Exposition of Revelation 8:2-13

The seven trumpets of Revelation are introduced by a scene in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Why are they introduced in this manner? Let us examine the scriptural passage? [1]

“Another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it into [upon] the earth: and there were voices, and thundering, and lightning, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” Revelation 8:3-6.

It seems quite clear that the seven trumpets are sent by God in response to the prayers of his people - the saints. Much incense is offered, because of the many prayers of the saints. What was it that led to the special prayers of the saints? Without doubt it was the overwhelming apostasy that had come into the church, particularly the church situated within the Roman Empire. This apostasy was supported by the authority of Rome, and so in response to the prayers of the saints God visits Western Rome with the first four trumpet judgments, in an endeavor to bring his people back to truth - back to loyalty to Christ. The fifth and sixth trumpets we will show, fell on Eastern Rome, the seventh trumpet falls on the whole world when it becomes Roman again - Rome revived when “all the world wonders after the beast”. (Revelation 13:3)

THE FIRST TRUMPET

“The first angel sounded and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood. And they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up and all green grass was burnt up.” Revelation 8:7

The language suggests a violent hailstorm. What does a hailstorm represent in prophecy? The Old Testament, on which Revelation is based gives the clue. In describing the invasion of the Assyrians into the land of Israel, the prophet declares,

“Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and a strong one, which, as a tempest of hail and destroying storm, as a flood of mighty, waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.” Isaiah 28:2

The prophet in describing the Assyrian invasion likens it to a mighty hailstorm. Again, in describing the invasion of Gog and Magog, the prophet Ezekiel says,

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land. Thou and all thy bands and marry people with thee.” Ezekiel 38:9

We can safely conclude that a storm such as described in the first trumpet, denotes a military invasion. The description in the symbol indicates that it is an invasion from the North. Hailstorms that fell upon Roman territory always came from the North, so this suggests that this invasion would be from the Northerly regions. The symbolism also suggests the destruction of the countryside for “the third part of trees was burnt up and all green grass”. This indicates that forests, pastures and crops would be destroyed by the invasion. Thirdly it has “hail and fire mingled with blood” denoting carnage or the slaughter both of beast and people.

The prediction says “a third.” “One third of the trees, and all green grass.” The “third”, that is mentioned throughout the trumpets applies to a third part of the Roman Empire. [2] From the time of Constantine, there were three divisions of the Empire, the East, the West and the central section called Illyricum which comprised the Balkan Peninsular, except Thrace, right up to what we would now call Southern Austria.

Is there any evidence in history of a military invasion of one of the divisions of the Roman Empire that meets the specifications of this first trumpet? Yes there is. The man who fulfilled it, was Alaric the leader

of the Visigoths - a branch of the Gothic peoples from which most Europeans are descended. They came from the Northeast of Europe, around the Baltic, where they were pressed by other peoples migrating from the East. The Goths began to move towards the warmer climate of the Roman Empire. Thousands had settled in Illyricum (the third part of the Empire which now involves Yugoslavia) where they were employed as mercenaries by the Romans to help defend the frontiers. Alaric led the Goths into Greece and ravaged the countryside. The emperor of East Rome in order to pacify Alaric, made him

the military general of the whole of Illyricum. Alaric took advantage of this and spent the next four years in preparation for the invasion of Western Rome. This began about 395 AD and the records of historians show that Alaric and the Visigoths abundantly fulfilled the specifications of the first trumpet. Notice the description by Edward Gibbon (perhaps the greatest authority on the fall of the Roman Empire) in his famous history, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." This man was not a Christian, he was a skeptic and he has been called, "The Unconscious Commentator of the Apocalypse", because when he penned the events that brought about the fall of Rome, he uses almost the identical language of the Revelator in his description of the trumpets of Revelation. In a remarkable manner he shows how these trumpets met their fulfillment. Of the invasion of Alaric and the Visigoths, he writes,

Valens [the Roman Emperor] "was informed that the North was agitated by a furious tempest." [3]

"A furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany." [4]

"A formidable tempest of the barbarians of Germany seemed ready to burst over the provinces of Gaul." [5]

"The Gothic nation [395 A. D.] was in arms. Deserted their farms at the first sound of the trumpet. The barriers of the Danube were thrown open, the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric. The whole territory was blasted by his baleful presence; flaming villages. The deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths." [6]

"A victorious leader, who united the daring spirit of a barbarian, with the art and discipline of a Roman general, was at the head of an hundred thousand fighting men; and Italy pronounced, with terror and respect the formidable name of Alaric." [7]

The prediction said that "the third part of trees and all green grass was burnt up". Gibbon relates how an old poet called Claudian of Verona bewailed the destruction of his trees, revealing how this prediction was fulfilled to the very letter. Gibbon says,

"His trees, his old contemporary trees must blaze in the conflagration of the whole country." [8]

Isn't that remarkable? This gives us a glimpse of the destruction of forest, crops and grass etc. Again,

"The dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic burst in thunder upon the banks of the upper Danube." [9] This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert and the prospect of the making ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul, that rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps and Pyrenees, was delivered to the Barbarians." [10]

This was the description of the Gothic invasion by the unconscious commentator of the Apocalypse. Three times Alaric invaded Italy. One commentator says,

"Alaric's course was to Italy, as he told an Italian monk. He felt a secret and preternatural impulse which directed and even impelled his march to the gates of Rom. As his trumpet sounded and his march advanced, terrible omens and prognostications preceded him. 'The Christians' says Gibbon, "derived comfort from the powerful intercession of the saints and martyrs." [This reveals the apostasy of the Christians] Thrice, in fulfillment of his destiny, he descended from the Alps onto the Italian plains, marking his course at each step as the awe-struck historians of the times tell us, in country and in town with ravage, conflagration and

blood, till the gates of Rome itself were opened to the conqueror and the Gothic fires blazed around the capitol." [11]

In fulfilling the first trumpet, it is significant to notice that Alaric possessed a powerful conviction, that he was divinely led to destroy Rome. This was recognized by the people of the day. When Alaric was intercepted by an Italian monk with a plea to spare the city of Rome, Alaric assured him that "he did not feel disposed to commence the siege, but found himself compelled by some hidden and irresistible impulse to accomplish the enterprise". [12]

Gibbon's remarks reveal that Alaric's invasion and sack of Rome dealt a deadly blow to the Roman Empire.

"The king of the Goths advanced with unabated vigor; and he pitched his camp under the walls of Rome." [13]

"During a period of six hundred and nineteen years, the seat of empire had never been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy." [14]

"At the hour of midnight the inhabitants [of Rome] were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the Imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of the Germany and Scythia." [15]

“This awful catastrophe of Rome, filled the astonished empire with grief and terror.” [16]

THE SECOND TRUMPET

“And the second angel sounded and as it were, a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea. And the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; And the third part of the ships were destroyed.” Revelation 8:8

This symbolism suggests a power connected with the sea - an invasion by a sea power likened to a burning mountain. What does a mountain represent in prophecy? Scripture is clear that a mountain represents a kingdom.

“I am against thee O destroying mountain, said the Lord, which destroys all the earth, I will make thee a burnt mountain.” Jeremiah 51:5.

This was alluding to the kingdom of Babylon that had conquered the world of that day and the prophet describes it as a “destroying mountain”. The kingdom of God is also likened to a mountain in Daniel 2:35-44. So we now ask: What kingdom invaded the Roman Empire - Western Rome - which was a sea power? History tells us that there was only one Gothic power involved in the downfall of Rome that was associated with the sea and that was the naval power of the Vandals. The Vandals were one of the Gothic tribes that migrated from Northwestern Europe at the same time as the Visigoths. In one invasion of Italy under a leader named Radagaisus, hundreds of thousands of Vandals, Burgundians and Suevi, besieged the city of Florence. When Radagaisus was killed, the Vandals, Burgundians and Suevi withdrew and passed on into Southern France. There the Burgundian division of these Goths settled and formed the kingdom of Burgundy. The rest of the Goths continued on into Spain - the Suevi then separated and settled in Northwestern Spain, forming the kingdom of the Suevi which is now Portugal. The remainder of the Goths - the Vandals - continued on to Gibraltar, crossed the straits, and entered Northern Africa.

There they established themselves with their capital at the site of ancient Carthage. Their leader was a man called Genseric. He was a Christian and under him, the Vandals also became Christians holding to the Arian faith. This faith was in conflict with the apostate Catholic church. The Vandals developed into a strong kingdom. They could not extend southwards because of the desert so they turned towards the sea. They built a strong navy and began to ravage the coasts of the Mediterranean. Historians declare that, being anti catholic, the Vandals attacked the catholic centers, especially Western Rome.

“The Vandals were unique among the German nations by the fact that they maintained a fleet.” [17]

The second trumpet symbolism suggested an invasion associated with the sea.”The third part of the sea became blood and the third part of creatures in the sea died and the third part of ships were destroyed.” The Vandals fulfilled this prediction completely. Africa was lost to the Empire of Rome. As Semondie says,

“The loss of Africa was perhaps one of the greatest calamities which could have overtaken the Western Empire.” [18]

Africa was the granary of Rome so the loss of Africa meant the loss of a main source of Rome’s food supply. Gibbon in describing the attacks upon Western Rome by the Vandals declares,

“The loss or desolation of the provinces from the ocean to the Alps impaired the glory and greatness of Rome. Her internal prosperity was irretrievably destroyed by the separation of Africa. . . after an interval of six centuries the fleets that issued from the ports of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean.” [19]

It was from Carthage, 600 years before, where the Phoenicians had settled that they attacked Imperial Rome under their leader Hannibal. Once again from Carthage, came the Vandals under Genseric, attacking Western Rome and particularly the centers of the catholic church, where apostasy flourished. Gibbon continues,

“The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece and Sicily. They were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia so advantageously placed in the center of the Mediterranean and their arms spread desolation or terror from the Columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile.” [20]

It is a significant point that Genseric, like Alaric the Visigoth, believed himself to be an agent of divine wrath. Thomas Hodgkin declares:

“The fleets became under Genseric’s guidance, the first naval power on the Mediterranean. At length the work [of ravaging the coast] became almost monotonous and the choice of a victim hard. Once, when the fleet had weighed anchor and was sailing forth from the broad harbor of Carthage the helmsman turned to the king and asked for what port he should steer.”For the men with whom God is angry”, answered the Vandal king and left the winds and the waters to settle the question who were the proper objects of the wrath of heaven.” [21]

Finally the emperor of Eastern Rome combined with Western Rome to build a gigantic fleet in order to destroy the Vandal power. This Roman fleet was twice destroyed by fire of the Vandals, and maybe this is the fulfillment of the prediction in the trumpet, “the third part of the creatures in the sea died and the third part of ships were destroyed”. The destruction by the Vandals was quite fantastic. [22]

Previously Genseric even sailed up the Tiber and sacked the city of Rome. Amongst the treasure that he took from that city were the golden candlestick and the golden table and other items that Titus had captured from the temple at Jerusalem. When the Vandal fleet was returning to Carthage there rose a great storm and one ship only, submerged beneath the ocean. It was the ship carrying the golden candle stick and the sacred vessels which originally had come from the temple of God in Jerusalem. [23]

Without doubt the Vandals fulfilled the second trumpet. The Vandals being of the Arian faith and in deadly opposition to the church of Rome, finally were confronted by the powerful Roman emperor, the catholic Justinian. Under Balisarius, he sent an effective army to Africa where the Vandals were destroyed.

“In 533 the Byzantine general, Belisarius, landed in Africa. The Vandals were several times defeated and Carthage was entered and the same year they were routed in the decisive battle of Tricameron. In the next year Africa, Sardinia and Corsica were restored to the Roman Empire. As a nation, the Vandals soon ceased to exist.” [24]

“There are few instances in history of a nation disappearing so rapidly and so completely as the Vandals of Africa.” [25]

“It is reckoned that during the reign of Justinian [the emperor of Eastern Rome] Africa lost 5 millions of inhabitants; thus Arianism was extinguished in that region, not by any enforcement of conformity but by the extermination of the race which had introduced and professed it.” [26]

THE THIRD TRUMPET

We now come to the third trumpet that helped terminate the reign of Rome.

“The third angel sounded and there fell a great star from heaven burning as it were a leap and it fell on a third part of the rivers and the fountains of waters and the name of the star is called wormwood and the third part of the waters became wormwood and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.” Revelation 8:10.

The great star from heaven is undoubtedly a meteor and it falls upon the third part of rivers and fountains of waters i. e. a third part of the Roman Empire, Western Rome. In scripture a star represents a leader, a falling star can represent an apostate leader (Jude 1:14). We look therefore for some powerful leader who invaded the Roman Empire and brought great bitterness to the peoples of a particular area.

The area is described as “a third part of the rivers and fountains of waters”. This would be the areas where the rivers commence - the alpine regions. Does history tell of an invasion that fulfills this specification? Yes! This was abundantly fulfilled by Attila with his multiplied thousands of Huns who invaded the Roman Empire in 450 A. D. In describing them the historian uses almost the identical language of the prophet.

“After a short space of time, as Orosius relates, the race of the Huns, fiercer than ferocity itself, flamed forth.” [27]

Notice the expression, “flamed forth”, reminding one of a blazing meteor.

“The rise of the great Hunnic power which threatened European civilization in the fifth century was as sudden and rapid as its fall.” [28]

“This invasion is the most celebrated in our people’s discourses, of all those which the barbarians have made upon us; and is the most talked of among the vulgar [or common people] and now all the countries which were within the Apennine mountains and the Alps, were full of flight, of depopulation, of slaughter, of slavery, of burning and despair.” [29]

Such a description perfectly fits the symbolism of the third trumpet. Attila called himself “the scourge of God, and the terror of men”. As Creasy declares,

“Not merely the degenerate Romans, but the bold and hardy warriors of Germany and Scandinavia, were appalled at the numbers, the ferocity, the ghastly appearance, and the lightning-like rapidity of the Huns. His own warriors believed Attila, to be the inspired favorite of their deities and followed him with fanatic zeal. His enemies looked on him as the pre appointed minister of Heaven’s wrath against themselves.”

“During the retreat from Orleans a Christian hermit is reported to have approached the Hunnish king and said to him, ‘You are the scourge of God for the chastisement of the Christians.’”

“Attila instantly assumed this new title of terror which henceforth became the appellation by which he was widely and most fearfully known.” [30]

In the reign of Attila, the Huns again became the terror of the world; That formidable Barbarian who alternately insulted and invaded the East and the West, and urged the rapid downfall off the Roman Empire.” [31]

One of the great battles that Creasy lists, was the battle of Challons in Northern France. Here 700,000 Huns under Attila met the Romans and Visigoths who had combined to meet Attila. On that battlefield Attila and his Huns were repulsed. It was a terrible battle with staggering slaughter. [32] Attila was not wholly defeated but he retreated to the mountain regions, to “the rivers and fountains of waters,” just as the prophecy had stated. There he reigned supreme. Later he returned to his capital and died of apoplexy.

The Huns had spread over all of Eastern Europe, where they were irresistible. They even invaded China and Media - north of Persia - giving an idea of the tremendous extent of their conquests. After the death of Attila they began to withdraw from Europe and return to the east, but a remnant remained in what we now call Hungary. Thus the third trumpet was faithfully fulfilled in the terrifying invasion of Attila and his Huns.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

“And the fourth angel sounded and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars so as a third part of them were darkened and the day shone not for a third part of it and the night likewise.” Revelation 8:12.

“The symbolism of this trumpet is the most difficult of the seven.” “The third part of the sun.” This undoubtedly is symbolic. It could not be referring to the literal sun because a third part of that would have no significance. What would the sun, moon and stars represent in the Roman Empire? “The third part” would apply to Western Rome. Undoubtedly they refer to the leading lights or rulers of Western Rome.

How was Rome ruled? How many bodies comprised its government? There were three - exactly three - the emperor, the consuls and the senate. The Revelator likens them to the sun, moon and stars - The emperor - the sun. The consul - the moon, and the senate - the stars. Under this fourth trumpet these ruling powers are put out of action bringing civil darkness over the third part of the empire. There is no leading Roman light, no ruling Roman power.

This prediction was fulfilled by the invasion of a Gothic people called the Heruli under their leader named Odoacer. They had been associated with Attila and his Huns and were left behind when Attila retired to the East. The Heruli invaded Italy in 476 A. D. and Odoacer gave orders that the office of the emperor of Western Rome be abolished. In response the reigning emperor abdicated and Odoacer was made king of Italy.

“Odoacer was the first Barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority over the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion.” [33]

But what of the moon and the stars? The consulship represented by the moon was abolished in 541 A. D.

[34] and in 553 A. D. the Roman senate represented by the stars, resigned because it was so powerless. [35] Thus terminated the rule of the leading lights of Western Rome. Under the fourth trumpet it all ended. Western Rome had come to her end. As Saint Jerome declared when he saw that Rome was to fall,

“The world’s glorious Sun has been extinguished.”

As the English poet Byron, in describing the same event wrote,

“She saw her glories star by star expire.” [36]

This we believe meets the symbolism of the fourth trumpet. What was the reason for the fall of the Roman Empire? Historians give many reasons. Rome had ruled the world for 644 years. Undoubtedly the main cause of Rome’s downfall was internal corruption. She disintegrated from within. This is the inevitable outcome of almost anything that is connected with the human race. Man is possessed of a fallen nature and most things connected with man ultimately disintegrate. This is one of the lessons of history - civilizations finally disintegrate. This is the significance of the second chapter of Daniel. The image commences with the gold, and the successive metals representing the various kingdoms are all of inferior quality - the silver,

brass, iron and finally clay. This tells us that the kingdoms of men, being comprised of human nature - degenerate and disintegrate.

The iron kingdom of Rome as the prediction stated in Daniel two, "would be divided". Maybe one of the purposes of the trumpets is to show how Rome was divided, how the "ten toes" of the image - the kingdoms of Europe - were established. Europe was to play an important part in the conflict between good and evil throughout the Christian era and especially in the End Time.

If it were true that Rome's downfall was due to internal corruption, how is this explained in the light of the fact that the empire had become Christian? The moral influence of the Christian faith should have stemmed the tide of corruption.

The answer is that the Christian church in the empire, had itself become corrupt. The ninth chapter of Revelation reveals that in spite of the judgment of the first six trumpets upon the apostate people of the empire, they continued in their downward course.

"The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues (or trumpets), repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils and idols of gold, silver and brass and stone and of wood which cannot see, nor hear nor walk neither repented they of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their fornication or of their thefts." Revelation 9:20.

These sins were exactly the ones that were perpetrated by the apostate Christians of the Roman Empire. It is understandable why the trumpets were sent as visitations of divine judgment. It is recognized that when corruption is under the guise of religion, it is the worst kind of corruption and this is of significance to Christians today. Falsehood, hypocrisy and corruption always receive the frown of heaven - even though they may be under the guise of religion. In fact this makes sin all the more offensive to God and he does not pass it by. The following counsel is worthy of note.

"He would teach his people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to him and are not to be lightly regarded. His frown may rest upon them all, if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions. His frown will be upon them, and the people of God as a body will be held responsible for those sins. In his dealings with his people in the past, the Lord show the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that may exclude the light of God from the entire congregation."

"If wrongs are apparent among his people, and if the servants of God pass an indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner and are alike guilty, and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God, for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty."

"Those who have excused those wrongs wrought by the people are shown to be very amiable and lovely in disposition simply because they slum to discharge the very plain scriptural duty. The task was not very agreeable to their feelings will therefore they avoided it."

"The true people of God who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sin which easily beset the people of God, especially in the closing work of the church." 5 Testimonies, pages 365-366. [37]

When there is corruption and apostasy in His church, God will not pass it by but rather He will permit judgments to come upon the church in an endeavor to purify it and bring those in apostasy back to the faith. This we suggest was the fundamental purpose of the trumpets.

APPENDIX

Another S. O. P. statement which refers to Trumpets is found in a diary entry of 1895, in which a violent windstorm reminded God's servant of the judgment of God in the seven last plagues.

"Terrible are the judgments God revealed. The seven angels stood before God to receive their commission. To them were given seven trumpets. The Lord was going forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity and the earth was to disclose her blood and no more cover her slain." M. S. 59. (Diary)

Is the above statement an explanation or comment on the prophecy of the 7 trumpets of Revelation 8-9. There is no suggestion that it is. The prophet is borrowing the descriptive language of scripture and using it out of context to describe the 7 last plagues. This is termed the homiletic use of scripture, using it out of context to describe a given situation. Such a use is recognized as permissible in preaching and writing.

The wording of Revelation 8 which the S. O. P. borrows is very fitting in describing the plagues because there are also 7 angels involved and the plagues form a part of God's controversy with the unsaved and trumpets are symbolic of war or invasions etc.

To take a scriptural term from a diary entry, used homiletically, out of context, and employ it as authority for a new application of the 7 trumpets is most unfortunate. The evidence for the fulfillment of the 7 trumpets as espoused by godly scholars of the past and by S. D. A.

's is so overwhelming, that an undermining of that interpretation should not be taken lightly. Today uninformed statements are being widely published, that the historic interpretations of prophecy as promulgated by S. D. A. 's are deficient and inaccurate. This is misleading and causes confusion. This is confirmed by the S. O. P.

“The great way marks of truth showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light. . . Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past, are made future d thus by these theories, the faith of same is undermined.” Ellen G. White, 2 Selected Messages, pages 101-102.

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17. Tormented By Locusts

Five Months Of Torment

Why Did God Decree It?

An Exposition of the Fifth Trumpet of Revelation 9:1-11

"And the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star fall from heaven to the earth and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded that they should not hurt the grass of the earth nor any green thing, neither any tree but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he strikes a man. And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die and death shall flee from them And the shapes of the locusts were like to horses prepared to battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like to scorpions and there were stings m their tails: And they had a king over them which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" Revelation 9:1-11.

The fifth trumpet is referred to as the first of the "three woe trumpets". It commences with a star falling from heaven to the earth. In scripture, a star denotes a leader. (1) In this prediction it is a falling star, and a falling star represents an apostate religious leader. (2) Some claim that the falling star represents Satan, but Satan fell centuries before this. (3) It is true that Jesus Christ saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven but Satan's latest fall was at the crucifixion of Christ. (4) The fourth trumpet that brought the end to Western Rome was in 476 A. D. In the third trumpet there was also a falling star, a meteor - representing Attila and his Huns. (5) -The falling star of the fifth trumpet must be another earthly leader, an apostate leader, who appears after the fourth trumpet. 476 A. D.

Let us examine the details of the prediction so that this fallen star can be identified.

“TO HIM WAS GIVEN THE KEY OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.”

What is the bottomless pit or abyss as given in the Greek? This term is used seven times in the book of Revelation. (6). It is used in a symbolic sense. In Revelation 11 it describes the region from which the beast emerges to attack the two witnesses. The abyss is also used of the power in Revelation 17 when it comes back, as it were, from death, after receiving its deadly wound, when “it was not”. In Revelation 20 it is used

twice to describe the earth when it becomes a vast worldwide prison house for Satan for a 1000 years. In most places where it is used, it represents the place of death and the domain of Satan. In Romans 10:7 the word “deep” [Greek: abyss] is also used to describe the grave or the place of death. Who is it that reigns in the region of the grave in the domain of death? It is Satan. The abyss, many scholars believe, is a term describing the arsenal or stronghold of Satan. Any power emerging from the abyss is inspired by him. In the book of Revelation, powers inspired of God are represented as “coming from above”, but powers inspired by Satan are represented as “coming from beneath”, from the sea, from the earth, from the abyss. (7)

This leader in the fifth trumpet has the key to the abyss - the arsenal of Satan. What does the key represent? It represents power or authority - the ability to unlock, to free, or release. What does he release? He releases smoke that darkens the sun and air. The sun of course represents Christ the light of the world. It also represents truth. Under this trumpet a leader is given the key to release from the arsenal of Satan, falsehood and error that would darken the light of the gospel - that would obscure Jesus Christ the Light of the world.

These points give us a clue as to where to search for the fulfillment of this prediction.

“THERE CAME OUT OF THE SMOKE LOCUSTS UPON THE EARTH.”

These locusts are undoubtedly symbolic. In this trumpet there are a number of symbolic creatures - at least four: the locust, the horse, the lion, and the scorpion. It is significant to notice that these four creatures in their natural habitat are Arabian. (8) “The zoology of the hieroglyphic,” [or symbol] as one scholar says, “is all Arabian.” (9). This is a further clue in identifying the power represented in the trumpet. The Bible employs the locust as a symbol of the Arab. Speaking of the Midianite Arabs it says, They came as grasshoppers [or locusts] for multitude.” Judges 6:5 [The original word is “locusts!”]

Midianites and the Amalekites (Arab tribes) . . . lay along the valley like grasshoppers or [locusts] for multitude.” Judges 7:12

Notice the statement by Forster, concerning the Arabs.

“In the Bedoween Romance of Antar the locust is introduced as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites.” ‘Mahommedanism Unveiled.’ - Volume 1. 217. (10).

Who are the Ishmaelites? They are one of the greatest tribes of the Arab people. There are other evidences that the prediction concerns the Arab peoples. It is recognized that the home of the locust is Arabia. In describing one of the plagues that smote Egypt in the days of Moses, the scripture says,

“. . . the east wind brought the locusts.” Exod. 10:13.

The country east of Egypt is Arabia and secular authorities are very clear that Arabia is the home of the locusts. Edward Gibbon quoting Volney, “the most judicious of our Syrian travelers” declared,

“The inhabitants of Syria have remarked that locusts come constantly from the desert of Arabia.”. (11)

The word “Arab” and “locust” in Arabic are very similar in sound. The word Arab is pronounced “Arbi” and the word locust, “Arbeh”. (12) A famous traveler of last century named Niebuhr in his journeys through Arabia described the appearance of the swarms of locusts that afflict that particular area of the world.

“The swarms of these insects darken the air and appear at a distance like clouds of smoke.” ‘Travels’ Volume II. page 337. (13).

This description harmonizes with the picture presented in the fifth trumpet where smoke emerges from the bottomless pit.

After the fall of Western Rome in 476 A. D. [i. e. after the first four trumpets] did a falling star, a leader of false religion, arise in Arabia and obscure the Christian faith and bring torment to a significant proportion of mankind? The answer is yes! only one event fulfills it and to the very letter. It was the rise of Mohamed and the Islam or Moslem religion. A historian of the near East, without a thought of this

Bible prediction, when he described the rise of Mohomet, used language very similar to that of the fifth trumpet. Writing of the inspirer of the desert tribes of Arabia he declared,

“ . . . at that juncture however, like a meteorite from the blue came into the world a new religion, a religion primarily of power and not of love, a militant fanaticism appealing to the evil which lies in men, and only partly to the good” William S. Davis. ‘A Short History of the Near East. ’ P100 (14)

Authorities have recognised that the religion of Mohomet was the key that opened the abyss, as it were, and set the Arabs in motion. Gibbon said,

“The Arabs had languished in poverty and contempt, till Mohomet breathed into those savage hordes the soul of enthusiasm.” Edward Gibbon. ‘Decline & Fall. ’ (15).

“There broke out among the nations of Asia that mighty conflagration whose flames were scattered over the terrified globe by the sons of the desert, guided by their new prophet of unbelief.” Schlegel. ‘The Philosophy of History. - (16).

Notice that! He likens the Arab invasion to “a mighty conflagration”. The Revelator speaks of it as “the smoke of a great furnace”.

Professor Davis speaking of the onset of the Arabs says,

“The Persian war ended in 628 A. D. Five later the cloud of Saracenic [or Arab] invasion rolled northward from the Arabian deserts.” ‘A Short History of the Near East. ’ page 32. (17).

Sir William Muir also in his classic history says of the Arab armies,

“Onward and still onward like swarms from the hive, or flights of locusts darkening the land, tribe after tribe issued forth and hastening northward spread in great masses to the east and to the west.” Sir William Muir. ‘The Caliphate. ’ page 144. (18).

Upham in his history says,

“The Persian Empire soon attracted the arms of ‘these locusts’ as the swarms of the Saracens were not inaptly called.” Edward Upham. ‘The Ottoman Empire. ’ Volume 1. page 40. (19).

Historians repeatedly confirm the application of the locusts to the Arabs and their religion. The prediction states that

“ . . . TO HIM WAS GIVEN THE KEY OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.” (or abyss]

Did Mohomet actually possess a key? It is significant to notice that Peyron in his essay on this question says,

“The Koran (the Moslem Bible) continually speaks of the key of God which opened to them the gates of the world and of religion. So in the Koran, ‘Did not God give to his legate [Mohomet] the power of heaven which is above and fire which is beneath? With the key, did he not give him the title and power of a porter, that he may open to those whom he shall have chosen ?’“ Peyronts Essais Sar l’Espagne. page 189. (20).

Cambridge Professor E. B. Elliott says that whenever a convert from the Moslem religion was accepted into the faith of the Greek church, he had to state his rejection of Mohomet’s “pretended key of heaven”.

(Commentary on Revelation 9) (21). So in harmony with the symbolism of the trumpet Mohomet did have a key.

This leads to the question: from whence did Mohomet obtain his inspiration for his religion? This is extremely important because so many today would believe that one religion is as good as another, and that all religions lead to the same end. Is the Moslem religion from beneath or is it from above? Let us quote from Gibbon. In describing the inspiration that Mohomet received, he says,

“Each year during the month of Ramadan, he would withdraw from the world and. . . in the cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, he consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm whose abode is not in the heaven, but in the mind of the prophet.” Edward Gibbon. ‘Decline & Fall. ’ Volume V. page 396-397. (22).

Edward Gibbon was a sceptic, an unbeliever and that makes his history so much more authoritative, he was actually biased against the Bible. Mohomet’s constant claim was that the angel Gabriel was his instructor. Mohomet certainly had a superhuman inspiration, but it

could not have been divine. The only other alternative is that he was inspired by occult powers. It is the practice of these intelligences to impersonate others in order to deceive.

The prophecy states that,

“THEY [the Arabs] HAD A KING OVER THEM WHICH IS THE ANGEL OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, WHOSE NAME IN THE HEBREW TONGUE IS ‘ABADDON’.” [OR DESTROYER]. Revelation 9:11.

Who is the invisible king of the abyss - the stronghold of Satan? Lucifer is the angel of the abyss! The prophet Isaiah reveals Lucifer as the great destroyer. (23). Thus the first king is Satan but there is probably a second king, a visible leader and that was Mohomet! If anyone was inspired by Lucifer undoubtedly it was Mohomet as we will soon show. Mohomet in turn, inspired Arabia to conquer and destroy and in the first ten years of Omar’s reign who was the second successor of Mohomet,

“The Saracens reduced 36,000 cities or castles, destroyed 4,000 churches and built 1,400 mosques (24) As Gibbon records,

‘Mohomet was alike instructed to preach and to fight, and the union of these opposite qualities. . . contributed to his success: his voice invited the Arabs to freedom and victory, to arms and rapine, to the indulgence of their darling passions, in this world and the next.’ Gibbon Volume V. page 466. (25)

The more we learn concerning the Moslem religion, the more we realise that it is a religion that has a terrific appeal to the carnal heart.

On this ground the Moslem religion cannot be from above. It must be from beneath. Gibbon continues,

“. . . From all sides the roving Arabs were allured to the standard of religion and plunder, the apostle sanctified the license of embracing the female captives as their wives or concubines. . . ‘The sword [says Mohomet] is the key of heaven and of hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer. Whosoever falls in battle his sins are forgiven. At the day of judgment his wounds shall be splendid as vermilion and odoriferous as musk and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by angels and cherubim.’ The intrepid souls of the Arabs were fired with enthusiasm: the picture of the invisible world was strongly painted on their imagination; and the death which they had always despised became an object of hope and desire. . The Koran inculcates in the most absolute sense the tenets of fate and predestination. . The practical result was the inspiration of a magnificent but terrible courage. Arab warriors went into battle convinced that their lifespan was so definitely determined that whether they stayed at home or went to the fight, their fate would surely overtake them. . .”

‘The warrior who dies in battle is sure of paradise the first companions of Mohomet advanced to battle with a fearless confidence; there is no danger where there is no chance: they were ordained to perish in their beds; or they were safe and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy. . .’

“The temper of a people thus armed against mankind was doubly inflamed by the domestic license of rapine, murder and revenge. (26)

The Moslem heaven that was promised to them was a paradise of sexual and intellectual pleasure.

“Seventy-two black eyed girls of resplendent beauty, blooming youth, virgin purity, and exquisite sensibility, will be created for the use of the meanest believer; a moment of pleasure will be prolonged to a thousand years, and his faculties will be increased an hundred fold, to render him worthy of his felicity. (27)

This was the carnal appeal of this Satanic religion that inspired those savage Arabs to burst forth in conquest of the Roman Empire. As Professor Davis says,

“Like a meteorite from the blue there came into the world a new religion, a religion primarily of power, and not of love, a militant fanaticism appealing partly to the evil which lies in men, and only partly to the good.” (28)

Competent scholars of the past have recognized that the fifth trumpet fits only one power and that is the Arabian Empire that rose in the 7th century A. D. Dr. Albert Barnes, that famous Presbyterian commentator says,

“With surprising unanimity commentators have agreed in regarding this trumpet as referring to the empire of the Saracens, or the rise and progress of the religion and empire, set up by Mohomet. (24).

“THE SHAPES OF THE LOCUSTS WERE LIKE UNTO HORSES PREPARED UNTO BATTLE”

When one examines the locust of Arabia he will soon see that they literally look like little horses. In fact the Bedouins describe them as “soldiers’ horses”. The old Italians called them Cavaletta, which means “little horses”.

The locust is used in scripture to denote swarming numbers, and this was a neat symbol of the amazing numbers of the Arabs as they swarmed out of the desert in conquest. The prophet said,

“Make thyself many as the locusts.” Nah. 3:5

“They came as the grasshoppers [or locusts] for multitude.” Judges 6:5.

The Arab tribes issuing from Arabia with their great speed, far ranging and irresistible progress, were fittingly symbolized by the swarms of locusts.

The Arab warriors are likened to “horses prepared for battle”. This also is a true picture of the type of military force that was used by the Arabs in their method of attack. Edward Gibbon says,

“I shall here observe what I must often repeat, that the charge of the Arabs was not like that of the Greeks and Romans, the effort of a firm and compact infantry: their military force was chiefly formed of cavalry and archers.” (30).

“THEY HAD BREASTPLATES OF IRON.”

Three Arab authorities confirm the fact that the Saracen warriors wore iron breastplates. (31).

“THE SOUND OF THEIR WINGS WAS AS THE SOUND OF CHARIOTS OF MANY HORSES RUSHING TO BATTLE.” V 9.

This correctly describes a locust invasion. When locusts swarm out into the countryside their sound is similar to that of chariots charging to battle. This aptly describes an Arab army of cavalry rushing into battle for which they were so famous and by which such great terror was brought to the world of the day.

“ON THEIR HEADS WERE AS IT WERE CROWNS LIKE GOLD.” V 7

This may refer to their colour. It is interesting to notice that the prophet Ezekiel in speaking of the Sabean Arabs says,

“The Sabean from the wilderness which put beautiful crowns upon their heads.” Ezekiel 23:42.

What were these crowns? An Arabian proverb tells that God had bestowed four peculiar things upon the Arabs:

19. Their turbans should be to them instead of diadems.

20. Their tents instead of walls and houses.

21. Their swords instead of entrenchments.

22. Their poems instead of written laws. (32)

Niebuhr the Eastern traveller describes the turbans of the wealthy Arabs. He says,

“The Arabs wear fifteen caps, one over the other. . . that which covers all the rest is usually richly embroidered with gold” Alwood. ‘Key to Revelation.’ Volume I. page 340. -(32 A)

Mahomet says,

“Make a point of wearing turbans, because it is the way of angels (33) “THEIR FACES WERE AS THE FACES OF MEN.” V 7

What is significant about the face of a man? Wherein does the face of a man differ from the face of a woman? The answer is that man grows hair-on his face especially in the form of a beard. Edward Gibbon in describing the Arab of that day, says,

“His breast is fortified with the austere virtues of courage, patience and sobriety. The gravity and firmness of the mind is conspicuous in his outward demeanor, his speech is slow, weighty and concise. He is seldom provoked to laughter, his only gesture is that of stroking his beard the venerable symbol of manhood.” (34).

The Arab was noted for the wearing of a beard, whereas the Gothic tribes - of the first four trumpets were recognised as having smooth and shaven faces. What a contrast! (35).

But not only that, the prophecy says that,

“ . . . THEY HAD HAIR AS THE HAIR OF WOMEN.” (V8) What is significant about women’s hair? The Bible says,

“Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame to him, but if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her.”

1 Cor. 11:14-15.

The prediction means that the Arabs of that day wore long hair. In Roman times when St. Paul wrote, long hair on men was abhorred.

Five authorities record the fact that the Arabs of Mahomet’s day literally wore long hair. In the famous “Antar” poem, written at the time of the Arab invasions it says,

“He adjusted himself properly, twirling his whiskers, folded up his hair under his turban drawing it from off his shoulders.

Again,

“His hair flowed down his shoulders.”.

Again

“We will hang him up by his hair.” (36).

“THEIR TEETH WERE AS THE TEETH OF LIONS.”

This is a symbol of the courage and destructive power of the Arabs in their invasions. As previously noted the lion is associated with Arabia. In describing Arabia Isaiah the prophet says,

“The land of trouble and of anguish from which came the old and young lion.” Isaiah 30:6

Naturalists inform us that the home of the lion is Arabia. (8). It is generally considered that Africa is the home of the lion but Africa is closely connected with Arabia and originally in Arabia there were extensive forests indicating that it was much different from what it is now. In Arabic literature the lion is the constant emblem of the valiant warriors. (8) Gibbon says,

“Eutychius the patriarch observes that the Saracens fought with the courage of lions.” (37) They also were very destructive, which is typical of the lion.

“THEY HAD TAILS LIKE UNTO SCORPIONS AND THERE WERE, STINGS IN THEIR TAILS AND THEIR POWER WAS TO HURT MAN FIVE MONTHS.” Verse 10.

This particular verse has proved- very difficult for students through the years. What does-it mean? When Moses described the deserts of Arabia through which Israel wandered from Egypt to Canaan, he said,

“Who led thee [Israel] through that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water.” Deuteronomy 8:15.

The natural home of the scorpion is Arabia. There, scorpions are twelve inches in length, very malignant, with eight feet and eight eyes.

No creature, they, say, is more irascible. Their sting is not fatal but causes acute and dangerous suffering.

“THERE WERE STINGS IN THEIR TAILS.”

What does the scorpion’s tail represent? The key is found in the writings of Isaiah in the Old Testament.”The ancient and honourable he is the head and the prophet that teaches lies he is the tail.” Isaiah 9:15.

The false prophet, the lying prophet - false religion - that is the tail. In other words,- the false religion of Mohomet is the tail which tormented men. The sting was in the false religion and by it men were tormented for five months.

“THEIR POWER WAS TO HURT MEN FIVE MONTHS.” Verse 10.

These words denote stress and anguish caused by injustice - not bodily, but mental torment, through doing wrong to others.

Commentators of yesteryear recognised this. Joseph Mede lecturer at Oxford University, a great student of Revelation, recognised this truth. (38). Scripture applies the term “scorpions” to humans. God warned the prophet Ezekiel,

“ . . . thou dost dwell amongst scorpions, be not afraid of their words nor be by their looks.” Ezekiel 2:6.

Matthew Henry on this verse says that it represents the stinging verbal attacks, full of venom and malice, by some of the people against the prophet. This is how the Revelator describes the venomous insults of the Arabs toward the apostate Christians whom they conquered. E. B. Elliott of Cambridge University, presents eleven ways in which the Moslem conquerors fulfilled this point in their attitude to the apostate Christians.

The bitter contempt and hatred displayed” against the Christians.

They were called dogs and infidels.

The Christians were forced to pay a life redemption tax every year in order to preserve their lives.

The Christians were compelled to dress differently from their conquerors.

They were compelled to ride in a humbler mode of transport.

Whenever a Moslem entered into their presence even though he was the meanest of men they were to rise in deference to him.

They must freely entertain an Arab when he required it, including sexuality with their females. The Arabs were notorious for their immorality. (39).

They were to build no-new churches.

They were to chime no bells in existing churches.

They were to admit to their churches any Arab no matter how much he scoffed and ridiculed the service, or

how frequently he insulted them.

Frequent insults to the Christian women.

A thousand other injuries of oppression that rankled the Christians and made life a burden. (40)

The prediction said

“IN THOSE DAYS SHALL MEN SEEK DEATH AND NOT FIND IT, AND SHALL DESIRE TO DIE AND DEATH SHALL FLEE FROM THEM.” V6.

That was the lot of the oppressed Christians. What a punishment! What a woe! This was God’s judgment upon apostasy. This was God’s response to the prayers of the saints that had ascended to the altar of incense of the heavenly sanctuary where our great High Priest ministered before God. (Revelation 8:3-5)

We now arrive at a more positive and pleasing part of the prophecy. ;,

IT WAS COMMANDED THEM THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HURT THE GRASS OF THE EARTH, NEITHER ANY GREEN THING, NEITHER ANY TREE; BUT ONLY THOSE MEN WHICH HAVE NOT THE SEAL OF GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS.”

V4

This is a remarkable prediction. , Was such a command issued to the Arab conquerors? It, is interesting to notice that in the other trumpets. - the first trumpet for example “. . . a third part of trees was burnt up and all green grass was burnt up.” (Revelation 8:7) The Goths - who fulfilled three of the first four trumpets, deliberately destroyed the vegetation in western ,:Europe - so much so that it resulted in the formation :of desert areas. On the other hand the policy of the Arabs was exactly the opposite. The Koran - the Moslem

Bible - decreed that trees and vegetation must- not be destroyed. This was a distinct characteristic of the Arabs and it resulted in the rapid rise of flourishing kingdoms and countries that they overran. (41) But the prediction says that “it was commanded them. . . not to hurt the grass”

etc. Was there such a command?

The writer was once accosted by a graduate of Theology from a nearby college who was very cynical concerning the historical interpretation of prophecy as expounded by Seventh Day Adventists. When the topic of the trumpets was mentioned he exclaimed, “How can we possibly interpret the trumpets - no man could interpret the trumpets!” The writer answered “Well, the events of history seem to very clearly fit the historical application.” He replied, ‘Tell me one event that fits the fulfillment of the trumpets?’ The writer said, ‘Take the command not to hurt the grass of the earth neither any green thing, neither any tree, that was issued to the Arabs.’ He said, “What command?” The writer replied “Haven’t you heard of the command recorded by Gibbon, the skeptic, in his ‘Decline and Fall. . . ?’” “No” he replied.

Here is this remarkable command. It was issued at the very time when-the Arabs were about to invade the Roman Empire. They had just raided Persia and now they were about to invade Syria, the Eastern portion of Eastern Rome. Mohomet had died, Abubeker his successor was now in charge. Gibbon declares,

“As soon as their numbers were complete, Abubeker ascended the hill, reviewed the men, the horses, and the arms, and poured forth a fervent prayer for the success of their undertaking. . . ‘Remember’, said the successor of the prophet, ‘that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgement, and the hope of paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression; consult with your brethren, and study to preserve the love and confidence of your troops. When you fight the battles of the lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm trees, nor burn any field of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make a covenant . . . stand to it and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons, who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. And you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mahometans or pay tribute. (42).

That was the actual command. The Arabs were not to destroy any green thing or trees etc. just as the prophecy had declared six hundred years before. Is not this remarkable? What indisputable evidence is this “that all scripture is inspired of God!”.

Now the command also included the hurting of “. . . those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads”. In the previous quotation from Gibbon you will recall the command of Abubeker concerning those of the synagogue of Satan who have shaven crowns and what the Arab warriors were to do with them. Who were these men with shaven crowns? In the footnote Gibbon says,

“Even in the 7th century the monks were generally laymen; they wore their hair long and disheveled, and shaved their heads when they were ordained priests. The circular tonsure was sacred and mysterious; it was the crown of thorns; but it was likewise a royal diadem, and every priest was a king.”

The men who had shaven crowns were the priests - the priests of the apostate Christian church - and the shaven ring on their crowns, represented the sun. it came from Babylon! But is it correct that those who had “the seal of God” were protected by the Arab invaders?

What do we understand by the term “the seal of God?” In Revelation 7 the seal of God is shown as being implanted -in the foreheads of God’s people in the last days in order to protect them from the judgments of God. The scripture clearly reveals that the ‘seal’ of God refers to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. (43). Did the-Arabs protect those, who were ‘observers of the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment? Notice the record as given by Dr. B. G. Wilkinson in his study of the rise and spread of the early Christian faith. He gives some remarkable information concerning this period of church history.

“In the early centuries of the Christian era, the church of the East [not the Western or Latin church] sometimes called the Assyrian church, sometimes the Nestorian church [who were observers of the true Sabbath] very effectively spread throughout Asia and the East, but remained separate from the church in the West, especially the apostasy.

These true Christians became the teachers of the Saracens, and were responsible for establishing an educational system in Syria, Mesopotamia, Turkestan, Tibet, China, India, Ceylon, and other areas.” (59)

The Arabs, like the Persians were very partial to the Assyrian Christians, because they found it necessary in the early days of their power, to lean upon the splendid schools which the church had developed. Medicine made great progress in the hands of the Church of the East. [They had the right arm of the gospel, the health message.] The Arabian court and its extended administrations employed its members as secretaries and imperial representatives. . . Assyrian Christians suffered comparatively little at the hands of the Moslems, but later much more at the hands of the Jesuits. . The leader of the Church of the East sensing that the conquest of the Persian Empire was imminent, succeeded in obtaining a pledge of protection and freedom of worship on condition that the Christians paid certain tribute. . . These immunities by Abubeker were not only confirmed by Omar his Successor, but even the taxes were remitted. . .”

“When the Arabian empire was fully established, it built up Bagdad, its magnificent new capital. The Church of the East removed its spiritual capital from Seleucia to Bagdad, where it remained for approximately the next 500 years.” B. G. Wilkinson ‘Truth Triumphant.’ page 268-291. Pacific Press. (44)

What a surprising fulfillment of this particular part ,of the fifth trumpet? Edward Gibbon confirms Dr. Wilkinson’s statement. He says,

“To his Christian subjects [i. e. the true Christians, not the apostate ones whom the Arabs tormented]; Mohomet readily granted the security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods, and the toleration of their worship.” (45).

We now come to the prediction concerning “torment and “to hurt men” for five months.

“TO THEM IT WAS GIVEN THAT THEY SHOULD NOT KILL THEM, BUT THAT THEY SHOULD BE TORMENTED FIVE MONTHS:” V5

“And their power was to hurt men five months.” V 10.

They were not to kill but they were to hurt and torment. Does this mean that the Arabs did not kill in their conquests? No! It could not mean that. The killing concerned the political killing or destroying of the Roman Empire i. e. Eastern Rome. In their battles the Arabs killed hundreds of thousands of people and they themselves lost hundreds of thousands. They overran almost all of Eastern Rome. They conquered North Africa, they crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and conquered most of Spain and even overran some of South Western France. But in all their conquests they were not able to destroy or kill or end, the Empire of Eastern Rome. They made concerted efforts to capture Constantinople, the capital of the Empire, but always they were unsuccessful.

It is significant to notice a remarkable parallel, published by Dr. Mervyn Maxwell in which he shows how the territory which is occupied by the swarms of locusts when in flight, is almost identical to the territory which was conquered by the symbolic Arab locusts of the trumpet. (47)

It is also significant to learn of the ambitions of the Arabs in their conquests. They determined to make the Mediterranean sea a Moslem lake. It was their intention to conquer Spain, France, Italy, the Vatican, Germany, the Danube, Constantinople, and return to Syria thus enveloping the Mediterranean, making it a lake of Islam. (48). If they had succeeded in their ambitions it would have meant the killing or destruction of Eastern Rome. But God decreed that the Arabs’ function was “to hurt” or “torment” the apostate power, thus whenever the Arabs made tremendous onslaughts to destroy the empire, each time they dismally

failed. Two times they attacked Constantinople, the very vitals of the empire, the first siege lasted five long years, at the height of the Arabs’ pride and power, but they failed. The second siege was in 716-718 A. D. Again, they were forced to retire defeated and disgraced. As one historian says,

“Fruitlessly the Arabs assailed the Byzantine capital by land and sea for five whole years [673-678]: but they did not succeed in taking it.” (49).

Finally the Arabs determined that they would invade France and over run Europe even to the Baltic. Their design was to conquer Eastern Rome by attacking it from the direction of the West. Thus in 721 A. D. they invaded South Western France. In 732 A. D. they mounted a grand invasion of Northern France by which they planned to reach the Baltic and fulfil their dream of Moslem supremacy and create a Moslem lake of the Mediterranean. This great invasion was led by Abd-ar-Rahman and it is significant to read the outcome of the Arabian effort to accomplish a purpose which was contrary to the prophecy of the fifth trumpet.

“These cares could not long divert him [Abd-ar-Rahman] from the great design he had formed - that of invading the whole of Gaul. [or France] Though the Arabic historians conceal the extent of the preparations, for the natural purpose of palliating the disgrace of failure, there can be no doubt that those preparations were on an immense scale; that the true believers[i. e. Moslems] flocked to the white standard from the farthest part of the Caliph’s dominions; and that the whole Mohammedon world contemplated the expedition with intense anxiety. . .

Abd-ar-Rahman commenced his momentous march, in the hope of carrying the banner of the prophet to the very shores of the Baltic. His progress brought dismay throughout Europe; and well it might, for so formidable and destructive an armament Europe had not seen since the days of Attila and his Huns.

Conflagrations, ruin, the shrieks of violated chastity and the groans of the dying, rendered this memorable invasion more like the work of a demon than of a man.

The towns of Southern and Central France were converted to smoking ruins and appeals were made to Charles Martel, the leader of the Franks. He knew too well the magnitude of the danger to meet it by premature efforts. He silently collected in Belgium and Germany a powerful force to meet the dreaded enemy. He boldly advanced to meet the Saracens at Tours which they had just overrun.

After six days of skirmishing there came the long and bloody battle in which great valor and skilful leadership was evident on both sides.

Eventually the impenetrable ranks, robust frames and iron hands of the Germans turned the tide and by nightfall vast numbers of Saracens lay dead in the field [including their leader]

At daybreak the victors arose to renew the battle - the white Saracen tents extended as far as the eye could see, but not a soul emerged to meet them. The Saracens had silently abandoned their camp and the immense wealth and booty they had amassed. Christendom was saved. Pope and monk, priest and peasant, flocked to church to thank Heaven for deliverance. A blow had been dealt to Islam that meant its return was no longer dreaded.

The far-famed victory spread consternation over the whole Moslem world. Another Emir [or leader] was appointed to revenge the appalling defeat. After passing through the Pyrenees into France, a complete panic seized the Saracen host which retreated and which was pursued and destroyed." (50).

What a description! However one point is very clear. The Arab invaders were permitted to torment the peoples of the Roman empire, but when they attempted to kill or end the empire they were signally repelled. This shattering of the Arab dream is spoken of by historians as "remarkable" and "perplexing" something they find very difficult to understand, because from a human viewpoint, the Arabs should have succeeded, but when success would have dealt a deathblow to the empire, they themselves were broken. Edward Gibbon says,

"When the Arabs first issued from the desert, they must have been surprised at the ease and rapidity of their own success. But when they advanced in the career of victory to the banks of the Indus and the summit of the Pyrenees; . . . they might be equally astonished that any nation could resist their invincible arms; that any boundary should confine the dominion of the successor of the prophet. . .

The calm historian of the present hour, who strives to follow the rapid course of the Saracens, must study to explain by what means the church and state were saved from this impending, and, as it should seem, from this inevitable, danger." (51).

Henry Hallam describes the turning back of the Arab hordes as one of the marvels of history.

"These conquests, which astonish the careless and superficial, are less perplexing to a calm inquirer, than their cessation; the loss of half the Roman Empire, than the preservation of the rest." (52)

Heaven decreed that the Arabs were not to kill the Roman Empire but only to torment it. However some scholars believe that there was a second reason why the Arabs were repelled. Was it to save the Papacy from extinction? That would have been a blessing! Was it to save the apostate Christendom of the West? Its destruction would have saved Europe from the thralldom of the Dark Ages."Europe owes its existence, its religion. . . to his [Charles Martel's] victory." Amid the rampant apostasy in the Roman empire there were remnants of God's faithful people, who were withdrawing to the wilderness regions in order to maintain their faith. These were the Albigenses of South France, the Waldenses of Northern Italy, and others in Bohemia, Germany etc. When the Arabs invaded France they were nearing areas where God's true people were dwelling and it is believed that one reason the Arabs were repelled was to protect the people of God.

Professor William Whiston the brilliant Cambridge scholar, and a great student of Daniel and Revelation, enunciates this very clearly in his notes on Revelation 9.

"Those who have the best plea from history, being indeed real witnesses against the idolatry and corruptions of the church in that age, were such as inhabited some parts of Savoy, Piedmont, Milan, and perhaps some in the southern parts of France; i. e. the forerunners of the first authors of the Waldenses and Albigenses, of whom those were the habitations. (53).

And the providence of God was so remarkable in delivering these people from the plague of the Saracens, that when, 726 A. D. , they attempted these southern parts of France, they were so terribly destroyed, and with so little slaughter on the other side, that history can scarce afford a parallel.”

But what of the five months of torment?

It is significant to note that the period in which the natural desert locusts swarm over the area of the Middle East is a period of exactly five months. This is from the month of May to September inclusive - exactly five months. (54) Likewise when the Revelator describes the period of the Arab invasions in which they would torment the apostate Christians of the Roman empire it is exactly five months. This period of time is a part of a symbolic prophecy therefore the allotted time must be symbolic time. It is a prophetic five months. Symbolic time must always be reduced to days, because in prophecy, a day equals a year. (55) In a Bible month there are exactly thirty days.

Therefore five months would equal 150 days. In symbolic prophecy, a day equals a year therefore the 150 days represent 150 years.

Here we have a very rigid test by which we can check the accuracy of our interpretation of the fifth trumpet. Did the period of torment by the Arabs continue for exactly 150 years? To answer this vital question we must ascertain the exact year in which Mohomet began his career of Islamic conquest. Let historians speak.

“After the year 612 A. D. Mohomet sought to propagate his religion with all his might.” (56).

“Thus began Mohomet’s prophetic career in the year 610 or 612 of our era.” (61).

The first major attack of the period took place in AD612. “The Arabs raided Syria, destroyed towns and many houses and then withdrew,” wrote the eighth century Roman (Byzantine) historian Theophanes, who was almost certainly quoting from a now lost seventh-century source.” (62)

For how long did the period of Arab torment continue? The period of Arab torment continued until there was a sharp division in the leadership of the Arab world. As a result there were formed two Islamic caliphates. This occurred in 756 A. D. The new caliph reigning in Damascus, Syria, transferred his capital to the West Bank of the Tigris and founded the city of Bagdad, where he became the leading caliph of the Arabian empire. He built his city on a canal flowing from the Euphrates to the Tigris an area outside the boundaries of the Roman empire. In what year did the Caliph transfer his capital outside the realm of the Roman Empire? It was 762 A. D. With this transfer came a complete change of attitude on the part of the Arabs. As Waddington says,

“The [Arab] conquerors now settled tranquilly in the countries they had subdued.” (57). They named their city, Bagdad - “Medinat al Salem” city of peace.

“In this city of peace, amidst the riches of the East, the Abassides [ruling Caliphs] soon disdained the abstinence and frugality of the first caliphs and aspired to emulate the magnificence of the Persian kings. . . the glories of the court were brightened rather than impaired in the decline of the empire. . . the luxury of the caliph . . . terminated the progress of the Arabian empire. Temporal and spiritual conquest had been the sole occupation of the first successors of Mahomet. . . . their stern enthusiasm -was softened by time and prosperity. . . war was no longer the passion of the Saracens;. . .” (58)

The period of conquest and torment had ceased and it ceased in 762 A. D. If we deduct 612 from 762, we have exactly 150 years or five prophetic months. Thus the prophetic period in which the Arabs were to torment or hurt men, was fulfilled to the very letter.

What confidence the fulfillment of this prediction gives us in the truth and reliability of Holy Writ. We can be very certain concerning the accuracy of the word of God. This is one of the great lessons we learn from this remarkable prediction of the fifth trumpet. Maybe there are other lessons for God’s people from this prediction. What was the purpose behind this trumpet? It was ‘God’s judgment on apostasy.

This reveals the attitude of God toward apostasy. Heaven hates it. Apostasy is repulsive to Jesus Christ. The fact that heaven permitted the rise of Islam in order to punish apostasy indicates how serious and offensive apostate Christianity must be in the sight of heaven. For 1200 years Islam has dominated the lives of millions of people throughout the Middle East and beyond. While it is a false religion it is opposed to idolatry and religious corruption and maybe is preferable in the sight of heaven than the apostate Christian religion was of the Roman empire. Islam was undoubtedly inspired by Satan, but so also was the apostasy in the Christian church. However while Islam destroyed much of the Apostasy it did permit true Christianity - those with the seal of God - to continue to spread their faith and influence. According to Benjamin Wilkinson true Christianity in that period spread amazingly throughout the eastern world. The gospel was taken even to China, and other distant lands. (60). Maybe the rise of Islam was to protect the true church. Had not the Papal apostasy been hindered in its early development, the church of the East may not have survived.

May the study of this fifth trumpet confirm our faith in the Word of God and in the wisdom and leadership of Jesus Christ as He guides and protects his people.

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18. The Triumph & Tragedy Of The Turk

WHY WAS HE INCLUDED IN BIBLE PROPHECY?

An Exposition of the Sixth Trumpet of Revelation 9:12-21

"One woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of man. And the number of the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: And I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads and with them they do hurt." Revelation 9:12-19.

The sixth trumpet is also called the second "woe". The final three trumpets are classed as the woe trumpets". Each woe appears to be more severe than its predecessor. The first woe was the Arab invasion represented by the locusts tormenting for five months. (1) It was not limited to "one third of men", like the rest of the trumpets. The reason is that the Arabs in their conquests of the Roman empire conquered not just one third of it but overran almost two thirds of the empire - Eastern Rome and a large section of Western Rome.

The second woe - the sixth trumpet is to slay or kill "the third part of men". The first woe tormented men, the second woe is more severe. In this woe a voice comes from the horns of the golden incense altar, in the first apartment of the heavenly temple. What is the significance of the voice sounding from this altar?

First, it locates the timing of this trumpet. The ministration in the heavenly sanctuary from 31AD to 1844 was in the first apartment of that temple. There Jesus ministered at the incense altar. The fact that the voice is heard from the altar indicates that the priestly ministry is still located there, thus the period in which the sixth trumpet sounds must be prior to 1844. (1A)

The second significance of the voice from the altar is that sometimes in scripture, the location where the voice is heard, represents the area where transgression prevails. For instance in Genesis 4 when God came to Cain, he said to him,

"Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In response the Lord said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground" Genesis 4:10.

The ground was where Abel's blood had been spilt. Again in Habakkuk it speaks of the sins of Babylon and how judgment would come on her,

"The stones shall cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Hab. 2:11.

That was the location in Babylon where she had committed her crimes. The altar of incense that is brought to view under the sixth trumpet represents the intercession of Christ. That was the area where the professed church of the day had become so apostate. God's professed people had become deeply involved in the intercession of saints and martyrs. This voice was from the place of true intercession which they had so seriously neglected or rejected.

In the exposition of the first four trumpets it was revealed that they were the judgments of God upon apostasy in response to the prayers of his true people. (2) The sixth trumpet is a judgment upon the apostate Christians of that day who had given themselves over to a false form of intercession, and as a result the command is issued,

“. . . loose the four angels that are bound in the great river Euphrates.” V14.

This term, “the four angels”, has been a problem through the years to most scholars. It has been their main objection against the Turks as fulfilling the sixth trumpet. Nothing in the Turkish power correctly corresponded to the four angels. One attempt to explain the four angels is that they were the four Turkish caliphates. (3) But the four Turkish caliphates were not yet in existence, and when they were finally formed, most of them were not connected with the Euphrates. The four Turkish caliphates it is claimed, were at Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Iconium in Asia Minor. However it appears that there were at least five caliphates, as follows:

1 Baghdad on the Tigris - in Iraq

2 Aleppo - in Syria

3 Damascus - in Syria

4 Roum (Nice & Iconium) - in Asia Minor

5 Kerman - South Persia (4)

Now Iconium and Nice in Asia Minor could never be considered to be in the region of the Euphrates. Baghdad was situated on a canal from the Euphrates where it joined the Tigris. Therefore it is questionable whether the caliphate of Baghdad could be counted as being in the region of the Euphrates. Aleppo was about 60 miles from the Euphrates so its inclusion could also be doubtful. Damascus was many more miles across the desert from the Euphrates and its caliphate was not united to the Ottoman Turks until 1517 A. D. (i. e. well after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A. D.). Only the Roum caliphate in Asia Minor was involved with the downfall of Eastern Rome. (5)

But the prediction declared that four angels are “loosed”. What then could the four angels represent? Let scripture interpret scripture. Does scripture, especially the book of Revelation, reveal any clues concerning the four angels? Yes, in Revelation 7. This latter-day prophecy pictures four angels holding the four winds that they should not blow on the earth until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. This is a latter-day prophecy depicting heavenly agencies holding back the judgments of God until a special work is completed.

We suggest that the four angels of the sixth trumpet are the same four angels. We believe that they are the agents of God, controlling the powers that would bring judgments or punishments upon the world. The six trumpets were judgments on the Roman empire and the four angels could be the same divine agents that were to release the powers that would bring punishment upon that empire. Some authorities claim that the term “four angels” in some manuscripts reads “four winds”. (6) If this were so, then the command would be more understandable, “Loose the four winds in the great river Euphrates.” This we suggest makes better sense, especially when associated with the Euphrates.

What is represented by the Euphrates? Generally, in the past, a literal interpretation has been given to this word and it has been claimed that the Euphrates represents the country through which it flows. (3) But the

difficulty with this interpretation is that the area where the Turks existed at that period was way beyond the Euphrates. It would be more correct to conclude that the Euphrates was the western boundary of the area where the Turks then resided. This fact will be confirmed below.

When we turn to the Old Testament upon which the book of Revelation is based, the Euphrates is seen to have a much greater significance. The term Euphrates is employed in two different ways. First, it was the designated boundary of literal Israel. (7) Any power invading Israel from the North must pass over the Euphrates. The second way the Euphrates is employed, is as an invading destroying power. The word “Euphrates” according to Dr. Strong, means “to break forth - rushing”. It seems that this meaning was based on the fact that when the snows of Mt. Ararat melted, the Euphrates became a roaring raging torrent which often overflowed its banks. This phenomenon was employed in the Old Testament to represent an overflowing, invading power. Isaiah declares:

“Woe to the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas; [or waters] and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [margin: thistledown] before the whirlwind.” Isaiah 17:12-13.

Again the actual river Euphrates is referred to as representing the Assyrians when they invaded Israel

“Now therefore, behold the Lord brings up upon them, [Israel] the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go

over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel [or Israel].” Isaiah 8:7-8.

The prophet likens the Assyrian power to the overflowing of the Euphrates in flood. Thus the Euphrates represents a rushing invading power. This is how the term is employed in the sixth plague of Revelation 16. When the supporters of spiritual Babylon are inspired by their leaders to rise up and overflow or destroy the saints of God; Heaven in response, dries up “the waters of the Euphrates” - it turns aside the invading destroying peoples and delivers His people. (8) : Likewise with the sixth trumpet in Revelation 9:14, the Euphrates represents a rushing invading destroying power. The command is given, “Loose the four angels [or the four winds] which are bound in the great river Euphrates”, that they might perform their work of destruction.

In the following two verses such an invasion is described.

“And the four angels were loosed . . . to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand and I heard the number of them.” Vv 15-16.

Here then is presented an army of horsemen poised to invade the third part of the Roman empire. Who were these horsemen? There are at least eight points of identification.

1. The type of army - horsemen or cavalry.
2. The way they are numbered.
3. The color of their uniforms.
4. Their courageous and destructive spirit.
5. Their destroying power would appear to issue from the horses’ mouths.
6. Their power is in their mouths and tails.
7. Their tails are like serpents - they had heads, and with them they hurt.
8. An allotted period of time is given in which they kill or slay.

After the reign of the Arabs of the fifth trumpet, what power invaded Eastern Rome and destroyed it? What power fits exactly the eight points of the prediction? There is only one, and that is the Turkomans or Turks.

Whence came the Turks? They were a numerous people situated in central Asia. They were descendants of Japheth, of the family of Magog. The Turkish race was comprised of five branches: the Kipchaks, Uigurs, Kanklis, Kalaches, and Kariuks.

There were three language groups and six different alphabets. They were closely related to the Mongols whom they considered as brothers. Four times the Mongols were involved with them in their career of conquest. The Greeks called them Scythians, and they formed a loosely knit empire from the Volga River (at their peak) north of the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, right across to the East, to Lake Baikal and North China. The Oxus River North of Persia was their Southern boundary. That vast expanse of country was the area in which they resided.

In 308-589 A. D. north China was under Turkish control. In 562 Mogan, a Turkish ruler, ruled from the Volga river to Lake Baikal, a distance of about 6,000 miles, Edward Gibbon says that from Samarkand (North of Persia) to Northern China involved 6 months travel in their famous caravans. In 800 A. D. Turkish soldiers were employed as mercenaries by the Arabian caliphs, then situated in Baghdad. Before long Turkish officers took control of the territory where the caliph reigned. This is how the Turks are first introduced into the Middle Eastern scene. (9)

In 960 A. D. they became established in Persia, and set up in East Persia an empire which extended even into India. They conquered a large section of India where was formed the famous Mogul empire - a Moslem state under Marmoud - a famous and remarkable ruler. Around Delhi one may see remains of the Mogul empire, including the beautiful Taj Mahal. By 1030 A. D. the Seljuk tribe of the Turks migrated into Khorasan (the north eastern province of Persia) because their relatives who were already settled there invited them in. The Seljuks developed into a dominant power. They overthrew the Turks who had previously occupied the area and ere long they were invited by the Arabian caliph at Baghdad to aid and protect him in retaining his office. In this manner the leader of the Seljuks, a man called Togrul Beg became the First Lieutenant of “the prophet”, and a controlling power in Persia. From this position they prepared their mission of invading and destroying the Roman empire. They were poised in the area, east of the Euphrates. That river could correctly be

classified as the boundary between the Turks and the Roman empire. Edward Gibbon, speaking of the beginning of the Turkish invasion under the nephew of Togrul Beg declared,

Alp Arslan passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry. (10)

The initial Turkish conquests embraced Armenia and Georgia. The Turks then met head on the great Roman army from Constantinople led by the emperor. This was the decisive battle of Melazkerd, 1071 A. D. (now Malazgirt), near the headwaters of the Euphrates river. The army of Eastern Rome was soundly defeated and the Seljuks took control of the Middle East. They conquered Syria and Asia Minor, setting up their capital at Nice, the birthplace of the Nicæan Creed. Professor Davis in his history declares,

The Turks in the 10 years following 1071 burned their way clear across Asia Minor almost to within sight of Constantinople. (11)

The Seljuk Turks then conquered Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, West Africa, and extended their empire eastward to the Indus river, the border of India. Northwards they conquered right across to Cashgar on the Chinese border. That was the vast empire of the Seljukian Turks. It was while the Seljuks controlled the Middle East that appeals were made to Europe to deliver Palestine from the Turks. This resulted in the Crusades. The crusaders drove the Turks out of much of Asia Minor, forcing them to remove their capital from Nice to Iconium. Later the Seljuk power was well nigh destroyed by the Tartars or Mongols or Eastern Turks, under Tamerlane, when they overran the Middle East. The Monguls empire reached from the sea of Japan in North China right across to the Caspian Sea. In Moscow today you can see memorials of mighty battles that were fought by the Russians against the Tartars or Eastern Turks.

The Mongols soon disappeared under Tamerlane but they had driven out many other Turkish tribes from Turkestan. One tribe migrated to Asia Minor, under the leadership of Othman. This tribe joined a remnant

of the Seljuk Turks at Iconium and soon developed into the dominant power of Asia Minor reconquering that territory. Othman and his successors soon set their sights upon Constantinople, the capital of Eastern Rome. It was the Ottoman Turks in particular, that fulfilled the specifications of the sixth trumpet. The Seljuk Turks prepared the way, but it was completed by the Ottomans. The eight points of identification especially the latter points, apply to them.

Notice what some historians say concerning the Turks in their attacks upon Eastern Rome. Finlay, the historian of Greece notes the similarity of the Turkish attacks to the attacks of the Goths upon Western Rome and it was the Goths who fulfilled three of the four first trumpets.

The Turks in Asia Minor acted a part not unlike that, which the Goths had acted in the history Of the Western Empire. (12)

Professor Vambery, a historian of the Levant says,

Alp Arslan was the first Turkish chieftain who led Turkish cavalry across the Euphrates and brought the classic and sacred ground of Western Asia under the dominion of the race which rules it to this day. (13)

The first point of identification was that the invading army would comprise numerous horsemen. So numerous were they that the prophet declared, "I heard the number of them in vision", indicating their vast number. Edward Gibbon, the skeptic and "unconscious commentator of the Apocalypse", described the invasion of the Turks in the following manner:

The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of 600 miles from Taurus to Azeroum and the blood of 130,000 christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian-prophet. [i. e. to the Moslem religion) (14)

Notice that the Turkish horsemen spread over a 600 mile frontier, from Taurus [near Tarsus] in the south east corner of Asia Minor, right up to the Black Sea. For 600 miles, the Turkish horse extended. Gibbon continues,

"200,000 soldiers marched under his banners" (15)

And they were all horsemen. A French writer who visited Asia Minor in 1433 speaks of the "innumerable host" of cavalry of the Turks. Hezekiah Holland, who published a book in 1650 on the sixth trumpet, made the following observation:

I well remember that living in the University of Ireland , a gentle man that newly came from Scangrown or Alexandretta, told me he saw the Turkish army march by to recover Bagdet or Babylon, and that the army was over a week marching by, consisting of fifteen hundred thousand men. (16)

1,500,000 horsemen! No wonder the prophet said "I heard the number of them". But were not all armies of that day on horses? Was not that the usual type of warfare in that era? It is true that there were numerous armies in the world of that day, but none possessed the

numbers of horsemen as did the Turks. In contrast to the Turkish armies the European armies consisted mostly of foot soldiers, the cavalry were comparatively few compared with the rest of the army.

The second point of identification is the method of numbering.

“. . . the number of the army of the horsemen were 200,000 thousand thousand.” V16.

In the Greek it reads, “myriads of myriads”. Various scholars confirm this view on external and internal evidence. In the Old Testament this was one way of numbering.

“Be thou the mother of thousands of millions.” Genesis 24:60. The original is “thousands of myriads”.

“Return now to the many thousands of Israel.” Num. 10:36. (margin-.”ten thousand thousands”)

The Hebrew reads, “myriads of thousands”.

“Thousand thousands ministered to him and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him.” Dan. 7:10. The Hebrew reads “myriads of myriads stood before him”.

What is the significance of this in the sixth trumpet? It was the Turkish method of numbering! They numbered by to tomens”. A tomen is ten thousand people or the number ten thousand, or myriad. Gibbon himself uses this very term when he describes the Turks. Alluding to Timur the Lame - the leader of the Tartars or Eastern Turks from Mongolia, he says,

The sea [the Bosphorus] rolled between the two continents of Europe and Asia and the lord of so many tomens or myriads of horse was not master of a single galley. (17)

Of the Turkish invasion of Asia Minor he says,

The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of 600 miles from Taurus to Azeroum. (18)

This way of numbering was peculiar to the Turks. (19)

The third point of identification was the colour of their breastplates and uniforms.

“. . . of fire and of jacinth and brimstone.” V17

The word “Jacinth” is “Jacinthine” in the Greek, and denotes the color blue. Thus when it speaks of “fire and jacinth and brimstone” it means red, blue and yellow. Fire is red, jacinthine is blue and brimstone or Sulphur is yellow. Red, blue and yellow! Were they the colors of the uniforms of the Turkish army? Daubuz, an English scholar writing of the time, says,

From their first appearance the Ottomans have affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, blue and yellow: a descriptive trait the more marked from its contrast to the military appearance of Greeks, Franks or Saracens [Arabs] who were contemporary. (20)

This third point indisputably identifies the Turks. The fourth point is: “. . . that the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions.”

The “heads” no doubt refers to the Turkish leaders who are described as lion-like. The lion is symbolic of courage and destructiveness. It is significant to notice that the Turkish leaders in their titles, as well as their character often used the term “lion”.

The name of Alp Arslan, the valiant lion, is expressive of the popular idea of. . . the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal. (21)

Alp Arslan’s successor was named “Kilidge Arslan!” which means “the noble lion”. Another writer says,

The Turks compare the grand Seignior [their king] to the lion and other kings [of other nations] to little dogs. (22)

Gibbon again declares,

It would be superfluous to praise the valour of a Turk. (23)

The Anzacs in 1915 were very much aware of the courage and fighting qualities of the Turk even in these modern times.

The fifth point, is that the agent that would be used to kill, appears to issue from the horses' mouths.

"Thus I saw the horses . . . and the heads of the horses as the heads of lions and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third of men killed. By the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths." Vv 17-18.

"The third of men [were] killed". The third denoted the third part of the Roman empire. (24) At this time it was, the Eastern division of the Roman empire, Eastern Rome. Under the fifth trumpet the Arabs were to torment Eastern Rome but under the sixth trumpet the Turks were to slay or kill Eastern Rome. That meant to destroy it as a political power. To accomplish that, it would mean striking at the heart of the empire - the capital, which was Constantinople. This great city had stood for 1100 years; eight determined attempts had been made to capture it, but in vain. It seemed as if it would last forever. However the Turks, when they conquered Asia Minor, being, Moslems and fanatically opposed to Christianity, especially the apostate Christianity centred in Constantinople, determined to capture Constantinople. Because of this they became a terrible threat to Europe. Initially the Turks crossed the Bosphorus, bypassed Constantinople, and ravaged the territories of Greece and beyond. J. H. Newman in his lectures on Greece said: "No race cast so broad and dark a shadow on the page of ecclesiastical history." (25)

A Turkish historian wrote,

The Turkish invasion was a scourge far heavier than that of the Saracens. While the latter when bent on permanent conquest offered the tribute as alternative to the 'Koran or the sword', the Seljouks were mere savages who slew for the pleasure of slaying. . . Never, probably even in the thick of the Teutonic [Gothic] invasions of the fifth century, was so much harm done in ten short years, as in Asia Minor during this period of 1071-1081. By the end of the latter year the flourishing themes [areas] which had been for so long the core of the East Roman realm had been reduced to mere wastes. Thirty years after [the battle of] Manikert, when the armies of the crusaders marched from Nicaea to Tarsus, right across the ancient heart of the empire, they nearly perished of starvation in a land of briars and rivers. (26)

This reveals the destructiveness of the Turks. They destroyed like the lion. As Lord Houghton wrote,

Think of that age's awful birth,

When Europe echoed, terror-riven,

That a new foot was on the earth,

And a new name came down from heaven

The Turks certainly filled Europe with fear and terror.

For many a year the church bells often called the people to pray for deliverance from the Turks (27)

It is fascinating to learn that the Ottoman Turks in particular, were a great aid to the Protestant Reformation. When Turks were invading Europe, King Charles V of Spain was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This was the Roman Catholic political empire of the Middle Ages. Protestantism had risen in 1517 and thousands of people had left Mother Church to become Protestants. Charles V, being a devout Roman Catholic was fervently persuaded by his church, not only to oppose the Protestant faith, but to destroy it (28) But whenever he advanced to attack the Protestants, so often tidings would come that the Turks were on the attack and Charles would be forced to turn away from the Protestants and march against the Turks. History, is very clear that had it not been for the Turks, Protestantism would never have survived. As one scholar says,

"In the 16th and 17th centuries support and encouragement for Protestants and Calvinists . . . were one of the fundamental principles of Ottoman policy."(29)

Another declared,

"There would have been no Protestantism had there been no Turk." (30)

It has since been revealed that there was an agreement between the Turkish sultan and some of the minor powers of Europe including German barons. It was agreed that whenever Charles V would exert his political strength, especially against Protestants, the Turks would attack Europe and divert Charles' attention. No wonder Charles in utter frustration finally buried himself in the monastic life and handed over the kingdom to his son, Phillip III His last 'words to Phillip were "Take care that the heretics. . . were repressed. . . without regard to any plea in their favor." (31)

Phillip certainly endeavored to fulfill the wishes of his father and also of his church.

We now return to the early fifteenth century of Turkish times. There finally ascended to the Turkish throne a sultan named Mahomet II. He named himself "Huukiar" which means "the slayer of men". This he proved to be for he was responsible for the final destruction of Eastern Rome. His unrelenting resolve was to take Constantinople.

"I ask a present far more valuable and important - Constantinople." he proclaimed. (32) In inspiring the Turkish armies to capture Constantinople he assured them that

. . . the door would open to them by its capture, to conquer the whole of the Greek empire. [i. e. Eastern Rome] (33)

How correct his words proved to be. In preparation for the fulfillment of his heart's desire he studied the latest instruments of destruction with which he might bring Constantinople to its knees. Especially did he concentrate upon gunpowder and artillery. . Not that any European powers had yet used it successfully, but they were progressing. Ere long a constructor or founder of cannon, because of improper treatment by the Roman emperor at Constantinople, deserted to the Turks. What a windfall! Mahomet's first question to him was, "Are you able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball that would batter the walls of Constantinople?"

The answer was in the affirmative. As a result, a foundry was immediately established and within three months a cannon was produced with a bore of five feet. It was able to blast a 600 pound missile for several furlongs and bury itself in the earth. (34)

Now the prophecy stated that

" . . . fire, smoke and brimstone came out of the horses' mouths"

With the invention of muskets [or rifles] the Turkish horsemen acquired the skill of using them while riding or charging on horseback into battle. As they charged they fired their muskets and we believe that to the prophet in vision gazing at these horsemen in the distance, - it appeared as if "fire and smoke and brimstone came out of the horses mouths". Through the years many scholars have seen this new type of warfare as a perfect fulfillment of the prediction. But were not other nations also using gunpowder? They were experimenting, but the Turks were the first to successfully employ gunpowder in the prosecution of warfare. Maybe this is one reason why this detail is featured in this prediction.

We pass to the seventh point of identification.

"Their power [or authority] is in their mouths, and in their tails."

In other words, their authority "was in their tails and their tails were like unto serpents and had heads." V19.

In scripture the word "power" may signify authority (Rom. 13:1). The word "heads" could indicate rulers or leaders in association with the horse tails. This is a puzzling symbolism and it has challenged many students through the years. How could a horse's tail be associated with a head or a leader? Normally the tail would represent the rear, those who follow or those in subjection. In this puzzling symbol we are given remarkable evidence of Turkish identity. The Turks' peculiar ensign - the standard that they used to represent authority was a horse's tail! From prime visior to the governors of provinces, the horse's tail was the badge of authority. As Elliott says,

The ensign of one, two, or three horse tails that marks distinctively the dignity and power of the Turkish Pasha. (35)

According to their history, a Turkish "general, not knowing how to rally his troops who had lost their standard, cut off a horse's tail, fixed it to the end of a spear. The soldiers rallying at that signal gained the victory". Thereafter the horse's tail was used as a symbol of office. (36)

A writer on Turkish history in 1842 stated,

The recent overthrow of the Mameluc power [in Egypt] by the Ottomans [Turks] had extended the shadow of the horsetails far along the coast of Africa. (37)

When France occupied North Africa, one of its generals summoned a certain tribe to submit to the French. The tribe had been under Turkish rule. In response the tribe stated that,

The horse of submission has no tails. (38)

This meant that the Turks no longer had any authority. What a clear mark of identity of the Turkish power? The prediction then continues,

“ . . . with them they do hurt.”

With their tails they do hurt. Here is a seeming contradiction. They have lion-like heads from which issue fire and smoke and brimstone, that kill the third part of men, or by which they were to destroy Rome. In this verse it speaks of “heads” that are connected with the tail which do hurt. The Greek word for “do hurt” means “doing injustice”. We believe that this represents the oppression by the Turkish leaders on those whom they conquered, especially Christians in Greece and elsewhere. History records the truth of this. Knolles says,

His Bassaes like ravening harpies, as it were, suck out the blood of his poor subjects. (referring to the Turkish Pashas or leaders) (39)

The following is an eyewitness account of Turkish oppression.

And where is the traveler through European Turkey . . . that has not with his own eyes witnessed the same? Even now the scene rises in memory before the author, of the long train of a Turkish Pasha proceeding to his Pashalik [or governorship] in Greece; which passed him by, . . . And bright, he remembers, shone the sunbeams on the varied colorings, the ‘red, blue and yellow’ of the horses, horsemen and foot-retainers, in the procession; and proudly the ensign was borne before the Turkman of two horsetails, to mark his dignity.

But associated with the remembrance there rise up other recollections also: the scene of a village which, on entering it a few days before with his companions, he had found deserted, though with marks of recent habitation; and from which, a straggler emerging from his hiding place informed them, men, women, and children had fled to the mountains, to escape from the visit, on some errand of oppression, of one of the officers of a neighbouring Pasha. Nor again can the scene be forgotten of other permanently deserted villages . . . and often with nothing but the silent graveyard in its loneliness, to tell the tale of former life and population. Thus was there set before his eyes how the inhabitants had failed before the oppressions of the Pashas. (40)

The Turkish “heads” associated with “the tails” certainly “hurt” those whom they conquered.

We now come to the seige of Constantinople - the final “killing “ or slaying” of the Eastern Roman empire. On April 6, 1453 Mahomet II assembled 258,000 men to commence the attack. The city was 13 miles in circumference, with 7,000 - 8,000 men to defend it. Its people implored the virgin Mary for deliverance - a token of their apostasy. The city was in the form of a triangle - two sides ran along the sea [the Black Sea and the Bosphorus] and the base of the triangle was protected by a double wall and a trench, 100 feet deep and six miles long. This part was attacked by the Turks. Edward Gibbon describes the attack, and reveals how the prediction was fulfilled that “by fire, by smoke and by the brimstone” was the empire killed.

“The volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of the musketry and cannon . . . the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundering at once on the most accessible places . . . the fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence, were dismantled on all sides by the Ottomen cannon, many breaches opened, and, near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers levelled with the ground. . . from the lines, the galleys and the bridge, the Ottomam artillery thundered on all sides, the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire . . . the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins’ . . . the Turks at length. . .”rushing through the breaches . . . Constantinople was subdued, her empire subverted and her religion trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors” (41)

A Turkish historian writing of the same event declared,

The Moslems placed their cannon in an effective position. The gates and ramparts of Constantinople were pierced in a thousand places. The flame which issued from the mouths of those instruments of warfare, of brazen bodies and fiery jaws, cast grief and dismay among the miscreants. The smoke which spread itself in the air rendered the brightness of day as somber as night; and the face of the world soon became as dark as the black fortune of the unhappy infidels. (42)

Thus as the prophet declared, “by these three, by fire and smoke and brimstone was the third part of men killed”. The Roman empire was no more.

There was now no independent Greek state left. (43)

The eighth and final point of identification is in the period of time allotted for the slaying or killing of the third part of men. It was to be for “an hour, a day, a month and a year”. The third part applied at this particular time to Eastern Rome alone. One interpretation through the years has been that this description of “an hour, day, month and year” means an appointed time. The margin reads “at-an hour, day, month and year”. Some versions confirm this reading. (44) Are we justified in holding that the above expression represents a period of time and not an appointed time? In other places in scripture time periods are expressed in a similar way as in Revelation 9:15. In describing the 1260 year time period of Papal supremacy, Daniel says, it is “for a time, times, and half a time”. (Dan. 12:7) This equals

three-and-a-half prophetic years or 1260 days, and represents 1260 years, on the Bible principle of a day equaling a year in prophecy. E. B. Elliott, the Cambridge lecturer on the book of Revelation in his "Horae Apocalypticæ" has closely examined this expression in the original Greek and he has concluded that it represents a period of time - not an appointed time. (45) This being so, it means that the period allotted amounts to 391 years and 15 days if we include the "hour". Let us reverse the order for the sake of clarity: a year, month, day, an hour. A Bible year is 360 days which equals 360 years. A Bible month is 30 days which equals 30 years. A day is 1 year. The total is 391 years plus the "hour" which is a 24th part of a year or 360 days. That equals 15 days. Altogether the time period is 391 years 15 days.

One year = 360 Bible Days = 360 solar years One month = 30 Bible Days = 30 solar years One day = 1 Bible Day = 1 solar year

One hour = 1/24 of a day = 1/24th of a year

Or one hour = 1/24 of 360 days = 15 solar days

Total = 391 years, 15 days

In 1840 Josiah Litch, a noted preacher associated with William Miller in The Great Second Advent Movement of 1833-1844, predicted on the basis of this time period, that the Ottoman empire would come to its end on the 11th August, 1840. He and William Miller believed that both the fifth and the sixth trumpets applied to the Ottoman empire; that the fifth trumpet applied to the rise of the Ottomans and the sixth applied to the domination of the Ottoman Turks. (46) Litch believed that the five month period of torment of the fifth trumpet (i. e. 150 years) began with the first king of the Ottomans, who was Othman. Othman began his career of conquest on July 27, 1299 according to Gibbon. By adding 150 years to July 27, 1299 Litch obtained the date of July 27, 1449. On that date John Palaeologus, the Roman Emperor died and his brother Constantine XI was elected in his place. However he could not be crowned except by permission of the Turkish sultan. This revealed that the Eastern Roman empire had lost its power and independence. It meant that the Turks were now in control. By adding 391 years and 15 days to July 27, 1449 Litch obtained the date of August 11, 1840. His conclusion was historically correct as far as the dates were concerned, and it was fulfilled to the very letter. Josiah Litch proclaimed to the world several months before August 11, 1840 that the infamous Ottoman empire would end. The world waited and watched. When it was fulfilled to the very day, hundreds of infidels were converted to the Christian faith. It was a dramatic fulfillment of Litch's prediction.

The author of Great Controversy refers to this event in the year 1840, as another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy . . . at the very time specified Turkey through her ambassador accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became-known, multitudes became convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement." (47) Josiah Litch's conclusions were based on the year/day principle - the same as William Miller's.

However since then, as a result of continued study, some problems have been discovered in certain parts of Josiah Litch's interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets. Litch held that the fifth trumpet applied to the Turks at their rise, but the current position is that the fifth trumpet applied to the Arabian conquests commencing with Mahomet, not the Ottoman Turks. (48) This being so, the period of torment of the locust power as understood by Litch needs to be re-examined. The 150 years were not connected with the Turks but with the Arabs, and the first king was not Othman the Ottoman, but Mohomet, the Arabian. The 150 years of torment fitted exactly, the period of the Arab conquests. They commenced in 612 A. D. when the Arabian armies sallied forth to invade Eastern Rome. From that point the period of torment of the apostate Christians of Eastern Rome began. Exactly 150 years later, in 762 A. D. the Arabian caliph moved his capital from Damascus to Baghdad, outside the boundary of the Roman empire and this ended the period of conquest of the Arabs and the period of torment. (48)

But what of the 391 year period of the sixth trumpet? When did this period commence and close? We suggest that that period commenced on the same date that Josiah Litch commenced it. That was July 27, 1449 A. D. When the Eastern Roman emperor, Constantine XI, was elected, he could only take office with the approval of the Turkish sultan. This meant that the Turks now controlled the empire. Its power and independence were gone - it had been killed. At the fall of Constantinople four years later, the last vestige of the empire was annihilated. With July 27, 1449 as the starting date for the 391 period, the termination, as with Litch's calculation was August 11, 1840 A. D. when the Ottoman empire lost its independence at the Treaty of London. Thus the final date of Josiah Litch's prediction is confirmed. The eighth specification of the prophecy was fulfilled. The time period of 391 years satisfactorily fits the Ottoman power.

We now come to the conclusion of the sixth trumpet. What are the main points of significance that we should note for our benefit? First, God's punishment of apostasy. All the trumpets were judgments on apostasy but it is significant to note that after the judgment of the sixth trumpet it says,

" . . . the rest of the men which were not killed. by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils and idols of silver and gold and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see nor hear nor walk Neither repented they of their murders nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Revelation 9:20-21.

In other words the terrible judgment of the Turks was completely unavailing. It did not bring the apostate Christians to repentance. What a powerful lesson is in that for the church today? When Christians apostatize, very seldom do they turn back from their apostasy. Very seldom is there true repentance. This is a solemn lesson to those in responsibility. When apostasy raises its head, it is vital that it receive immediate and correct attention, otherwise the damage will seldom if ever be rectified.

The second point of significance concerning the sixth trumpet is that it introduces the Turks, for the first time into the prophetic picture. That vast multitude of peoples that inhabited the central Asiatic mainland, play a part in divine providence. Through two groups the Seljuks and the Ottomans - the Turks took control of Asia Minor and destroyed Eastern Rome. This remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy by the Turks confirms the accuracy of scripture.

The final and important point of significance is that the Turks were used by heaven to safeguard the Protestant Reformation. As one historian declared, "There would have been no Protestantism, had there been no Turk." (30) Is it not awe-inspiring to consider that one reason God moved the millions of Turks out of Asia into the Middle East was to employ them as protectors of His people and to keep at bay the powers of apostasy? . The Arabs of the fifth trumpet, protected the Church of the East from the attacks. of the-Papal apostasy. (48) The Turks of the sixth trumpet protected, the Protestant Reformation from the assaults of the Papal apostasy.

The sixth trumpet concludes the part that the Turks and Turkey played in the panorama of prophecy. In the great controversy between Christ and Satan, as portrayed in the book of Revelation, the Turks never again come into the picture. The conflict from here on moves westward and involves the European powers, the Papacy, the U. S. A. and finally the whole world. This will be unveiled in chapters 10-18 of Revelation.

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The answer to this claim is given in Hebrews 9:6. "When these things were thus ordained the priests went always into the the first tabernacle [apartment] accomplishing the service of God." Involved in this daily first apartment service was the offering, morning and evening, of the incense on the golden incense altar which stood before the veil in the first apartment. (Luke 1:8,9 & Exod. 30:1-8) The fact that the common priests performed the daily service proves that the altar and censers were located in the first apartment because into the second apartment, only the high priests could enter, and that was only on one day of the year.

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19. Time No Longer

THE ANGEL OF TIME!

The key to the Great Disappointment of 1844!

Revelation 10:1-11; 11:1-2

This chapter is situated between the sixth and seventh trumpets of Revelation. The seventh trumpet is introduced in Revelation 10 but the details of it are given in Revelation 11:14-19. In between the two trumpets is a two-fold prophecy. First, "The Angel of time", which proclaims "time no longer", and secondly, "The Two Witnesses and The Beast From The Abyss".

REASON FOR THE 2 PREDICTIONS

Why are these two predictions interposed between the sixth and seventh trumpets? We suggest that chapter 10 reveals God's method of concluding the gospel which occurs under the final trumpet. The attack by the beast upon the two witnesses, brings to view Satan's attempt to thwart God's plan. However God turned it around and used it to fulfill His purpose. The two witnesses were attacked by the beast, but instead of their being destroyed they were greatly exalted. (1)

What is God's method of concluding the gospel? This is introduced in Revelation 10.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the earth. And cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars. And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices, and when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that lives forever that there should be time no longer." Revelation 10:1-6.

A mighty angel was also featured in Revelation 5:2, ("a strong angel" - KJV). He also proclaims concerning a book."Who is worthy to open the book?" That book is a different book to the one in chapter 10. (2)

THIS ANGEL REPRESENTS A DIVINE MESSAGE

"Another angel came down from heaven."

This denotes that the message is from God, and is of great importance. In Revelation, God inspired movements are pictured as coming from above, from heaven, whereas movements inspired by Satan are symbolized as emerging from beneath, from the abyss, the sea and the earth.

"This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. . . But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." James 3:15-17.

THIS ANGEL IS CHRIST

It is significant to notice the identity of this mighty angel. He is "clothed with a cloud". Clouds are associated with the Deity in scripture. When the Deity descended on Mount Sinai,

"A thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people trembled." Exodus 19:16.

“These words the Lord spoke to all the assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice.” Deuteronomy 5:2.

“Who makes the clouds his chariot.” Psalm 104:3

When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain.

“The there came a cloud and overshadowed them and they feared as they entered into the cloud and there came a voice out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son hear him.” Luke 9:34-35.

At Jesus’ ascension.

“He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Acts 1:9.

At the Second Advent.

“Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him.” Revelation 1:7.

“I looked and behold a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man.” Revelation 14:14.

Seeing the clouds are associated with the Deity, it suggests that this angel must be a member of the Godhead.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RAINBOW

“A rainbow was upon his head.”

This reminds us of the rainbow of chapter 4:3, the brilliant backdrop to the throne of God, and the symbol of the covenant of God’s mercy amid his judgments and justice. This is the sign of our covenant keeping God, the one who keeps his word, the God that can be trusted. Around the angel’s head is this rainbow, a genuine halo. This indicates that he must be Jesus Christ. The author of “Patriarchs and Prophets” agrees.

“When man by his great wickedness invites the divine judgments, the Savior interceding with the Father in his behalf, points to the bow in the clouds, to the rainbow around the throne, and above his own head as a token of the mercy of God toward the repentant sinner.” (3)

“His face was as it were the sun.”

This is a repetition of Revelation 1:16, “And his countenance was as the sun”. This expression denotes his divinity.” Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” Just as Moses, after being with God on Mount Sinai, was compelled to veil his face because of its shine, so the Lord Jesus, the glorified God-man, his face is as the sun and

“His feet as pillars of fire.”

This coincides with Revelation 1:15 where.

“His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace.”

This refers to Christ’s power to judge and punish evil and to tread down in destruction, all who rebel against God. (4)

WHY JESUS IS CALLED AN ANGEL

If this angel is Jesus Christ in his glorified state, then this tenth chapter must be important. Why is Jesus designated as an angel, when in reality he is forever a man?

“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5.

Before his birth in Bethlehem, in the Old Testament, the Son of God was alluded to as an angel. He was called Michael the Archangel. Michael means “who is like God”? The word archangel means, the 11 chief angel”. This is still one of Christ’s titles. The term angel, or messenger, is applied to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, in the setting of the covenant, as the judge and protector of his people.

“Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not for he will not pardon your transgressions for my name is in him. But if thou shall indeed obey his voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thy enemies and an adversary to thy adversaries. For mine angel shall go before thee and bring thee unto the Amorites, the Hittites, and I will cut them off.” Exodus 23:20-23.

The prophet Malachi also refers to Christ as the angel.

“Behold I will send my messenger [John the Baptist] and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger for, the angel], of the covenant whom you delight in, behold he shall come, said the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap.”

This is a prediction of Christ’s first advent. It also applies to Christ’s coming to his temple, to the most holy place, for judgment. It is a judgment scene.

“He shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, [believers], and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . And I will come near to you in judgment and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, said the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 3:1-6

REVELATION 10 IS IN A JUDGMENT SETTING.

Christ is here presented as “the angel of the covenant” in the setting of the pre advent judgment. In the light of these Old Testament portrayals, undoubtedly Revelation 10 is also in the setting of the covenant and of judgment.

“He is clothed with a cloud.”

The cloud is an “emblem of God coming in judgment”. (5) In Daniel 7:9-10, 13, where it describes the pre advent judgment, Jesus is pictured as being conveyed by the clouds into the presence of the Most High. When Christ is described as coming in judgment at the Second Advent, clouds are associated with his coming.

“Behold he comes with clouds and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him and all kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of him.” Revelation 1:7.

The rainbow also is associated with judgment. At the time of Noah’s flood, “It represented the union of his [God’s] mercy and justice.” (6) “It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation so full and complete.” (7)

“His face was as the sun” - denoting his deity - the all-knowing, the all-seeing one, before whom “all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:13 This again alludes to judgment.”His feet as pillars of fire.” - This again represents judgment. Finally, he has in his hand, “a little

book, open”, and the title of this book, also denotes judgment, for it is none other than the book of Daniel, and Daniel means, “God is judge”.

LITTLE BOOK OF DANIEL.

What are the evidences that this little book, is the book of Daniel?

1. It is a little book. The book of Daniel comprises just 12 chapters.
2. The emphasis is on the word “open”, indicating that the book was not previously open, but closed or sealed,

“The voice which I heard from heaven, spoke to me again and said, Go and take the little book which is on in the hand of the angel.” Revelation 10:8.

The emphasis is on the word “open”. Normally one would say, “Go and take the little book which is in the hand of the angel.” But instead, it says, “which is open in the hand of the angel.” One would normally say, “in his hand he had a little book, or, he was reading from a little book, or, he was reciting, or proclaiming from a little book; but each time it reads “a little book open in the hand of the angel.” Has there been any little book that was closed or sealed up and later opened? The answer is yes! Only one book in all of scripture is described as being sealed, and that is the little book of Daniel the prophet.

“But thou O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4.

“Go thy way Daniel for the words are closed up and sealed, till the time of the end.” Daniel 12:9.

3 The angel raised his hand to heaven and swore an oath that there would be “time no longer”. This is derived from Daniel 12.

“And I heard the man clothed in linen which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swear by him that lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times and a half. And when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people all these things shall be finished.” Daniel 12:7. (RV)

In the eighth verse of Daniel 12, it indicates that Daniel did not understand the meaning of this oath of the angel. In verse 9, Daniel was assured that it would be understood at the time of the end, i. e. after 1798. Revelation 10 shows that the opening of the little book is the fulfillment of the promise of Daniel 12:9.

4 The angel of Revelation 10 is the same being that swore the oath in Daniel 12:7. He is described in detail in Daniel 10:5. In Revelation 1:13-17 it is shown that this man is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. This indicates that Daniel 12 and Revelation 10 are very closely connected.

5 The little book of Revelation 10 is concerned with “time”. “Time shall be no longer.” The only other book that specializes in “time”, is the book of Daniel. It is peculiar for the remarkable time periods it contains.

These evidences confirm that the “little book” is none other than the book of Daniel, which was sealed till the time of the end, i. e. 1798.

DATE OF “THE TIME OF THE END”

How do we know that “the time of the end” commenced in 1798? Some claim the time of the end commenced in 1844, at the close of the 2300 year prophecy, but this conclusion cannot be confirmed by scripture. In the book of Daniel, this expression, “the time of the end” is mentioned five times.

1.”At the time of the end shall be the vision.” Daniel 8:17.

2.”Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge and to make them white, even unto the time of the end.” Daniel 11:35.

3.”And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind.” Daniel 11:40.

4.”Shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” Daniel 12:4.

5.”The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” Daniel 12:9. Of these five statements only one indicates when the time of the end would commence.

“Some of them of understanding shall fall to try them and to purge and to make them white even to the time of the end.” Daniel 11:35.

This is speaking of the great tribulation of the Dark Ages and it says that the tribulation would continue until “the time of the end”. When did the period of tribulation end? Without dispute it ended in 1798 AD. The author of “The Great Controversy,” agrees regarding this date.

“That part of the prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close and seal till the time of the end. Since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment.” (8)

THE EXTENT OF THE MESSAGE

“He set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth.” Revelation 10:2.

This represents the fact that Christ is sovereign of the sea and the Lord of the land. His message is worldwide - it sounds over land and sea.

EFFECT OF THE MESSAGE

“And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars.” Revelation 10:3.

This denotes the tremendous power and effect of the message as it is proclaimed. The lion’s roar creates fear, and this was true of the message, it created great fear in the minds of many. The lion may represent Jesus as “the lion of the tribe of Judah”, when he judges and destroys those who reject him.

THE SEVEN THUNDERS

“And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices, and 4m the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not.” Revelation 10:3, 4.

These are not seven peals of thunder, but seven distinct voices or messages. At times in the past, when God spoke, it sounded like thunder.

“God thunders marvelously with his voice.” Job 37:5.”The God of glory thunders.” Psalm 29:3.

But only he that has ears to hear, discerns that it is the voice of God. The New Testament records that on one occasion when Jesus prayed,

“Father glorify thy name, Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, who stood by and heard it, said, it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.” John 12:28-30.

John understood the messages of the seven thunders but God commanded him to hush them up. Why then, did God deliver them, if John was to hush them up? Sometimes God deliberately withholds truth and here he reveals that he is so doing. Jesus in his ministry on earth, in answer to queries from the disciples, said, “You cannot bear them now,” (John 16:12) and we suggest, that this was so with the seven thunders.

“The special light given to John which was expressed in the seven thunders, was a delineation of events which would transpire under the first and second angels’ messages. It was not best for the people to know these things, for their faith must necessarily be tested. In the order of God, most wonderful and advanced truths would be proclaimed, the first and second angels messages were to be proclaimed, but no further light was to be revealed before these messages had done their specific work. This is represented by the angel proclaiming that time should be no longer.” (9)

TIME NO LONGER

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things which therein are and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.” Revelation 10:5, 6.

Jesus Christ swears an oath on the authority of the Creator. This reveals the importance of the truth in this chapter.

WHAT KIND OF TIME?

What time is Christ referring to? Is it literal time, the beginning of eternity, or is it referring to probationary time, the close of the day of salvation? Is it symbolic time, in which a day represents a year? The answer is that it refers to none of these three! On what grounds? At the close of the proclamation of this message, the command is given, “You must prophesy [or preach] again.” (Verse 11) This shows that the time cannot be literal time - the end of the world. Under the seventh trumpet it says that “The mystery of God would be finished”. (Verse 7)

The mystery of God represents the gospel and the finishing of it means the close of probationary time. So the time cannot be probationary time.

But what of symbolic time, of a day for a year? Symbolic time is the time involved in symbolic prophecy. Symbolic prophecy extends until the Second Advent of Christ. Therefore symbolic time, of a day for a year, must also continue until the Second Advent. This is an important principle of Bible interpretation. This principle explains why it is, that the 1000 years of Revelation 20 are understood as literal years and not symbolic. Revelation 20 refers to events after the Second Advent - therefore this time must be literal time. There are no

symbols after the Second Advent. (10) In Revelation 20 where it refers to the abyss, or bottomless pit, it is a literal abyss, when this earth becomes a literal worldwide place of death, a literal prison house of Satan. (See Appendix 1.)

On the other hand, all time periods that are brought to view in symbolic prophecy prior to the Second Advent of Christ, are symbolic.

Therefore in answer to the question, ‘What manner of time is “time no longer” of Revelation 10:6?’ we must examine the book of Daniel from which Christ is quoting. Let the book of Daniel itself answer. In Daniel there are four great prophetic time periods. These are all chronological time periods.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL TIME PERIODS OF DANIEL

1. The 3 prophetic years of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7.

This period is mentioned seven times in Daniel and Revelation and always refers to the same time period. (It is an important clue in prophetic interpretation.) = 1260 years. 538 AD to 1798 AD.

2 The 1290 prophetic days of Daniel 12:11 in which the “daily” would be taken away and the abomination is set up = 1290 years. 508 AD to 1798 AD.

3 The 1335 prophetic days of Daniel 12:12 at the end of which Daniel and the saints stand in their lot for judgment etc. = 1335 years. 508 AD to 1843/1844 AD.

4 The 2300 prophetic days of Daniel 8:14 at the close of which the “cleansing of the sanctuary” or judgment, would commence = 2300 years. 457 BC to 1844 AD.

The longest time period of Daniel is the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 which ended in 1844 AD. All of these time periods are what we call chronological time periods. Thus when the angel said, “Time shall be no longer he undoubtedly was referring to the end of the chronological time-periods of the Book of Daniel. It is important to remember that the portion of Daniel that was closed up, or sealed, was the portion that involved these chronological time periods.

Daniel 8:14-15, tells how Daniel sought for the meaning of the vision concerning the time period. According to Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, the vision of the time period would apply in the time of the end, i. e. , after 1798. So the “time no longer” represents all the time periods of the book of Daniel. It means the cessation of all chronological time -all time periods- the cessation of all date setting in Bible prophecy. 1844 is the last date in Bible prophecy. One author declared:

“This message announces the end of the prophetic periods.” (11)

“This time, which the angel declares with the solemn oath, is not the end of this world’s history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which would precede the advent of our Lord i. e. the people would not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.” (12)

THE INTERPRETATION OF “TIME PROPHECIES”

1. In symbolic prophecy, “time” must be counted as symbolic time and in literal prophecy, “time” should be counted as literal time.

2. Symbolic prophecy extends until the Second Advent. After the Second Advent, symbols cease: therefore symbolic time, (day for a year), likewise ceases at the Second Advent. (See Appendix 2.)

NO DATE SETTING AFTER 1844

This, then, cancels out all date setting after 1844, for any event whatsoever, as far as Bible prophecy is concerned. However this does not mean that the year-day principle in prophecy, ceased in 1844.

It means only, that any time period requiring an end date has ceased. Such passages as the “half-hour” silence in heaven, (Revelation 8:1.) and the “one day” for the 7 last plagues, (Revelation 18:8) could still be applied according to the year-day principle.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound the mystery of God should be finished as he has declared to his servants the prophets.” Revelation 10:7.

Let us examine the mystery of God more closely. In scripture there are two mysteries: the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of godliness or the mystery of God. This verse speaks of “the finishing of the mystery of God”. This is the Close of Probation, the conclusion of the proclamation of the gospel, the close of Christ’s priestly ministry in the temple above. Why is the gospel spoken of as a mystery?

In scripture a mystery is something that is only understood by those who have a right to know. Jesus said,

“It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but to them it is not given.” Matthew 13:11.

The plan of redemption is a mystery to the unbeliever. There are seven aspects of the truth of God that are classed as mysteries. These are:

1. The hidden wisdom of God which is revealed to the believer. 1 Corinthians 2:5, 8.
2. The incarnation - “God manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy 3:16.
3. That the Gentiles should be included in the plan of salvation. Ephesians 3:3, 4, 9.
- 4.”Christ in you the hope of glory”. Colossians 2:25-7.
5. The union of Jesus Christ and his bride, the church. Ephesians 5:31, 32.
6. The resurrection of the saints. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.
7. The seven stars and the seven candlesticks of Revelation. Revelation 1:20. The scripture also speaks of:
8. The mystery of his will. Ephesians 1:9.
9. The mystery of God. 1 Corinthians 4:1.
10. The mystery of Christ. Colossians 4:3.
11. The mystery of the gospel. Ephesians 6:19.
12. The mystery of the faith. 1 Corinthians 3:9.

The last five refer to the same thing. On the other side of the great controversy there are:

- 1.”The mystery of iniquity”. 2 Thessalonians 2:7.
- 2.”The mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her.” Revelation 17:7.

Thus, when the Bible speaks of the mystery of God being finished, it really refers to the end of the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

Today we live in the period of the close of the day of salvation - soon all hope of the kingdom will be gone for the unsaved. Soon God will declare “It is finished!”, “It is done!” Soon the decree will sound:

“He that is unjust, Let him be unjust still, he that is filthy, let him be filthy still, he that is righteous let him be righteous still, he that is holy let him be holy still.” Revelation 22:11.

EATING THE LITTLE BOOK

“And the voice which I heard from heaven, spoke to me again and said, Go and take the little book, which is open in the hand of the angel, which stands upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went to the angel and said to him, Give me the little book. And he said to me, Take it and eat it up, it shall be in thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.” Revelation 10:8, 9.

What is meant by the term, “eat it up”? It means to mentally digest it. This expression is drawn from Ezekiel in the Old Testament.

“But thou Son of man, hear what I say to thee, Be thou not rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent to me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations and mourning and woe. Moreover he said to me, Son of man, eat that thou finds; eat this roll and go speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said to me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.” Ezekiel 2:8-10; 3:1-3.

What is the significance of this? First it tells us how God’s word is sweet to the soul.

“How sweet are thy words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth, through thy precepts I get understanding.” Psalm 119:103.

The same truth is expressed by Jeremiah.

“Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by name, O Lord God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16.

There are parallels between the experience of the prophet Ezekiel, and that of the prophet John.

PARALLELS BETWEEN EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

1. Ezekiel given a book.
2. Commanded to eat.
3. In his mouth as honey for sweetness.
4. Spoke the words of the book to Literal Israel.
5. Ezekiel experienced “bitterness of spirit.” Ezekiel 3:14.

REVELATION CHAPTER 10

1. John given a book. (Daniel)
2. Commended to eat.
3. In his mouth, sweet as honey.
4. Words of the Book of Daniel proclaimed to spiritual Israel.
5. John experienced bitterness in the belly.

In what way was the book of Daniel mentally digested, and John’s prediction fulfilled? This experience came to God’s people as a result of the French Revolution. At that time there was a tremendous attack upon Christianity and the Bible. This onslaught produced a marvelous reaction among Protestant nations, a reaction that led to a remarkable revival of interest in Bible prophecy. Many godly scholars were led, independently, to investigate the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. This was a fulfillment of Daniel 12:4 that “many would run to and fro and knowledge would be increased.” As Dr. Froom declared:

“The French Revolution was like the explosion of the long pent-up forces of a volcano. The Papal church and state were suddenly torn from their foundation and overwhelmed in the common ruin. The sudden and violent shock sent the Protestant church back to the prophecies.” (13)

In their investigation of these prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, these godly searchers were led to study in particular, the 3. 5 prophetic years, or 1260 year period of Papal supremacy. They came to the conclusion that this period ended about 1798. The attack on the Papacy had recently rocked the world of their day - it was a landmark in history. As a result of their discovery of the fulfillment of this prophetic time period in 1798, these Bible students were then led to investigate the next great time period - the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. It became the center of study. Finally, most concluded that the 2300 days ended between the years 1843 and 1847 AD. In that four year period, the 2300 years would come to their close. This conclusion led to a revival of the truth of the Second Advent of Christ. It began in Britain then spread among scholars and Christians in Europe, India, Asia and America. As the historian Thomas B. Macauley wrote in 1844,

“Many Christians believe that the Messiah will shortly establish a kingdom on the earth and reign invisibly over all its inhabitants. Whether this doctrine be orthodox or not, we shall not here inquire. The number of people who hold it is very much greater than the number of Jews residing in England. Many of these who hold it are distinguished by rank, wealth and ability. It is preached from pulpits both of the Scottish and English church. Noblemen and members of Parliament have written in defense of it.” (14)

This revival of the truth of the Second Advent developed into what is called the “Great Second Advent Movement”. It commenced in Britain, but unfortunately because of adverse forces, it was hindered in its full development. There were five factors that hindered the Second Advent movement in Britain.

1. There arose a dispute over whether the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 was 2300, or 2400 days. This conflict diverted attention from the closing event of the period. The 2400 day version came from copies of the Vatican manuscript. Later it was proved that 2400 was erroneous. Maybe when the prophet Daniel forecast that the Antichrist “would think to change times and laws”, he included the time prophecy of the 2300 days? The conflict caused by the error was a serious blow to the development of the Advent Movement in Britain.

2. There arose a re-emphasis of what is called post-millennialism. This was the view that the Second Advent of Christ would not occur until after the 1000 years of Revelation 20, instead of before the 1000 years. This also helped to blunt the revival.

3. In Britain an unscriptural view dominated the thinking of Christians that the Jews must return to Palestine before the Second Advent of Christ. This proved to be a great hindrance, in Britain, in the development of the Great Second Advent Movement.

4. Samuel Maitland, an Anglican scholar began to publish the Jesuit futuristic interpretation of prophecy. This system had been invented by the Jesuits after the Reformation in order to counter the Protestant and Biblical interpretation of prophecy that the Church of Rome was the Antichrist. This had a very serious effect, for many were influenced by it.

5. In 1833 there rose the Oxford Movement. That was the pro Roman Catholic movement in the Church of England which commenced at Oxford University with J. H. Newman, who later became a Roman Catholic Cardinal. The Oxford Movement’s views were readily accepted by many of the higher classes in Britain and this again helped to blunt the study of Bible prophecy and the truth of the Second Advent.

However this did not end the Movement. The literature that had been published in Britain detailing the findings of the British scholars had been regularly sent to America. This information was spread among the American churches with the result that the great Second Advent Movement began to develop and finally climaxed in the USA. The leading man of the Movement was William Miller. He began to preach that the Second Coming of Christ would be about 1844. Eventually he was supported by about 3,000 clergy plus thousands of lay people, proclaiming the Second Coming of Christ, throughout America. It was a tremendous religious revival but it ended in great disappointment. Hundreds of thousands listened, believed

and prepared for the Advent. They forsook their sins and in repentance sought God. On the other hand there were others who scoffed and ridiculed and misrepresented the mighty message that swept the country.

It sounded not only through North America but into many other lands. It enveloped the globe. About the year 1938, the writer observed in faraway New Zealand, a reference in a newspaper to an event that occurred in that country in the year 1844. It stated that numbers of people on a certain day in 1844, were expecting the second coming of Christ. In the year 1944, while the writer resided in Adelaide, South Australia, he read a reference in a local magazine of how one hundred years before, many among the German settlers of the Barossa Valley, South Australia, were likewise expecting the return of Jesus Christ in 1844.

To those who believed the message, it “was as sweet as honey”. It would end the reign of sin and death, and usher in the kingdom of eternal bliss. It was the end of their trials and heartaches, “sweet as honey”. When the day dawned and Christ did not appear, it was indeed a great disappointment. It was bitter and devastating. What a test this was to the people of God. As a result, the majority who accepted it, turned against religion and the study of scripture. However, there was a minority who knew that God had led them, that God had worked for them. Many thousands had repented of their sins, and turned to righteousness, which was evidence that God’s hand was in it. Instead of turning away from God or rejecting religion, they turned back to the Bible for meaning. Herein is a great lesson for every Christian. When disappointment is experienced in the realm of religion, always turn to God and the Bible. The Bible is never wrong - it is our interpretation of the Bible that can be wrong.

Why was it that sincere intelligent Christians made such a mistake? They believed that when the prediction said, “Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”, that the cleansing of the sanctuary, meant the cleansing of the earth, which scripture says will be at the Second Advent of Christ. Christians of that day lacked an understanding of the question of “the sanctuary”. In their ignorance of the subject, they concluded that the sanctuary represented the earth or even Palestine. This was the general thinking of the day.

We suggest that this was the significance of the seven thunders. They revealed the truth concerning 1844. If so, why then did God hush up the seven thunders? Why did he permit his people to be so bitterly disappointed? We suggest two main reasons:

1. To test his people - He had tested the apostles at the first advent when Jesus was crucified - they also were tested by great disappointment.

2. To warn the world that a special event had transpired. And the world certainly was warned. The message went to every mission station on the globe, and that period was a great era of foreign missions. Christendom was certainly warned of the Second Advent of Christ. Had the believers known all the facts concerning the prediction, they probably would never have proclaimed it as they did.

“You must prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.” verse 11.

How could they prophesy (preach) again, when they were so mistaken? How could they go to the world again, when they had been proved wrong? The solution to this is given in the next verse. (Originally there was no break between Revelation 10:11 and Revelation 11:1.)

“There was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood saying, Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and them that worship therein. But the court which is without [outside] the temple, leave out, and measure it not, for it is given to the Gentiles.” Revelation 11:1-2.

“Rise and measure the temple!” What temple? In 1844 when this applied, there was no official temple of God on earth. The popular view of the day was that the temple or sanctuary represented the earth or maybe Palestine. God’s people were in darkness as to what the temple signified. They knew that there had been Jewish temples - Solomon’s temple and Herod’s temple. Why “rise and measure the temple”? The Greek word for “measure”, when it is applied to a building or object, means to preserve or restore it.

“There was given me a reed like unto a rod.”

The word “reed” is “kanna” in the Greek, and from it we get our English word canon, which means a rule, a law, a standard, or order of doctrine or discipline. The word canon is used in the religious world, as the rule or authority for the Christian. We speak of “the canon of scripture”, or the law of scripture, the rule of scripture. What the angel commands is: “Measure the temple and the altar!” Take the Bible, the canon or rule of scripture, and examine or restore the temple and the altar. Why restore the temple and the altar? The answer is that the truth concerning the temple and the altar has been lost to the Christian church.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Daniel had revealed that the Antichrist was responsible for this.

“By him the daily sacrifice was taken away and the place of his sanctuary was cast down”. Daniel 8:11 (“sacrifice” not in the original.)

It was the daily that was taken away.”The daily” represented the ministration of Christ in the heavenly temple. (15) This would be taken away, and the place of his sanctuary, i. e. the heavenly sanctuary, would be cast down. How did the Papacy take away “the daily” and cast down the sanctuary? He did it by setting up a counterfeit priesthood, sanctuary and altar. What is the altar that is to be measured or restored? It is the altar of incense. The altar of incense in the earthly sanctuary, was especially connected with the ministry of the priest. When the Roman Catholic system developed, the world was deceived into looking to the Catholic system of priesthood for its salvation. The great truths of Christ’s heavenly sanctuary, and his mediation in that sanctuary, were cast down or lost.

But did not the Protestant Reformation restore the truth concerning “the daily”, or Christ’s ministration, and the heavenly sanctuary? No it did not. The Reformers commenced the restoration of the truth of the gospel but they did not complete it. They emphasized the priesthood of believers.

Now the priesthood of believers is a very important truth, but the Reformers did not have the light on the heavenly sanctuary and the priesthood of Christ in heaven above. That truth was rediscovered in 1844 as a result of the “great disappointment”. When that disappointment occurred, it drove the people of God of that day, to seek the reason. They were convinced that God was in the Great Second Advent Movement, so they took the reed, the canon of scripture, and with it examined the question of the temple. They soon discovered that the temple in the book of Revelation was the heavenly temple, the antitype of the Jewish temple of the Old Testament. They also found that the book of Hebrews referred to this temple,

“But Christ being come an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, [temple] and of the true tabernacle which the lord pitched and not men.”

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.” Hebrews 8:1, 2, 9.

They found that in the book of Hebrews, the priests' ministry in the Old Testament sanctuary, was a figure, or shadow of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

"Who serve unto the example and the shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle, for see, said He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount." Hebrews 8:5.

In the earthly temple there were two holy places and so it is in the heavenly temple.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with bands, which are figures of the true, [or the true ones] but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Hebrews 9:24.

They also discovered that the first half of the book of Revelation pictured Christ ministering in the first apartment. (16) In the second half of Revelation, Christ is seen ministering in the second apartment of the heavenly temple just as it was in the Old Testament type. In Revelation 11:19, the Deity is distinctly revealed as present in the second apartment.

"The temple of God was opened in heaven and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, [or covenant] and there were lightning and voices and thundering." Revelation 11:19.

This indicates that the activities of the Deity were now where the ark is. (17) Thus the latter part of Revelation reveals Christ ministering in the second apartment. (18) They also discovered in the prophecy of Daniel 7 that after the four universal monarchies would reign, the Antichrist or Papacy, would reign for 1260 years. This ended in 1798. The prophet then revealed an awe-inspiring phenomenon in the heavenly temple. It was the transfer of the deity from one division of the temple to another.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or positioned] and the Ancient of Days did sit."

Thrones were placed, or put in position. There is a movement of thrones, and the Ancient of Days did sit. God the Father, is moving. He is transferring.

"His throne was like the fiery flame and his (its) wheels as burning fire, a fiery strew issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, the judgment was set and the books were opened." (or, "the court sat in judgment." RSV) Daniel 7:9-10.

For what reason would God the Father transfer his location in the heavenly temple? The answer is given in Daniel 8:14.

"Unto (until) 2,300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

At the end of the 2,300 year period [1844] there was to take place "the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary or temple. What does this represent? We will show later that it represents a work of judgment, that was conducted in the "Holy of holies" of the heavenly temple. (19) Therefore, in 1844, there commenced in the heavenly temple a ministry of judgment. This was the key to the great disappointment of 1844. The prediction of Daniel 7 then reveals that after the Father was seated in the judgment,

"Behold one like the Son of Man [Jesus] came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days and they [the clouds] brought him near before him." Daniel 7:13.

Here Christ is described as coming to "the Holy of holies", of the awesome heavenly temple. This was the significance of the coming of Christ in 1844; it was not to the earth, but to the judgment scene in the heavenly temple. Thus the command of Revelation 11:1, after the disappointment of 1844, to "rise and measure [or restore] the temple and the altar" was exactly fulfilled.

But not only was the command to restore the temple, but to measure "them that worship therein". When the word "measure" [in the Greek] is applied to people, it means to evaluate, or to judge. In other words, evaluate or judge the people that worship in the heavenly temple. How does one worship in the heavenly temple? Who worships in the heavenly temple? Verse 2 declares:

"But the court which is without [outside] the temple, leave out and measure it not, for it is given to the Gentiles."

The court represents this earth. In the court was the altar of sacrifice which represents Calvary, where the Lamb was slain for the sins of the world. (20) The court "is given to the Gentiles". The Gentiles are contrasted with spiritual Israelites, true believers, who worship in the heavenly temple. The Gentiles are non-Israelites, i. e. the unconverted, the unsaved, who look to the earth, in contrast to true believers who worship in the heavenly temple. Now, the court, (or earth), is given to the unsaved and the unsaved or Gentiles, "tread down the holy

city 42 months” or 1260 years. Who trod down the holy city, the symbolic city, the Christian church, for 1260 years? History shows that it was the Church of Rome - the Papacy.

Thus, the Gentiles represent the Papacy. Therefore, this prediction is saying that the earth is given to the Papacy.

How could the earth be given to the Papacy?

1. The Papacy was permitted by Heaven to dominate or control the earth for 1260 years and it certainly did.

2. It is the earth where Papal worship is centered. Papal worship is centered in earthly things; in earthly tabernacles, an earthly priesthood, an earthly deity, an earthly sacrifice (the mass). As James describes the power that is not of God: “it is earthly, sensual, devilish”. James 3:15.

The difference between true and false worship is determined by the center of that worship. Paganism’s worship is centered in the earth, in earthly symbols. The worship of Apostate Protestantism likewise, is centered in the earth, on the cross, in the court, on Christ’s work on earth - his death, burial and resurrection. Calvinism and the so-called “New Adventism”, likewise are centered on the earth.”Everything was done for me 2000 years ago.” But the center of true worship is where Christ is. The faith and devotion of the believer must focus on Jesus, where ever He is now. And where is Jesus Christ since his ascension?

“Mere is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5. Jesus is not now on the cross, nor in the tomb, nor is he on the earth. As the apostle Paul declared:

“You are not come to the mount that might be touched, [Mt Sinai]. But you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Hebrews 12:18-24.

Notice the phrase, “the blood of sprinkling”. This was the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifice in the sanctuary by the priest. It refers to the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. This is where true believers focus their worship. Saint Paul declares:

“Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest [or the holy places (Greek) of the heavenly temple] by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the veil.” Hebrews 10:19, 20.

The believer is to center his worship in the heavenly temple where Christ is. It is in the heavenly temple where salvation is ministered.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost[completely] that came unto God by him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25.

Christ’s ministry on behalf of man is centered in the heavenly sanctuary.

“The sanctuary in haven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men.” (20)

By faith we enter within the veil of the great heavenly temple, by the new and living way and that way is Jesus who said,

“I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me.” John 14:6. One author declared:

“The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above, is as essential to the plan of salvation, as was his death upon the cross. By His death, he began that work, which after his resurrection, He ascended

to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, ‘whither our Forerunner is for us entered’. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. Jesus has opened the way to the Father’s throne and through his mediation the sincere desire of all who come to him in faith maybe presented before God.” (22)

It is in the light of the sanctuary that we are to look upon the cross of Christ. In Revelation 5, Christ is presented as “the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne.” By faith the true believer follows Jesus Christ into the heavenly temple and that is where his worship is centered. But how are worshippers measured or judged in the heavenly temple? They are judged in the pre-advent judgment, mentioned above, and revealed in Daniel 7 & 8. Daniel 7 reveals that after Christ entered into the court session, where the Ancient of Days presided, that. . .

“Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:22.”Judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High.” NLN.”Judgment was given in favor of the saints.” NEB.

Thus in the heavenly temple, commencing in 1844 AD, judgment began concerning the saints of God, and in that judgment “the books were opened” and from the unerring record of every professed believer, is determined who is faithful and who has overcome.

“Every case is coming in review before God: he is measuring the temple and the worshippers therein.” (23)

“the grand judgment is taking place. The Lord says, Measure the temple and the worshippers thereof. God is measuring you: when you are attending your household duties, when you engage in conversation, God is measuring you. Remember that your words and actions are being photographed in the books of heaven. Here is the work going on, measuring the temple and its worshippers to see who will stand in the last day when we are doing our work, remember there is one watching the spirit in which we are doing it.” (24)

This is the first way in which those who worship in the heavenly temple are being measured. The second way in which they are being measured is by the process of self-examination now on earth.

“Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove [scrutinize closely] your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except [or else] you be reprobates [rejected].” 2 Corinthians 13:5.

While the saints are being measured or judged above, they are to measure or judge themselves on earth below.

“All who would have their names retained in the book of life, should now in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery.” (25)

“Through defects of the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind and knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible to overcome. But Jesus pleads in their behalf, his wounded head, his bruised body: and he declares to all who would follow him, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ 1 Corinthians 12:9. ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’ Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them.” (26)

THE TIME PROPHECIES OF DANIEL AND REVELATION

In all the symbolic prophecies that apply before the Second Advent, any time that is mentioned is always symbolic time, whereas prophecy that applies after the Second Advent is literal. To give any of the time prophecies applying before the Second Advent a literal application, as does the Jesuit Futuristic system, is contrary to an important principle of prophetic interpretation.

In all the symbolic prophecies that apply before the Second Advent, any time that is involved is always symbolic time. On the other hand the one prophecy in Revelation that applies after the Second Advent is literal and the time that is mentioned also has a literal application. (See table, page 34.)

APPENDIX 1

In Revelation 20 several symbolic terms are mentioned. These are carried over from previous chapters where events to transpire before the Second Advent are highlighted. To change the symbols to literal terms would be confusing so the symbolic terms of “the beast and his image or mark” and “false prophet”, (Verse 4, 10), are carried over into this chapter. However all the other terms are literal. These are: “bottomless pit”, or “abyss”, thrones, judgment, resurrections, priests, 4 quarters of the earth, camp of the saints, lake of fire, great white throne, books, and sea. All of the above have a literal application.

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20. Cosmic Invasion

The Seventh Trumpet Of Revelation

An Exposition of the Seventh Trumpet of Revelation 11:15-19

This Chapter concerns the seventh trumpet of Revelation. Already we have dealt with six of the seven trumpets, and this final trumpet is perhaps the most important for it concerns our generation and the termination of this world's history. The introduction to this trumpet reads,

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound the mystery of God should be finished as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Revelation 10:7

“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel” - that is the angel of the seventh trumpet - “When he shall begin to sound (or, “is about to sound” in the Greek), the mystery of God should be finished.” What is the mystery of God that is to be finished? In the chapter entitled “Time No Longer” (1), this was fully explained. The “mystery of God” represents the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thus when the seventh trumpet is about to sound, the gospel is to be finished, or concluded. The day of salvation is to come to its end. How will the work of the gospel be concluded? By the proclamation of the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14:6-12, the final gospel message of God to man. One version renders it “the final ultimatum to men” and that is exactly what the Three Angels’ Messages mean. In Revelation 18:1-4 a fourth angel joins the Third Angel’s Message with a mighty voice calling God’s people out of Babylon. This is spoken of as the “Loud Cry”, because the angel speaks “with a loud voice and the whole earth is lightened with his glory.” This is how the gospel concludes.

In the 11th chapter of Revelation the details of the seventh trumpet are revealed.

“The second woe is past and behold the third woe comes quickly [indicating great trouble; sorrow and affliction]. And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats [or thrones] fell upon their faces and worshipped God saying, We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty which art and was and art to come because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and has reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou should give reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and to them that fear thy name both small and great, and should destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament and there were lightning and voices and thundering and an earthquake and great hail.” Revelation 11:15-19

“There were great voices in heaven.” This indicates that an important event is about to transpire.”The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ and he shall reign forever.” This brings us to the close of human probation when Jesus Christ becomes King of kings. Since his ascension Jesus has been a Priest/King sharing his Father’s throne. He is of the order of Melchizedek and when the kingdoms of this world become his, then his priestly work ends and he becomes King of kings and Lord of lords.

When does Jesus Christ receive the kingdom? The gospels inform us that Jesus, when he spoke of his return to heaven, often indicated that he was going to heaven to receive a kingdom.

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.” Luke 19:12

At his ascension Jesus went to heaven to receive a kingdom, and when he returns it will be after he has received it. When does Christ receive his kingdom? He receives it in the great heavenly judgment that began in 1844 and concludes at the close of probation. This truth is revealed in Daniel 7. After seeing the rise of the four beasts and the emergence of “the little horn”, it says,

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or positioned] and the Ancient of Days did sit. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered to him, the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” [“The court sat in judgment”] Daniel 7:9-10 (RSV)

This is the great heavenly assize which is alluded to in Daniel 8:14 and which commenced in 1844 at the close of the 2300 year period. After the judgment was set, Daniel said,

“I saw in the night vision and behold one like the Son of Man [Christ] came to the Ancient of Days . . . and they brought him near before him” Daniel 7:9-10,13

In this scene Jesus is depicted coming before the Father as the great Advocate in the heavenly judgment scene. It is significant to notice one of the events that occur in this pre-advent judgment.

“There was given him [the Son of Man] dominion, and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:14

Jesus Christ receives “a kingdom”. What kingdom? The kingdom of this world that had been usurped by Satan. This is why in the 7th trumpet “the great temple is opened in heaven and there is seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” [Or Covenant] That ark was in the Holy of Holies. Here we are given a glimpse into the awesome heavenly sanctuary. This indicates that the activities of the Father and the Son are now centered in the Holy of Holies, the inner apartment of the heavenly temple. It is while this special judgment ministry is in progress that Christ receives his kingdom.

This truth is very clearly stated by the author of "Early Writings". After describing the transfer of Jesus Christ from the first to the second apartment of the sanctuary, Jesus is -represented as saying, "I am going to my Father to receive the kingdom." (2)

In the gospels the receiving of this kingdom is likened to a marriage.

"Let your loins be girded up and your lights burning. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding." Luke 12:35-36.

This is based on a custom of Old Testament times. When the oldest son of a reigning monarch came of age, and could share in the ruler ship, the father, or king, could install his son as a co-ruler. In a special ceremony he would marry his son to a leading city of the kingdom. This indicated that the son was a sharer in the ruler ship of the kingdom. So it is with Jesus. In the pre-advent judgment in the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus Christ is married to the New Jerusalem. The Holy City is called his bride. (3)

"The coming of Christ as our high Priest to the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary brought to view in Daniel 8:14 is also represented by the caning of the bridegroom to the marriage described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. The marriage represents the reception by Christ, of his kingdom. The holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital - is called the Bride - the Lamb's wife."

"Said the angel to John, 'Come hither I will show thee the Bride the Lamb's wife.'" (4)

There have been different opinions through the years as to which is the Bride of Christ. Some declare it is the church while others declare it is the New Jerusalem. The answer is that there are two brides - a spiritual bride and a literal bride. It is important to note that often in scripture there are two of the same thing. (5)

The spiritual bride is the church. When we accept Christ as our Savior it is likened to a marriage. Christ becomes our husband, we become his bride. When Christ is married to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" he is married to a literal bride. As the author of "Early Writings" declared,

"Christ had received his kingdom. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated." (6)

When are the subjects of the kingdom made up? At the close of the heavenly judgment, at the close of probation. Then the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ."

"The four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and has reigned." Verses 16-17

Why the rejoicing in heaven? We suggest the reason for such rejoicing is that for six thousand years the heavenly hosts have been waiting for the reign of sin and rebellion to end. It has been a long wait for them, because they have witnessed the whole reign of sin. For six thousand years they have seen its terrible effects. We see but little portions of it and are not able therefore to realize the full magnitude of the tragedy, but the heavenly inhabitants do. Thus when the marriage is consummated, when the kingdom becomes Christ's there is tremendous rejoicing. The six thousand years of human woe and wretchedness is to end - God is about to begin the work of restoring this planet to its pristine state. In the next verse we have five great events outlined in connection with this trumpet.

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou should give reward to thy servants and should destroy them that destroy the earth." Revelation 11:18.

These five great events are as follows:

1. The nations were angry.
2. Thy wrath is come.
3. The judgment of the dead.
4. The reward of the saints.
5. The destruction of those who destroy the earth.

The first three events in this list are declared by the prophet to be "separate and distinct, one following the other."

“I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other.”
(7)

This means that the anger of the nations comes first then it is followed by God’s wrath, which is followed by the judgment of the dead. Let us examine these events.

“The nations were angry”

We suggest that this has two applications. The first refers to the nations as we understand the term “nations” today. We suggest that it refers to the spirit of nationalism that has enveloped the nations of recent years and which originated in the French Revolution. This spirit began to blossom in 1848 when Europe was shaken by national revolution. Over 30 kingdoms experienced revolt and the overthrow of their existing order of government. In 1849 one author writes “The nations are now getting angry”, and they surely were. Great political upheavals hit the nations of Europe. In addition to that, since 1848, there has been a tremendous increase in military conflicts, not only in number but in size and destruction. There has been the Crimean War, the Russo-Japanese, the Chino-Japanese, the Franco-Prussian, the Great War, or World War I; (in fact there has not been a single day of peace since 1918), the Spanish Civil War, The Italian-Abyssinian War, World War II, and the Cold War. Added to these there have been numerous local wars - Indonesia, Malaya, Indo-China, China and the Communists, Algeria, Korea, India and Pakistan, the

Suez War, Palestinian War, Greco-Turk, Hungarian, Vietnam, Chile, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, Inter America, and undoubtedly many more to come. This is seen not only in large wars, but in the ferocious small wars between minor powers.

Now the first three events are “separate and distinct, one following the other”, i. e. the anger or war among the nations is separate and distinct from the wrath of God, the seven last plagues. (8) Through the years it has been held that the final battle of Armageddon of the sixth plague is involved in “the anger of the nations”, of nation fighting nation, or international war. But the prophet distinctly states that the wrath of God [which involves Armageddon in the sixth plague] is “separate and distinct” and follows the anger of the nations. It appears that there has been a misreading of the Spirit of Prophecy on this question. Statements have been used as authority for a military Armageddon, of nation against nation, when such statements could be understood in a different way. Notice the following:

“Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hastens greatly. Only a moment of time as it were yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held, until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.” (9)

Does the term “a general engagement” mean that there will be a military battle in which all nations will fight against one another in Armageddon? The word “Armageddon” is not used in the above quotation although later the author says “the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.” This certainly is referring to Armageddon. What is meant by the expression “a general engagement”? Does that mean an engagement of nation against nation, or could it mean something else? Is it a world war or could it refer to the attempt by the united powers of evil to destroy the church of God? The statement says that this “general engagement” is held back until the sealing is completed, “then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.”

The sealing is completed at the close of probation at which point the seven last plagues commence. (10) Now the plagues “are separate and distinct from, and follow the anger of the nations.” Therefore in what way will “the powers of earth” marshal their forces for the last great battle” after the close of probation? Will it be against each other? Or will it be in union against God’s people? Let the Spirit of Prophecy itself answer.

“The nations of the world are eager for conflict: but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.” (11)

Let us analyze the above statement. It says “the nations of the world are eager for conflict”: Is this true? The answer to that is NO! The nations are afraid of conflict, they are afraid of nuclear war, and they are afraid of universal destruction. What then is the Spirit of Prophecy speaking about? What conflict? It says, “all who do not have the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies and they are to be kept under control till the great battle of Armageddon.”

This undoubtedly refers to the conflict between God and Babylon. Notice how the following statement indisputably confirms this.

“A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding her wings preparing to step down from the throne and leave the world to the control of Satan. The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against those who serve him

and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good against evil. The earth is to be the battlefield the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here where for so long Satan has led men Against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed.” (12)

What a tremendous statement! Further confirmation is given in the following statement.

“The world is filled with storm and war and variance, yet under one head - the papal power - the people will unite to oppose God in the person of his witnesses.” (13)

The anger of the nations is separate and distinct from Armageddon. Armageddon does not involve nation against nation - it is all nations united under Babylon in a general engagement against God’s people. The second application of the anger of the nations concerns the meaning of the word “nations”. In the Greek language the word is “ethnos”, from which comes ethnic. It means gentiles or non-Israelites. Sometimes it is translated as heathen. It is a term used to denote those who are not God’s people - in other words, the unsaved. Thus when scripture speaks of the anger of the nations it could correctly be translated, the anger of the unsaved. Is it not true that finally all nations will be classed as unsaved, for they will all be united in rebellion against God and his people? The Greek word for “angry” may also be translated as “wrath”. Thus the sentence could be translated “the unsaved were wrath”. This leads to the question: What is it that leads the nations or the unsaved, to become angry or wrathful? The answer is found in Revelation 18.

“Babylon the great is fallen . . . far all nations, have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” Revelation 18:2-3.

What is it that makes the nations or unsaved wrathful? They have drunk of the wine of Babylon, the wine of her fornication. That means Babylon’s doctrine of illicit union with the world. When men accept these doctrines, the wine of Roman Babylon, it leads them to become wrathful. In what way? Wrathful against whom?

“The dragon -was wrath with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.” Revelation 12:17.

Babylon’s wine leads the unsaved to become wrathful against those who dissent, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, in other words, the saints of God. The expression then, “the nations were angry”, in its most scriptural application refers to the coming time of persecution of God’s people. This will be brought about by the world’s reception of the teachings of spiritual Babylon. These will inspire hatred and wrath against those who refuse to accept the false worship which will be enacted by the law of the land.

“In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united in opposition to God’s people all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.” (14)

Let us now examine the second event of the five listed in verse 18.

“Thy wrath is come.”

God’s wrath is filled up in the seven last plagues.

“I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels, having the seven last plagues; for in then is filled up the wrath of God.” Revelation 15:1

In the study of the first six trumpets it was evident that they were God’s judgments on apostasy in the Roman empire. The first four fell on western Rome, the next two fell on Eastern Rome. The seventh trumpet involves judgments, not on the old Roman empire, but upon the whole world which has once again come under Roman control, but this time it is spiritual Rome or spiritual Babylon.

When spiritual Babylon “sits as a queen and is no widow and shall see no sorrow”, when all the world is united in her support, then comes the outpouring of God’s wrath in the seven last plagues which will precede the destruction of the whole world, the empire of spiritual Rome. The invasion of this planet - cosmic invasion - is graphically portrayed in Revelation 19.

“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge [punish] and make war and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses. . . and out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations:” Revelation 19:11-15.

This is a symbolic picture of the invasion of our planet by Christ. This is the finale of the final conflict. It is Armageddon. (15) Thank God for a message that guarantees protection when that terrible day comes. The following gives a little glimpse of the awfulness of the wrath of God which climaxes in the return of Christ.

“When he [Jesus] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, [there is now a restraint upon the wicked - the restraint of the Spirit of God] and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready and only waiting the divine permission to spread desolation everywhere.” (16)

The third event of verse 18 reads:

“The time of the dead, that they should be judged.”

These three events are “separate and distinct, one following the other.” The seven last plagues end at the Second Advent, therefore the “time of the dead that they should be judged” is an event that follows the second advent. What judgment of the dead transpires after the second advent? The answer is brought to view in Revelation 20. We need to recall that already God’s people have been judged. This transpired from 1844 to the close of probation. Revelation 20 reveals that the saints, during the millennium, will enter with Christ into a work of judgment.

“I saw thrones and they [the saints] sat upon them and judgment was given to them and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4

What is this judgment that is given to the saints during the millennium? The apostle Paul declares,

“Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world [the fallen world]. Know ye not that we shall judge angels.” [The fallen angels] 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.

One of the occupations of God’s people during the millennium will be to investigate the records of the lost. Will the saints desire to do that? Undoubtedly! When we reach the kingdom we are going to experience some great surprises. We will find many will not be there that we thought would be there, and many will be there that we thought would have no right to be there. Jesus said, “The first shall be last and the last shall be first.” (17) What a surprise is in store. Many whom we thought were true and loyal we will find that they won’t be there.

Naturally we will want to know why, because in the kingdom we will not lose our enquiring minds, in fact we will be more inquisitive than ever! We will be able to investigate the records to learn why it was that God kept certain ones out of the kingdom. We will be able to examine the secret record of every one of the unsaved. Then we will understand and appreciate the verdict that heaven has made. It will be a form of investigative judgment.

“Let the saints be joyful in glory, [in the kingdom] let them sing aloud upon their beds, let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: [according to the books] this honor have all the saints.” Psalm 149:5-9

How significant! We recall the terrible suffering of so many of God’s people through the ages. Will it not be fitting for them to sit in judgment upon their terrible oppressors? To decide with Christ what the rightful sentence or degree of punishment should be? Not only will justice be done, but it will be seen to be done, by all the universe, and in particular by every saint of God.

In Revelation 20:12-13 some things are mentioned that raise questions.

“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.” Revelation 20:12-13

Here the judgment is portrayed again. Are there two judgments after the Second Advent? The answer is that there are two aspects of judgment - trial and execution. During the millennium the saints with Christ enter into an investigative judgment of the unsaved dead. At the close of the millennium, is the judgment of the unsaved living, after they have been resurrected. It is the execution of the judgment, the carrying out of the sentence, for it says,

“The sea gave up the dead which were in it, death and hell delivered up those which were in them and they were judged [or punished] every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:13

We now come to the fifth event of the seventh trumpet.”And should destroy them which destroy the earth.” This has been applied to the use of the atomic bomb and the destruction, at least, of some of the earth. It may have such an application but we suggest that there is another application that is more correct. The marginal reading of this verse says “corrupt”. It can read, “destroy them that corrupt the earth.” The word in the original Greek can mean either destroy or corrupt. In the light of other scriptures the word corrupt is more scriptural. God will finally destroy those who corrupt the earth. How is the earth corrupted? The answer is found in Revelation 19.

“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, to the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her band.” Revelation 19:1-2

Who is it that corrupts the earth? It is spiritual Babylon. Under the seventh trumpet God destroys those who corrupt the earth, in other words, he will destroy Babylon and all her supporters. How is the earth corrupted? With her fornication, her illicit union - an illicit religious union with the world, with the state. This has resulted in religious or spiritual corruption of the highest order. It could also involve moral corruption. Does the earth become corrupted by immorality? According to the Old Testament, the land is corrupted by the immorality of its inhabitants.

“Defile not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled.” Here God is addressing Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land. It had been inhabited by the immoral sun worshipping Canaanites, and because of their gross immorality, “the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it and the land itself vomits out her inhabitants. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments and not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation nor any stranger that sojourns among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the Land is defiled.) That the land spew not you out also when you defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you.” Leviticus 18:24-30

What were the abominations of the Canaanites? If you read onwards from Verse 5 of chapter 18, it lists the various forms of immorality. It involved incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality - all the sexual perversions that we are now witnessing in our world today and which will become more and more widespread. Undoubtedly this is corrupting the earth and so in a very real sense, under the seventh trumpet, God will destroy those that corrupt the earth whether the corruption is religious or moral.

The final event of the seventh trumpet.”That thou should give reward to thy servants the prophets and

the saints and them that fear thy name, small and great.” What is the reward? Is it eternal life? No! Eternal life is a gift. (Romans 6:23) It is given in a spiritual sense at conversion, but it is given literally at the Second Advent, when, “this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality.” If eternal life is a gift, what then is the reward? The rewards are the special favors bestowed upon the saints after they reach the kingdom. Salvation is by faith but the rewards we will receive will be according to our works. Some rightly will receive greater rewards than others because they have sacrificed more and suffered more for their Savior. The first rewards will be given at the Second Advent, other rewards will be given at the third Advent when the saints inherit the renewed earth.

According to Jesus the main rewards will be given at the end of the millennium.”When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:31, 32)

The completion of this promise will be at the third advent, for only then will all nations be gathered before him. The majority of nations that have existed have now vanished.”Then will the king say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:44

The Spirit Of Prophecy confirms this. This promise of Jesus will be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem after the millennium.

“While Satan was rallying his army the saints were in the city beholding the beauty and glory of the Paradise of God. Soon we heard his lovely voice saying, ‘Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ (18)

What a reward that will be! An eternal home in the New Jerusalem, an estate in the earth made new.”They will build houses and inhabit them, they will plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.” Isaiah 65:17, 21

He will reward “both small and great”. The smallest, the most insignificant one among us, will receive his due reward and each reward will be something that is very special to the receiver. It will thrill the heart and bring everlasting contentment. What a future awaits the saints of God!

APPENDIX:

Some of the Twos in Scripture

2 Babylon’s

2 marriages

2 Suppers

2 Jerusalem’s

2 Suppers

2 Women

2 Temples

2 Altars

2 Mysteries

2 Covenants

2 Testaments

2 Israel’s

2 Deaths

2 Hells

2 Witnesses

2 Judgments

2 Intercessors

2 Births

2 Trees of Life

2 Eden’s

2 Priesthoods

2 Ministrations

2 Resurrections

2 Lakes of Fire

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- 16 Ellen G. White. The Great Controversy, page 614.
- 17 Matthew 19:30
- 18 Ellen G. White. Early Writings, page 53.

21. The Beast From The Abyss

That Slays The Two Witnesses!

An Exposition of Revelation 11:3-13

The prophecy of Revelation 11 commences with the third verse of the chapter. The first two verses actually belong to the prophecy of chapter 10. Many and varied attempts have been made to interpret Revelation 11, but the majority of them have been most unsatisfactory. Scholars admit that this chapter is the most difficult of the whole book, therefore it is essential that we adhere strictly to the basic Bible principles of interpretation.

“And I will give power to my two witnesses and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.” Verse 3.

WHO ARE THE TWO WITNESSES?

There appear to be three main interpretations.

1. They represent Moses and Elijah.

2. They represent the Christian church.
3. They represent the Word of God in the Old and the New Testaments.

The following reasons are presented as to why the first two applications should be rejected.

1. The two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth for 1260 prophetic days or 1260 years. This was the period of Papal supremacy from 538 to 1798 A. D. There is no evidence that Moses and Elijah appeared during that period. Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36) in their glorified immortal state. How then could they be slain and their bodies lie exposed for three and half prophetic days or three & half years? In their glorified immortal state they would not be subject to death.

2. It is true that in Revelation the 7 candlesticks represent the Church of God. (Revelation 1:20.) But this is when they are presented in the setting of the heavenly temple or sanctuary. However in Revelation 11 the two candlesticks are not presented in the setting of the heavenly temple but in the earthly conflict of good and evil.

(a) During the period of the 1260 years, the church of God was attacked not just at the close of that period, but during the whole of the 1260 years. In Revelation 11:2 the church is referred to under the symbol of “the holy city” which was trodden down for forty-two prophetic months or 1260 years.

(b) How could the church be overcome and killed (v. 7.) when Jesus declared that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”. (Matthew 16:18.)

(c) How could it be truthfully said “that fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours” the enemies of the church, “and to smite them with plagues” when Jesus instructed his church “to love your enemies, bless them that curse you and do good, to them that despitefully use you.” (Matthew 5:44.)

(d) When did true Christians “torment people on the earth?” Verse 10.

We therefore conclude that the two witnesses represent the Word of God in the form of the two Testaments, for the following reasons:

1. Scripture clearly symbolizes the Word of God as a candlestick or lamp.
2. Scripture speaks of both the Old Testament and the New Testament as “a witness”.

Jesus Christ designated the Word of God as “the prophets”. Verse 10. (Luke 24:27, 44.) “These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

The book of Revelation is based mostly on the Old Testament and it is from the book of Zechariah that the Revelator borrows the symbols of the olive trees and candlesticks. Zechariah was shown two olive trees which fed their oil into the candlestick. In answer to the prophet’s question,

“What are these, my lord?” The angel answered,

“This is the word of the Lord saying, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit’ said the Lord.” (1) The candlestick is a lamp stand and the lamp or lamp stand is a symbol of the Bible.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” and, “The entrance of thy words gives light.” (2)

It seems quite clear then that the “two witnesses” represent the Word of God and the Word of God consists of two testaments or witnesses. Alluding to the Old Testament, Christ declared,

“Search the scriptures for they are they which testify [or bear witness] of me.” (3)

Likewise the New Testament is also declared to be a witness.

“This gospel shall be preached as a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come.” (4)

Through the centuries numerous scholars of Biblical prophecy have concluded that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 represent the Scriptures. Over twenty such scholars could be listed that this writer is aware of. (5) Bishop Wordsworth, the noted Anglican scholar declared,

“The two witnesses, the olive trees, are the two Testaments ministering their testimony to the church of the old dispensation as well as to that of the new, which explains the two witnesses being called also the two candlesticks. The church in both dispensations has no light in herself, but derives it from the Spirit through the witness of the twofold Word, the two olive trees.” (6)

Verses 5-6 confirm that the two witnesses represent the Word of God.

“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceed out of their mouth, and devours their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this member be killed.”

Whoever hurts God’s Word - whoever defiles it, perverts it, conceals it or hinders its work, if he does not repent, he will ultimately, in the judgment, be destroyed by fire.

“If any man shall add to these things God shall add to him the plagues that are written In this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.” (7)

Elsewhere in this chapter, it declares that the two witnesses are also “two prophets.” (Verse 10) The two Testaments are personified, or represented as living persons in order to highlight the power and influence of the Bible.

“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.” Verse 6.

In Elijah’s day he declared, by the Word of God, that there would be drought for three & half years. By the Word of God also, the drought was broken,

“The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, ‘Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.’” (8)

“And have power over waters to turn them to blood.”

This was illustrated in the experience of Moses when seeking Israel’s deliverance from ancient Egypt. One of the ten plagues that fell on Egypt was the turning of waters to blood, and it was done by the Word of God. (9)

“And to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.”

The Word of God warns that before the Second Advent, severe judgments will fall on the unsaved in the form of seven plagues. (10)

The two witnesses “shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.” Verse 3.

“Prophecy” here means to preach or proclaim, but “in sackcloth”. Sackcloth in Bible times was used in connection with affliction, mourning, desolation. Applied to the Bible it signified that it would be under suspicion, stigmatized, made illegal. The Bible would prophesy in obscurity and secrecy.

“A thousand two hundred and three-score days”, (1260 days) : This period of time is mentioned in seven different places in Daniel and Revelation. (11). It is referred to as “time, times and a half”, i. e. three and a half years, and also “42 months”. There are 30 days in a Bible month, so this equals 1260 days. In prophecy one day equals one year, so this period equals 1260 years. (12)

This was the period in which the Papacy held political supremacy. It commenced in 538 A. D. and concluded in 1798 when the French Government stripped the Papacy of political power. In this period, then, the prediction states that the two witnesses are to “prophesy in sackcloth”.

DID THE SCRIPTURES PROPHECY IN OBSCURITY?

It is indisputable that wherever the Papacy was supreme, the scriptures were suppressed. The Bible was preserved in the Latin language which mostly, only the priesthood understood. The Bible, was, as it were, locked up - kept from the people. It was in obscurity. The Bible, in the common language of the people, was expressly forbidden by church and civil law. Only Mother Church could explain Scripture, was the Papacy’s claim. Bible reading turned people into heretics, so the Bible must be kept from the people. (13)

Wherever the Bible was possessed in the native tongue of the people, the Papacy made war on that people.

“The decree of Toulouse 1229 A. D. [in France] which established the ‘Tribunal of the Inquisition’ against all the readers of the Bible in the vulgar [common] tongue was an edict of fire, bloodshed and devastation. It ordained the entire destruction of the houses, the humblest

places of concealment and even the subterranean retreats of men convicted of possessing the scriptures; that they should be pursued to the forests and caves of the earth; and that even those who harbored them should be severely punished. As a result, the Bible was everywhere prohibited; it vanished, as it were, underground; it descended into the tomb. These decrees were followed for five hundred years by innumerable punishments, in which the blood of the saints flowed like water.” (14)

In a convocation held at Oxford under Archbishop Arundel in 1408, it was enacted.

“That no man hereafter by his own authority translate any text of the scripture in to English or any other tongue, by way of a book, booklet, or tract and that no man read any such book, booklet or tract, now lately composed in the time of John Wycliffe or since publicly or privately upon pain of greater excommunication. He that shall do contrary to this shall likewise be punished as a favorer of heresy and error.” (15)

The following, from the Episcopal Register of Lincoln (England) for the years 1518-1521, illustrates how the Bible prophesied in sackcloth or obscurity and secrecy. Indictments were issued against Bible believers.

“Against John Barret ‘because he John Barret was heard in his own house before his wife and maid there present, to recite the epistle of James, which epistle, with many other things, he had perfectly without book’.”

“John Newnan was impeached because he was present in the house of John Barret, at the reading of scripture.”

William Halliday “was detected for having in his custody a book of the Acts of the Apostles in English.”

“One Fredwey and several others, because they were heard to recite the Ten Commandments in English.” (16)

“When they [two witnesses] shall have finished their testimony.” Revelation 11:7.

The Two Testaments or Witnesses were to testify in sackcloth for 1260 years, i. e. from 538-1798. And when they are finishing their testimony, that is, around 1798:

“The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them.” Verse 7. There are at least nine specifications of the beast of Revelation 11:

1. It is a political power or kingdom.
2. It rises at the close of the 1260 year period, i. e. 1798.
3. It emerges from the bottomless pit, or the abyss.
4. It is connected with, or is a part of spiritual Babylon.
5. It causes an earthquake or political upheaval.
6. It is likened to Egypt.
7. It slays or abolishes the Bible.
8. It is likened also to Sodom.
9. It was located where true Christians had suffered enormous persecution.

1. IT IS A POLITICAL POWER OR KINGDOM

In prophecy a beast represents a kingdom. (17) Therefore, this beast represents a political power. It is not a philosophy or ideology such as Communism.

2. IT RISES AT THE CLOSE OF THE 1260 YEAR PERIOD

(1798) - This beast cannot represent the Papacy because the Papacy made war on the Bible and on God’s people during the whole period of the 1260 years. This beast emerges at the close of the 1260 years, whereas the Papal beast of Revelation 13:1-10 and Revelation 17 received a deadly wound at the close of the 1260 years.

3. IT EMERGES FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

What is the Bottomless Pit or Abyss? This expression is used seven times in Revelation, which is a book of symbols; therefore, the “bottomless pit” is a symbolic term.

(1) In Revelation 9 it is used three times to describe the source and inspiration of the symbolic locusts that are inspired by Satan to bring woe to the inhabitants of the earth under the fifth trumpet.

(2) In Revelation 17:8 it is used once to describe the location or condition from which a beast emerges, after it, “is not”, i. e. nonexistent, or dead. It is a place of death - the grave.

(3) In Revelation 20 it is used twice to describe the prison house of Satan during the millennium, when the earth will be turned into a world-wide graveyard, or a place of death.

(4) In Romans 10:7 the word “deep” (abussos) is used to describe the grave or place of death.

All the above usages indicate two things in common: Satan is the inspirer and controller, and it is a place of death. Now whose territory is the grave? Who is the author of death? Whose prison-house is the grave? It is the realm of Satan. It is his stronghold or arsenal. The bottomless pit represents Satan’s kingdom, and any person or power that rises from the bottomless pit is inspired by him. In scripture the things of God are often described as coming “from above”, while the things of Satan are described as emerging “from beneath.”

“This wisdom descends not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.” (18)

In the book of Revelation, often the movements or powers inspired by Satan are described as emerging from the pit, the sea, the earth, etc, i. e. from beneath, (19) whereas the movements inspired by heaven are described as coming from above. (20) So then the beast of Revelation 11 that emerges from the bottomless pit is a power that is inspired and controlled by Satan.

“Here is brought to view a new manifestation of Satanic power.” (21)

4. THIS BEAST IS A PART OF THE GREAT CITY SPIRITUAL BABYLON (Verses 8, 13)

In the book of Revelation two cities are brought to view:

(1) The Holy City, Jerusalem - representing until the Second Advent, the Church of God, and secondly, after the Second Advent, the literal city of the heavenly Jerusalem. (23)

(2) The other city is Babylon, representing the apostate system of religion centered in the Papacy. (24)

Only three earthly cities in scripture are described as “great”. They are:

Gibeon (Once) Josh 10:2.

Nineveh (4 times) Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 3, 11.

Babylon (10 times) Daniel 4:30; Revelation 14:8; Revelation 16:19; 17:5;

Revelation 18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21. The only conclusion then is that “the great city” of this prediction can be none other than spiritual Babylon. Other chapters present more detail on this point. The beast of Revelation 11 then is a part of, or connected with spiritual Babylon - the Papacy. It is described as “the street of the great city”, (Verse 8), and in verse 13, it is described as “the tenth part of the city”. All the beasts representing Roman Babylon in Daniel 7, Revelation 12, 13 & 17 have ten horns, which represented at least the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. This was the territory that was peculiar to Pagan Rome and which was inherited by Papal Rome, or spiritual Babylon. Therefore, the beast that rises about 1798 must be one of the ten kingdoms of Western Europe and one which has been an effective part of the Papacy.

5. CAUSES AN “EARTHQUAKE” IN THE POLITICAL WORLD - “The same hour was there a great earthquake.” (Verse 13.)

The one and only West European kingdom that fulfills the above five points was Revolutionary France. In 1789 the French people arose in awful revenge against the arrogant, corrupt, cruel and selfish aristocracy and priesthood that had ground them down in poverty and

serfdom for so many years. French writers of the period, in describing the terrible outburst of fury of the French populace, employ almost the identical terms of the prediction written 1700 years before. Lamartine writes of “The bottomless pit of atheism” and the Abbe Burrel wrote in 1797 of “the dark recesses from whence it burst into being.”

It was a political earthquake that shocked the civilized world. Historians and statesmen have described it as such. (25)

“The time of the eighteenth-century French Revolution, when the 1260 years of the Papal era were closing, was a turning point in the history of the modern world. It brought forth forces that made a permanent change in the thoughts and actions of mankind.” (26)

“The French Revolution was one of the momentous events in the history, not only of France, but of Europe and even the whole world.” (27)

“It was an earthquake in the political world.” Burke.

“The minds of men were shaken as by the yawning of the ground during the fury of an earthquake.” Alison. “It destroyed the landmarks of the world in which generations of men had passed their lives.” Cambridge Modern History.

6. THIS POWER IS LIKENED TO “EGYPT” “Their dead bodies shall lie in the street which spiritually is called Egypt.” (Verse 8.)

What is the characteristic that scripture brings to light that was peculiar to Egypt? Probably the most outstanding experience in connection with Egypt was when the prophet Moses delivered to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the message from God:

“Let my people go” and Pharaoh said “Who is the Lord [Jehovah] that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I KNOW NOT THE LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” (28)

This is the spirit of defiance of, and a refusal to recognize the existence of the true God. In other words, it is atheism.

“This is atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims -of the living God, and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance.” (29)

In the French Revolution the lapse into atheism was dramatic and tragic. France endeavored “to dethrone the King of Heaven as well as the monarchs of earth”.

“The world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern am of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man’s soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a deity.” (30)

7. IT SLAYS OR ABOLISHES THE BIBLE FOR 3. 5 YEARS

The Papacy had been opposed to the scriptures in the common tongue for most of the 1260 years of her supremacy. But this power is to war against the Bible at the close of the 1260 years and in such a way that the scriptures are personified as being “slain” for a period of 3. 5 prophetic days. Taking the prophetic day to represent one year, this means that the scriptures were slain or abolished for 3. 5 literal years. Such details as these aid us in pin-pointing the power that is indicated in the prediction.

Did revolutionary France abolish the scriptures for a period of three and a half years?

It is an established fact that not only did France in the Revolution declare herself atheistic but she officially abolished all religion. The Christian religion to the French, was Roman Catholicism which, through the priesthood and aristocracy, had sorely oppressed them. Because of the fierce resistance of clergy and royalty to the Protestant faith when it tried to enter France, the French people failed to discern false Christianity from the true. Thus when they in their blind fury turned against their oppressors, they attacked everything that was associated with religion.

Because the seven day week originated at creation, as recorded in Genesis, they abolished the seven-day week and decreed that the week be of ten days duration. All churches were closed and their lands confiscated. Death was pronounced an eternal sleep. Most of the clergy and the aristocracy were executed.

“The shootings, the drowning, the roasting of the Roman Catholic loyalists, both priest and nobles, had all their prototypes [or models] in the barbarities of another age, practiced under the direction of the Pope and French Papists.” (31)

“The French Revolution slew as many priests and Papists under Louis XVI as the priests and Papists slew Protestants under Louis XIV. Simpson and other good and great writers have truly and justly considered that the latter slaughter was a righteous retribution for the former murders. This event sent an awful shock through the whole empire.” (32)

After mentioning the frauds and deceptions perpetrated by religious leaders preparatory to their slaughter in the Revolution, this writer continues,

“They rose en masse, ‘Down with these monsters who have villainously imposed upon our credulity.’ Baruel, in his ‘History of the Revolution!’ says, ‘138 bishops and 64,000 curates were driven from their sees or parishes; all the clergy, all the religious forced from their retreats. 300 priests slain in one day in one city; all the other pastors who remained faithful to their God, were either sacrificed or banished. Such is the spectacle exhibited to the world by the French Revolution.’” (32)

On November 10, 1793

“The Convention dressed up an ass. . . loaded it with the symbols of Christianity and tied the Old and New Testaments to its tail. It was then led in mock procession. The crowd piled books of devotion into heaps and burned them to ashes amid blasphemous shouts. A prostitute was enthroned as ‘Goddess of Reason.’” (33)

On November 23, 1793, “The Convention decreed the abolition of all religion.” (34)

This included abolition of the scriptures.

On June 17, 1797, just over 3.5 years later (i. e. 3 years, 6 months and 20 odd days), the National Assembly voted that religion be restored and toleration be given to the scriptures, etc. , thus fulfilling in remarkable detail this specification of the prophecy. (35)

8. THE KINGDOM WOULD BE SPIRITUALLY LIKE SODOM “Which spiritually is called Sodom.” Sodom is mentioned in the book of Genesis.

The city was notorious for its immorality and was destroyed by divine intervention. (36)

In the French Revolution marriage was degraded, adultery was legalized, and moral debasement and corruption swept the country. (37)

9. WHERE TRUE CHRISTIANS HAD SUFFERED PERSECUTION “Where also our Lord was crucified.” Verse 8.

Jesus Christ was crucified in Palestine in 31 A. D. In what way then could Christ have been crucified in France? Scripture speaks very clearly as to how Christ can be crucified or slain again. Jesus declared:

“In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Saul, the Jewish Pharisee, was a fearful persecutor of the early Christians. When Jesus Christ confronted Saul on the Damascus road, He introduced Himself by saying,

“Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?” (38)

In other words, whatever is done to Christ’s followers, He accepts that, as having been done to Him. It is an appalling fact that France in the long period when it was dominated by the Papacy, was guilty of the slaughter of millions of Christians who refused to follow the Roman Catholic faith. (39) France was foremost in carrying out the Papacy’s will in opposing and destroying those who rejected Roman Catholic dogma. France was called “The eldest daughter of the church” because of her fervent support of the Roman Catholic cause. In this manner, France in particular was guilty of crucifying or putting to death Jesus Christ. She did this in the person of Christ’s true followers. (40)

In another sense, Christ was also crucified in the French Revolution.

“In the scenes of the Revolution, Jesus Christ was declared to be an imposter, and the rallying cry of the French infidels was, ‘Crush the Wretch’, meaning Christ. Heaven-daring blasphemy and abominable wickedness went hand in hand and the basest of men, the most abandoned monsters of vice and cruelty, were most highly exalted. In all this, supreme homage was paid to Satan; while Christ, in His characteristics of truth, purity and unselfish love, was crucified.” (41)

Of these nine specifications, Revolutionary France alone fulfils them and fulfils them to the letter. Let us now notice how the remainder of the prediction was fulfilled in the French Revolution.

“And they shall rejoice over them and shall make merry and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them.” Verse 10.

This was fulfilled in the Revolution. The Bible is a reprover of evil. Its requirements and restrictions are a source of annoyance to the man who is intent on doing evil. When God, religion and the Bible were abolished, a great sense of relief and freedom was felt by the French infidels, and tremendous jubilation swept over the country.

“This Revolution, which was to bring forth so many scenes of the bloodiest cruelty and injustice, was also to become memorable for scenes of popular rejoicing which have scarcely been equaled in any other land or at any other period.” (42)

“And they of the people and kingdoms and tongues and nations-shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” verse 9.

In reaction to the shocking experience of the French Revolution, many of the surrounding peoples and nations were galvanized into the defense of the Bible and the Christian faith.

“By many voices in different lands and through various vehicles, the end of the Papal period was perceived as due and under way. The sudden shock of the French Revolution sent the Protestant church -back to the scriptures for meaning.” (43)

A league was formed to resist the spread of disorder and anarchy. This attitude of the surrounding nations caused the French leaders to take stock of France’s situation. It led them to begin to check the frenzy and extremism that the Revolution had produced. The world stood aghast at “The Reign of Terror” that had convulsed the French people, most of which was the result of Papal policy as carried out previously by the French church and state. In answer to the manifesto of the European kings representing the league, Robespierre, before the French Assembly, endeavored to defend the Revolution.

“They represent us as a mad and idolatrous nation. They lie. The French people and their representatives respect all forms of religious worship and do not proscribe any.” (44)

“And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from god entered into them. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” verses 11, 12.

As we have previously shown, 3. 5 years after the scriptures were slain or abolished by France, they were restored again by law. The scriptures are personified as being resurrected and ascending to heaven in full view of those who abolished them.

The phrase, “ascended up to heaven” is used in scripture to denote great exaltation.”Thy greatness is grown, and reaches unto heaven.” (45)

This referred to the power and prestige of the king of Babylon. In Revelation 11 it represents how the scriptures, as a result of the attack on them by Revolutionary France, would gain universal recognition and popularity. This was strikingly fulfilled in the formation of the great Bible Societies: The British and Foreign in 1804 and the American Bible Society in 1816. These with their auxiliaries have scattered the scriptures all over the earth. For many years, the Bible has been the world’s best seller. At the time of the French Revolution, the Bible had been printed and circulated in only fifty languages. Since then it has been annually distributed by the millions and in hundreds of languages.

At the same time there blossomed the great era of foreign missions, by which the scriptures were taken to the remote areas of the world.

“Moreover, the extraordinary circulation of the scriptures began during the French Revolution. Never should it be forgotten that both missionary and Bible societies had their birth at this very time.” (46)

“The same hour was there slain of men seven thousand.” Verse 13.

The margin reads “names of men”. Undoubtedly, this term refers to the titles of men that were associated with the aristocracy. Did the French Revolution abolish the titles of men that were so divisive in French society? Note the decree of June 19, 1790:

“Hereditary nobility is forever abolished: in consequence the titles of prince, duke, count, marquis, viscount, vidame, baron, knight, messive, ecuyler, noble and all other similar titles shall neither be taken by any one whomsoever nor given to anybody.” (47)

ANY ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 11?

Altogether there are at least twelve specifications in this striking prediction of Revelation 11, and every one of them has been clearly and accurately fulfilled in Revolutionary France. No other power has ever met the specifications of the prediction. Search where you may, you will not find any other interpretation of this chapter that is satisfactory and meaningful.

Now, while this interpretation is the one espoused by Seventh-day Adventists, nevertheless, it did not originate with them. Scholars have discovered that godly Bible expositors as far back as the 17th century discerned that France would probably be the power that would slay the two witnesses of Revelation 11 and deal a death-blow to Papal supremacy.

In 1948 Professor L. E. Froom, as a result of several years of painstaking research, published a monumental four volume history of the interpretation of Bible prophecy throughout the Christian era. It is entitled, "The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers". In these volumes the writer has counted at least thirty-two scholars who, up to the time of the French Revolution, had predicted on the basis of Revelation 11 that France would be the European kingdom that would end the supreme power of the Papacy. These predictions reach back to 150 years prior to the Revolution. On page 31 is a partial list of these prophetic scholars and some of their forecasts.

Jean Vuilleumier, a veteran French editor of Paris, France, researched the records of the time of the French Revolution to verify the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 11 especially the time period of the three and a half years in which religion and the Bible were legally abolished in France. His confirmations were published in 1940. (48)

IS THERE A SECOND APPLICATION TO THE LAST DAYS?

It is claimed by some that the beast of Revelation 11 is identical to the beast of Revelation 17, and that therefore, the prophecy of Revelation 11 has a second fulfillment as outlined in the 17th chapter of Revelation. (49) What is the truth of this contention? The chief reason that the two beasts of Revelation 11 and Revelation 17 are claimed to be identical is because both are described as ascending out of "the bottomless pit". It is also claimed that because the beast of Revelation 11 was Revolutionary France and that its philosophy later developed into "International Socialism", that therefore the beast of Revelation 17 applies to Communism in its current form. Let us examine these claims:

Because a beast or kingdom in prophecy has one point of similarity with another, is no evidence that it is the same kingdom. In the prophetic symbols of Daniel and Revelation, there are often similar points listed, but they are not necessarily the same powers; e. g. each of the four beasts of Daniel 7 emerge from the sea, but this is no evidence that they are identical. The same applies in Revelation. Because two different beasts ascend from the bottomless pit, this is not evidence of their being identical powers. It does indicate, however, that they are both inspired "from beneath".

When one analyzes the beast of Revelation 17 he soon discovers that it is identical with the beast of Revelation 13. In fact, the three beasts of Revelation 12, 13, and 17 can be shown to be very similar in character and closely connected.

The following points reveal that the two beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 are identical, although in Revelation 17 additional details are given concerning the Roman head of the Beast. (50)

REVELATION 13 AND 17

REVELATION 13

1. 7 Heads & 10 Horns (Verse 1.)
2. The names (margin) of blasphemy. (Verse 1.)
3. Make war with the saints. (Verse 7)
4. Receives deadly wound, slain. (Verse 3.)
5. His deadly wound was healed. (Verse 3.)
6. All the world wondered (Verse 3.)
7. Whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. (Verse 8.)
8. Specifications fulfilled chiefly by the Roman head of the beast.

REVELATION 17

1. 7 Heads & 10 horns (Verse 3.)
2. Full of names of blasphemy. (Verse 3.)
3. Drunken with the blood of the saints. (Verse 6.)
4. "The beast which thou saw was, and is not." i. e. , no longer exists - is dead. (Verse 8.)
5. "The beast shall ascend out of the bottomless pit", (place of death.) 5. "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (Verse 8.)
6. They that dwell upon the earth shall wonder. (Verse 8.)
7. Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. (Verse 8.)
8. Specifications fulfilled chiefly by the Roman head of the beast.

On the other hand, notice the contrasts between the beast of Revelation 11 and the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17:

REVELATION 11

REVELATION 13 and 17

1. Beast wounded or slain in 1798.
2. Beast's territory included the ten kingdoms.
3. Beast makes war on the saints.
4. Beast is controlled by Babylonian religion [scarlet women].
5. Under this beast the two witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth".

REVELATION 11

1. Beast rises about 1798.
2. Beast is only one of the ten kingdoms.
3. Beast makes war on the Papacy.
4. Beast is "Egypt" i. e. atheistic - [anti-religious],
5. Under this beast the two witnesses are slain.

These contrasts clearly show that there can be no connection between the beast of Revelation 11 and the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17.

A recent writer has claimed that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 apply to the church when in the future it "will prophesy in sackcloth". (51) On checking the source of this statement, (52) we find that the quoted author, when elsewhere explaining the two witnesses of Revelation 11 clearly states that:

"The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. During the greater part of this period, [the 1260 years of Papal supremacy] God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity." (53)

Before we suggest a latter-day parallel of the fulfillment of this prediction of Revelation 11, we should state with emphasis that this prophecy fits only one specific historical situation. A definite time period is involved of forty-two prophetic months, and this can logically have only one legitimate fulfillment in history. The beast of Revelation 11 is also a specific political kingdom that would arise at a specific time. Therefore no attempts should be made to reapply the historical application.

In what way, then, could there be significance for us today regarding this remarkable prediction of the French Revolution and the ending of Papal supremacy? In the book, "Education" by Ellen G. White (1903) it is shown how the experience of the French Revolution can have significance for us.

"The centralizing of wealth and power; the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interest and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; THE WORLDWIDE DISSEMINATION OF THE SAME TEACHINGS THAT LED TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION - all are tending to involve the WHOLE WORLD in a struggle SIMILAR to that which convulsed France." (54)

According to this statement "the whole world" is to experience "a struggle similar to that which convulsed France". In other words, what occurred in the French Revolution on a local scale is to be repeated on a world-wide scale. The writer suggests that there are twelve parallels between the situation that involved Revolutionary France and what is in process of being fulfilled in our world today.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND END-TIME EVENTS

1. FRANCE - Prior to the Revolution, France was called to receive the Gospel of Christ in the Protestant Reformation.

TODAY - Our world is being called to receive the Gospel in the proclamation of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 which will culminate in "the loud cry" of Revelation 18:1-4.

2 FRANCE - The majority rejected the Gospel and clung to, or accepted the worship of Rome.

TODAY - The majority will reject the Gospel of the Three Angels and instead "worship the beast and his image". (55)

3 FRANCE - The populace were led to believe that Rome alone could dispense salvation and that Protestantism would destroy the peace of the nation. (56)

TODAY - Similar arguments will be used to secure the union of all society under Rome. The populace will also be deceived by "great signs and wonders" until "all the world wonders after the beast." (57)

4 FRANCE - The minority who received the Gospel were driven out, imprisoned, or slain. (59)

TODAY - "The Remnant" will receive the wrath of the dragon and they will be driven out, imprisoned or slain. (60)

5 FRANCE - Was one-tenth of the spiritual city of Babylon, the Papacy, i. e. she was one of the ten kingdoms of West Europe. (61)

TODAY - It will involve the whole world which will have come under the jurisdiction of spiritual Babylon.

6 FRANCE - There was a centralizing of wealth and power in the church and state. They united in order to protect each other. (62)

TODAY - We are witnessing a centralizing of wealth and power throughout the world, in which governments and merchants (e. g. multinationals) are combining with the Papacy to protect and enrich each other.

"The kings of the earth (rulers) have committed fornication (illicitly united) with her (Babylon) and the merchants (multinationals, etc) are waxed rich through her." The same chapter forecasts how the world's financial establishments will be ruined through Babylon's fall. (63)

Today the vast multinational enterprises are seriously influencing the economies of the world, even in socialist countries. And entwined through all the multinationals, and influencing them, is the greatest multinational of all- the Vatican. (64)

"Vast combinations to enrich the few at the expense of the many."

7. FRANCE - The middle and working classes became impoverished and down-trodden."The burden of supporting the church and the state fell upon the middle and low classes, who were heavily taxed by the civil authorities and by the clergy."

TODAY - We are witnessing the process of the enrichment of the few "at the expense of the many."

Many foresee that the world's middle and working classes are on the path to poverty. Today the rich mostly escape taxation, but the middle and working classes are over-taxed, and employment is becoming increasingly precarious.

The fifth chapter of James forecasts that the rich would be guilty of oppressing the employee. While this has had a partial fulfillment in the past, the prediction undoubtedly refers to the future.

Scripture appears to indicate that a form of slavery will prevail as we near the conclusion of human history. When the “mark of the beast” is enforced, it involves “rich and poor, free and bond”. (66) At the return of Christ when the unsaved cry in despair, there are included “every bondman and every free man”. (67) This may indicate that, because of the enormity of economic problems, certain sections of society may be compelled to surrender personal freedom in order to survive.

8 FRANCE - The result was general decline of the nation - Intellectually, morally, industrially and economically. Flourishing French industries decayed. Fertile districts became a wilderness. Intellectual dullness developed.

“Moral decay succeeded a period of unwonted progress.”

Paris became one vast alms-house.”Two hundred thousand paupers claimed charity from the king.” The State became financially embarrassed. The populace became brutalized. (68)

TODAY - We are seeing a general decline throughout the world:

- a) Intellectually - As a result of deficient education, false philosophy, broken homes, drug addiction, unemployment and poverty, etc.
- b) Morally - Through the literature, entertainment, education, and the mass media, society is becoming immoralized and brutalized.”Moral decay succeeded a period of unwonted progress.” This is being repeated on a world scale.
- c) Industrially and Economically - After a period of unparalleled industrial and economic growth, the world now appears to be in decline, especially in the Western world; and because of the various destructive forces in operation, undoubtedly we will see increasing declension.
- d) Social Decline - Millions are dependent upon government charity in order to exist, and like France an increasing number of countries are becoming welfare states and this is embarrassing government finances.

9. FRANCE - The down-trodden, poverty-stricken masses combined to defend their interests.

TODAY - We have witnessed a similar situation in the formation of labor unions to protect the working man. In the future we may witness an intensification of “the combination of the poorer classes” in the light of the forecast that “labor unions will be very oppressive” and these unions will “rob the poorer classes of the advantages which justly belong to them”, and the unions will combine with apostate churches to enforce the “Mark of the Beast”. (69)

10 FRANCE - There developed an underground opposition to the corrupt church and government.

TODAY - “The dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France. (70) These teachings are manifest in “international socialism”, or Communism. While Communism will not succeed in its quest for world control (for spiritual Babylon is to gain world power), nevertheless its philosophy could ultimately influence the masses to fulfill the events outlined in number 11 and 12 below:

11 FRANCE - The oppressive course of church and state climaxed in the revolt of the masses, and the slaughter of the priesthood and aristocracy.

TODAY - After church and state unite, freedom will disappear and oppressive laws will afflict the people, especially the people of God. This will climax in the visitation of the seven last plagues in which all classes that support spiritual Babylon will terribly suffer. (71)

The Result: The true character of Babylon will be revealed. Instead of being seen as the great Champion of Truth and Right, the judgments of God will expose her as the great deceiver - the enemy of God and man. She will be seen as a self seeker, craving world dominion and self-exaltation at the expense of the people. (72)

Outcome: The masses who will be deluded into supporting Babylon and opposing God’s people, will finally turn on Babylon and destroy her. In Revelation 17:12-14 we are informed that the ten kingdoms will unite with and support the beast against God and His people, but in verses 16 and 17, the same ten kingdoms, or supporters of Babylon, “shall hate the whore (Babylon) and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.” In other words, the supporters of the apostate churches ultimately will turn on their religious leaders and destroy them.

“The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. ‘We are lost!’ they cry, ‘and you are the cause of our ruin,’ and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most, will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels, will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God’s people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.” (73)

12 FRANCE - After the slaughter of priests and aristocrats, the populace turned on each other in “The Reign of Terror” and fratricide became the order of the day.

TODAY - The order of events will be similar but on a world-wide scale. After the masses turn on their religious leaders and destroy them, they then will turn on each other in slaughter.

“They shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.” (74)

“After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other.” (75)

These parallels between Revolutionary France and our day end at this point. Whereas France continued to exist as a nation, our civilization is not to continue, but will conclude at the Second Advent of Christ.

The events as outlined in the above parallels indicate, we suggest, the course that our world is to pursue and how it will climax in the return of Christ.

WHO BELIEVED THE PREDICTION OF REVELATION 11

DRUE CRESSENE

(1638-1718) Prebend of Anglican Ely Cathedral. In 1690 he studied the 1260-year period of Papal supremacy and concluded that it would close “a little before 1800 AD” (The actual end was 1798). From, Volume 2, pages 588-596. This was 109 years before the event.

THOMAS BRIGHTMAN

(1562-1607) Puritan scholar. One of the fathers of English Presbyterianism. He ably answered the Preterist and Futurist errors of the Jesuits, Ribera and Bellarmine. He was the first to mention that the 1260 years dated from the decree of Justinian in 533 AD. From, Volume 2, pages 512-517, 724.

GEORGE DARHAM

Died 1634. English theologian, Professor of Logic, Cambridge University, Chaplain to James I. A refuter of Bellarmine and his Futurism. He published “A Treatise concerning Antichrist”, which became the leader of Protestant works and prophecy of the 17th century. He also dated the 1260 years of Papal supremacy from the decree of Justinian.” From, Volume 2, pages 535, 536.

JOSEPH MEDE

(1586-1638) Professor of Greek at Cambridge University. He specialized in prophetic study and greatly advanced the science of interpretation. His “Key to the Revelation” was authorized by the British House of Commons. From, Volume 2, pages 542-549.

HENRY MORE

(1614-1687) Of profound learning. A non-conformist educator and philosopher and a distinguished religious leader. He refuted the errors of Futurism and Preterism. - From, Volume 2, pages 563, 564.

THOMAS GOODWIN

(1600-1680) Celebrated non-conformist. Member of Westminster Assembly. Vice Chancellor of Oxford University. In 1639 he declared that “the tenth part of the city” of Revelation 11:13 was one of the ten kingdoms of Western Europe under the jurisdiction of Papal Rome and “as that kingdom (France) had the first great stroke, so now it should have the honor to have the last great stroke in the ruining of

Rome.” “The earthquake is a “mighty commotion.” (This was 152 years before the French Revolution) - Froom, Volume 2, pages 573-575; 724, 725.

PIERRE JURJET

(1637-1713) Distinguished Huguenot leader. Brilliant scholar and Professor of Theology and Hebrew at the Huguenot Seminary at Sedan, France. A great champion of Protestantism against French Jesuit leaders. He ably answered the Futurist and Preterist schools of prophetic interpretation. He authored sixty works, including “Exposition of the Apocalypse” (1685). He taught that the tenth part of the city of Revelation 11:13 was France, which would “shake off the yoke of Rome”. Froom, Volume 2, pages 625, 636-639, 726. (This was 104 years before the Revolution.)

ROBERT FLEMING

(1660-1716) A Scottish divine. Pastor of English Church of the Refugees, Holland. Author of ten works. An expositor of prophecy. Very influential. A confidante of King William III of England. In his “Rise and Fall of the Papacy” (1701) when France was at the height of her power, he declared that he hoped for the death of the chief supporters of Antichrist, “and perhaps the French Monarchy may begin to be considerably humbled about that time (at least before the year 1794) ”. This was forecast ninety years before the Revolution. His conclusions were based on Revelation 11. Froom, Volume 2, pages 642-649.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

(1642-1727) Famous mathematician, philosopher and genius in scientific research. He also studied prophecy for forty-two years, resulting in his work, “Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and The Apocalypse” (1773). He upheld the Historical School of Interpretation and taught that ‘before primitive Christianity could be restored, the power of infidelity in ‘a main revolution’ would be used to put a stop to, or block the Popedom that has so long corrupted the Church.’ - Froom, Volume 2, pages 658-669. This was twenty years before the Revolution.

WILLIAM WHISTON

(1667-1752) Baptist theologian and mathematician. He was Newton’s successor at Cambridge University. He authored fifty works including, a translation of Josephus. His major work was “The Revelation of St. John”. He believed that “infidelity” (such as later occurred in Revolutionary France) “might be the only means of stopping the Papal enslavement before true Christianity could be restored.” - Froom, Volume 2, pages 672.

BISHOP THOMAS NEWTON

(1704-1782) Bishop of Bristol and Dean of St. Paul’s, London. He wrote “Dissertations on the Prophecies” (1754) which ran into eighteen editions, as well as in Danish and German. Concerning the fulfillment of Revelation 11, he wrote, “Rome therefore will finally be destroyed by some of the princes and as the kings of France have contributed greatly to her advancement, it is not impossible nor improbable that they may be the principal authors of her destruction. France may appear more likely to effect such a revolution.” - Froom, Volume 2, pages 684-687, 724. This was written thirty five years before the Revolution.

JOHN FLETCHER

(1729-1785) Excellent scholar and associate of John Wesley. Authored nine works. He held “that the Papacy would fall amid revolutions”. He acquainted Wesley with the knowledge “that 100,000 French Protestants in 1755 expect some great revolution, that will result in their being united with 200,000 of their brethren who have been expelled from France.” Froom, Volume 2, pages 687-691. This was forty-four years before the Revolution.

JAQUES PHILIPOT

Huguenot pastor driven out of France. In 1685 he wrote “Elucidations on The Apocalypse of St. John”. One hundred and four years before the Revolution, he wrote on Revelation 11, “The earthquakes in scripture mean great changes occurring in the nations.” “There will be a surprising change in France” of which “the whole world will be glad except the clergy, the monks and the Jesuits.” “It is France which is referred to by this tenth part of the city-the city here is Babylon, i. e. the Papal Empire, the Church of Rome, France is one of the ten horns of the beast, one of the ten kingdoms. France is a part of the city, i. e. of the Papal Empire.” “Since the death of the two witnesses takes place in France this tenth part of the city which shall fall is France.” Froom, Volume 2, pages 726-728.

JOHN WILLSON

(1680-1750) Scotch divine. Authored nine principal works. Wrote "A Prophecy of the French Revolution!" (1733) fifty years before the event. He said, "Before Antichrist's fall, one of the ten kingdoms which supported the beast (Papacy) shall undergo a marvelous revolution! Revelation 11:13 (quoted) "by which tenth part is to be understood as one of the ten kingdoms into which the great city, Roman Babylon, was divided. This many take to be the kingdom of France." Froom, Volume 2, pages 728-730.

GEORGE BELL

In 1796, in the "London Evangelical Magazine" he declared on the basis of Revelation 11, that "the Gentiles" of verse 2 were the papacy; that the "earthquake!" of verse 13 was the French Revolution and the "tenth part" of verse 13 was France. He continued, "Have we not seen, in one of the ten kingdoms, a most astonishing revolution? Have we not also seen that kingdom fall off the Papal jurisdiction? Have we not good ground to hope that the accomplishment of the prophecies respecting the rising of the witnesses and the fall of Antichrist is near at hand?" One year later, Revolutionary France restored the scriptures (Resurrected the witnesses) and two years later, France delivered "the deadly wound" to the papacy. Froom, Volume 2, pages 742, 743.

JOSEPH PRIESTLY

(1733-1804) English clergyman, philosopher and scientist. Authored eighty works. In February, 1794, he declared on the basis of Revelation 11, that France was currently fulfilling the prediction in the French Revolution. - Froom, Volume 2, pages 744.

JAMES BICHENO

(Died 1831) Dissenting minister and schoolman. Authored numerous works. Taught that Revolutionary France was the fulfillment of Revelation 11. - Froom, Volume 2, pages 746-748.

GOERGE CROLY

(1780-1860) M. A. , Classical scholar, author and Bible Expositor. Anglican Rector. In "The Apocalypse of St. John", he held that "the two witnesses" were the two Testaments, slain in the French Revolution, the "political earthquake" in France, "the tenth part of the city". The 3. 5 days were the 3. 5 years from November 1793 to June 1797 when religion was abolished. He forecast that the Bible would have "a stupendous triumph." - Froom, Volume 3, pages 544-548.

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6. Jamieson, Fausset & Brown - Commentary on Revelation 11:3. 7. Revelation 22:18, 19; 20:9.
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- 20."The Great Controversy," page 269.
21. Revelation 11:2; 14:20.
22. Pev. 3:12; 20:9; 21:2, 10-27; 22:2, 14, 19.
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24. Sir W. Scott."Life of Napoleon Bonaparte", Volume 1, chapter 17.
25. Alison."History of Europe" (1789-1815), Volume 1, pages 47-49.
26. L. E. Froom."Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers", Volume 2, page 633.
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40. Wylie."History of Protestantism", Volume 1, pages 37-46, 50."Great Controversy", pages 271-273. Oldenbourg."Massacre at Mantsegur.
Lawrence."Historical Studies", pages 253-314.
- 41 "Great Controversy", page 273.

42 E. F. Henderson."Symbol and Satire in the French Revolution", page 127.

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45 Daniel 4:22.

46 L. E. Froom."Prophetic Faith of our Fathers", Volume 2, page 762.

47 Sir Robert Anderson."Constitution and Selected Documents", page 33.

48 Jean Vuilleumier. (French Editor) "Ministry", May-July, 1940. R&H Publishing Association.

49 D. Ford."Crisis Two", pages 482, 483.

50 See the author's: "Riddle of Revelation 17."

51 D. Ford."Crisis Two", page 485.

52 Ellen G. White. "Testimonies", Volume 4, page 594.

53 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 267.

To take a single phrase from a publication and use it out of context and in contradiction to other statements by the same author, in order to give Revelation 11 a future application, is a very questionable method of interpreting prophecy and must be totally rejected.

54 Ellen G. White."Education", (1903) page 228.

55 Revelation 13:3, 8, 11-17.

56 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 277.

Wylie, "History of Protestantism," Volume 2, page 140, 141.

57 Matthew 24:24.

58 Revelation 13:3.

59 Wylie, "History of Protestantism," Book 22, chapter 6; Book 13, chapter 20;

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60 2 Timothy 3:12; Revelation 12:17; 13:15; 16:5, 6.

61 Revelation 11:13.

62 Revelation 18:2, 3, 9, 11, 15.

64. Avro Manhattan, "The Vatican Billions", pages 120-187.

65. Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 280.

66. Revelation 13:16.

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68. Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 279.

S. Smiles."The Huguenots", pages 169, 342-349.

Wylie."History of Protestantism", Volume 3, pages 334-336.

69 Ellen G. White."Selected Messages", Volume 21, pages 141-143.

70 Ellen G. White."Education," page 228. (emphasis supplied)

71 Revelation 13:15-17; 14:9, 10; 16:1-21.

72 Revelation 18:1-8.

73 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy," pages 655, 656.

74. Zechariah 14:13.

75. Ellen G. White."Early Writings", page 290.

22. War On God's Woman

An Exposition of Revelation Chapter 12.

The latter part of the book of Revelation concentrates on the later stages of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Chapters 12-15 describe in detail the conflict of the church with the powers called "the dragon", "the beast", and "the image to the beast". Chapters 16-19 describe the judgments of upon these powers and their supporters.

"There appeared a great wonder [or sign] in heaven; a women clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Revelation 12:1-2.

A WOMAN DENOTES A CHURCH

This great sign, or wonder, that the prophet sees, located in the sky. It is associated with the sun and the moon. This indicates that this is a symbolic prophecy and in prophecy a woman denotes a church. In the book of Revelation are presented two women. These symbols are derived from the Old Testament, where two women represent Babylon and Jerusalem.

"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." Jeremiah 6:2."Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon." Isaiah 47:1.

The book of Revelation, being based on the Old Testament, likewise presents two women: one is Jerusalem, spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God of Revelation 12. The other is the harlot, spiritual Babylon, the church of Satan of Revelation 17. The apostle Paul also symbolized God's church as a woman.

"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused [or betrothed] you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Ephesians 5:31, 32.

CLOTHED WITH THE-SUN

In this symbolism of Revelation 12, the woman is pictured as being in glorious attire, "clothed with the sun". This represents the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Malachi likens Christ to the SUN of righteousness."Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2. God's people, are not seen by heaven in their own sinful attire; God sees them through the merits of Christ who is their substitute and righteousness.

"For he made him, [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21.

THE MOON UNDER HER FEET

The woman is standing on the moon which is represented as the church's foundation."The church has one foundation, is Jesus Christ her Lord."

The Sun represents Jesus Christ. The moon is an object that reflects the Sun's light. What is it that reflects Jesus Christ in the realm of religion and is the basis of the Christian church? It is the Old Testament Scriptures. They are a reflection of Christ.

Jesus said,

"They are they that testify [or bear witness] of me." John 5:39.

"All things are fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." Luke 24:44.

The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

The Old Testament is the New Testament contained. The New Testament is the Old Testament explained.

The Old Testament is the New Testament enfolded. The New Testament is the Old Testament unfolded.

The Old Testament is the New Testament founded. The New Testament is the Old Testament sounded.

The Old Testament is the New Testament instilled. The New Testament is the Old Testament fulfilled.

The Old Testament in the New Testament is latent. The New Testament in the Old Testament is patent.

The Old Testament is the New Testament in hope. The New Testament is the Old Testament in scope.

One Old Testament description of the church of God, corresponds with the symbolism of Revelation 12.

"Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Song of Solomon 6:10.

WOMAN REPRESENTS THE CHURCH OF ALL AGES

The Roman Catholic church claims that the woman of Revelation 12 represents the virgin Mary and the birth of Jesus. The answer to that claim is given in verses 5-6. After the birth of the child, it was caught up to God's throne and the woman fled into the wilderness for 1260 days. But Joseph and Mary, after the birth of Christ, fled with him to Egypt, not the wilderness, and returned with the child to Nazareth, less than one year later. (1) The woman represents the church of God of all ages, in both Old and New Testament periods.

"This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in Mt Sinai and with our fathers who received the lively oracles [or scriptures] to give unto us." Acts 7:38.

Israel in the wilderness, at Mt Sinai, was a part of the Old Testament church.

CROWN OF 12 STARS

The woman has on her head, "a crown of twelve stars." The crown denotes ruler ship and organization. Twelve is consistently associated in scripture with church government. The pre-flood church, from Adam to Noah, was led by 12 patriarchs, if Shem and Japheth are included. (Genesis 5) The post flood church was also led by at least 12 patriarchs, from Shem to Jacob. The church in the Sinai wilderness consisted of twelve tribes. (2) The church of the times of the Judges of Israel was led by 12 judges. The Old Testament priesthood consisted of 24 courses, (2 x 12). (3) The New Testament church was led by 12 apostles. The final remnant church, the translation church, is symbolized by the number 144,000 which is a multiple of twelve. (4)

TRAVAILING IN BIRTH

"She being with child, cried, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered." Verse 2.

This is a dramatic representation of God's people awaiting the coming of the Messiah. Ever since Eve gave birth to Cain, God's people had waited and longed for the deliverer. Scripture gives typical instances of their waiting. When the infant Jesus was brought to the temple to be dedicated, it records that there were two persons waiting with great longing for the Messiah. One was Simeon,

“Waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed to him that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God and said, ‘Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy ward: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. ’ And Joseph and Mary marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed then and spoke unto Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.”

“There was one Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of great age. . . And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” Luke 2:25-38.

THE MANCHILD

“She brought forth a man child.”

This was in fulfillment of the four-thousand-year old prophecy given to Adam and Eve that the seed, (or off-spring) of the woman, would bruise the serpent’s head.”I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it the] shall bruise thy [Satan’s] head, and then shall bruise his [Messiah’s] heel.” Genesis 3:15.

In referring to this prediction, the Apostle Paul declared, “thy seed, which is Christ”. (Galatians 3:16) The Revelator by-passes the 33 years of Jesus’ life and emphasizes just two events. The first was his ascension.

TO GOD’S THRONE

“Her child was caught up to God and his throne” Verse 5. Forty days after Jesus’ resurrection, “He was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Acts 1:9

Enoch and Elijah were also caught up to God, having been translated, but this man was caught up “to his throne”. The only man associated with God’s throne is “the man Christ Jesus”. (1 Timothy 2:5) The second event is Christ’s Second Advent. He would “rule all nations with a rod of iron”. This expression is drawn from Psalms 2:1-9 where it predicted that the Messiah would ultimately destroy his enemies.

“Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm 2:9. This prediction will be fulfilled at Christ’s return.

“Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and Wrath of Almighty God.” Revelation 19:15.

The Christ child who was born in a manger, one day will destroy the nations.

THE DRAGON

In verse 3 another symbol is introduced:

“There appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads,”

Here is symbolized a power that is to influence mankind until the final conflict. The first point of identification is found in verse 4,

“His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and didst cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

This power would attempt to destroy Jesus Christ at his birth. That attempt was made by Herod the Great, the king of the Jews, a Roman governor.

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth and slew all the Children of Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.” Matthew 2:16.

Herod was made king of Judea by the Romans. He was a Roman governor. We conclude therefore, that the dragon represents Imperial Rome. The dragon had “seven heads and ten horns”. The seven heads are dealt with in Revelation 17 which we will discuss when we come to that chapter.

SEVEN CROWNS

The dragon had “seven crowns upon its heads”. Crowns denote ruler ship, showing that the period when this particular dragon power is spoken of here, is when the heads are ruling - not the ten horns. Revelation 17 reveals that the seven heads are successive kingdoms or empires, that reign one after the other whereas the ten horns are contemporaneous, that is, they all reign together. The crowns on the heads suggest that when the dragon is brought into the picture at the birth of Christ, one of the heads was reigning and that head or empire was Imperial Rome.

TEN HORNS

What do the ten horns represent? According to Daniel 7 they represent the ten kingdoms of Western Europe into which Western Rome ultimately divided. (Daniel 7:7, 24) These ten horns are mentioned ten times in

Daniel and Revelation and they always represent initially, the ten divisions of western Europe. Therefore western Europe must form a part of the dragon power. We will be repeatedly confronted with the dragon power in later chapters, so it is important to understand the details, so that we can identify correctly who the dragon power represents in later chapters. It is “a great red dragon”. Red in scripture denotes sinfulness, 10 “Though your sins be as scarlet.”

(Isaiah 1:18) Imperial Rome was the enemy of God. It was termed in scripture, an “abomination”. (Matthew 24:15) One of the standards of Imperial Rome was the dragon.

“The pagan Romans used the image of the dragon on their standards as well as the eagle. These dragon standards were red.” (5)

Another ancient writer called Prudentius, tells how the Roman soldiers under Constantine, substituted the symbol of the cross for the symbol of the dragon,

“Instead of the dragon flags, which they carried, waved shout with the wind, they brought forward the illustrious wood [referring to the cross] which subdued the dragon.” (6)

This is further evidence that the dragon power was Imperial Rome. About 600 BC, the prophet Ezekiel described Egypt as, “the great dragon”.

“Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of the rivers.” Ezekiel 29:3.

Later, Imperial Rome occupied Egypt and became the dragon. The Egyptian dragon tried to destroy the child Moses, Israel’s deliverer, soon after his birth. (7) Likewise, the Roman dragon attempted to destroy the deliverer of spiritual Israel, Jesus Christ, soon after his birth.

A THIRD OF THE STARS

“His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven”. Verse 4.

Stars represent leaders. (Revelation 1:20; Daniel 12:13) In Israel’s system of government there were three elements or power: the king, the Sanhedrin and the priesthood. When Rome overran Judea, she removed Israel’s kingly power or authority, and in that sense she drew away a third part of the stars of heaven. The word “drew” means to “drag down”. This was also a fulfillment of Daniel’s prediction concerning the Little Horn.

“And it waxed great, even w the host of the heaven; and it cast down some of the host [God’s people] and of the stars to the ground, and stamped on them.” Daniel 8:10.

The question should now be asked: Why such animosity on the part of Imperial Rome towards an innocent infant? This indicates that a greater power than Rome is involved here. The invisible influence behind Rome was Satan. He is also symbolized as the dragon.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Verse 9.

Satan is the invisible dragon, while Imperial Rome was the visible one. Satan is described by a quartet of terms: dragon, old serpent, devil and Satan. What do these represent? The dragon represents him as a persecutor and destroyer. The old serpent speaks of his cunning and deception. The devil indicates that he is a slanderer or liar. (John 8:44) The fourth term, Satan, denotes an adversary, especially in the setting of a law court. He is the accuser of the brethren. But why should Satan, or Lucifer, seek the life of this innocent infant? The answer takes us back to the origin of the conflict.

WAR IN HEAVEN

“Mere was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and his angels.” Verse 7

How mysterious! Heaven, the perfect paradise, is where war began. The contestants were Michael and Lucifer. Who is Michael the archangel? The word “archangel” means the “chief” angel. “Michael” means “who is like God”. This refers to Jesus Christ who is “the express image of his [the Father’s] person. (Hebrews 1:3) At the second advent of Christ, the voice of the arch-angel raises the dead. Who is it that raises the dead? The only voice that raises the dead is the voice of Jesus Christ.

“Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ’s] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life.” John 5:28, 29.

Michael, therefore must be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

HEAVEN HATES NEUTRALITY

But what kind of war could be fought in heaven? It was an angelic war. There was no destruction of life. It was a struggle for supremacy, for control. This is fascinating. The Creator could have put Lucifer out of action in a flash, but he permitted his heavenly messengers to strive for the mastery. One side fought with Michael, the other with Lucifer. What was God’s purpose in permitting this? Undoubtedly it was to reveal their loyalty. It was a public declaration of their allegiance. God always calls for public displays of loyalty. Jesus said,

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the son of man be ashamed.” Luke 9:26.

God will never accept neutrality. It is counted as a denial of Christ. (8)

STARS ALSO SYMBOLIZE ANGELS

In the heavenly conflict, Satan’s hosts were outnumbered. They comprised only a third of the angelic host; “his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven”. This prediction has a second application to Satan, the invisible dragon, and his drawing down of the angels of God. Stars also represent angels.

“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” Revelation 1:20.

This reveals that Satan must have been successful in deceiving a third of the angels, and that with him, they were cast out of heaven.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, [“principality”, margin], but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 1:6.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” 2 Peter 2:4.

Satan drew from their original estate, a third of the multiplied millions of angelic beings. What a devastating blow to the reputation of the Godhead. This is an awful enigma. “War in heaven”! This is where sin and war began. The problem of evil is an unfathomable mystery and the only satisfactory explanation is found in the Word of God. (9) However, in the great war in heaven, “they prevailed not”. (Verse 8) Satan and his angels were defeated. Michael, being co-creator with God the Father, naturally, would be victor, because Lucifer and his fellow angels are created beings. Jesus Christ is always the victor over Satan. This is why in our personal warfare with the powers of evil, if we have Christ with us, we also will be victorious.

“Neither was their [Satan and his angels] place found any more in heaven.” Verse 8

The fallen angels originally abode in the third heaven, the dwelling place of God. They were messengers of God, but by their rebellion, they forfeited their right to remain. They lost their first estate or principality. At

what time did this expulsion occur? It must have been before the creation of this earth, because Lucifer, in Eden, after the creation of this earth, deceived Eve, indicating that he had already fallen. In verses 7-12 two expulsions of Satan are presented. Verse 9 reveals a second expulsion.

“He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

The first expulsion of Satan was to the place called hell, or “tartarus”.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.” 2 Peter 2:4 (Greek: “tartarus”)

THE 4 CASTINGS OUT OF SATAN

Tartarus is not this earth. (10) Lucifer and his angels originally were cast out before this earth was created, however after creation, Lucifer had access to this earth. Tartarus is a place of “chains of darkness” (1 Peter 2:4) of “everlasting chains under darkness”. (Jude 1:6) Darkness, is the opposite of light, indicating that it is a place outside the presence of God. It was not Eden, nor could it apply to other worlds, for they are all realms of light, wherein is God’s presence, as illustrated in Genesis 2. We suggest that Tartarus is outer space, the area between the worlds. This is a place of darkness. We suggest that from outer space Satan had access to this and other worlds. Verse 9 indicates a second casting out, but this time to the earth.

Altogether, there will be four castings out of Satan. The first was from the exalted position of covering cherub, by the throne of God. The second, was his being cast out to this earth of verse 9. The third will be when he is cast into “the bottomless pit” of Revelation 20. The final one, is when he is cast into the lake of fire of Revelation 20:10, which means his utter destruction.

How can we harmonize the second casting out of Satan from heaven? How could Lucifer return to heaven when it says, “his place was found no more in heaven”? (Verse 8) Lucifer could never return to his original position in heaven as covering cherub, but the Scriptures indicate that he returned to heaven as the representative of this earth. In Eden, Lucifer usurped Adam’s position as leader of this world.

Scripture reveals that at various intervals, the leaders of other worlds assemble in council before God. (11) Satan, when he became “the prince of this world”, (12) by seducing Adam and Eve, he attended the heavenly councils as this world’s representative. Before the representatives of the universe he acted the part of “the accuser of the brethren”. (13) The second casting out of Satan was from these councils.

“For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Verse 10

But the question arises as to how and when was Satan cast out. On what grounds could Satan be excluded from the councils of heaven? The answer is given:

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.” Verse 10.

Notice the phrase, “now is come salvation” or “now is come the victory”. When did salvation, or the victory come? The victory, or salvation, was accomplished at Calvary. When Christ expired upon the cross he sealed the doom of Satan.

“He also himself likewise took part of the same; [flesh and blood] that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14.

Previously Jesus had declared,

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” John 12:31-33.

SATAN CAST OUT AFTER CALVARY

In what way did Jesus Christ, by his death, seal Satan’s doom? There is an old saying: “Give a fool enough rope and he’ll hang himself.”

Jesus did exactly that. He gave Satan enough rope so that he would overreach himself. Jesus allowed himself to come under Satan’s power. He allowed Satan to vent his implacable hatred upon him, and the enthralled universe beheld the incredible scene. They witnessed the amazing love of Christ, and on the other hand, the diabolical cruelty and hatred of Satan. Under the fierce and frenzied onslaught of Satan they beheld Jesus in all his innocence, love and compassion. As the nails were thrust through his quivering flesh, they heard his

prayer, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." At Calvary Jesus unmasked the character of Satan. He exposed him as a liar, an imposter and self seeker. On the other hand, Calvary revealed Jesus as the most loving and lovable of men.

"The pent up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God, while all heaven gazed on the scene in silent horror." (14)

In this experience Jesus drew all to him. (The word "men" is not in the original text.) "If I be lifted up, I will draw all unto me." John 12:32.

THE BLESSINGS OF CALVARY

By his sufferings on behalf of others, by his utter selflessness, Christ drew all the universe to him. Any questions in the minds of the sinless beings, due to Satan's rebellion, were there no more. They now knew that God was right and Satan was wrong. Any doubts regarding the Godhead were now dissolved. In this light the announcement was made:

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them" Verse 12

Not only did salvation come at the cross, but also "strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." (Verse 10) What does this mean? As a result of Calvary, power is available to the believer to successfully resist Satan.

"And the kingdom of our God." Calvary made God's kingdom sure. God's law was vindicated. God's character was revealed as righteous. Justice and mercy were seen as the foundation of His throne.

"And the power of his Christ."

The Greek word for power is 'exousia' meaning 'authority'. Now is come the authority of Christ. Because of Satan's insinuations, Christ's authority had been under question. The war in heaven had been over the question of authority, but now as a result of Calvary, Jesus' authority is fully established. His authority as Savior, Priest, and King is no longer under question. At the close of his earthly ministry Jesus declared,

"All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18.

Verse 10 continues,

"For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Ever since Satan usurped Adam's position as vicegerent of this world, he had been the accuser before the heavenly councils. For four thousand years he had lured the saints into sin and had then accused them before heaven. Undoubtedly he also accused God of being unjust in expecting man to keep His "unjust" law.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S SHED BLOOD

"And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb." Verse 11.

Satan, the mighty, angelic being can be overcome. And he is overcome in two ways: First, "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb", i. e. on the basis of Christ's shed blood. In what way? Scripture employs fifteen different phrases to emphasize the power of the blood of Christ."There is power in the blood."

1. It washes away our sins. (Revelation 1:5)
2. It cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)
3. It makes our spiritual garments white. (Revelation 7:14)
4. It propitiates or covers our sins. (Romans 3:25)
5. It gives remission for our sins. (Hebrews 9:22)
6. It purges the conscience. (Hebrews 9:14)

7. It justifies the believer. (Romans 5:9)
8. It gives peace to the guilty. (Colossians 5:20)
9. It makes us nigh to God. (Ephesians 2:13)
10. It redeems, or buys us back. (Colossians 1:14; Ephesians 1:7)
11. It gives life. (John 6:54)
12. It purchases the church of God. (Acts 20:28)
13. It gives boldness to enter into God's presence. (Hebrews 10:19)
14. It makes us perfect to do His will. (Hebrews 13:20-21)
15. It overcomes Satan. (Revelation 12:11)

No wonder the hymn says,

“There is power, power, wonder working power In the precious blood of the Lamb.”

THE POWER OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The second way in which Satan can be overcome, is “by the word of their testimony”¹, i. e. on the basis of their testimony. One's personal witness for Christ and the gospel can defeat Satan.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:9-10.

Testifying of the love and power of Christ, is vital for the Christian. As one author wrote,

“This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. This is the witness for which our Lord calls and for the want of which, the world is perishing. The gospel is to be presented not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God would have his servants bear testimony to the fact that through his grace, men may possess Christ's likeness of character and may rejoice in the assurance of his great love.”⁽¹⁵⁾

“And they loved not their lives unto death.” Verse 11

As the result of their testimony many Christians came under the threat of death, but their love for Christ was so supreme that self-preservation had little or no place in their thinking. Serenely they faced the lions, and millions later faced the fiery stake. What a victory for Christ! What a conquest over the evil one! “They overcame him by the word of their testimony.”

SATAN'S ACCESS TO OTHER WORLDS CUT OFF

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” Verse 12.

This refers to the intelligent beings of sinless worlds. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Why the rejoicing of other worlds? Because Satan's activities as accuser, have been curbed or terminated. Until Calvary Satan had access to the heavenly councils, but since Calvary access is no longer available. He has been exposed and his doom sealed. As the author of “Desire of Ages” declares:

“Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His Administration was laid open before the sinless angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed in garments of blackness and the defilements of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.” ⁽¹⁷⁾

SATAN ATTACKS THE CHURCH ON EARTH

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.” Verse 12.

Knowing he has been exposed, Satan now vents his wrath upon the human race. He knows he has but a short time. He has approximately two thousand years until the Second Advent. Compared with eternity that is certainly short. Knowing his doom is sealed, he determines that he will take as many as possible to destruction with him and, in particular the woman, the church.

“And he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child” Verse 13.

This was fulfilled first of all by the Jews. They were relentless in their persecution of the Christians. The synagogues were called “fountains of persecution”, because from them the persecution was organized and inspired. Secondly, it was fulfilled by the pagans, especially Pagan Rome. Two and a half million Christians, it is claimed, were martyred for their faith in the first century of the Christian era. The Egyptians, Persians and other pagan peoples were also involved, but most of all Pagan Rome. Every apostle except John was martyred. He was delivered by God from a cauldron of boiling oil. Jesus had warned them of persecution.

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

SATAN ATTACKS THE CHURCH FROM WITHIN

Persecution by Rome continued until Constantine the Great, about 320 AD. But it was in vain. Satan therefore changed his tactics. Instead of attacking from without, he determined to attack the church from within. Under a Christian guise, he entered the church and led it into apostasy. This fulfilled the great prediction of 2 Thessalonians 2 which had forecast the rise of the “man of sin”.

“And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Through the years, most Protestant scholars have been clear that this has been fulfilled in none other than the Church of Rome. This apostate body involved the majority of the professed church. It broke away from the true faith and finally by combining with political powers it obtained political supremacy and began to dominate the world of the day. In 538 AD, persecution commenced against those who held to the true faith. This led to the fulfillment of Revelation 12:14.

“And to the woman (the church) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of a serpent.”

In the Old Testament, ancient Egypt, which was also called “the dragon”, pursued ancient Israel into the wilderness of Sinai. Israel was pictured as being carried out of Egypt on eagle’s wings. (18) So it was with spiritual Israel. When Catholic dominance began, true believers were pursued by the dragon, the political agencies of the Papacy, and the church is represented as flying on eagle’s wings into the wilderness. This began in 538 AD under Justinian, the emperor of Eastern Rome. Procopius, the historian who followed the Roman armies declared:

“In his zeal to gather all men into one Christian doctrine, he [Justinian] recklessly killed all who dissented, and this too he did in the name of piety. For he did not call it homicide, when those who perished happened to be of a belief different from his own.”

THE CHURCH FLEES TO THE WILDERNESS

“Now the churches of these so-called heretics, especially those belonging to the Arian dissenters, were almost in credibly wealthy.”

“Agents were sent everywhere to force whomever they chanced upon to renounce the faith of their fathers. Thus many perished at the hands of the persecuting faction. But most of them by far quitted the land of their fathers, and fled the country and thenceforth the whole Roman Empire was a scene of massacre and flight.” (19)

John Chapman, Roman Catholic scholar, says of Justinian,

“He felt himself to be the vice-regent of the Almighty, to rule the world and bring all to the service of Christ. His wars were holy wars. In later centuries, a Byzantine battle began like a church ceremony. Even in the sixth century every enterprise was consecrated by religion.”

“He was well aware that judicious persecution is a great help to conversion! He strengthened the existing laws against pagans, Jews and heretics. Many were burnt at Constantinople after the Emperor had made vain attempts to convert them. Other heretics were given three months grace. All magistrates and soldiers had to swear they were Catholics.” (20)

PAPAL SUPREMACY BEGAN IN 538 AD

Church historian Dr Summerbell says,

“Justinian . . . enriched himself with the property of all ‘heretics’ - that is, non-Catholics, and gave all their churches to the Catholics; published edicts in 538 AD compelling all to join the Catholic church in 90 days or leave the Empire and confiscated all their goods.” (21)

538 AD was the date that commenced “the time, times, and half a time”, of Papal supremacy.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and three score [12601 days.” Verse 6.

Here we have clear evidence that the “time, times and half a time”, equals 1260 days, which represents 1260 years. (22) These are two of the seven times that this time period is mentioned in prophecy. (23) This particular period is highlighted in Daniel and Revelation, and wherever it is employed, a vital clue is provided by which to interpret prophecy. We need to beware of the Jesuit futuristic interpretation which tries to destroy this identification mark, by giving it a literal 3.5 year application in the future.

MEANING OF WILDERNESS

“The woman fled into the wilderness.”

What does the “wilderness” represent? In the Old Testament, the wilderness referred to the uninhabited areas of the Sinai peninsula. The Greek word in Revelation 12:6, 14 is “eremos”. It means a forsaken desert, empty place, an uninhabited place. It represents a place of seclusion or obscurity. A place away from the public gaze, the outback areas, remote from the centers of civilization. Did true Christian believers fly to such regions in 538 AD? Yes! Because of the oppressive persecuting decrees of Emperor Justinian, and the setting up of the Bishop of Rome as the “Universal Bishop of the World, and the Corrector of Heretics”, true Christians were compelled to leave the empire “amid massacre and flight.” (24)

SPECIAL PLACE FOR THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

“She fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God.”

Verse 14 says, “into her place”. There was a place for the church of God in the wilderness, in the outback areas, for 1260 years.”A place prepared of God”. Was there any particular location where the church of God resided? The most famous place of refuge in those dark years were the Waldensian valleys amid the Cottian Alps, 30 miles west of Turin, in northern Italy. Significantly this was about the middle of the Papal empire, in the very heart of its territory. There the Lord had a place prepared for many of his people during those trying years.

Some students of church history believe that at the time of the universal flood, when the surface of the earth was torn up and re-laid, the Creator bore in mind the future needs of his persecuted people. Certain areas were formed that could serve as places of refuge.

MIDDLE AGES, HOLDING FAST TO THE TRUE FAITH

The Waldensian refuge was comprised of seven remarkable valleys, so formed, that at that time, they formed a natural fortress against invasion. One valley led into the other and finally within them was the seventh, a secret valley, accessible through a narrow, rocky canyon. In it was situated the little college, where they educated young men for the ministry. These valleys were self supporting. The soil was very fertile and provided sufficient food, including many nut trees. In the mountain soil were abundant quantities of slate which they used as building materials for their homes, many of which were hidden among the trees along the sides of the mountains. Here for centuries, the Vaudois, as they were called, or Waldenses, resided, maintaining the true faith. (25)

Their territory was within the diocese of Milan which for centuries was independent of the Roman See. Milan was closely connected with the Church of the East which had been founded by the apostles. For centuries the Christians of Milan withstood Papal influence. They kept the seventh day Sabbath when Rome was keeping the first day. In fact, whenever Ambrose, the famous Archbishop of Milan, visited Rome it was his practice to observe the Sunday in Rome, but in his home diocese of Milan, he observed the true Sabbath. The famous remark which has come down through the centuries has been credited to Ambrose, “When in Rome do what Rome does.” This was stated in connection with the keeping of Sunday when in Rome, and shows that the diocese of Milan continued to hold to the true faith many years after Rome had gone astray. (26)

THE FOOD OF THE CHURCH

“That they should feed her there.” Verse 6 “Where she is nourished.” Verse 14. What is the food or nourishment of the Christian? It is the Word of God which is likened to spiritual milk, to spiritual bread, and spiritual meat. (27)

Were the Waldenses nourished by the Word of God in those dark days? They had the Bible translated from the uncorrupted manuscripts of Lucian, the famous scholar of Syria in post-apostolic times. They had the Word of God in their own tongue. The Waldensian Bible formed the link between Lucian and the

Protestant Reformers. Thus the Waldensians, having the Bible in their own language, became strong Christians. When the rest of Europe was deprived of scripture, when it was locked up in the Latin language, and few could even read it, the Waldensians studied and understood the Scriptures.

Student pastors, as they studied in the secret valley, were required to copy by hand, portions of Scripture as part of their ministerial course. These they took with them on their missionary journeys, two by two, in disguise, throughout Europe. These students first served as missionaries before they could serve as pastors in the valleys. Generally they traveled, disguised as merchants, minstrels or peddlers. They moved unobtrusively among the people. Silently, secretly they distributed their copies of the precious word. The Waldenses kept the lamp of truth burning, though dimly, throughout Europe during the Dark Ages. This finally resulted in the great Protestant Reformation. (28)

THE WALDENSES WERE DISTINCTIVE

The Waldensians in their lifestyle, exhibited a character of moral purity which was in stark contrast to the average lifestyle of the time. The populace were in appalling ignorance, poverty, superstition, moral degradation and mental slavery. As the historian says “It was the midnight of the world”, but it was the noonday of the papacy. The contrasting lifestyle of the Waldensians soon marked them as heretics and so often led to their being arrested and martyred. (29) We need to beware of the current concept of the Middle Ages. Rome has invented a picture of that period which deceptively whitewashes history and hides the appalling lot of society under the Catholic yoke. (30) Truly the Middle Ages were “the midnight of the world”. But often the darkness was dispelled by a burning Waldensian martyr dying at the stake for his faith. They were the unsung heroes of the faith during the Dark Ages and with them, of course, were other heroic peoples who also helped to keep the light burning. (31)

FLOODS OF PERSECUTION AGAINST THE CHURCH

“The serpent cast out of his mouth water as flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.” Verse 15.

Why the change here from “the dragon”, to “the serpent”, in verses 15-16? These terms are used interchangeably.

“The flood which came out of the dragon’s mouth”. Verse 16.

This shows that the dragon and serpent are identical. The reason, we suggest, that the word serpent is used, is because the serpent represents deception, lies and cunning. The serpent “beguiled Eve.” “The woman, being deceived”, by the serpent. The dragon denotes ferocity and destructiveness. We suggest that the reason why the flood is pictured as coming “out of the serpent’s mouth” is because the persecution was inspired by malicious propaganda, by campaigns of lies and deceit. Through the preaching of friars and priests, through the proclamations of popes and prelates, by false promises of pardon and paradise, the populace were inspired to mount great crusades against the saints of God in the wilderness regions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM ‘FLOOD’

Why is this persecution symbolized by the term, “a flood”? “Waters as a flood.” Verse 15. The Greek word is “potomos” which means “flood, river, stream, water”. (Dr. Strong) “A flood of water like a river”. (Dr. Dodderidge) This term is derived from the Old Testament, of the Euphrates river, which was often described as “the flood”.

“Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [Euphrates] even Terah the father of Abraham, and they served other gods, and I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan.”

“Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood [Euphrates]. Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods on the other side of the flood, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15.

The same truth is brought to view in Jeremiah 46:6-8 and 47:2, 3. In Daniel 9:26 it predicted the invasion by the Roman armies and the destruction of Jerusalem, under the term “a flood”. Daniel 12:6, 7 also alludes to the river Euphrates. The Euphrates was the appointed boundary between ancient Israel and Babylon.

“Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river - the river Euphrates.” Genesis 15:8.

When the snows of Mt. Ararat melted, the Euphrates often overflowed into the appointed territory of Israel. The prophets used this phenomenon to illustrate the invasion of Israel by her enemies from the north. The Holy Spirit uses this flooding, to illustrate the rising up or overflowing of the church’s enemies in an endeavor to destroy her. The term “Euphrates” is used in a similar vein in the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9 and also in the sixth plague of Revelation 16:12. (32)

During the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, as a result of serpentine propaganda, “the waters [or peoples] on which the whore sits” (Revelation 17) rose up to sweep away the saints. Multitudes were inspired to mount crusades against the “heretics”. The following are some of the crusades:

1. Against the Celtic Christians of Britain.
2. Against the non-Catholic Christians of Thrace in 538 AD.
3. Against the Ostrogoths in Italy in 538 AD.
4. Against the Waldenses in Northern Italy. Several crusades were organized into their valleys by Catholic leaders.
5. Against the Albigenses in south and western France.
6. Against the Christians of the East.
7. In Ireland by Henry 2 of England with the support of the Papacy.
8. Against the Lollards, in England the followers of John Wycliff.
9. Against Spanish Protestants at the time of the Spanish Inquisition.
10. Against the Hussites, the followers of John Huss in Bohemia.
11. Against German Protestants at the time of the Reformation.
12. Against Swiss Protestants by Catholic authorities.
13. Against Dutch Protestants by Phillip 2 of Spain.
14. Against English Protestants by the Spanish Armada.
15. Against European Protestants in the 30 Years War.
16. Against the French Protestants called Huguenots in the St. Bartholomew massacre, by French Catholic kings, and the oppression of the Huguenots in later years.
17. Against the Scottish Covenanters by the pro Catholic Stuart kings when 18,000 were done to death.

These were some of the crusades comprising the flood of persecution that came out of the mouth of the dragon or serpent, in an endeavor to sweep away God’s people. Some claim that the water from the serpent’s mouth represents the false teachings of evolution. But the events of Verses 15, 16 apply to the 1260-year period of 538-1798. Darwin and modern evolution commenced about 1844, well after 1798.

GOD’S RESPONSE TO THE PERSECUTION

“The Earth helped the woman”. Verse 16. In response to the flood of persecution God intervened to aid his people.

“And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.” Verse 16

What is represented by the earth? It has been claimed that the earth represents the science of archaeology which uncovered the remains of lost civilizations and confirmed the Bible. But this science did not begin until about 1798, “the time of the end”. Archeology could be a

part of “the increase of knowledge”, which the prophet Daniel had predicted, but it was too late to find its fulfillment in “the earth opening her mouth”, of Verse 16.

Does the word “earth” have a literal or symbolic application? Six times in this chapter, the word earth is used:

1.”The dragon cast a third of the stars to the earth” (Verse 4)

2.”The dragon (Satan) was cast out into the earth.” (Verse 9)

3.”Woe to the inhabitants of the earth.” (Verse 12)

4.”The dragon saw he was cast to the earth.” (Verse 13)

5.”The earth helped the woman.” (Verse 16)

6.”The earth opened her mouth.” (Verse 16)

Other terms in this chapter, such as “the woman”, “the mouth of the serpent”, and “the flood” - are symbolic. Should we understand the term “earth” to be symbolic also? Maybe it has a literal as well as a symbolic application. Did God employ the literal elements of the earth, the natural world, to deliver his saints from destruction during those dark years? Yes: he certainly did. He used the mountain fastnesses, the isolated valleys, deep forests, secret caves, cloud and mist, wind and tempest, water and floods to protect and deliver his people. The Waldensians, in one of their hymns, celebrate how God used the elements to deliver them from their foes:

HYMN OF THE VAUDOIS MOUNTAINEERS

For the strength of the hills we bless

Thee, Our God, our fathers’ God!

Thou hast made Thy children mighty

By the touch of the mountain sod.

Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge

Where the spoiler’s feet never trod

For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,

Our God, our fathers’ God.

We are watchers of a beacon

Whose light must never die;

We are guardians of an altar,

Midst the silence of the sky;

Thy rocks yield founts of courage,

Struck forth as by thy rod;

For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,

Our God, our fathers’ God. (33)

The literal elements of the earth were strikingly used by God. When one reads the gripping accounts of how the Scottish Covenanters were delivered from their pursuers, it is evident that God used mist, fogs and cloud. When the Spanish Armada sailed against Protestant England, the purpose of which was to bring England back to the Catholic faith, it was wind and tempest that saved England. On Plymouth

Hoe, beside the great statue of Sir Francis Drake there stands a smaller monument. It commemorates the defeat of the Armada. On the monument are the words, "Thou didst said Thy winds, and they were scattered."

Indisputably, the literal elements of the Earth, helped the woman. Dr. Wylie in his portrayal of the Armada's destruction says:

"Even the Spaniards themselves confessed that the divine hand was upon them; that One looked forth at times from the storm cloud that pursued then, and troubled them. Christendom at large was solemnized: the ordinary course of events had been interrupted; the heavens had been bowed, and the great Judge had descended upon the scene. The deliverance was a common one to the Protestant kingdoms. All shared in it with England, and each in turn took up this song of triumph . . . it seemed as if the days of Miriam with their judgments and songs of triumph, had returned, and that the Hebrew prophetess had lent her timbral to England, that she might sing upon it the destruction of a mightier host than that of Egypt. England began the song as was meet, for around her isle had the Armada been led, a spectacle of doom; but soon, from beyond the German ocean, from the foot of the Alps, from the shores of Scotland, other voices were heard swelling the anthem, and saying, Sing ye to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously." (34)

When the few remaining Spanish galleons finally limped back to Spain, Phillip 2 lamented, "I sent my ships to fight with men not to combat the winds." But God had intervened and used the winds to bring disaster to the plans of Rome to overcome the people of God. History records how the Dutch Protestants were besieged by Spanish Catholic armies, and how winds, tides, and floods intervened, enabling the Dutch to escape destruction.

"EARTH" ALSO HAS A SYMBOLIC APPLICATION

Does "the earth", also have a symbolic application in these verses? The earth is the opposite to the sea (or waters), and in prophecy, waters symbolize of multitudes, peoples, nations and tongues;" a thickly populated area. The earth, being the opposite to waters, could represent a sparsely populated area. During the 1260 years, did God's people resort to such areas to find protection? They certainly did. As we have previously shown, it was the Alpine Valleys of Northern Italy, the forest recesses of Bohemia, the extensive forest areas of south-west France, extending to the glens and dales of the Pyrenees. Also the isolated areas of Britain, and the adjacent islands such as Iona and Lindisfarne.

The regions of Ethiopia, cut off from papal intrusion by the Moslem conquests, the areas of the Ukraine - southern Russia - where German Christians called Pietists migrated because of opposition in the 17th century. The Caucasus and Armenia, and areas of the east where the Church of the East flourished, cut off from Papal influence by Arab and Turkish rule. The remote mountain valleys of Southern France where the French Protestants called Huguenots, resorted for worship amid fierce persecution from Catholic civil and religious leadership. These French believers in the wilderness regions, were literally called "the Church in the Desert". (35)

Finally, the sparsely populated portions of the new world of America, where the papacy did not dominate. In the 17th and 18th centuries America came into being, the land of freedom. That nation originated chiefly with the Pilgrim Fathers who forsook England because of religious intolerance by church and king.

EARTHLY RULERS PROTECTED THE SAINTS

In scripture the term "earth" is also used to represent the rulers or inhabitants of the earth. (36) "The earth is generally understood of some earthly power which is raised up to protect the church against persecution". (37)

Did any earthly rulers protect God's people throughout the 1260 years of persecution? Yes! The first one of note was Theoderic, King of the Ostrogoths of the sixth century. (38) Count Raymond of Toulouse was a noted protector of the Albigenses. The king and queen of Bohemia were protectors of John Huss and his followers. The Protestant princes of Germany protected Luther and his followers. Some of the independent city states of Germany protected the Anabaptists. Some cantons of Switzerland protected Zwingli and his followers. The city state of Geneva gave asylum to John Calvin and French and British Protestants. Protestant England intermittently gave protection to Protestants. William of Orange - 01W'illiam the

Silent" - was another outstanding champion of religious liberty who protected Dutch and German Protestants. Certain Dutch city states were also a refuge for British Independents such as the Pilgrim Fathers.

Gustaf Adolphus, King of Sweden, led the Protestant armies against the Catholic European powers in the Thirty Years War, in order to protect the Protestants. Oliver Cromwell, during the English Commonwealth, was a great protector of English dissenters. His army was composed mostly of Congregationalists. He protected the people from the intolerant pro-Catholic Anglican church. He was also a threat to the persecutors of the Waldenses of his day. Count Zinzendorf of Saxony was a protector of the Moravians who had fled from Roman Catholic persecution in Moravia.

Probably the greatest of all, was the United States of America which by legislating civil and religious liberty, became the home of the oppressed. Some would also include the French Revolution, which, by overthrowing the feudal system and establishing the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity, dramatically changed the attitude of much of the world towards religious oppression. Thus, the earth in a symbolic sense, opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood of persecution.

THE TRUTH REGARDING THE REMNANT

We now examine the final verse of this chapter.

“The dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

“The dragon was wrath AT [Greek] the woman, and went [away, or departed, as one baffled in his attempt to carry the woman away in the flood of persecution], to make war with the remnant of her seed.” What is the meaning of the term “remnant”? Some versions render this word, “the rest”, or “remainder” of the woman’s seed. The word “remnant” means “that which remains, residue, rest” according to Dr. Strong. The dragon makes war with the residue, or the rest of the church’s followers.

In Revelation 12 there are two “seeds”. The man child, Jesus, (Verse 5) and “the remnant of her seed”, or offspring. (Verse 17) This means the remainder, or the last of her offspring. It clearly refers to the final group of God’s people before the Second Advent of Christ.

REMNANTS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

The key to understanding the term “remnant”, is found in the Old Testament. God’s people are continually pictured as a remnant, as survivors; a minority, clinging to the true faith while the majority of the professed people of God compromise with error and the world. The New Testament confirms this Old Testament concept. Jesus declared:

“Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction and many there be that go in thereat, because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13, 14.

God’s true people have always been a minority, always a remnant.

“Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32

Truth has ever been on the scaffold and error has ever been on the throne.

THE REMNANTS IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

Before the Flood, God’s people, the descendants of Seth, were called “the sons of God” (39) in contrast to the descendants of Cain who were called the sons or “daughters of men”. (40) Finally there was compromise and intermarriage between the two groups and as a result the whole earth became corrupt. But a remnant was saved, consisting of Noah and his family.

In the post flood era, from Shem to Abraham, God’s people, the Shemites, were opposed to the Hamites, the builders of the tower of Babel. Again there was compromise, and idolatry soon permeated the people of God. Again, God saved a remnant, the family of Abraham whom he called out to the land of Canaan.

In the Exodus of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, for 40 years, Israel was “the church in the wilderness”. As a result of their rebellion, God decreed that all adults should die in the wilderness; except a remnant, comprising Caleb and Joshua and their families.

In the Promised Land, from the time of Joshua to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, repeatedly the people of God compromised, and were finally delivered into Babylonian captivity. Only a remnant remained, Jeremiah and his associates. After Israel’s captivity and deliverance by Cyrus, God called them to return to their homeland, but only a remnant responded. These were the Jews under Zerubabel,

Ezra and Nehemiah. At the time of the First Advent, the Jews, in a different form, compromised again, but God saved a remnant. They were the Jews who accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They formed the nucleus of the Christian church.

REMNANTS IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA

In the early Christian church, from the time of the Apostles to Constantine, after fierce persecution, the Christians came under royal favor. This resulted in compromise and apostasy, but God saved a remnant. They were those who resisted the apostasy and withdrew from the centers of civilization and dwelt in the wilderness regions in 538 AD.

In the time of the Protestant Reformation, from 1517 to about 1700 AD, God's professed people were the Lutherans, the Calvinists, (the Reform Church), and the Anglicans. Once again there was compromise. They did not fully forsake Catholicism and as a result those churches became spiritually dead. But out of them God called a remnant. These were the dissenters, the independents, the Anabaptists, the Baptists, the Pietists, the Moravians and the Methodists etc.

REMNANT OF THE LAST DAYS

Beginning about 1798 God's people were called to receive further light from Scripture, but sadly the majority neglected to follow the increasing light, and as a result they began to slip down the path of apostasy. But once again, God preserved a remnant. They were they who received the light and embraced the Three Angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. (41) We suggest that this is the remnant of the end time.

According to Revelation 12, the woman - the true church - is to be in the wilderness, in obscurity, for 1260 years, from 538 to 1798 AD. This suggests that while there were Christian churches in existence, as noted above, prior to 1798, these bodies did not comprise the true church as such. While God used these various groups mightily in his cause, yet they did not comprise the true church. That church as such, was out of the public eye, unrecognized, in the wilderness.

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE FINAL REMNANT

It is not until after 1798 AD that we should expect to see the true church publicly emerge. How then can one identify the true remnant of the last days? Revelation 12 presents seven unique specifications by which the sincere searcher may be able to distinguish the true remnant.

1. It publicly appears after 1798.
2. It will be a minority group - a remnant.
3. It will be apostolic - i. e. similar in belief and practice to the apostles.
4. It will be unpopular. It receives the wrath of the dragon.
5. It keeps the commandments of God.
6. It will have the testimony of Jesus.
7. It is expecting the Second Advent, i. e. it is an Adventist church.
8. What religious group arose after 1798? The answer is that hundreds of religious groups arose in that period. Why should this be? In order to confuse the searcher. Satan understands the prophecies of scripture; he was aware that the true church would return to the public arena after 1798, therefore he endeavored to hinder the purpose of God by a clever counter. After 1798 he inspired the rise of numerous religious bodies, and each one claimed in sincerity, that it was the true church or that it, alone, had the truth. How clever but how confusing! Therefore to find the true remnant, we must pass to the other six distinguishing marks.
9. It will be a minority group. All of the groups that arose after 1798 were minority groups but some are no longer in this category.
10. It is apostolic. To illustrate this point, we use the term remnant as understood in the commercial world. A remnant is a small piece of material left over from a bolt of cloth. That remnant is of the same texture, color and pattern as the rest of the material comprising the bolt. So also with the final remnant of the church. It will be the same in belief and practice as the true church right back to the apostles. It is significant to note, that nearly all of the religious groups that have risen since 1798, claim to be apostolic. Therefore one must examine the New Testament to determine the teachings and character of the apostolic church.
11. It will be unpopular. It will be the target of Satan's wrath. This is where the first big difference appears. Most of the groups that arose after 1798 are now popular. The Pentecostals are popular. The Church of Christ is popular. The Salvation Army is popular. On the other hand, Jehovah's Witnesses have been very unpopular and they claim that this is evidence that they must be the true people of God. But they must fulfill all the other six specifications in order to comprise the remnant.
12. The remnant keep the commandments of God. This cancels out all who reject God's law of ten commandments, and sadly this involves the great majority of all religious groups. What group endeavors to keep and to teach, all of God's commandments? This must

include the fourth commandment, which involves the seventh day Sabbath, for the Scripture says, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)

It must also include baptism by immersion, the ordinance of humility as commanded by Jesus in John 13. It involves obedience to the laws of health according to Acts 15 which hark back to the health laws given by God to Moses. More than one group observes the true Biblical seventh-day Sabbath, but nearly all fall down in the area of temperance and healthful living.

6 The sixth point is particularly relevant at this stage. The final remnant will possess the testimony of Jesus. What is the testimony of Jesus? (See Appendix 1.)

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10.

What is the spirit of prophecy? A parallel verse throws light on this expression.”He said to me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” Revelation 22:9.

Notice the parallels between these two verses which shows that the spirit of prophecy involves the existence of a prophet.

REVELATION 19:10 REVELATION 22:9.

“See thou do it not!” “See thou do it not”

“I am thy fellow servant” “I am thy fellow servant”

“And of thy brethren “And of thy brethren”

“Which have the testimony of Jesus.” “The prophets.”

“Worship God.” “Worship God.”

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”

The “testimony of Jesus” is the equivalent of “the prophets”. In scripture the term, “testimony” is employed in both Old and New Testaments, to describe the messages which the prophets received from God.

“Thy prophets testify against thee.” Nehemiah 9:34.

“And testifies against them in the prophets.” Nehemiah 9:30.

“Thy testimonies wherewith thou didst testify against them.” Nehemiah 9:34.

“I testify among you this day.” Deuteronomy 32:46.

“They rejected his testimony.” 2 Kings 17:15.

“You have not obeyed his testimonies.” Jeremiah 44:23,

“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20.

In the book of Revelation, the word “testimony”, is used in connection with the prophet John, when he received the message from God for the church.

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify to you these things in the churches.” Revelation 22:16, 18, 20.

“I testify to every man.” Revelation 22:16, 18, 20.

“He that testifies these things said, Surely I come quickly.” Revelation 22:16, 18, 20.

“Who bear record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:2.

“The testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9.

“The testimony of Jesus.” Revelation 19:10.

The word testimony, or testify, is employed eight times in Revelation and it always refers to the revelation given by God to His prophets. (See Appendix I.) This calls for the existence of one who has the prophetic gift. Thus within the final remnant there will exist the prophetic gift, there will be one who possesses the unique gift of prophecy. But do not the Mormons claim to have the gift of prophecy in the person of Joseph Smith? Yes! But the scriptures present at least nine rigid tests by which believers may test anyone claiming to be a prophet. (See Appendix 2.) These were never fulfilled by Joseph Smith.

7. The seventh point is that the final remnant, existing in the end time, will be aware of the imminence of the Second Advent. It will be a group living in expectation of the Advent. In obedience to the instruction of Christ, it will be proclaiming the Second Advent and urging preparation for it. In other words, it will be an Adventist group of people.

Who then, comprise the final remnant of the end-time? What group is endeavoring to fulfill the seven specifications that identify the true remnant. There is only one group that fits the picture and that is the world-wide, Seventh-day Adventist movement. While it is a minority group, yet it is the most widespread Protestant movement in the world today.

Seventh-day Adventists claim that they are the hearers of God’s last message to the world, the message that prepares God’s people worldwide, for the Second Advent of Christ. Does this mean that Seventh-day Adventists believe that they alone, are the people of God?

No: They believe that they have God’s final message for the world. They believe that there are other remnants of God’s people in the churches of Christendom. There are other remnants of God’s people - born

again believers - who are living according to the light that they have. However these remnants do not fulfill the seven specifications of the true remnant. What then will be the lot of the remnants that are scattered throughout the various churches of Babylon? Scripture reveals that God has set a special standard, in order to fit the saints for translation. This standard is revealed in the character of the 144,000, the number that represents or symbolizes the final remnant of God’s people. (42) Those who fail to permit God to introduce within them the character essential for translation, will be shaken out of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Only those who are classed by God as over comers will comprise the final remnant. This will involve only a minority of Seventh-day Adventists. (43) the majority of the final remnant will comprise the remnants who are now in Babylon but who ultimately will come out of Babylon. In the final call of God to his people, in Revelation 18:1-4, He calls out of Babylon, all those who still belong to Christ.

“Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that there will be large numbers who will come out of the various religious bodies, and join with them in the keeping of all the commandments of God and be ready for the coming of Christ. They believe that the majority of God’s people are in the churches of Babylon, (44) There are godly remnants within those churches, which finally will come out and unite with those Seventh-day Adventists who are true to Christ. This means that finally, “there will be one fold and one shepherd”, just as it was in Jesus’ day. Jesus said,

“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” John 10:16.

Today God has numerous “other sheep”, not of the fold of the final remnant. But he says, “them also I must bring and shall hear my voice.” When the final call of Christ goes to the world, those Christians still in Babylon, will hear His voice, calling them to keep all of God’s commandments, calling them out of Babylon, calling them into the final remnant. At that time, “there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” That one fold will be:

“The remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

The prediction also declares that,

“The dragon was wrath with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Elsewhere we have shown that the dragon represents the political powers whom Satan uses to make war on the saints. This warfare is detailed in the 13th chapter of Revelation onwards. In these chapters is introduced the beast with seven heads that rises out of the sea, the second beast with two horns like a lamb that rises out of the earth, and the image to the beast. These powers will be involved in the great final conflict with Christ and the final remnant of His people.

GOD'S LATTER DAY MOVMENT IN SCRIPTURE

ITS CONCEPT

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Joel 2:32

Titus 2:11-14

1 John 3:1-3

ITS COMMISSION Matthew 24:14;

Matthew 28:19-20 Revelation 10:11; Revelation 14:6-11

ITS COMPOSITION

Romans 9:27; 11:5 Revelation 3:2; Revelation 18:1-5

ITS CHARACTER Revelation 7:1-3; Revelation 14:1-5, 12 Romans 9:27; 11:5

ITS COMMITMENT

Luke 9:57-62 Revelation 14:4; Revelation 17:14

ITS CREDENTIALS Revelation 12:1-17

ITS CONVICTION

John 1:6; 19-23 Matthew 11:1-8

APPENDIX I. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

There is some misunderstanding on this question. What does "the testimony of Jesus" mean? Some claim that it means "the testimony TO Jesus Christ", or the "testimony ABOUT Jesus Christ." The RSV, the New English Bible, Phillip's translation, the 20th Century New Testament, all translate this phrase, "the testimony TO Jesus Christ." This brings into question the term, "the testimony OF Jesus Christ" as translated in the KJV. Four times the term 1Pthe testimony of Jesus Christt0 is used in Revelation. (1:2; 1:9; 12:17; 19:10.) In the first, second and fourth references, the Revised Standard Version renders the phrase as, the testimony OF Jesus Christ", but when it translates Revelation 12:17 it translates it as "the testimony TO Jesus Christ." This is pointedly inconsistent on the part of the translators. In "The New English Bible", when it translates Revelation 1:2 it says, "the testimony TO Jesus Christ." This again is inconsistent. Likewise with Phillip's translation, where, in translating the same two verses, he also is inconsistent. On the other hand, when Dr. Weymouth translates Revelation 12:17 he says, "the testimony OF Jesus Christ", but in the other three verses he also is very inconsistent. He translates Revelation 19:10 as "the testimony TO Jesus Christ". Revelation 1:9 he translates, "the testimony BY Jesus Christ". Revelation 1:2 he translates, "the testimony TO Jesus Christ". Yet, in his footnote under Revelation 1:2 he says, "The literal Greek is, 'the testimony OF Jesus Christ.'" (45)

Nine other translations, or versions, render Revelation 12:17 as, "the testimony OF Jesus Christ." These are: the King James, the New King James, Moffat, The New International, the Douay, Marshall, Fenton,

The Amplified New Testament, and Jamieson, Fausset & Brown. This assures us that the Greek of Revelation 12:17 is indeed, "the testimony OF Jesus Christ."

APPENDIX 2

The Nine Tests of A True Prophet A. Physical Tests of

A Prophet In Vision

1. Loss of Natural Strength. Daniel 10:7-8; 16-17.
2. Receives Supernatural Strength. Daniel 10:18-19.
3. Breathing stops. Daniel 10:17.
4. Eyes Remain Open. Numbers 24:2-4; 15-16.
5. Unconscious of earthly surroundings. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4.

B. Moral Tests

1. Teaches Jesus Christ came in the flesh. 1 John 4:1-3.
2. In harmony with the law and the testimony. Isaiah 8:19-20.
3. Predictions Come True. Deuteronomy 18:20-22.
4. Life and influence, consistently for good. Matthew 7:15-20.

The first five tests declare that the person fulfilling them is under the influence of supernatural powers. The final four tests determine whether the supernatural power is of God or Satan.

REFERENCES

1. Matthew 2:13-23.
2. The church in the Sinai wilderness actually was composed of 13 tribes but they are always described as twelve tribes.
3. 1 Chronicles 24:1-18.
4. Revelation 7:1-4; 14:1-5.
5. Emmanius Marcellinius."The History of the Roman Empire", Book 16, chapter 12.
6. Aurelius Clemens Prudentius. See "Encyclopedia Britannica", 1911, Edition. Volume 22, page 518.
7. Exodus 1:7-22.
- 8."If God abhors one sin above another of which his people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded by God as a grievous crime, and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God." Ellen G. White, "Testimonies", Volume 3, page 281.
9. For an in depth study on "The Origin of Evil", see The Author's – "Why Do The Innocent Suffer?"
Or Ellen G. White. The Great Controversy, page 492-504. Patriarch's And Prophets, pages 33-34.
- 10 The Greek word "Tartarus is used once only in the Bible and it appears to be the place or abode of evil spirits.
- 11 Job 1:6-7; 2:1.
- 12 John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.
- 13 Job 1:8-11; 2:3, 5.
- 14 Ellen G. White. The Great Controversy, page 501. Ellen G. White. Testimonies to Ministers, page 168.
- 15 Ellen G. White. Ministry of Healing, page 99.
- 16 See, "Are Other Worlds inhabited?" in "New Heaven and New Earth", by the Author.

- 17 Ellen G. White. *Desire of Ages*, page 761.
 - 18 Exodus 19:1-4.
 - 19 Procopius. *Secret History of The of Court of Justinian*, pages 121-122; 138-139.
 20. John Chapman. *Studies in The Early Papacy*, page 222.
 21. Dr. N. Summerbell. . *History of The Early Christian Church*, pages 310-311.
 22. The Year-Day principle of a day for a year in symbolic prophecy is employed in Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34.
 23. Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5.
 24. C. Edwardson. *Facts of Faith*, pages 40-42.
 25. The word Vaudois or Waldenses means “people of the Valleys.” An attempt has been made by the church of Rome to identify the Waldenses as the followers of Peter Waldo of Lyons, France. This has been done to try to hide the truth that there were dissenters from the Papacy centuries before the Protestant Reformation.
 26. Dr. L. E. Froom. *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Volume 1, page 419.
 27. I Peter 2:2; John 6:51-52, 63; Hebrews 5:12-13.
 28. Dr. J. A. Wylie. *The History of Protestantism*, Volume 1, pages 23-32.
 29. H. C. Lea. *History of The Inquisition of The Middle Ages*, Volume 1, pages 86-87.
 30. Professor A. Baudrillart. *The Catholic Church, The Renaissance & Protestantism*, pages 182-184. Andrew Steinmetz. *History of the Jesuits*, Volume 1, page 13.
 31. Other groups that maintained the true faith were the Celtic church in Britain etc. The Albigenses of South West France, the Hussites of Bohemia, the Paulicians of Armenia, the Pietists of Germany and the Ukraine and many other groups.
 32. See the Author’s “The Drying Up of The great River Euphrates”.
 - 33.”The Hymn of The Vaudois Mountaineers”, Quoted by William Spicer.”*Beacon Lights of Prophecy*”, page 273.
 34. Dr. J. A. Wylie. *The History of Protestantism*, Book 23, chapter 19.
 35. Samuel Smiles. *The Huguenots in France*, page 88.
 36. Jeremiah 22:9; Micah 1:2; Habakkuk 2:20.
 37. Bishop Ellicott on Revelation 12:15-16.
 38. Gibbon. *Decline & Fall*, Chapter 39, Paragraph 17, pages 229-232.
 39. Genesis 4:26, margin.
 40. Genesis 6:2-4.
 41. See the author’s “God’s Final Ultimatum to Men.”
 42. See the Author’s, “The 144,000”.
 43. Ellen G. White. *The Great Controversy*, p. 608.
- Ellen G. White. *Testimonies To The Church*, Volume 5, pages 80-81, 236.

44 Ellen G. White. The Great Controversy, page 383.

45 Dr. Weymouth. The New Testament In Modern Speech, Footnote under Revelation 1:2.

23. The Antichrist 666

The Great Antichrist

An Exposition of Revelation 13:1-10 & 13:18.

The Plan of the Chapter:

Verses 1-4 A brief sketch of Antichrist's career. His rise, reign, ruin, resurrection and restoration.

The principle of repetition and enlargement so prominent in scripture and especially in Daniel and Revelation is employed in this chapter.

Verses 5-8 The reign of Antichrist.

Verses 9-10 The ruin of Antichrist.

Verses 11-12 The resurrection and restoration of Antichrist and through whom it is accomplished.

Verses 13-15 The method by which it is accomplished.

Verses 16-17 The medium used to accomplish it.

Through much of the Christian era and particularly at the time of the great Protestant Reformation, the general view among the faithful was that the Antichrist was the Church of Rome. However, in reaction to the devastating influence of the Reformation upon the Church of Rome, a Counter Reformation was mounted, led by the Jesuits. One of the main efforts of the counter Reformation was to invent an interpretation of prophecy that would hide the true identity of Antichrist and remove the stigma from the Church of Rome. To do this they invented a school of prophetic interpretation called the Futuristic system. This school cleverly perverted the prophecies to make them teach that the Antichrist would be a Jew who would rise in the future, probably after the Second Advent, or the Rapture, and fulfill the predictions concerning Antichrist.

This clever school of thought was then insidiously infiltrated into the Protestant churches and as a result it gradually robbed them of their protest against the Church of Rome. One instrument in accomplishing this has been the Schofield Bible.

What is the truth of Revelation 13? This chapter is one of the main chapters in Daniel and Revelation dealing with the Antichrist. Other chapters are Daniel 7, 8, 11, and Revelation 17 and 18.

In Revelation 13 are presented at least fifteen specifications by which the sincere searcher may identify the earthly Antichrist; the fifteen points briefly stated are:

1. It is a political kingdom.
2. It rises amid numerous peoples.
3. It is one of seven political powers or empires opposed to God.
4. It is connected with Western Europe.
5. It reigns when the powers of Western Europe are reigning.
6. It is connected with the four kingdoms of Daniel 7, i. e. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
7. Its seat or center is given it by Imperial Rome.

8. It becomes a universal or catholic power.

9. It practices blasphemy.

10. It persecutes and destroys the saints.

11. Its number is 666.

12. Its political supremacy is for 1260 years.

13. It is then fatally wounded.

14. Its wound is healed.

15. It is restored to world pre-eminence.

THE RISE OF THE BEAST

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns and upon his heads, the name of blasphemy.” verse 1.

IT IS A POLITICAL ENTITY

In prophecy a beast represents a political power or kingdom. As Daniel’s divine instructor declared: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings [kingdoms] which shall arise out of the earth.” “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.” Daniel 7:17, 23.

This reveals that the Antichrist will not be an individual person but a political entity.

IT RISES AMID NUMEROUS PEOPLES

In prophecy, sea represents numerous peoples - a thickly populated region. Sea is comprised of water and the divine instruction is,

“The waters which thou saw are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” Revelation 17:18.

IT IS ONE OF 7 POLITICAL POWERS THAT OPPOSE GOD

“Having seven heads.”

The seven heads are dealt with in detail in Revelation 17 where it is shown that they represent seven successive kingdoms used of Satan to oppose God and his people. (2) Revelation 13 applies to a period when one of the 7 heads is in power. “I saw one of his heads wounded to death.” Verse 3. These four beasts are introduced in Daniel 7 and represent the four universal kingdoms of history.

IT IS CONNECTED WITH WESTERN EUROPE

“Having . . . ten horns.” Verse 1

In Daniel and Revelation these ten horns are mentioned ten times and every time they represent at least, initially, the ten divisions into which Western Rome divided in 476 AD.

“And the ten horns out of this kingdom (Imperial Rome) are ten kings.” [kingdoms] Daniel 7:24.

Western Europe was the territory peculiar to Rome. Her other territories which she conquered, were territories peculiar to Greece, Persia and Babylon, etc. The ten kingdoms were formed from the Western division of Rome.

ANTICHRIST REIGNS WHEN EUROPE RULES

“And upon his horns ten crowns” verse 1.

Crowns denote ruler ship and the crowns upon the horns denote that the beast is in power when the ten horns are ruling, i. e. when the Western European kingdoms have been formed and are in power. The ten kingdoms were established by 476 AD which means that Antichrist rises after that date.

IT IS CONNECTED WITH THE 4 KINGDOMS OF DANIEL 7

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority.” Verse 2.

The Lion #NAME?

The Bear #NAME?

The Leopard #NAME?

The Non-descript or Dragon #NAME?

“Its mouth is as the mouth of a lion.”

Antichrist has Babylon’s mouth. It is Babylon’s mouthpiece. When Antichrist speaks, it is Babylon speaking.

IT RECEIVES ITS SEAT FROM IMPERIAL ROME

“The dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority.” Revelation 13.

The dragon is first mentioned in Revelation 12 and is shown there to represent Imperial Rome which was used by Satan to try and destroy the Christ-child. (3) Did Imperial Rome give its capital, its seat of government to any other power? The answer is yes. This transpired in 330 AD when Constantine the Great, removed the seat of government from Rome on the Tiber to the new Rome - Constantinople on The Bosphorus, (Istanbul). To whom did Imperial Rome bequeath her ancient seat? Let historians answer.

Francis P. C. Hays (Roman Catholic) says:

“When the Roman Empire became Christian, and the peace of the Church was guaranteed, the Emperor left Rome to the Pope, to be the seat of the authority of the Vicar of Christ, who should reign there independent of all human authority, to the consummation of ages, to the end of time.” (4)

Alexander C. Flick, Ph. D. , Litt. D. , says:

“The removal of the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330, left the Western Church practically free from imperial power, to develop its own form of organization. The Bishop of Rome, in the seat of the Caesars, was now the greatest man in the West, and was soon forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head.” (5)

“And meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages.” (6)

In the Room of Constantine in the Vatican palace, are four superb paintings. The fourth one is entitled, “The Donation of Constantine”. It depicts the Roman emperor about to depart from Rome for Constantinople. He is presenting to the Bishop of Rome a statue of a warrior which represents the transfer of the city of Rome to the bishop. This painting is claimed to be a forgery but it was used by the Papacy as authority for her political claims. Here is an acknowledgement from the Papacy that she derived her seat from Imperial Rome.

But Imperial Rome gave not only her seat, but “power and great authority”. This was fulfilled by emperor Justinian when he officially decreed the Bishop of Rome to be the “universal bishop of the world and the corrector of heretics” in 533 . AD. (7)

But such authority was useless without the political and military power to enforce it. This was provided in 538 AD when Justinian put down all resistance to the Papacy and enforced submission to Catholicism. This resulted in the flight and slaughter of thousands of non-Catholics as they attempted to leave the empire. (8)

IT IS A UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS POLITICAL POWER

“They worshipped the beast.” Verse 4.

“Power was given him over all kingdoms and tongues, and nations.” Verse 7.

The word universal also means catholic. Thus this power will be a catholic, religious, political power.

IT PRACTICES BLASPHEMY

“Upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” Verse 1.

“A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” Verse 5.

“He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” Verse 6.

What is the meaning of blasphemy? According to scripture, it is the practice of usurping the position, or of claiming the prerogatives of God.

“Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone.” Luke 5:21.

Does the Church of Rome claim to forgive sin? Let Catholic authorities answer.

“If anyone said that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act . . . let him be anathema.”

“If anyone said that priests. . . have not the power of binding and of loosing, or that not priests alone are ministers of absolution, let him be anathema!’ [accursed] (9)

“To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God.” (10)

“The priest not only declares that the sinner is forgiven, but he really forgives him. So great is the power of the priest, that the judgments of heaven itself are subject to his decision.” (11)

“The poor sinner kneels at his confessor’s feet. He ‘Knows he is not speaking to an ordinary man, but to another Christ. He hears the words, ‘I absolve thy sins’ and the hidden load of sins drops from his soul forever.” (12)

“A priest in absolving a sinner, performs the very office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls.” (13)

A form of blasphemy is also indicated in the gospel of John.

“For a good work we stone [kill] thee not, but for blasphemy and because that thou, being a man, makes thyself God.” John 10:33.

Does the Papacy deify man? Does the Papacy make claims that pertain only to God? Again, let Catholic authorities reply.

“We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the wide world and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of the blessed Peter . . . the father and doctor of all Christians; and that to him . . . was given . . . full power to feed, rule and govern the universal church.” (14)

In a large, authentic work by F. Lucii Ferraris, called “Præmpta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica” printed at Rome, 1800, and sanctioned by the Catholic Encyclopedia (Volume VI, page 48) we find the following statement regarding the power of the pope:

“The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.”

“Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. . .”The Pope is as it were God an earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom.” (15)

The Catholic Encyclopedia says of the pope:

“The sentences which he gives are to be forthwith ratified in heaven.” (16) Pope Leo XIII says:

“But the supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires, together with a perfect accord in the one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman. Pontiff, as to God Himself.”

“We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.” In this encyclical the pope has capitalized all pronouns referring to himself and to God, (17) St. Alphonsus de Liguori, a sainted doctor of the Roman church, claims the same power for the Roman priests. He says:

“The priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of his priests. . . The Sovereign Master of the universe only follows the servant by confirming in heaven all that the latter decides upon earth.” (18)

Innocent III has written:

“Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices, the priests are so many gods.” (18)

“The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ but HE IS JESUS MUST HIMSELF hidden under the veil of flesh.” (19)

“In 1335 Bishop Alvarez Pelayo laid down the doctrine that as Christ partook of the nature of God, so the Pope . . . is not simply a man, but rather God on earth.” (20)

“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.” Verse 6

The above claims of the Popes amount to blasphemy against God’s name. But how does the Papacy blaspheme God’s tabernacle? God’s tabernacle is the great temple or sanctuary, in heaven.

“We have such an high priest-in the heavens . . . a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.” Hebrews 8:1, 2.

“The temple of the tabernacle in heaven was opened.” Revelation 15:5.

The Papacy has blasphemed God’s heavenly tabernacle by setting up an earthly counterfeit tabernacle, in which are offered counterfeit sacrifices by a counterfeit priesthood to a counterfeit god.

But how does the Papacy blaspheme “them that dwell in heaven”? Apart from the Godhead, the dwellers in heaven are the millions of angels, the messengers of God. The Papacy blasphemes against them by claiming that the priests are greater than the angels and that the Pope can even excommunicate angels,

“The sacerdotal [priestly] dignity also surpasses the dignity of the angels. . . All the angels in heaven cannot absolve from a single sin. . . the holy archangel can chase away devils, but he cannot free his client from their claims till a priest comes to absolve him. . . If I saw an angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the angel.” (21)

“The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions, so that if it were possible that the angels might err in the faith, they could be judged and excommunicated by the Pope.” (22)

ANTICHRIST IS A PERSECUTING POWER

“It was given him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” Verse 7.

Who are the saints? The word saint means a holy one, i. e. one who is free from sin. One who belongs to God. The only way anyone can be free from sin is by accepting the shed blood of Christ in payment for his sins.

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” I John 1:7.

This involves only true believers in Christ, i. e. true Christians. Has the Papacy made war on true Christians? Note the official attitude of the Papacy toward those who dissent.

“Much more can heretics [dissenters] after they are convicted of heresy, be not only forthwith excommunicated, but as surely put to death.” (23)

“When she thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it-But will the Catholic Church give bond that she will not persecute at all? . . . The Catholic Church gives no bonds for her good behavior.” (24)

Has the Papacy employed physical force against dissenters? Let Professor Baudrillart, rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris and later a cardinal, reply.

“The Catholic Church proudly proclaims that she has, a ‘horror of blood.’ Nevertheless when confronted by heresy she has recourse to force, to corporal punishment, to torture. She creates tribunals like those of the Inquisition and encourages a crusade, or a religious wars. Especially did she act thus in the sixteenth century with regard to Protestants she lit in Italy, In the Low Countries and above all in Spain the funeral piles of the Inquisition. In France and in England she tortured the heretics whilst both in France and Germany she encouraged and actively aided, the religious wars. No one will deny that we have here a great scandal to our contemporaries.”

“Indeed, even among our friends and our brothers we find those who dare not look this problem in the face. They ask permission from the Church to ignore or even deny all those acts and Institutions in the past which have made orthodoxy compulsory.” (25)

This book bears the sanction of the Roman Catholic authorities, and of their “censor”. Dr. J. Dowling says:

“From the birth of Popery in 606, to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that more than fifty millions of the human family, have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors, an average of more than forty thousand religious murders for every year of the existence of Popery.” (26)

W. E. H. Lecky says:

“That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood Um any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history. The memorials, indeed, of many of her persecutions are now so scanty, that it is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no power of Imagination can adequately realize their sufferings.” (27)

The Anglican Scholar, Dr. H. Grattan Guinness, says:

“It has been calculated that the Popes of Rome have directly or indirectly slain fifty millions of men, and women who refused to be parties to Roman idolatries, who held to the Bible as the Word of God.” (28)

These distasteful accounts of history abundantly confirm that the Papacy fulfills this tenth specification of the Antichrist.

ITS NUMBER IS 666

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a men; and his number is six hundred, three score and six.” Verse 18

In the Catholic Douay version of the Bible there is a footnote inserted by the translators which reads, “666. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”

Whose name? It is the number of a man. What man is predominant in the Papal system? It is unquestionably the Pope. The title “Pope” means “father”. The word “Papacy” is also from the word father. This is in spite of Jesus command – “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” Matthew 23:9.

“The holy father” is THE man of the Papacy. If the numeral letters of his name make up the number 666, it is essential that his official name be confirmed in order to follow the instruction in the footnote of the official Catholic bible. Six Catholic authorities are unanimous that the official name or title of the Pope, is “Vicarius Filii Dei” i. e. “Vicar of the Son of God”. These Catholic authorities are:

1. The Decretum of Gratian. The founder of the science of Canon law. 1148-1582 AD.
2. The Revised edition of the above - 1582 until now.
3. The Roman Catholic Encyclopedia of Lucii Ferraris. Volume 6, page 48.
4. Cardinal Manning “The Temporal. Power of the Vicar of Christ,” pages 231,232.
5. Philippe Labbe, a distinguished Jesuit writer, “Sacrosanta concilia ad regiam editionen Exacta!” VoIume 1, page 1534.
6. Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore, USA 1904. In an official letter to an enquirer.

At the coronation of the Pope, the presiding cardinal, as he places the crown upon the head of the new pope declares, "Vicarius Filii Dei".

Do the numeral letters of this name add up to 666? In the Latin language there are seven numerals; (originally there were six).

V= 5 I=1

C=100

A = 0

R = 0 I = 1 U = 5

S = 0

F=0

I=1 L=50

I=1 I=1

D=500

E=0 I=1

Without any manipulation each numeral of the Pope's title adds up exactly to 666.

It is also claimed that whenever the Pope signs an official document, the signature is "Dux Cleri", meaning "Chief, or Head of the Clergy".

Significantly, this official signature also adds up to exactly 666.

D=500

U=5 X=10

C - 100

L = 50

E = 0 R = 0 I = 1

This means that whenever the Pope signs an official document or letter, etc. , he signs 666. It is interesting to note that when the identifying titles of Jesus Christ were nailed upon the cross at Calvary, they were written in three languages.

"And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEW'S and it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin." John 19:19, 20.

Likewise, with the identification of Antichrist. He also is identified in the same three languages because in these, his names add up to 666.

The Hebrew term for the Roman power was "Romith". Unlike Latin, every letter serves as a numeral in the Hebrew language.

R = 200

0 = 6

M = 40

I = 1

I=1

TH = 400

The Greek term for “The Latin People” was “Lateinos”. In the Greek language every letter also serves as a number.

L= 30 A = 1

T = 300 E = 5 I = 10

N = 50

O = 70

S = 200

The number 666 was sacred to sun worship. It originated in Babylon and had great significance. (29)

ANTICHRIST IS POLITICALLY SUPREME FOR 1260 YEARS

“Power was given him to continue forty and two months.” Verse 5

The margin reads “to make war” for 42 months.

“He was allowed to exert authority for forty-two months.” Moffatt and Phillips translation.

Did the Papacy have political supremacy for 42 literal months? No! This is a symbolic prophecy, therefore any time mentioned in it must be taken as symbolic also. This is an important principle of prophetic interpretation. Symbols in prophecy only apply until the Second Advent. After the Second Advent symbols no longer apply. Therefore the time period of Revelation 13 being prior to the Second Advent, must have a symbolic application, i. e. a day for a year. (30) In a Bible month there are 30 days, therefore forty-two months equal 1260 days or 1260 years. This time period is mentioned seven times in Daniel and Revelation and it always refers to the same period. It is an important key in the prophetic interpretation of Daniel and Revelation.

Any attempt to give this period a literal application of three and a half literal years must always be rejected. The Jesuit futuristic system uses this method to try and destroy this vital key, in order to avoid the stigma of the Papacy being the Antichrist.

When did the Papacy achieve political supremacy? The date was indisputably 538 AD. Four events transpired in 538 AD which made the Papacy supreme -

1. In 538 the Arian [anti-Catholic] kingdom of the Ostrogoths, controlling Italy, was conquered and soon after disappeared. This was the last of the three kingdoms that had stood in the Papacy’s way to political power. (31)
2. Roman Catholicism was made the official religion of the state. In 533 AD Justinian had decreed the Pope to be “the Universal Bishop of the World and the Corrector of Heretics!” In 538 this decree was made effective. This commenced a new era in history. It marked the commencement of the Middle Ages. (32)
3. In 538 AD the Papacy itself underwent a great change. Until this year all the Bishops of Rome were counted as “saints”, but from 538 onwards they were considered as rulers of state. This was because they were now political rulers. (33)
4. In 538 AD the persecution of non-Catholics commenced. Justinian decreed that all must join the Catholic Church or leave the empire and have their goods confiscated. This resulted in flight and massacre as thousands endeavored to escape. (34) Thus 538 AD commenced the awful era of Papal persecution that produced so many millions of martyrs and which today is an embarrassment to so many Catholics. (35)

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship [obey] him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Verse 8

This was truly the situation in regard to the world of that day, over which the Papacy presided. All submitted except the faithful minority of saints who were hounded, persecuted and martyred. 538 AD marked the beginning of the Middle Ages. Once this period was called the Dark Ages, but because it was the period when the Papacy dominated Europe, the Catholic Church has undertaken to falsify the historical

picture in order to improve her image. The Dark Ages have been glamorized as an age of chivalry, peace, unity and glory. Unfortunately, the opposite was the case. It was an age of oppression, superstition and fear. Of feudalism, of appalling ignorance and of prolonged persecution. It was the rule of the Papal Church. As the Anglican scholar declared,

“The noon of the Papacy was the midnight of the world.” (36)

Dr. N. Summerbell has written,

“The Dark Ages, introduced by the persecution of an enlightened church in the sanguinary wars of Justinian to exalt the Catholics, continued up to the fourteenth century. It was a long, dark night when ignorance, bigotry and cruelty reigned, and truth, purity and justice were crushed out.” (37)

Another author has also written,

“The noontide of the Papacy was the world’s moral midnight. The Holy scriptures were almost unknown not only to the people, but to the Priests, God’s law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position, for centuries there was no progress in learning, arts or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.” (38)

The prediction stated that the beast was to continue or make war for 42 months or 1260 years. The Papacy is the only power in history that has reigned supreme for that period of time. It covers the majority of the Christian era. Many enquire as to the reason why heaven permitted such a vast period of oppression upon mankind especially upon the saints of God. We suggest two main reasons -

1. This world is an object lesson or theatre to the sinless universe. In permitting the Papacy full reign, God revealed to the universe the fruitage of the principles of Satan’s rule. The Papacy is the masterpiece of Satan’s deception and in the 1260 year period, all beheld what it was like when Satan’s principles held sway.

2. The extended period of persecution kept the true church pure. Had affluence and popularity been the lot of the true church, it would have been ruined by corruption and apostasy as was the early church. Persecution maintained the purity of the faith.

If 538 AD marked the beginning of the 1260 year period, what date marked its end? This brings us to the thirteenth point of identification.

ANTICHRIST RECEIVES A DEADLY WOUND

“I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death” verse 3

“Mortally wounded,” T. C. N. T. and Weymouth.

“A death blow,” N. E. B.

“A mortal wound,” R. S. V.

“Slain,” margin K. J. V.

“He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity: he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” Verse 10

This is a repetition of the first part of verse 3. (39) The supremacy of the Papacy was to continue for 1260 years. Therefore the deadly wound would not be dealt, until the 1260 years were concluded. In what way did the political power of the Papacy end? The 1260 years ended in 1798 AD. It was in this year that the prediction was fulfilled concerning “the deadly wound” and of going “into captivity” and of being “killed with the sword” verse 10. It is important to recognize that it was the head of the beast that received the deadly wound. It is not the Roman Catholic Church as such that was wounded or slain. The Catholic Church has continually functioned. The beast represents the political aspect of the Papacy. The Papacy is a union of church and state, of religious and civil power. In Revelation 17, which is an enlargement of chapter 13, the religious element is symbolized as the harlot, and the civil or political element, is symbolized by the 7-headed beast on which the harlot rides.

Some claim that the deadly wound was administered by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century; but that event occurred before the close of the 1260 year period. The Reformation hurt the Catholic Church in certain countries of Europe, but it did not wound or slay the political element. The Papacy continued to war against the saints more strongly than ever. It organized the Counter Reformation which

amounted to open war against Protestantism. She established the terrible order of the Jesuits, whose sole purpose was to destroy Protestantism and elevate the Papacy. All this declared that the Papacy was alive and well after the Reformation.

The deadly wound of the Papacy occurred in 1798 at the behest of the Revolutionary government of France. It directed General Berthier to invade Italy and destroy the Papacy.

“There is one thing more essential to the attainment of the end desired and that is to destroy, if possible, the center of unity of the Roman Church.” (40)

In response Berthier arrested Pope Pius VI and gave orders for the abolition of the Papacy. He carried the Pope prisoner to France where he died the following year. Italy was declared a republic. This momentous event was recognized by authorities as the death-knell of the Papacy.

“Berthier entered Rome on the 10th of February, 1798 and proclaimed a republic. . . Half Europe thought Napoleon’s veto would be obeyed and that with the Pope the Papacy was dead.” (41)

“Orators deliver its [the Papacy’s] funeral oration with a joyous and blasphemous irony. It has ceased to exist. It well seem as if everything were finished.” (42)

“Rarely during all its history has the church known a more critical situation. In short, Catholicism as a whole seem dying.” (43)

What was it that constituted the deadly wound? It was the stripping from the Papacy of its political power. The church continued as a religious body but the political element was destroyed.

“In 1798 Berthier made his entrance into Rome, abolished the Papal government and established a secular one.” (44)

It was the Papal government that was slain. While various attempts were made to recover her political power, it was not successful. After 70 years of lingering between life and death, the Papacy gave its last gasp when Victor Emmanuel annexed the Papal territories and became the political head of Italy. (For detailed historical data, see Appendix I.) The initial wound was administered in 1798.

ANTICHRIST IS RESURRECTED - THE WOUND IS HEALED

“And his deadly wound was healed.” Verse 3

If the reception of the wound was the loss of its political power, we suggest that the healing of the wound must be the restoration of its political power. At the turn of the century the world in general believed that the Papacy was finished. To all appearances the restoration of its former power appeared an impossibility. But the divine prediction 1900 years before had declared, “Its deadly wound was healed.”

Today the fulfillment of the prediction is indisputable. The Papacy has revived. An almost unbelievable change has occurred. The recovery began about the time of the Great War of 1914-1918 and climaxed in 1929. In that year Mussolini, dictator of Italy, officially restored to the Papacy her political power. The Pope was made king again. He had the right to rule. He was able to re-establish the Papal court, the Papacy was again recognized as a political kingdom.

To commemorate the treaty, Mussolini constructed a special street leading from Rome to the Vatican called, “The Avenue of Reconciliation”. This treaty was recognized and published as a HEALING.

“A crowd, tense with excitement, is here to witness the passage of these two men. [Mussolini and Cardinal Gasparil whose pens will HEAL A WOUND of fifty-nine years.” (45)

“In affixing their autographs to the memorable document, HEALING THE WOUND which festered since the 1700’s, extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides.” (46)

Over eighteen hundred years after the prediction by St. John, the identical term is unconsciously employed to describe the fulfillment of this remarkable prophecy.

THE RESTORATION OF ANTICHRIST’S POWER

“And all the world wondered after the beast.” Verse 3

“And they worshipped the beast saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” Verse 4

“And causes the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast [Papacy] whose deadly wound was healed.” Verse 12

Since 1929 the Papacy’s revival and restoration has amazed the world. One hundred years ago, no Roman Catholic could hold public office in Great Britain or the United States. The Roman Catholic church was an unpopular, hated and despised church. It was considered by millions to be unchristian, pagan, idolatrous, degrading, oppressive and even a curse to the community.

Today, Roman Catholicism is looked upon in exactly the opposite light. It is an amazing reversal of public opinion. Today Catholic institutions in Great Britain are greater than before the Reformation. In the USA the position of the Papacy is even more impressive. She occupies a dominant position in regard to policies and control in that leading nation. As J. Rickab declared,

“Yet since then [1798], the Papacy has been lifted to a pinnacle of spiritual power, unreached maybe since earliest Christian history.” (47)

“The place of the Papacy in world affairs seems to stand out in bolder relief than at almost any other epoch of its long existence.” (48)

“As it reached the Atomic Age, the Catholic Church found itself in perhaps the most powerful condition in its history, in terms of numbers, influence and prestige.” (49)

THE EXTENT OF ANTICHRIST’S POWER

“All the world wondered after the beast.” Verse 3

Various translations concur that the extent of restoration will be worldwide.

“The whole earth went after the beast in wonder.” Moffatt.

“The whole earth went after the beast in amazement and wonder.” Amplified Bible.

“The whole earth followed the beast with wonder.” RSV.

“The whole world went after the beast in wondering admiration.” NEB.

“The whole earth followed the animal with wonder.” Phillips.

“The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast.” GNB.

Verses 11-17 reveal how the Papacy reaches world preeminence. A particular power enforces Papal acceptance and special methods will be employed to bring about universal acceptance of Papal worship. (50)

This is a tremendous prediction. It reveals how world events will finally work out. The ultimate power to wield world control is not Communism, not Russia, not China, but the Papacy.

In the final conflict that is soon to envelope the world there will be only two sides, two groups. Those who worship and obey the Beast and those who worship and obey the Lamb. It will be between truth and tradition, the law of God and laws of men. It will be between Jesus Christ and Antichrist.

(This chapter is continued as: “When Religious Persecution Returns!”)

THE DEADLY WOUND TO THE PAPACY

The Historical Record as Given in “Historians History of the World” Volume 9, [1908 ed.]

In 1798 General Berthier, at the order of the French Government “In February, 1798, occupied its capital [Rome]. Their General demanded that the Pope should resign his temporal sovereignty, retaining his universal bishopric, and receiving a large pension. Pius obstinately refusing, was carried into Tuscany and thence into France, where he died. On the 20th March, 1798 the constitution of the Roman or Tiberine Republic was formally proclaimed.” Page 556.

In 1799 the French armies were forced to withdraw from Italy.

In 1800 a new Pope was elected, who was restored to ruler ship of Tiberine or Roman Republic.

“Meanwhile the old Pope having died the preceding year, a conclave which opened at Venice in March, 1800, had raised to the papal chair, Cardinal Chiaramonti. He was allowed by all parties to return to Rome and assume the government of the provinces which had formed the Tiberine Republic.” Page 564.

In 1809 the Papal throne was again overturned.”The Papal state was openly claimed as a fiefhold under Napoleon.”

“In May, 1809, Napoleon dated . . . a decree which annexed to the French Empire those provinces of the papal state which had not already been seized. The pope. . . was transported into France . . . where he was kept a close prisoner till 1811.” Page 571.

“After the fall of the popedom, an attempt was made to give unity and a show of independence to the - Italian provinces of the empire. . .” page 573.

After the fall of Bonaparte in 1815, most of the territories of the church in Italy were restored to the Pope. An attempt was made to restore the pre-Napoleonic conditions, but a new spirit of national independence was astir in Italy.

In the papal states, insurrections broke out, due to the administrations of Popes Leo XII and Pius VIII.

“The subjects of the papal provinces declared openly against the temporal sovereignty of the pope, and on 26th February, deputies from all the revolted states united in proclaiming a new republic.” Page 586.

However, the political heads of the allied nations put down by arms the insurrections. The Holy See had all its possessions restored and “the leading powers of Europe interposed to recommend concessions by the Pope to his subjects.”

1848 - Insurrection in Rome. The Minister of Pius IX was assassinated. The Pope flees to Gaeta.

1849 - A Republic was declared in Rome under Mazzini. However France sent an army to Italy, which restored the Pope, page 597.

1870 - The French leave Rome. Victor Emmanuel enters Rome and annexes the Papal Territories to Italy. The Pope appeals to the King of Prussia, but in vain. The Pope retires to the Vatican and styles himself in protest, “The Prisoner of the Vatican” and refused to leave. Pages 622-623.

It is clear that 1798 marked the initial wounding of the Papacy. The election of another Pope did not necessarily restore Papal power. It was an attempt to do so, but the above facts show that while the Papacy endeavored to regain control over the people of Italy, the people themselves rejected Papal authority. The Pope was kept in office by foreign powers, not by the support of his own people. Finally the support of all foreign powers was withdrawn and the Pope in styling himself as “prisoner of the Vatican” in effect admitted that his political power had vanished.

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24. When Religious Persecution Returns

When The Lamb Becomes A Dragon

The Ominous Future of America

An Exposition of Revelation 13:11-18

In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, two beasts are brought to view. These represent two kingdoms. The first beast, we have previously shown, represents the Papacy. (1) Verses 1-3 describe its rise and appearance, its deadly wound, the healing of the wound, and finally its restoration to world power.

Verses 11-17 tell how Rome's power would be restored. Another beast or kingdom rises and compels the world to worship or obey the first beast, (the papacy). Verses 13-14 tells how the second beast will accomplish this. Miracles will be performed which seduce the people, and persuade them to form an image to the beast. What is the reason for the image? Why form an image to bring about the restoration of the Papacy? Undoubtedly there are many people in the world who could never be persuaded to accept Roman Catholicism as such. There are many non-Catholics who, while not bigoted, could never accept the Pope or priests, the mass, Mary, or the concept of purgatory etc. In order, therefore, to capture their support, deception will be employed, another organization will be formed; not a Catholic organization but a replica of the Papacy which will be supportive of Papal policy. In this way the non-Catholic groups will be led into submission to the Papacy.

There are very clear identification marks associated with the second beast and by these we can be sure as to who the power is.

1. It rises to power when the Papacy receives a deadly wound.

"He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity. He that kills with the sword must be killed with the

sword, and I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.” Revelation 13:10-11, 13.

Verse 10 is a repetition, or explanation of verse 3. (2)

“I saw one of his heads as it were, wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed.”

The Papacy received its deadly wound in 1798.

2 This power rises out of the earth, an area that is the opposite to the sea, from which the first beast arises. (Verse 1)

Sea, or waters, represent a thickly populated area of the world. (Revelation 17:15) This means that the second beast rises out of a sparsely populated region of the world.

3 It rises silently like a plant growing out of the earth. This is the significance of the Greek word, “coming up”.

4 It is lamb-like. This means that it is youthful, innocent, harmless and gentle, in its appearance.

5 It has two symbols of power that are lamb-like or Christ-like.

6. It ultimately possesses world-wide influence.

7. After the healing of the fatal wound, it enforces Papal policy.

8. It promotes the formation of “the image to the beast”.

9. It enforces obedience to “the image of the beast”.

10. The form of enforcement is characterized by a particular mark, “the mark of the beast”. The only power that fulfills these ten points is the United States of America.

11. The time of its rise. It is informative to notice the conclusion of the great Methodist John Wesley regarding this prediction. When he wrote his New Testament Notes, in 1754, he applied the first beast to the Papacy. He declared,

“Another beast, but he is not yet come, though he cannot be far off, for he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast [that is 1798] and he had two horns like a lamb. A mild, innocent appearance.” (3)

In 1754 Wesley understood that this power had not yet risen, but in 1798, a few decades after Wesley wrote his notes, the U. S. A. was emerging as an independent nation. On July 4, 1776 her Declaration of Independence had been made, ratified by eleven of the thirteen states with a population of 4 million people and scattered over a territory of one million square miles. At the time appointed in prophecy, the U. S. A. rose to power.

2 Its location. It was to rise “out of the earth” in contrast to the sea, i. e. , in a sparsely populated area. North America contained about one million Indians occupying about three million square miles (approximately 6 square miles per family). A sparsely populated area.

3 The manner of the rise of this power. The Greek word is “anabainon” which means “coming up”, “to grow up peacefully like a plant”. It was not to rise by military conquest, as did most of the European and other nations. No other nation was overturned in order to make room for the U. S. A. It rose through peaceful migration. It grew as a result of the development of its natural resources. Historians are very clear in regard to this. George Alfred Townsend declared, “Like a silent seed we grew into empire.” (4)

This is exactly what the prophecy indicated. Another writer wrote,

“The United States is a wonderful empire which was emerging amid the silence of the earth, daily adding to its power and pride.” (5)

Another wrote,

“Behold the mighty regions over which, in peaceful conquest - ‘Victoria sine clade’, [victory without strife] - they have borne the banners of the cross.” (6)

A French writer in his study of the founding America declared,

“In that land the great experiment was to be made, by civilized man, of the attempt to construct society on a new basis; and it was there, for the first time, that theories hitherto unknown or deemed impracticable, were to exhibit a spectacle for which the world had not been prepared by the history of the past.” (7)

4 It had lamb-like horns, that is, not fully grown, denoting youthfulness. It was to be a young nation, gentle and innocent, like a lamb. What an accurate description of the founding fathers of the U. S. A. in regard to their form of government. According to Deuteronomy 33:17, horns in scripture denote power. It says “horns like a lamb” indicating that the power would be lamb-like or Christ-like. The term “lamb” is mentioned 29 times in Revelation and generally it represents Jesus Christ. What Christ-like power, or principles of power, are laid down in scripture regarding the governing of man? In the New Testament

Jesus Christ presents at least two remarkable principles.

The first one is the separation of Church and State.

“Render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and render to God, the things that belong to God.” (8)

This means to keep Caesar and Christ separate. Keep Church and State apart. Do not give to Caesar the things that belong to God, nor to God the things that belong to Caesar. Keep politics out of religion. This is the great principle of the separation of Church and State.

The second great principle is that of religious liberty. Jesus declared,

“If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not. For I came, not to judge the world but to save the world.” (9)

We are not to judge our fellow men in regard to conscience, or religion. On earth Jesus Christ did not set himself up as Judge. God does not judge men now. The judgment is future.”Judge not that ye be not judged.” These two important principles were laid down in the U. S. A. constitution.

Article IV: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government.”

Article VI: “No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”

This was a remarkable achievement. Never before had this been accomplished in history. It was a marvelous advance in the civilization of man. How important it is for man to realize the significance of this fact so that he may be continually alert to safeguard his religious and civil liberty. It was the nonexistence of these principles through history that brought about so much suffering and the shedding of so much blood. Over the last five thousand years, how seldom has man learned the lesson of religious liberty? What a revelation of the intolerance and arrogance of man. In it we see the out workings of the principles of the “prince of this world”. It is a sad testimony to the sinful nature of man.

Through history only a few minor groups, or individuals have understood the necessity of religious liberty. Among them were the Evangelical Anabaptists who were sorely persecuted by their fellow men at the time of the Protestant Reformation. (20) William of Orange, called “William the Silent” (1533-1584), stood out a century before his time. He was a lover and upholder of religious liberty. (11)

Some German Protestant princes about the same period also stood for religious liberty. Among them was Phillip of Hess, known as “Phillip the Magnanimous”. (12) There were the English Baptists who in 1612 formed themselves into a religious body. They were the first church to set out a declaration of faith that embodied religious liberty.

“This is the first known expression of absolute liberty of conscience in any profession of faith. It was from their little dingy meeting house. That there flashed out first in England, the absolute doctrine of religious liberty.” (13)

It is amazing that it took so long for men to learn the lesson that this principle is essential for the happiness and well-being of man. After the English Baptists, came Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) who also was a great advocate of religious liberty. He hated the persecution of people because of their religious opinions. (14) Later came Roger Williams, a friend of Cromwell, Milton, and other Puritans. He founded Rhode Island Province, “upon the basis of complete religious toleration, a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.” He was baptized by the Ana-Baptists and formed the first Baptist church in America.”He was uniformly tolerant and he occupies a high place for complete liberty of conscience. He was the first and foremost exponent in America of the theory of absolute freedom of the individual in matters of religion. Rhode Island was the first colony consistently to apply this principle in practice.” (15)

The U. S. A. was the first nation to legislate religious freedom, to have a church without a pope, and a state without a king. The timing of the rise of the U. S. A. was very providential. It is recognized that had the U. S. A. been founded at a different period in history the above two vital principles may never have been included in the Constitution. Historians are very clear that it was providential regarding the time when the U. S. A. was formed. (16) There were three main countries from which the refugees had come to establish their government. They came from Britain, Holland and Germany. In these countries, these people had passed through extreme periods of persecution and intolerance from Church and State. They had learned through bitter experience, the need for religious and political tolerance. This cemented their resolve to have a church without a pope, and a state without a king. Undoubtedly the hand of God was present. Divine prophecy had foretold that “the earth” would help the “woman” [God’s true church] “and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood [of persecution] which the dragon cast out of his mouth.” (Revelation 12:16)

Scholars are convinced that America in a great degree fulfilled this prediction, for she opened her arms and her vast empty territories, “the wilderness” became a refuge for the oppressed of Europe. Historians have declared this in no uncertain terms. (17) A nation after a new order was established in the U. S. A. The founding fathers of America in forming their constitution, adopted as their motto on the great seal of their government the words, “Novus Ordo Seclorum”, which means, “A new order of the Ages”. The establishment of a government upon such principles had a profound effect upon many other parts of the world. George Townsend said,

“Since America was discovered she has been a subject of revolutionary thought in Europe. Out of her discovery grew the European reformation in religion; out of our revolutionary war, grew the revolutionary period of Europe.” (18)

6. It would be a non-Catholic power. The principles mentioned above are anti-Catholic. They are opposed to Catholic principles. They are contrary to the published principles and policies of the church of Rome. (19) They are basic Biblical, or Protestant, principles. Therefore this lamb-like power would be a non-Catholic power. From inception, the U. S. A. has been a strong Protestant country.

Time has confirmed the interpretation of this prediction by Seventh-Day Adventists. Since the 1840’s, Seventh-Day Adventists have consistently taught that the two horned beast of Revelation 13:11-17 is the U. S. A. For over one hundred and forty years they have had no cause to alter one detail of their interpretation. In the past, some people have been skeptical of the Adventist interpretation of this prediction but today the facts are indisputable. America has fulfilled, is fulfilling, and will fulfill the remaining points of this prediction.

7 America is to enforce Catholic policy in the world.

“He exercises all the power of the first beast before him and causes the earth. . . to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.” Verse 12

This signifies, that in the U. S. A. , several major changes would take place, firstly the U. S. A. would change its attitude to the Roman Catholic Church. Instead of being anti-Catholic it would become pro Catholic in its outlook. Secondly, it would change its constitution so that church and state would no longer be separate. Religious liberty would disappear and religious oppression would be legalized. This reveals an ominous future for America.

It is very significant, that at least 100 years ago, the Church of Rome planned the conquest of the U. S. A. In 1890 at the Centennial conference of Catholics in Baltimore, Archbishop Ireland made this statement, “Catholics of the U. S. A. are called to make America Catholic. Catholic truth will travel on the wings of American influence and with it encircle the universe.” (19a)

Again in 1894,

“The U. S. A. , it can be said without exaggeration, are the chief thought of Leo XIII, a few days ago, an receiving an eminent American, Leo XIII said, ‘The United States of America are the future, we think of

them incessantly. ’ That is why Leo XIII turns all his soul, full of ideality, to what is improperly called his American policy. It should be called his Catholic universal policy.” (20)

Thirdly, in 1909, a report of the third Washington conference of Roman Catholics, stated,

“Our purpose is to make America dominantly Catholic.” (21) Notice this statement made in 1910,

“It seems to me that the main support of Protestantism comes from the U. S. A, and England. If we put an end to this effort in the U. S. A. and England, by making these nations predominantly Catholic, we will have removed the chief obstacle to the conversion of the world to the true faith. A vigorous effort in the United States at this time, will reduce the opposition to an insignificant condition. In the course of another century the [Protestant] sects will be a study for the historian and antiquarian, along with Arianism.” (22)

About fifty years ago Catholic Action was established. It focused on America in particular, not in an antagonistic way, but in a quiet, wisely-planned way, in order to gain favor for Catholics among Protestants. How remarkably successful it has been. Dr. E. Boyd Barrett, for many years a Jesuit, made the following statement in 1935 in regard to the plans of the Roman Catholic Church.

“In theory, Catholic action is the work and service of lay Catholics in the cause of religion, under the guidance of the bishops. In practice it is the Catholic group fighting their way to control America.”

“The effort, the fight, may be drawn out. It may last for five or ten years. Even if it lasts for twenty - what is twenty years in the life of Rome? The fight must be fought to a finish - opposition must be worn down, if it cannot be swept away. Rome’s immortal destiny hangs on the outcome. That destiny overshadows the land.”

“And in the fight, as she has ever fought when battles were most desperate in the past, Rome will use steel and gold and silvery lies. Rome will stoop to conquer.” (23)

What an admission, but how true! A communication from Vatican city, published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press of November 1936, stated,

“Pope Pius feels that the United States is the ideal base for Catholicism’s great drive. The Catholic movement, Rome’s militant organization numbering millions all over the world, will be marshaled direct from Rome, by Monsignor Pizzardo - next to Pacelli the Holy See’s shrewdest diplomat and politician.” (24)

This gives a glimpse of the tremendous organization and effort that the Catholic church, the Papacy, has been making over the last 100 years in order to capture America. According to investigators, Rome, in her plans, planned to take five steps to capture the United States. These five steps are:

1. To Catholicize school textbooks of the public schools.
2. To revise the books of reference.
3. To muzzle or control the public press or media.
4. To capture or control the public libraries.
5. To censor books that are not friendly to the Roman Catholic Church.

Notice the statement by a French cardinal, Alfred Baudrillart when he was Director of the Catholic Institute of Paris. He was a very scholarly man. After giving a frank statement about the many persecutions of which the Catholic church is guilty, he says in the words of Monsignor d’Hulst:

“Indeed, even among our friends and our brothers we find those who dare not look this problem in the face.” [i. e. the problem of Rome’s dark and awful past.] “They ask permission from the church to ignore or even to deny all those acts and institutions in the past, which have made orthodoxy [Catholicism] compulsory” (25)

This is a frank Roman Catholic admission that Catholics have sought permission and obtained it, to deny and ignore the facts of history in order to whitewash the church of Rome. Senator Thomas E. Watson declared in 1928, before the United States Senate:

“In the public schools the Catholics have stealthily introduced textbooks written by Jesuits; and your children are being taught that the Roman church was misunderstood in the past; that its doctrines are not fatal to humanity and gospel religion; that its record is not saturated with the blood of innocent millions, murdered by Papal persecutors, and that there never was such a monstrosity as the alleged sale of papal pardons of sins.”

“Educate youth in this Catholic way, and the consequences are logical.” (26)

This reveals the fulfillment of the five steps needed to capture the United States. How successful the church of Rome has been. Notice the statement by Harold Laski in 1947. He was a prominent member of the British government of that time. He was a professor and an author, and he lived for some years in America, as a member of the faculty of Harvard University. He contributed a series of articles on world conditions to an American journal. Amongst the dominant forces operating in the U. S. A. , in particular, forces tending towards reactionism, he lists Roman Catholicism. What he says is both calm and convincing and the more convincing because it is calm:

“I add with both hesitation and regret, my feeling that a good deal of what is most reactionary in the political and social life of America today, is directly traceable to the Influence of a militant Roman Catholic church, which is as much the expression of the purposes of a

foreign power as any Influence exerted by the Communist Party. No other body has devoted itself so consistently, to poisoning the relations between the U. S. A. and Russia. It protects child labor, it is building from infant school to University, its own educational emperium in emperio. It has immense influence over the movie industry, not least where film of a political complexion are concerned. It plays a major part in the repression of freedom of speech. It is attempting with subtlety and skill to establish a concealed control of trade unions in cities where there is a large Catholic population. I doubt whether there are three Americans today whose authority direct and indirect counts for more than that of the Cardinal- Archbishop of New York.”

“And to this must be added the curious and significant fact that the members of the Roman Catholic church seem able, like their co-religionists in Great Britain, to obtain pivotal posts in the foreign service, exercising a power of infiltration which must make members of the Communist party feel that they are infants at the game.”

“Anyone who measures Roman Catholic strength in the United States today with what it was a generation ago cannot fail to be impressed by its growth, as well as perturbed by its direction. Spain apart, I doubt whether there is any country in the world today in which its authority is greater than in America.” (27)

How successful has Roman Catholic policy been over the last one hundred years, in the United States? Today Americans look upon the Catholic Church with great favor. She is accepted as a Christian church whereas the truth is that it is not a Christian church, but there are many Christians within the Catholic church. It is the largest single church in the U. S. A. today. The largest group of congressmen are Roman Catholics. The financial income of the Vatican, from the U. S. A. , outstrips the income from all other nations of the world combined.

Recently when an American ambassador was appointed to the Vatican, it was done with hardly a murmur from the people of the U. S. A. Americans have been thoroughly blinded to the character and aims of the Papacy. Notice this admission recently written in a letter by Father Patrick Henry O’Brien to the Reverend A. Dominica, former Catholic of Philadelphia. This may reveal the thought of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

“We, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church expect all loyal children of the church to assist the president [of the U. S. A.] with all our strength to see the individuals comprising the U. S. A. Supreme court shall obey the President’s injunctions. And if necessary, we shall change, mend or blot the present

constitution so that the president may enforce his, or rather our, humanitarian program. And all phases of human rights as laid down by our saintly popes and the holy Mother Church.”

“We elected our worthy president by the greatest majority ever recorded in history. We are going to have our laws made and enforced according to the Holy See, and the popes and the canon law of the Papal throne. Our entire social structure must be rebuilt on that basis. Our educational laws must be constructed to the end - that atheism, the red peril of totalitarianism, PROTESTANTISM, communism, socialism and all other like ilk and stamp, be driven from this fair Land.”

“The cross was planted on our shores by a staunch Roman Catholic. [Columbus]. This land belongs to us by every right. Long enough have we compromised on every important question. Now we demand what is really ours, and we are going to have it. We will support our president in every way to obtain it, peacefully, honestly if we may. If necessary we are ready to fight and die for it.”

“We want as cabinet members, children of the Holy Mother Church, holding important positions in the entire structure of our government.”

“We control America and we do not propose to stop, until America, or Americans are genuinely Roman Catholic and remain so. God help us.” (28)

What a bold and arrogant assertion! If this is an accurate admission then it indicates that Rome is well nigh in control within the U. S. A. Her objectives, it appears, are about to be reached. She feels confident that her one hundred year old plan is on the verge of fulfillment.

However, while Rome may believe that she will make America Catholic, nevertheless the prediction of Revelation 13 informs us that the method used indicates that Rome may not succeed in the manner she plans. While many of the millions of Protestants in the U. S. A. are not anti Catholic, they will not be bullied into submission to a Roman Catholic hierarchy. The method used to bring the U. S. A. into line will have to be much more deceptive. Notice what the prediction says:

“He, [U. S. A.] doeth great wonders, so that he makes fire come down on the earth in the sight of men and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” Verses 13-14.

In order to bring America into line, there will be performed remarkable miracles that will delude the people. In particular it predicts the bringing of fire down from heaven. Maybe this refers to the control of the lightning. Whatever it is, it will convince the people. No doubt these miracles will be performed by the power of the occult, by spiritualistic forces or demons. Other scriptures make this very clear.

“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles which go forth to the kings of the earth and the whole world to gather [or unite] then to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:14.

This is speaking of the final climax of history, which is just before us. The spirits of devils working miracles will delude the world. Again,

“Some will depart from the faith, giving head to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” 1 Timothy 4:1

It is very clear as to what is coming. The miraculous power of Spiritualism, evil spirits or demons, is going to exercise wonder-working power to delude the population of the world. It will commence in the U. S. A. As Jesus said, in speaking of the last days,

“There shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, in as much that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24

If the very elect, or God’s own people, are almost deceived, what about the rest of mankind? They won’t have a hope. They will be swept in by the great delusion, and in this way the population of the U. S. A, will be brought into line with Catholic policy. It is interesting to notice how one author describes this:

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens in token of the power of miracle working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge then on-to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects, will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ himself, and claiming the title and worship which belongs to the world’s Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing, and will profess to have revelations from contradicting heaven the testimony of the scriptures.” (29)

We should beware of miracles! We should know the Word of God so well that we can discern between good and evil and between truth and error. The powers of the occult are to have great influence in U. S. A. affairs. In the past we have seen evidence of this in individual leaders in the USA government. Many are aware of the confessions of Jean Dixon, once a leading spirit medium in the USA. She tells how, during the World War II, she conducted seances with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his war chiefs in order to obtain guidance in the conduct of the war.

If that transpired at that time, why should it not occur again. It may already be occurring. Today, witchcraft is taking hold of millions. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, are involved in the occult in America. In 1973 it was reported that there were 100,000 avowed witches in the U. S. A, which means that there could be many more thousands of secret witches. The Church of Satan has organized groups in most of the big cities of America. In its various forms, such as astrology, the use of the Ouija board, seances, spiritual healing, glossolalia etc. , these occult forces are influencing an increasing number of organizations and individuals in the U. S. A. Among them is the New Age Movement which is deeply involved in the occult, and is very popular in many American circles.

Under these deceptions, the prediction declares the U. S. A, will move to form an image to the beast,

“Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by the sword and did live.” Verse 14.

This suggests that the form of government in the USA is democratic, not autocratic, which is quite correct. It is dependent upon the support of the people. Thus with authority, backed by miraculous power, the United States government will urge the people, will persuade its legislators, to form an image. A literal image or a symbolic image? It says “an image to” or, “of the beast.” (Verse 15) It says “the image has life”. This indicates that it is not a literal image. It must be a symbolic image.

To understand what the image to the beast is, we need to understand what the beast is, because it is an image to, or of, the beast. What is the beast? A beast represents a political power. Here it represents the Papacy. We must now ask, what is the Papacy? Is the Papacy simply a church? No! The Papacy is a religion-political organization. It is more than a church, and more than a political entity. It is a combination of a church and state. Therefore an image to or of the beast, would be a replica, a likeness of that organization, and it will be formed in the U. S. A.

How was the Papacy formed in order for it to become “the beast”? History reveals that it involved the taking of five significant steps and we suggest that the same five steps will need to be taken in order for the image to the beast to be formed in the U. S. A.

1. The first step was taken by the early Christian church. As the decades went by, finally the majority of Christians departed from the original faith of the scriptures and became apostate. Acts 20:28-31 informs us, and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7 confirms, that this would take place.

There was a great “falling away” or an apostasy in the Christian church.

2. As a result of this apostasy, there was a loss of spiritual power on the part of the church in its proclamation of the gospel. In place of the simplicity of the gospel, and the Word of God, forms, ritual and ceremony took over. False teachings entered, and controversies began to wrack the church. Pagan philosophies permeated contemporary thinking and the power of love and the power of the gospel was replaced by a love of power, a love of position, a desire to dominate.

3. The apostate church began to amalgamate with the popular pagan religion of the day. That religion was a form of sun-worship called Mithraism. It originally came from Babylon through Persia. “Mithra” was the Persian term for the sun. This Mithraism united with the apostate Christianity of the day. The result was that paganism, with its unscriptural ceremonies and rites, became a part of the church’s faith. Such festivals as Christmas, Easter, Lent, Sunday sacredness, the celebration of the Mass, purgatory, prayers to and for the dead, and all the other pagan rites, ceremonies and doctrines that we now find in the professedly Christian church, entered into the orthodox church in that period.

4. The fourth step involved the convening of great ecumenical councils in order to unite the churches of the Mediterranean world. This is where the word “ecumenical” originated. They brought together the leaders of the churches in these councils in order to settle their differences, that the churches of the Roman Empire might become one. Finally unity was achieved. They became one and the Bishop of Rome was accepted by the majority as the Head of all churches. The church now spoke with one voice.

5. The fifth and final step was the union of the one super church with the civil power of the state. Church and state united. The civil power executed the wishes of the one super church. Religious liberty vanished and persecution began. The result was the Papacy, the formation of the beast power.

We conclude therefore, that in order for the image of the beast to be formed, the same five steps will need to be taken. In fact, three steps have already been taken. We are now in the midst of the fourth step. Revelation 13 reveals that there are six features associated with the formation of the image of the beast.

1. It is to originate in the U. S. A.
2. It is to be initiated by the U. S. A, government.
3. It is formed after the healing of the wound, that is, after the Papacy’s political power is restored. That healing began in 1929.
4. It is to be separate and distinct from the first beast. It will be non-Catholic in its profession.
5. It will be supported by the majority of the American people.
6. It will be similar in its character and form to the Papacy, that is, it will be religious, political and intolerant.

The only entity that fits the picture are the American Protestant churches. Already these churches have taken the first three of the five steps that the early church took. They have departed from the original faith of Christ. They have departed from the scriptures as the sole guide for man. These churches, for many years have been sliding deeper into apostasy. This may be a shock to some, but it is a proven fact that Protestantism has lost its protest. No longer do the Protestant churches protest against the errors of Rome. For 140 years they have been slipping further away from God. There has been a retreat from the authority of the Bible. This is step number one: apostasy on the part of the Protestant churches.

As a result of apostasy, Protestantism as such, has lost its spiritual power. This has been so for many years. Religion, for many, is a mere form. False teachings permeate the Protestant churches, particularly the clergy; psychology, evolution, the social gospel and worldly standards are the norm. Thirdly, instead of rejecting pagan rites and ceremonies, the Protestant churches are increasingly tolerant of them and uphold and practice many of them. Instead of receiving the light of truth which show that these are of pagan origin and are not of God, they promote them.

These include Christmas, Easter, Sunday observance and other pagan practices under a Christian cloak. Fourthly, Church councils have convened to bring about church union. This we have witnessed for a number of decades. Church union is the order of the day. Powerful forces are bringing the churches together. Doctrinal differences are being put aside. This prediction, Seventh-Day Adventists have

proclaimed for 140 odd years. Originally there was little evidence to confirm it, but time as usual, has confirmed the accuracy of the Seventh-Day Adventist interpretation of the book of Revelation.

It is often claimed by those who advocate church union, that the divisions of the church confuse the world, that the church is failing because of its divisions. This is untrue. The correct cause of failure is apostasy on the part of the church which has resulted in a loss of spiritual power. The power of love is being replaced by a love of power, and so often this is the pattern, not only with organizations, but with individuals. Church union is a backward step. It is a further step into apostasy. In fact down through history, divisions in the church have been essential in order to preserve truth. Take Luther and the Protestant reformers. If they had stayed in Rome, there would never have been the mighty Protestant Reformation. Had the Wesleys stayed in the Anglican church, there would never have been the great Evangelical Revival. Likewise with the Seventh-Day Adventists. If they had stayed in the Protestant Churches there would never have been this world-wide Advent movement presenting the truth of the Second Coming of Christ. It appears that the basic motive for church union is power, although many sincere people are deceived, believing that it is the will of God. Notice some of the statements by leaders of church union.

“The church today faces a life and death struggle in which a totalitarian Christianity, or a totalitarian government is the issue. To achieve this goal of Christianity, all minor differences separating the churches must be forgotten.” (30)

That is ominous. The Archbishop of York, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, addressing an ecumenical church council declared:

“We deeply lament the absence from this gathering the collaboration of the great church of Rome, the church, which more than any other has known how to speak to the nations, so that the nations heard.” (31)

What an admission! But how true! The church of Rome did speak so that the nations heard. And how did she speak? By anathema, by interdict, by persecution, by martyrdom, by crusades, by dictating to the State. That is how Rome spoke. The same spirit is evident in the National Council of Churches. They officially advocate violence for the achieving of certain ends. It is a love of power. The purpose of the Ecumenical Movement is to take the Protestant churches back into union with Rome. The Charismatic Movement likewise is a movement with the aim of uniting all churches with the Roman Catholic church.

Today we are witnessing the fourth step in the formation of the image to the beast. The fifth step, is not far off. The one super, united church will accept the support of American civil power. There will then be a union of church and State. The prediction indicates that the U. S. A. civil power will “give life to the image of the beast”.

“He [the U. S. A.] hath power to give life to the image of the beast, that it should both speak and cause that as many as who would not warship the image of the beast should be killed.” Revelation 13:15, (or “He was granted power to give life to the image.” N. K. , T. V.)

A government speaks through its laws and policies. This means that the civil power of the U. S. A. will put the policies and rules of the one super church into operation. It enforces them. In doing this, the state or civil power unites with the super church and thus becomes a part of the image to the beast. Then the lamb-like power will “speak as a dragon”. Remember what the prediction said?

“I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth. And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.”

Thus the next step to be taken in the U. S. A. , will be the enacting of civil laws that will lead to religious intolerance. The dragon always speaks in terms of persecution, therefore we must expect oppressive laws against those who dissent from the wishes of the super church. Finally, because many dissenters refuse to submit, the prediction reveals that capital punishment will be re-enacted, and used against religious dissenters.

“And cause that as many as would not worship [or obey] the image of the beast, should be killed.” Revelation 13:15.

It is informative to notice that this prediction of the image and its worship, is culled from the Old Testament. As previously emphasized, the book of Revelation is a mosaic of the Old Testament. It is based on the Old Testament. The imagery of this prediction is borrowed from the third chapter of the book of Daniel. Daniel gives an account of how Nebuchadnezzar, after he had conquered the then known world, set up a golden image and demanded its universal worship on pain of death. But three Hebrew worthies, three Jews, refused to obey. As a result they were cast into a fiery furnace from which the Son of God publicly delivered them. The record of that incident is recognized as a picture of the final crisis over the worship of the image of the beast of Revelation 13.

“All this typifies the last apostasy.” (32)

There are 14 significant parallels between Daniel 3 and Revelation 13.

PARALLELS BETWEEN DANIEL 3 AND REVELATION 13

Daniel 3.

1. Literal Babylon.
- 2."Great Babylon."
3. Dominated the World.
4. Connected with the Number 6.
5. Its Fall Predicted in Daniel 2:39; 5:25-31.
6. Erected Image Representing Babylon Forever. Representing Babylon Forever.
7. Compels All to Worship.
8. Three Literal Jews Refuse.
9. Hailed Before the Ruler.
10. Wrath Against the 3 Jews.
11. Issue Over Worship (10 times in chapter 3).
12. Death Decree.
13. A Fiery Trial.
14. Delivered by Son of God.

Revelation 13.

1. Spiritual Babylon.
- 2."Babylon The Great!"
3. Will dominate the world.
4. Connected with Number "6" (Appendix)
5. Its Fall Predicted in Revelation 18:7-8.
6. Is to Erect a Spiritual Image. Representing Babylon Forever.
7. Compels All to Worship.
8. Spiritual Jews of 3 Angel's Message Refuse to Worship.
9. Hailed Before Rulers.
10. Wrath Against Spiritual Jews.
11. Issue Over Worship (7 times in chapters 13-14).
12. Death Decree. (Revelation 13:15)
13. A Fiery Trial.

14. Delivered by Son of God. (Revelation 17:14)

The next point in this prediction is the method by which submission to the Image of the beast will be enforced.

“He causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:16-17.

Here we have two symbols of submission. Firstly, “the mark of the beast in the right hand or the forehead”. The right hand denotes the prostration of the body - or the physical powers. The forehead denotes the prostration of the intellect. The term, “the name of the beast”, is used only once in scripture, and there are doubts on the authenticity of this phrase. It is not confirmed elsewhere in scripture.

On the other hand “the mark of the beast” is mentioned eight times in six chapters.”The image of the beast” is mentioned ten times in six chapters. Secondly, “the number of the beast” is mentioned five times in two chapters.

The Mark of the beast is the predominant symbol of submission. In the dire warning in Revelation 14:9-11, against the reception of the worship of the beast and his image, only the mark is mentioned. The number, and the name is omitted. This indicates that the dominant symbol of submission will be the Mark of the beast.

What is the significance of the number of the beast? When we dealt with verse 18 in the previous topic or chapter, we presented the initial application of the number and showed that it fits perfectly the official title of the leading man of the Papacy. However, it appears that the number 666 will also apply to a segment of mankind when religious laws are enforced in the coming crisis. Many confuse the mark with the number, but verse 17 makes a clear distinction between the two. The number is 666, but the mark is something that is distinctly different. It appears that some receive 666 as a sign of submission, while the great majority receive “the mark of the beast”.

SIX IS THE NUMBER OF MAN

1. Man was created on the SIXTH day of the week
2. The work of creation concluded on the SIXTH day of the week: representing secular completeness.
3. Six days were given to man for labor.
4. Six words in scripture are used for man - 4 in Hebrew & 2 in Greek.
5. Six represents man trusting in, and exalting himself.
6. Cain and his descendants involved six generations only.
7. In the 600th (6x10x10) year of Noah’s life, man filled up his cup of self exaltation and was destroyed.
8. 666 is comprised of 3 x 6’s. 3 represents completeness. Thus 666 represents the peak of human exaltation.

The number 666 is derived from Babylon. It was the secret symbol of the ancient mysteries of that system which in fact was the worship of Lucifer. 666 is deeply involved in Theosophy, the religion of the east, and is also in the modern occult. (For an in depth, documented study on the origin and significance of the number 666, see “666 THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBER” by Murl Vance.) (33) This concludes Revelation 13. What a dramatic and moving prediction! To the uninformed it is a daunting prospect. To the enlightened saint it calls for a special form of preparation. It also involves a call to warn our fellow men. This is featured in the next chapter, Revelation 14:6-13 – “God’s Final Ultimatum to Men”. The purpose of this prediction is to warn God’s people that they might make full preparation and be delivered when Christ intervenes on behalf of His people.

APPENDIX

A. The Number Six in Daniel 3.

1. The Gematria (i. e. the value of each letter) of Daniel 3:1 = 4662 i. e. 666 x 7.
2. The height of the golden image is 60 cubits x 6 cubits.
3. The musical instruments employed in Babylon’s worship number 6.

4. The expression “worship the golden Image” is also employed 6 times.
 5. The phrase “these three men” or “these men” referring to the 3 Hebrews, is used 6 times. 6.
 6. Belshazzar in praising Babylon’s gods, praises 6 gods. (Daniel 5)
- B. The Number Six Associated with Babylon in Revelation
1. The term “Babylon” is employed six times.
 2. The term “woman” of Babylon is employed six times.
 3. The Babylonian woman has six items of attire.
 4. Six items of Babylon will “be no more all” (18:21-23).
 5. Babylon’s merchants trade with her in 30 items (6x5) commencing with gold the highest value in her sight, and concluding with the item of lowest value in her sight, “the souls of men” (18:12-14).
 6. Six major sins are leveled against Babylon.

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25. The Head Or The Hand?

The Mark On Every Man?

The Mark of the Beast is introduced in Revelation 13 where the great crisis that confronts the people of God before the Second Advent is brought to view. In Revelation 14 are the Three Angels’ Messages, the last message of God to the world before the return of Christ. The third angel declares:

“If any man worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark in his forehead or his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of-God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” Revelation 14:9, 10.

This fearful warning, the most awful in all scripture, is given to the last generation of the world, the generation that will be guilty of worshipping the beast and his image and receiving his mark. Now our God is a very reasonable God, and he would not issue such a threat if we did not understand what the mark of the beast is. There are too many who claim that no one knows what this mark is. Many say that they do not understand Revelation and they claim that no one else understands it. If that were true, then this warning that God gives to the last generation off earth would all be in vain. Therefore, we must be able to understand what the mark is. The invitation to God’s people is to “seek and ye shall find”, and when we search the book of Revelation we are able to find the answer.

Who is the beast of Revelation 13:1-10? In a previous chapter this question has been fully answered. (1) A beast represents a kingdom.

In Revelation 13 there are at least fifteen points that identify this kingdom. Down through the centuries most Christian scholars have been agreed that this beast represents only one power, and that is the Papacy. Every single point fits and no other power in all history begins to fit the specifications. Among other things, the Revelator speaks of the mark of the beast, the mark of Rome, which will become a sign of submission on the part of the majority of the earth. It is very important, therefore, to discover what the mark is.

“He causes [compels] all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark.” Revelation 13:16, 17.

In the coming crisis, this mark will be enforced upon all, and any who will not comply, will be boycotted or persecuted. This mark will be enforced by law. Therefore it is important that we understand what the mark is, that we might know what to do about it, how to make preparation, and how to escape when the great crisis comes.

What then, is Rome’s mark? Let us go back in history to the time of the Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was a marvelous event. The eyes of millions of people were opened to the truth of God when they heard the Word of God. What blessing and joy it brought to millions. The motto of the Reformers was, “the Bible and the Bible only”. This was their stand, this is what they preached, “the Bible and the Bible only”. At that time this concept was like a bomb amid the Papacy. It shook the Church of Rome to her foundations, and as a result of this preaching, millions of people left Mother Church. The Reformation,

with its stand of “the Bible and the Bible only”, hung like a menacing cloud over the church of Rome and forced her to do something about it.

In response there was mounted what is known as the great Counter Reformation. The leaders of this reaction were the Jesuits. They were especially formed to counter the Reformation and to destroy Protestantism. It is important to remember this, for this is still the purpose of the Jesuits and sadly they have well nigh succeeded.

To aid in the accomplishment of the Counter Reformation, a great church council was called, The Council of Trent, from 1545-1563. This was the greatest council conducted to that time by the Church of Rome. It lasted for eighteen years, not continuously, and its purpose was to find a way to weather the storm of Protestantism. Authorities have admitted that The Council of Trent was the greatest council of the Roman Catholic Church.

The main issue was whether the church was to stick to tradition, as it had done through the years, or to turn to the Bible and the Bible only, with which Protestantism was rocking the world. Rome, with her stand on tradition, was losing out; there was a move therefore to return to the Bible. Year after year this council continued with this weighty discussion and debate, in order that Rome might know what to do in her desperate situation. Must she alter her position and admit that Protestantism was right? Could tradition stand? Finally at the end of the eighteen-year council, the church of Rome made her decision. The Schaff-Hertzog Encyclopedia on the Council of Trent, says,

“From a doctrinal and disciplinary point of view it was the most important council in the history of the Roman Church, fixing her distinctive faith and practice in relation to the Protestant evangelical churches.” (2)

Thus the church of Rome made her momentous decision. Would she accept the Bible and the Bible only? Would she stick to her tradition? Finally she made her decision. She would stick to tradition. Cardinal Pole, the Papal legate, declared at that time:

“Our beliefs and our worship in their entirety depend upon tradition.” (3)

Nampon, writing on Catholic doctrine as defined by the Council of Trent, said,

““Tradition, not scripture,’ Lessing says, ‘is the rock on which the Church of Jesus Christ is built.” (3a)

The Reverend J. Faa di Bruno wrote,

“Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and divine tradition contain the Word of God, the precious gem of revealed truth. Though these two divine streams are of equal sacredness, still, of the two, tradition is to us more clear and safe.” (4)

J. H. Holtzman, in referring to the Council of Trent, declared:

“Finally at the last opening session on the 18th January, 1562, in the Council of Trent, their last scruple was set aside, The Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that ‘tradition stood above scripture.’ (5)

That was the stand of the church of Rome. Collier declared,

“Without tradition we could not prove that the Old any more than the New Testament contains the Word of God.”

“Tradition, not Scripture, is the rock on which the church of Jesus Christ is built.” (6)

This momentous decision was made by this impressive council when the Church of Rome was in her crucial hour. What was it that led Rome to take her stand on tradition and reject Scripture as the sole authority? What weighty evidence was it that made Rome decide for tradition? What were the overwhelming facts that carried the day? What were the indisputable points that convinced this great council?

What unquestionable authority was brought to light, to bolster her stand that it was tradition and not Scripture? Notice again the words of J. H. Holtzman,

“Finally, at the last opening session of the 18th January, 1562, their last scruples were set aside. The Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that tradition stood above scripture. The authority of the church therefore, could not be bound to the authority of the scriptures.”

Why? Notice carefully,

“Because the church had changed Sabbath into Sunday, not by command of Christ but by its own authority.” (7)

There is Rome’s reply. The fact that carried the day, the overwhelming evidence that convinced that great assembly in the hour of its crisis, that it could still stick to tradition and reject the stand of the Protestants, was the fact that she, of her own authority, had changed a plain command of God. She had changed the Sabbath from the seventh day, to the first day of the week. The change of the Sabbath was the evidence of her authority.

It is very significant to notice that at the time of the Protestant Reformation, there were many disputes between the Protestants and the Catholics. There is one debate in particular in which Luther engaged Dr. Eck at Leipzig. This particular debate Luther did not win. Why? It was because of the challenge that Dr. Eck issued to Luther. Dr. Eck declared:

“The church has had power to change the Sabbath of the Bible into Sunday. If you turn from the church to the Scriptures alone, then you must keep the Sabbath which has been kept from the beginning of the world.”(8)

Luther had no satisfactory answer to that challenge. If Rome changed the Sabbath as she claims, of her own authority, then Protestants who claim to go by the Bible only, are in error in observing Sunday. The Lutheran church in its official confession of faith admits this. Notice the admission in the Augsburg confession.

“Attention is hereby drawn to the fact, that the Sabbath has been changed to the Sunday, contrary to the ten commandments and no example is held up so high, [by the Catholics] and so forcefully pointed to by them, as the change of the Sabbath, and in this way, they desire to prove that the power of the church is great, because they have interfered with or dispensed with the ten commandments and have altered some what thereof.” (9)

Here is striking evidence of the importance of the Saturday-Sunday issue. Here is the answer to any who claim that the Sabbath is not important. It was so important to the Church of Rome, that in the great hour of her crisis, it was the deciding factor. She had changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. The Augsburg Confession of Faith admits that “no example is held up so high by the Catholics and so forcefully pointed to by them as the change of the Sabbath”. Over the years, in the many verbal and literary clashes between Protestants and Catholics, the church of Rome has generally been triumphant. Though Rome is so unscriptural and so erroneous in her teachings, she has nearly always has won out. On what grounds? Because almost every time the Church of Rome would come back to the Sabbath question and she would say to the Protestants,

“If you follow the Bible and Bible only, why then do you keep Sunday?” One leading Catholic publication issued the challenge,

“The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments. You believe the other nine are still binding, who gave you [Protestants] authority to tamper with the fourth?” (10)

Another Catholic publication declared:

“It was the Catholic church which transferred this rest to the Sunday, thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants, is an homage they pay in spite of themselves to the authority of the Catholic Church.” (11)

Another Catholic spokesman wrote,

“Sunday is an institution of the Catholic Church and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church. It is well to remind the Presbyterians, the Methodists and all other Christians that the Bible does not support them anywhere in the observance of Sunday.” (12)

The Catholic Church has used this argument repeatedly and convincingly. Rome’s change of the Sabbath has been the great mark of her authority. In her official published statements, the Catholic Church has clearly made claim to the fact that because she changed the Sabbath, that is the mark of her power. In an official Catholic catechism by the Revelation Keenan is the following.

“Question: Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer: Had she not such power she could not have done that in which all other religionists agree with her, she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.” (13)

The leader of the Catholic Church in the U. S. A. , in answer to a question addressed to him as to whether the act of changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday is recognized by Rome as Rome’s mark of her power gave the official answer.

“Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act; it could have not have been otherwise, as none in those days ever dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual or religious without her, and the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.” (14)

How plain this is. The change of the Sabbath to Sunday is Rome’s mark. This leading Catholic authority declared it and put it into print. In the “Catholic Record” printed in London, Ontario, Canada, is another admission:

“Sunday is our mark of authority. The church is above the Bible, and this transferring of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.” (15)

Thus those who have concluded that Sunday observance will be the Mark of the Beast have been justified in so doing. It is an entirely logical conclusion. As far as Seventh-day Adventists are concerned, they do not teach that those who currently keep Sunday have the Mark of the Beast. The Mark of the Beast is yet future. When this day is enforced by law on behalf of the church of Rome, then it becomes the Mark of the Beast. It will become the medium in enforcing world government. The Mark of the Beast will be a spiritual mark and it will be revealed by the observance of the day that Rome has foisted upon the world. All who accept it will be counted as having submitted to Rome. Now, it is understandable why Protestants stiffly oppose the claim that the Mark of the Beast will be Sunday observance. They have refused the light of truth regarding the Sabbath. But in spite of the refusal of Protestantism to acknowledge the facts concerning the mark, it is confirmed by Rome herself. Rome has and does claim that Sunday is the mark of her authority. On the other hand, search where you may, there has never been produced a satisfactory alternative as to what is the Mark of the Beast.

In the third angel’s message of Revelation 14 it declares:

“If any man worships the beast-and receives his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” Revelation 14:9, 10.

This reveals how important the mark is. It shows what the attitude of heaven is in regard to the Sabbath question. If any man receives the Mark of the Beast, he receives the wrath of God. Revelation 15:1 declares that the seven last plagues comprise the wrath of God and they fall upon earth’s last generation prior to the Second Advent of Christ.

On the other hand, the book of Revelation reveals that there is another mark. God also has a mark and this mark he is to place in the foreheads of his servants prior to the Second Advent. This mark is brought to view in Revelation 7. In a prediction concerning the latter days, it declares:

“After these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow an the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”

Winds in prophecy denote war, strife and commotion; the judgments of God.

“I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed thee servants of our God in their foreheads.” Revelation 7:1-3.

This mark is termed “the seal of God”. Before the judgments of God fall upon this earth, God is to seal his servants in their foreheads. What comprises this seal? In scripture the words sign and seal are synonymous. Every kingdom has its seal, every government has its seal, every law to be valid must have its seal. There are three elements in a seal. For example, the seal of the Queen of Great Britain contains her name, her title and her territory or dominion - Elizabeth II, Queen, of Great Britain. These three items in the seal indicate

what one is, who one is, and where one is. So it is with God's seal. It contains these same three elements. Just as every law must have a seal in order to be valid, so there is a seal connected with God's law.

“Seal the law among my disciples.” Isaiah 8:16.

When the ten commandments are examined, the seal is discovered right in the heart of that divine law. The three elements of the seal are found in only one commandment - the fourth commandment -- the Sabbath commandment. The name of God is in the first three commandments, but only in the fourth commandment is found God's name, title and dominion,

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shall thou labor and do all thy work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in than is and rested the seventh day.” Exodus 20:8-11.

In the fourth commandment is God's name - “the Lord thy God”; his title - “the Lord made heaven and earth”, i. e. Creator. Throughout scripture the true God is designated by the fact that he is the Creator. (15) This is what distinguishes the true God from all other gods.

The third element of the seal is his territory or dominion - “heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is.” This embraces the universe. In the Sabbath commandment, then, there is more than meets the eye. It is more than a command to rest. In it is God's seal declaring who he is, what he is and where. Thus according to the prediction of Revelation 7, in the last days a special message concerning the true Sabbath is to be proclaimed, implanting in the foreheads or minds of God's servants the lost truth of the Sabbath. In the last days then, in the coming crisis, the issue will take the form of two marks, two signs, or two Sabbaths. One Sabbath will be the sign or seal or mark of Jesus Christ, the Creator and Recreator. The other Sabbath will be the sign, or mark of the Antichrist - the creature. Other scholars have recognized a similar significance in the Sabbath.

Dr. Evatt, a Baptist scholar, declares:

“The Sabbath was made a seal of God's covenant with Israel, an ordinance so essential for the maintenance of religion, it actually became a proof and measure of it, not only for them, but to all ages.” (16)

James Murphy in his commentary on the book of Exodus declares:

“The observance of the Sabbath connects man with the six days of creation and with the Creator himself. The Sabbath thus becomes a sign by which the believers in the historical revelation are distinguished from those who have allowed these great facts to fade from their remembrance.” (17)

The godly Anabaptists in their German Sunday Book have written,

“Blessed are they who bear God's sign. As truly as the Sabbath is the sign of the covenant between the true God and his people, so truly must this sign be found with those who belong to God's people.” (18)

These scholars confirm that the seal of God, in the heart of the ten commandments, is the seventh-day Sabbath. Today God's mark or seal is being proclaimed throughout the world. Why is the seal of God described as being placed in the forehead? Because the Sabbath commandment begins with the word “remember”, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”, With what do we remember? The memory involves the frontal lobes of the brain - the forehead. In these last days God is placing in the mind and memory of his people the truth of the Sabbath.”Hurt not the earth till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads”. There are millions of God's servants around the world who, as yet, are unaware of God's seal, who are unaware of the truth of the Sabbath. To them must come the message concerning the true Sabbath, calling them to remember to keep it holy, to hallow it, for the prophet says,

“Hallow my Sabbaths and they shall be a sign between me and you that you may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:20.

On the other hand, the Mark of the Beast is also to be placed in the forehead or in the hand of those who follow the beast. In what way will this be fulfilled? When the Papacy reaches the peak of her power and the nations agree to enforce papal policy, it will be enforced in the form of Sunday observance. When the law declares that all activities must cease on Sunday, millions will obey knowing in their minds that they are paying homage to Rome. By this decision they will receive the Mark of the Beast in their foreheads. On the other hand, there will be millions of people who are not interested in religion; when the law declares that they must cease all labor, etc. , on Sunday they will receive the Mark of the Beast in the hand. The hand is a symbol of labor and in ceasing work they will receive the mark in the hand. Thus, all the unsaved will be involved.

It is important to note that the seal of God is placed only in the forehead. Why only the forehead? Because to cease labor on the Sabbath is not necessarily observing the Sabbath. Sabbath-keeping, primarily is an act of worship. It is a recognition of the Creator, that the God who

created in me a clean heart and put in me a right spirit is also developing in me, by his grace, a new character, a new life like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the significance of Sabbath keeping.

“Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you that you may know that I am the Lord that sanctify you.” Ezekiel 20:12.

The divine sign of sanctification or holy living according to scripture is the genuine observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. So, then, in the coming crisis the issue will take the form of two days, two Sabbaths - Sabbath or Sunday. It will be a clash of authorities.

It will be between Jesus Christ and Anti-Christ. It will be a clash between the commandments of God and the traditions of men, between truth and error. The response of true believers will be to leave the traditions of men and to come over to the side of the commandments of God. As Father Enright once declared:

“The Bible commands you to keep the Sabbath day. Sunday is not the Sabbath day, no man dare assert that it is, the Bible says as plainly as words can make it, that the seventh day is the Sabbath, that is, Saturday, or we know Sunday to be the first day of the week. The observance of Sunday is solely a law of the Catholic church. The church changed the Sabbath to Sunday and all the world bows down and worships on that day in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic church.” (19)

If, therefore, we are to be true to Jesus Christ, there is only one thing that we can do and that is to leave the traditions of men, of Rome and come over completely to the side of Jesus Christ. In describing his faithful people of the last days, the Lord says,

“Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

The faith of Jesus goes hand in hand with the commandments of God. When men say, “What difference does a day make?” one can now see that it is more than just a day; it is a question of which God, it is a question of, at which altar do you worship. A man holds in his hand a piece of blue cloth. He treads that piece of cloth underfoot and no one cares. He then takes a piece of white cloth and likewise treads it underfoot. He next takes a piece of red cloth and likewise treads it underfoot and no one takes any notice. However, if he takes a piece of red, white and blue cloth, which is the flag of our nation, and treads it underfoot, one would rightfully object. Why? Is it not simply a piece of cloth with a design on it? Yes! It is only a piece of cloth, but now it represents something. It represents a people, it represents you and your nation. It is more than a piece of cloth, it is what it represents. Likewise, with the Sabbath, the true Lord’s Day. It is more than a day. It represents Jesus Christ, the Creator. Likewise with Sunday, it is more than a day, it is the false Lord’s Day, it represents the Antichrist. It is his mark, his day, his sign, his flag. Thus there are two flags, two authorities, two Sabbaths; the true Sabbath and the false Sabbath of the Antichrist. In these last days God’s special message calls us to come out and stand under the true flag of Jesus Christ, and turn our backs on the flag of Anti-Christ. Which flag shall we accept? There can be no neutrality in this issue for Christ declares:

“If any man worships the beast and his image and receives his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” Revelation 14:9, 10.

In past years the Sabbath was not a test. In these last days it is to be the great test and all will be judged according to their reception or rejection of it. Some say, “My family will object”, and sometimes families do object. However, the Lord says that if we place family before him we are not worthy of him.

“He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after me, is not worthy of me.” Matthew 10: 37, 38.

Others may say, “My business prevents me,” or “My occupation involves Saturday work.” This really is no reason. If you were called into the armed services to defend your country, you would have to leave your business. Your occupation would have to take second place. So it is when Jesus Christ calls us. All these things must take second place and God promises.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [our occupation, business, or family etc.] shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33.

The Lord never forsakes His people.”He that honors me, him will I honor.” In honoring God, we are to honor his day, his commandments. If we say, “It is too hard,” or “too narrow”, just think of Jesus Christ. He had nowhere to lay his head. He was “a man of sorrows”. He was crucified. Was the way too hard for him? He trembled before it but he accepted it.”Not my will, but yours be done,” he said. And he says to us,

“If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

This is the call of Christ and if we love him we will respond. We will serve the Creator and not the creature, we will choose truth and reject tradition. We will keep the commandments of God and turn our backs on the commandments of men. We will submit to Jesus Christ and reject Antichrist. We will take the Sabbath, the seal of the living God, and reject the mark of the beast. May God help us to make the right decision.

In one particular city there was a man who was the foreman of a welding gang. When he heard God's Sabbath message, he was convicted that he ought to obey Jesus Christ. He went to his boss to seek freedom from work in order to keep the Sabbath. His boss would not listen. He pleaded with him, but to no avail. In the end, he was led to give up his job. For three weeks he sought work but could not find any. Someone suggested that he start up a business of his own, which he did successfully. Ere long there sailed into the harbor a ship laden with munitions. While it was being unloaded, one of the laborers accidentally dropped a lighted cigarette into the hold of munitions. He said nothing. Soon they saw a wisp of smoke floating up from the hold. There was panic. The authorities sent into the city for a welding gang to cut a hole in the

ship's side and allow the sea in. Out came the gang, the very gang of which this man had been the foreman. They got to work but it was too late. There was a terrific explosion and the gang was never seen again. Parts of the ship were scattered far and wide. When this happened, the man who had tried to obtain Sabbath freedom in that particular firm, now knew why it was that he was not successful. You see, the Lord did not want him in that job or in that place.

When we serve Christ with all our hearts, God leads us to the place where he wants us to be, and his way and his leading is always the best. It is always right. It might not seem so at the beginning, for often God tests us, but when we are true to him, he never lets us down.

Let us make the decision that will lead us to the kingdom of God.

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26. God's Final Ultimatum To Men!

An Exposition Of Revelation 14:6-13

In introducing this section of Revelation, notice the significance of its setting. In Revelation 13 is presented Satan's final and most successful effort to control the world. In Revelation 14 is presented God's answer to Satan's final attempt. The Three Angels' Messages present a dire warning to all who refuse to resist the popular trends of the last days. This message is the final message from Heaven before the Second Advent of Christ for verse 14 declares:

"I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud, one sat like unto the Son of Man having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle." Revelation 14:14.

This is a picture of Christ returning to the earth as King of kings at the Second Advent. This message is God's final warning, and is a preparatory message for the Second Advent. The Lord promises His people,

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, except He reveal his secret to his servants the prophets." Amos 8:7.

Seeing that such a tremendous event as the Second Advent is due, God, in justice, must make a special announcement concerning it. The Three Angels' Messages are connected with the 144,000. In Revelation 14:1-5 the 144,000 are brought to view. This number symbolizes the final product of the Three Angels' Messages. These messages reveal how the 144,000 are produced.

I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLY IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN

The expression 'I saw' in the book of Revelation denotes a new vision, not a continuation of events seen in the previous verses. It may be a repetition and an enlargement of events already mentioned. This is called the principle of 'repetition and enlargement'. Revelation frequently employs this principle.

"Another angel flying in the midst of heaven."

The previous angel described as "flying" is in Revelation 8.

"I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe, to inhabitants of the earth." Verse 13.

This angel pronounced three woes upon mankind, but in Revelation 14, in contrast, three blessings are pronounced upon mankind. The message of the first angel reads:

"Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters." Verse 7.

This angel is flying in the midst of heaven, which probably denotes speed or urgency.

HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

This is the only instance in scripture where the gospel is so described. Why the everlasting gospel? The first reason is that it is impossible to destroy the gospel of Christ. In spite of all attempts to destroy, or pervert it, the gospel continues. The second reason we suggest, is that its effects, or fruitage, are everlasting. It produces everlasting life. Perhaps a third reason is that the tremendous truths of the gospel. God's love for man, God's suffering for man, God's plan of salvation for man, will be retold and studied for eternity.

"The everlasting gospel" in a special sense, is the message of the Three Angels of Revelation 14. It is a great international, or world-wide message. It goes to "every nation and kindred and tongue and people". Through the centuries, the gospel of salvation has been proclaimed, but mostly, only some of the essentials have been emphasized. The full, and complete gospel was not proclaimed in the past, because much of it was lost during the Dark Ages. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the gospel in its main features was restored, but in Revelation 14, in the last days, some essentials of the gospel that had been previously lost, or neglected, are to be brought back and re-established.

SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE

"Fear God, and give glory to-him for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters." Verse 7.

Three factors are emphasized in this final, everlasting gospel of the first angel. Firstly: "Fear God and give glory to him." But have not Christian men in the past always feared God, and given glory to him? We are living in a period of the world's history when the world's population is to fear and glorify "the beast", for scripture declares,

"All the world wondered after the beast!" And "All that dwell on the earth shall worship him [the beast]. Revelation 13:3, 8.

The Three Angels' Messages is God's counter to Satan's final fling of the last days. Instead of fearing the beast, the call is to "fear God". In what way are we to fear God? There are two kinds of fear featured in scripture. The first is slavish fear which is offensive to God. (1 John 4:18). The second is a fear involving respect and reverence, and which leads to love and obedience.

"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28-29.

Today there is a serious lack of this godly fear, and of reverent respect for God, and His will, especially in the professedly Christian world. God has been presented in an unbalanced light. In the yesteryear God was pictured as harsh and cruel. Today he is pictured as being so loving and forgiving that He will shut His eyes to almost anything. It does not matter what a man believes, so long as he is sincere etc. But the scripture is clear,

"Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of men." Ecclesiastes 12:13.

If one is to be ready for translation, at the Second Advent, a correct attitude is essential in regard to our great and holy God. The next point declares, "Give glory to him." This means to give credit, or praise to God, not merely by voice but by action, by life and influence. It is a call to attractively represent God. This means obedience from the heart out of love and not from compulsion. The angel then declares that there is a special reason for giving glory to God.

FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGEMENT IS COME

What judgment is this? Some claim that this means that God is being judged. Is there any truth in this assertion? In a sense God has been vindicated or judged. Through Lucifer's defection, grave questions were raised throughout the sinless universe in regard to God's justice and character, but these questions were resolved at Calvary. (See under Revelation 12:7-12) Jesus himself declared:

"Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [the word 'men' is not in the original] unto me. This he said, signifying by what death he should die." John 12:31-33.

God was vindicated, or judged, at Calvary. The "hour of his judgment" does not refer to God being judged, but to the judgment of men, and the context of the passage reveals this. The message goes to "every nation, kindred tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment is come." This judgment concerns men.

What kind of judgment is meant in this verse? The word Judgment in scripture has several meanings. First, it represents the visitation of God's justice or punishment. It means recompense. Perhaps the best example of this will be the coming seven last plagues on Babylon which are termed God's judgments (Revelation 18:10). The second meaning of judgment means investigation, an examination, to determine guilt or innocence. The judgment involving punishment will be at the end of the world.

“It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27. This judgment is after death. Jesus said,

“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” John 12:48.

The judgment in the last day, is the final judgment before the great white throne. (Revelation 20) Jesus declared, “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” [Or judgment] John 5:28-29.

This judgment is at the close of the millennium.

“I saw the dead wall and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and they were Judged, every man according to his works.” Revelation 20:12.

But the message of the first angel of Revelation 14:6-7 declares that “the hour of his judgment is come”. It is here. What judgment is here? Undoubtedly it is the second type of judgment; it is an investigation, or a trial. But does God require an investigation, an examination to determine guilt? No! This is not the significance of this scripture. Our God is all wise and all knowing. He reads the thoughts and intents of the heart. He knows all. God does not need even a final judgment, at the end of the world. He knows every man’s guilt and what he justly deserves. Nothing is hidden from him.

Why then the judgment? This brings us to the crux of the question. Judgment is for the sake of man; it is for the sake of the universe. Throughout the universe are unnumbered worlds, inhabited by sinless beings. It is essential that the justice of God be revealed to the universe. This is why there is not only a final judgment at the end of the world, but there is also a judgment that involves investigation, a type of trial, for God must not only be just, but He must be seen to be just. This is the reason for the two-phased judgment; first of all the trial, then the execution of the sentence, the same as it is on earth. Justice must be seen to be done. How often we hear and use the term “a fair trial”. Likewise with the Most High; it is important for him to stage a fair trial so that the judgment of the human race will be seen to be fair and right. Thus there are two stages in the judgment, two phases, the trial and the execution.

Some claim that believers do not come into judgment; that there is no trial, or examination for those who are “in Christ”. A large body of professed Christians reject the claim that believers will be judged. They base their conclusion on their concept of justification. They claim that when a man is justified, he is declared to be righteous, and this means to be judged. It is true that when a man accepts Jesus Christ as his

Savior, that he is judicially acquitted. He is judged by God as righteous. But the claim is made and by very sincere Christians, that therefore there is no further need of judgment. Is this correct? Is the believer declared righteous forever? Two scriptures are mainly used to uphold their view.

“He that believeth in him, [Christ] is not condemned.” John 3:18.

“He that believeth on him shall not come into condemnation.” John 5:24.

There are two Greek words in the above two verses which are translated “condemned” and “condemnation”. It is claimed that these words should be translated “judged”, and “judgment”. Thus believers are not judged or do not come into judgment. Is this correct? These two Greek words may be translated into other English words. They can be translated, “to try, to condemn, to punish, avenge, conclude, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, or think”.

(1) The question is, which is the correct English word? We must allow scripture to answer that question.

Will justified believers be judged in the great final assize? Will born again people have to answer before God for their deeds? Scripture clearly replies, “God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.” Ecclesiastes 3:17.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Paul is writing to believers, and he includes himself, and he was a justified man. Truly the saints will stand before the judgment bar of God. Again,

“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10-12.

“So speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James 2:12.

We must not be misled on this question. The following verse settles the question forever.

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, [the church] and if it first begin at us, [i. e. believers] what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God.” 1 Peter 4:17.

These are solemn words. Every intelligent, responsible person, will stand before the judgment bar of God. But are the saints involved in a trial, or an investigation? Is this essential? Is there an examination of the believer to determine whether he is guilty or innocent? Scripture clearly portrays the setting up of a court trial that involves the saints. In the book of Daniel, which means “God is judge”, an awe inspiring court trial is portrayed. In Daniel 7 it tells how after the reign of the four universal kingdoms, there rises “the little horn” that reigns for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. After 1798 this remarkable court scene is introduced.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or placed] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame and his [its] wheels, as burning fire. A fiery flame issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousands times ten thousand stood before him, the judgment was set and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9-10.

Another version says, “I beheld till thrones were placed and one that was Ancient of Days took his seat.”

-2 Moffatt says, “I watched until an assize was held.” The Amplified Version says, “Until thrones were placed and the Ancient of Days took his seat and the judgment was set and the books were opened.” One version says, “the court sat in judgment.” (3)

Another says, “The court was held, and the records were opened.” The Amplified Version says, “The judge was seated, the court was in session, and the books were opened.”

It is indisputable that this is a great court trial. Where is this trial? In heaven above, in the awesome heavenly temple. Who is involved in this great heavenly trial or judgment? It involves the saints, for it says,

“The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever.” Verse 18. Again,

“Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.” Verse 18. The N. E. B. says, “Judgment was made in favor of the saints.”

Likewise the NKJV says, “Judgment was made in favor of the saints.”

It is indisputable that this great investigative judgment, involves the saints of God. Daniel also says, “The judgment shall sit and they shall take away his [little horn’s] dominion to consume and destroy it. And the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:26-27.

This judgment also involves the “little horn” as well as the saints. Thus after 1798 A. D. there commenced in heaven a great court session, involving the people of God, and the message of the First Angel of Revelation 14 declares to the world, that that judgment has begun. “The hour of his judgment is come.”

The exact date of the commencement of this judgment is revealed in the 8th chapter of the book of Daniel. “Unto [or until] 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14.

This term “cleansing of the sanctuary”, can be shown to represent a work of judgment in the great heavenly temple. The 2300 days [or years] can be shown conclusively to end in the year 1844 A. D. (4) This means that the heavenly court session commenced in the year 1844. Therefore the time of the commencement of the First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14:6-7 would have to be in the year 1. 844. Why is it essential to conduct a trial, an examination, of the life record of the saints?

It is to publicly display to the universe that those who are to be saved in the kingdom of God, have met the conditions laid down by heaven. To show that the saints not only commenced as saints, but that they ended up as saints. There are millions of people who commence the Christian way, but fall away from Christ. Multitudes begin, but do not continue. Vast numbers claim to be Christians but are not born-again. Therefore an examination is essential, a public audit, in order to reveal who can rightfully and justly be granted eternal life at the Second Advent. But is not eternal life a gift? Yes, it is; but the gift may be lost, because eternal life is conditional. The believer must continue in the faith. Some believe in what is commonly called, “once saved, always saved”, but scripture teaches the opposite.

“He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13. The believer, by the grace of God, must overcome.

“He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life.” Revelation 3:5.

It is possible for one to have his name blotted out of the Book of Life if he does not overcome. Eternal life is conditional. We are to be faithful even unto death.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10. We are to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world, and the world passes away and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides forever.” I John 2:15.

“Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world even, our faith.” 1 John 5:4.

God knows every detail of every person. He is infinite and omniscient. However, created beings are finite, limited in knowledge. Created beings can be deceived. Even a third of the angels were deceived, therefore it is necessary for God to conduct a public examination or court trial before the universe in order to reveal the final state of every believer. Such an examination must transpire prior to the Second Advent because at that time, the saved receive eternal life. Before the Second Advent, there will go forth from heaven, a special decree,

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still; and behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man, according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:11-12.

Further scriptural evidence on the pre-advent judgment is available. (5)

The First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14 proclaims to the world that the pre-advent judgment “is come”; not, has come, not is coming, not will come, but, it is come, meaning it is here, it has commenced. It commenced in 1844. It will conclude at the close of probation, before the Second Advent. The third factor in the First Angel’s Message is:

“Worship him that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.”

This is a special call from heaven for men to worship the Creator in the last days. Why such a call? The first reason is that the world in general has forsaken belief in creation. The philosophy of evolution, dominates the thinking of men in regard to origins. Atheism, the belief that there is no God, is rampant, especially among the intellectuals. The modern form of evolution, begun by Darwin, commenced in the year 1844, and in that very year, God raised up a special message for mankind to worship the Creator. How timely: The second reason for such a call, is that the world is being lured into “the worship of the beast”.

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life.” Revelation 13:8.

Unconsciously mankind is being lured into the worship of the beast and his image as brought to view in Revelation 13. (6) How then is Creator worship distinguished? How may we recognize a man who worships the Creator? Scripture provides a guideline for acceptable worship. This is important because certain forms of worship, Christ declared, are vain and worthless.

“In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:9.

God commands men to worship Him aright. The standard for true worship is the first table of God’s eternal law. The first four of the ten commandments, lay down the essential principles of worship. This table comprises man’s complete duty to God. The second table, comprises man’s duty to his fellow men. The first table of the law contains eight conditions of true worship. (7) The first commandment reads,

“Thou shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3.

This tells us who we are to worship, and that is God alone. What is a god? A god is anyone or anything, in which you place your trust. Jesus said: “Thou shall worship the Lord thy God and him only shall thou serve.” Matthew 4:10.

Again, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Matthew 6:33. The only one in whom man it to place his complete trust, is the Creator. The second commandment lays down at least three principles of true worship. It reads,

“Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.” Exodus 20:4-5.

This command forbids the use of any material object as an aid in worship. It does not forbid the making of such objects, but it forbids bowing down to them. God forbids the use of any statue, picture, relic, cross, altar, angel, crucifix, or whatever. Nothing is to be employed by which we visualize God in our worship. Why this restriction? Because it is sensual, it involves the use of the senses, whereas true worship must be spiritual. Jesus said,

“God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24.

How do we worship God in spirit? It is through the exercise of the mind, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. This commandment concerns our method of worship. Why is God so insistent? Jesus said,

“The hour comes and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship him.” John 4:23,

God is very particular regarding the type of worship we render. Why is this? Because false worship is harmful. False worship affects the person, false forms of worship affect the character; whereas true worship uplifts and ennobles; false worship degrades. This is why God commands true worship. He loves his creatures, and one of the great lessons of history is that every nation, every group of people that has persisted in false worship has finally sunk into degradation and generally become extinct. In the second commandment are laid down three important principles of worship.

1. Worship is to be spiritual.
2. Worship is to be simple.
3. Worship is to be direct.

The next condition of acceptable worship concerns our attitude, and this is spelt out in the third commandment, “Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Exodus 20:7. Here is laid down the principle of reverence and respect for the Creator. This respect will lead us to not even use God’s name lightly or unnecessarily.

“Let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29.

The true worshipper must be conscious of the greatness and holiness of the Creator.

“The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20.

In the fourth commandment there are another three principles. This command tells us when to worship, why to worship, and the condition of worship.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shall you labor and do all thy work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth the sea and all that in them is.” Exodus 20:8-11.

Why does the Creator command no labor on His Sabbath. The principle reason is to give man time to worship the Creator and that time is the day especially blessed by God. The only day of the week that God has blessed is the seventh day. Next is the reason for worship. Why does God call us to worship him?

Because He created us. He made all things. Therefore he has the sole right to call for our worship.

He made us. He owns us. We belong to him by right. Next we have the condition for worship.”Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Holiness means to be free from the guilt of sin. True worshippers are those whose sins have been washed away. The only way a man can be free from sin is through the cleansing blood of Jesus, for that alone can wash away sin. (1 John 1:7). This then is the condition for true worship; to be “washed, in the precious blood of the Lamb”.

True Sabbath-keeping as directed in the fourth commandment is the sign of Creator worship. Speaking to his ancient people, Israel, God declared,

“Wherefore the children of Israel, shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” Exodus 31:16-17.

So with spiritual Israel today. The term Israel represents believers, those who are God-ruled, those who belong to Christ, and the great sign between the true believer and God, that he worships the Creator, is his observance of the seventh day Sabbath. Therefore the First

Angel's Message is a special call to observe the first table of the law, and that involves the observance of the fourth commandment, the true Sabbath. It also includes all other commandments given by God, for Christians.

Has such a movement risen in these last days, commencing in 1844, and endeavoring to fulfill all the above points of the First Angel's Message of Revelation 14? Yes, only one, and that is the great Seventh day Adventist movement that rose exactly in 1844 and is proclaiming the truths brought to view, in the First Angel's Message.

THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

"There followed another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Verse 8.

This is the first mention of Babylon in the book of Revelation. She is called "that great city". In prophecy, a city denotes a church. (8) In the Old Testament two cities are singled out, two religious organizations; Babylon, representing Satan's center of worship, and Jerusalem representing Christ's center of worship. In the 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation, Babylon is revealed as the great apostate church of Satan. Revelation 17:18 likens Babylon to "that great city", and in Revelation 17 ten points of identifications are presented, to show who Babylon is. Only one organization fits the specifications. She is spoken of as the "mother of harlots". i. e. mother church. It represents the great religion-political system of the Papacy. It does not include all individuals in the church of Rome, because Revelation 18 reveals that God has some of his people there, and He is continually calling them out. This term, "the mother of harlots", means that Babylon has daughters, daughter churches, that have come out of Rome, but who are now following the practices of the mother church. The question therefore needs to be asked: Did the church of Rome morally or spiritually fall, after the First Angel's Message began to be proclaimed to the world in 1844? The answer is that she did not. Rome fell morally and spiritually way back in the early centuries of the Christian era when she combined with paganism in the time of Constantine the Great, about 300 AD. That is when the church of Rome became apostate.

What churches, or religious bodies, spiritually fell from 1844 onwards? The Protestant churches in general. How did they fall? They fell spiritually by rejecting truth. What truth? The truth of the First Angel's Message. The Protestant churches began to reject at that time the doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ. They began to reject the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They rejected the recovered truth of the heavenly sanctuary, including the truth of the pre advent judgment. They began to reject the standard of Christian conduct, the ten commandments, commencing with the fourth commandment. They then began to reject the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. They clung to the error of the natural immortality of the soul which is the basis of belief in Spiritualism. The major Protestant churches began to accept the false theory of evolution, which leads to the rejection of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Some Protestant

churches accepted the system called Futurism invented by the Jesuits, to interpret prophecy, and the result was that the Protestant churches dropped their protest against Rome and are now pro-Catholic in their outlook. Some accepted false views concerning the Second Advent, such as the secret rapture. On top of this they retained pagan rites and ceremonies such as Sunday observance, the celebration of Christmas, Lent and Easter which originated in Paganism. They preferred tradition instead of scripture.

Because of compromise worldliness began to flood the churches, which scripture describes as spiritual fornication or adultery.

"Babylon is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Verse 8.

What does wine represent in scripture? Wine denotes doctrine or teachings. Intoxicating wine denotes false doctrine. What is meant by fornication? In a religious sense it means illicit union, union with the civil power, union with the world, or union with false worship. It is unfaithfulness to Christ. The Lord likens himself to the husband of the church, and if the church is unfaithful to him and seeks the favor of others, that is classed as spiritual adultery or fornication.

But what is meant by "the wrath of her fornication"? When men assimilate the wine or doctrines of spiritual Babylon it makes them wrathful and intolerant. They become intolerant of truth and intolerant of people who hold to the truth. As Revelation 12:17 declares,

"The dragon was wrath with the woman [the church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"She [Babylon] made all nations drink of the wine."

Revelation 17:2 says that the Mother Church makes the inhabitants of the earth drunk with her wine. Through the centuries Rome has extended her cup of false doctrine to the nations. But today, apostate Protestantism is doing the same. Since 1844, when the First Angel's Message began, the Protestant churches, first of all in the United States, rejected that message and as a result they began to spiritually fall from grace. Ever since, apostate Protestantism has been infecting the world with her false teachings. She has been gradually sliding down the path of apostasy until finally, as we will show from Revelation 18, the Protestant churches will come to the place where they will be

totally under the control of occult powers. This is a sad picture, when we recall how mightily God has used each Protestant church in the past.

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

“And the third angel followed than, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.” Revelation 14:9-11.

This is an appalling picture, and it is vital to understand it aright. This is God's answer to Revelation 13, where mankind is compelled under threat of boycott, and finally of death, to worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. God declares, “If any man (does) worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God”.

What is the mark of the beast? In a previous chapter we dealt with this question. We showed that it will involve the enforcement of Sunday sacredness. Rome has continually claimed that Sunday sacredness is the mark of her authority, and all who accept Sunday observance when it is enforced by law, will thereby receive the mark of the beast. There is only one satisfactory explanation of the mark of the beast. Search where you may, the interpretation as given by the proclamation of the Three Angel's Messages alone, is satisfactory.

Since the mid 1800's Seventh-day Adventists have taught with conviction, that the mark will be enforced Sunday observance. Many claim that no one knows what the mark of the beast is. If that were true, then the Third Angel's Message is meaningless or guesswork, and the integrity of God is put under question. Some confuse the number 666 with the mark of the beast, but the mark is a spiritual mark, not a number.

The third angel sounds “with a loud voice”, indicating that its message is to be proclaimed with power. It will be a world-wide message because the worship of the beast will be world-wide.”All the world wondered after the beast”, every one “whose name is not in the Book of Life” will worship the beast; therefore, God's answer must also be “to every nation, kindred tongue and people”.

“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.”

Here is God's fearful threat to earth's last generation that worships the beast and his image and receives his mark. Notice that there are two cups, two wines, and two wraths.”The wine of the wrath of [Babylon's] fornication” and “the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture”. What a contrast! Babylon has a golden cup in her hand “full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication”, (Revelation 17:4) ; but God's cup overflows with indignation. If we accept Babylon's cup then we will receive the cup of the wrath of God. On the other hand if we reject Babylon's cup of false doctrine, we will receive “the wrath of the beast”. However this wrath even though multiplied a thousand times, could not compare with a single drop of the wrath of God. What is the wrath of God? John declares,

“I saw-seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” Revelation 15:1.

These are punitive judgments, ordained by God and superintended by Christ and the angels.

“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

These plagues do not come from natural causes. They are ordained by God. This is divine justice.

“The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever [continuously] and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receives the mark of his name.”

If these plagues were from natural causes then all would suffer the consequences, but the man who rejects the worship of the beast and his image and his mark, will escape the wrath of God. The description above is a frightening picture. It sounds like eternal torment, and some use this scripture to teach that the unsaved will be damned to eternal hellfire. However when we analyze the phraseology, it is evident that it is drawn from the Old Testament account of the destruction of ancient Edom. The Revelator uses the imagery of Edom's punishment to describe the punishment of earth's final generation, that worship the beast and his image. Edom was located southeast of the Dead Sea. They were the blood brothers of the Jews.

“My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, [Edam] and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, [Edom's capital] and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. Their land shall be soaked with blood. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance. The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the

land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it, for ever and ever.” Isaiah 34:5-10.

This is a picture of the total destruction of the Edomites and their civilization, and it is borrowed by the Revelator. The wording does not denote eternal torment, but complete and utter destruction. It is true however, that there will be a certain amount of suffering during the plagues, because it states that they are “tormented day and night”, but it is not eternal.

In the next verse is presented a beautiful contrast. It is a description of those who have responded to the Three Angel’s Messages. They are the product or fruitage of these messages.

“Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

What a contrast! Here are those who have heeded the Three Angel’s Messages, and have rejected the mark of the beast. They are distinguished by three characteristics.

1. They Are Patient:

“The patience of the saints.”

This denotes steadfast endurance. In the tremendous conflict with the beast that is just ahead, the saints will need to endure; they will need to maintain their integrity; they must refuse to yield; they must be willing to die, rather than sin against God. In the last days when the conflict comes, the saints will have reached a stage of character development in which their characters have become fully mature.

They are immovable, their characters become fixed in righteousness.

“He that is righteous let him be righteous still [i. e. remain righteous] and he that is holy, let him be holy still [i. e. remain holy].” Revelation 22:11.

Dr. Weymouth, in his footnote on this verse declares,

“The word seems to denote development and crystallizing of character immediately preceding the coming of the great Judge of all.” Verse 12. (9)

Before the Second Advent, at the close of probation, God’s people will be sealed. They will be holy, they will be settled in the faith, they will be immovable in their obedience. [For further information. (10)]

2 They Are Commandment Keepers:

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God.”

This is in stark contrast to those who keep the commandments of the beast, who obey men rather than God. Not only do God’s people teach the commandments of God, but they keep them, they obey them, they fulfill them. Now seeing that “sin is the transgression of the law”, it means that at least by this time, the saints have overcome. They are no longer sinning, for they keep the commandments of God.

Today God’s people endeavor to keep all of God’s commandments, but often fall short. However, through repentance and confession, God forgives. But as we grow in grace, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, we will come to the state, where it will be said of God’s people, that truly,

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God.”

3 They Are Faithful: “And the faith of Jesus.”

What is the faith of Jesus? We suggest three applications of this term.

(A) The Teachings of Jesus - The term “faith” may represent a body of belief or doctrine. The Three Angel’s Messages - “the everlasting gospel” - involves the restoration of all the truths or teachings of Jesus that have been lost over the centuries. In the last days the gospel to be proclaimed, is to be the gospel in its fullness, the gospel fully restored. The Protestant Reformation which commenced in 1517 did not possess a complete gospel. Since then lost truths have been recovered and set in their rightful place.

(B) The Confidence of Jesus - The faith of Jesus also means having the same confidence that Jesus Christ possessed in His Father. Jesus is our great example, not only in deed, but also in faith and trust. It will be this faith that will enable the saints to be victorious.

“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:14.

“I saw them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark. Stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God.” Revelation 15:2.

If God’s people are to gain the final victory they must possess the faith that Jesus had.

(C) Faith in Jesus - This term “faith of Jesus” could also mean “faith in Jesus”. This involves faith in his blood, faith in his sacrifice; believing that it takes away all my sin and guilt. It means faith in his resurrection, faith in his intercession and mediation, faith in his promises of power to change me and prepare me for translation. Faith that, one day soon, he is coming back. Faith in his protecting power in the coming conflict with the beast and his image.

A SPECIAL REWARD

The concluding verse of this scripture reads,

“I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow then.” Revelation 14:13.

“Blessed are the dead.” Are all the dead blessed? No! All those outside of Christ, sleep the death of damnation. Jesus said,

“All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation” [Or judgment] John 5:23-29.

The resurrection to life refers to those that died trusting in Christ.”Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Psalm 116:15.

Why is this beautiful promise given in verse 13? Why are the dead blessed? Scripture declares, “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16) What advantage is there in rising first?

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.

What a blessing! On the other hand those who rise in the second resurrection, on them, the second death does have power. But in Verse 13 there is a blessing upon a special group of righteous dead; “blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth”. What does henceforth mean? This refers to the period in which God’s final message of the three angels, is being proclaimed, i. e. , from 1844 until the close of probation, just before the Second Advent. There is a special blessing upon those who die in the Lord, in the faith of the Three Angels Messages. This is the setting of this remarkable promise. There is also a special blessing upon the living who are true to the Three Angels Messages. They are classed as the 144,000, the symbolic number representing those who will not die, but will be translated without seeing death. But this special blessing of verse 13 is upon the dead who die in the Lord in this particular period. What special blessing could be upon the dead who die in the truth of the Three Angels Messages? Is there a special resurrection of any particular group of saints? Yes, there is. Scripture reveals that some saints rise from death before the general resurrection of the saints at the Second Advent.

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2.

This is not speaking of the general resurrection of the saints at the Second Advent because in that resurrection only the blessed and holy take part. Revelation 20:6. In the resurrection of Daniel 12:2,

however there are some righteous and some wicked. Some are raised to shame and everlasting contempt. This then must be some other resurrection. To what time does Daniel 12:2 apply? It applies to the time of trouble preceding the Second Advent.

“At that time, shall Michael [Christ] stand up, and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation, and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1

This is at the close of probation and the ensuing time of trouble which involves the seven last plagues. During the plagues then, there is to be this special resurrection of some of the righteous and some of the unsaved. Who will the unsaved be? The answer is given in Revelation 1 where it reveals that at the Second Advent, there will be some present who had crucified Christ 2,000 years before,

“Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him.” Revelation 1:7.

Those who maltreated the Son of God in his humility, who so brutally nailed him to the cross, will be raised up before the Second Advent in order to behold him. But not only that; those also who unjustly condemned him; the high priest and his cohorts will be raised. At Jesus’ farcical trial, in answer to the demand of the high priest as to whether he were the Son of God, Jesus replied,

“You say, nevertheless I say to thee, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:63-64.

These guilty parties will be raised up before the Second Advent to see Christ returning. What a shattering experience! This special resurrection is generally called, “The Partial Resurrection”. At what time will this partial resurrection take place? According to Daniel 12:1, it is during the seven last plagues that “thy people shall be delivered”. The living saints of the end time, are delivered from their would-be slayers during the plagues. Likewise the special group of the righteous dead of the end time, are delivered from the grave, and raised to everlasting life. The righteous living are delivered under the sixth and seventh plagues in the drying up of the Euphrates.

The special group of the righteous dead will be resurrected soon after. It is informative to notice how the author of “The Great Controversy” comments on Daniel 12:1.

“Graves are opened and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. All who have died in the faith of the Third Angel’s Message, come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept his law.” (11)

Verse 13 continues:

“Yea said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.”

“That they may rest from their labors”. The word “labors” means “wearying toil” or “strenuous effort”. The word is used in the New Testament of “the labor of love¹ of believers in the cause of Christ. Often this involves wearying toil as the Apostle Paul experienced.

“In weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” 2 Corinthians 11:27.

The Revelator is referring to the wearying toil of God’s servants in proclaiming the Three Angel’s Messages. Has this been true of those who have died in the Third Angel’s Message? It has been true of many, and it is still true of some in certain areas of the world today where the Three Angel’s Messages are being proclaimed. It was indisputably true of the pioneers of the Three Angel’s Messages. James White performed the work of three men and finally died of overwork. Ellen White also, was involved in wearying

toil for over seventy years in the cause of Christ. Colporteurs, evangelists, missionaries in isolated, uncivilized areas, labored, often painfully, in the proclamation of God’s last message. On the other hand, there are many who have died in the Third Angel’s Message who may not have experienced wearying toil such as that of the pioneers. Will they share in the partial resurrection? We suggest that the wearying toil, the strenuous effort could also apply to the continuous toil of fighting the good fight of faith, the continual struggle against the carnal nature, against principalities and powers, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. As one author has written,

“There are living upon our earth men who have passed the age of fourscore and ten. The natural results of old age are seen in their feebleness. But they believe God, and God loves them. The seal of God is upon them, and they will be among the number of whom the Lord has said ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord’. With Paul they can say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. There are many whose grey hairs God honors because they have kept the faith.” (12)

Again,

“Though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. Teach man to co-operate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming.” (13)

AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM

When God's people are laid to rest not only are they not forgotten, but God remembers their works. Why does God remember their works? We suggest that it is because they "are rewarded according to their works". Is there anything special about their works? Under the Three Angel's Messages, they have been called to full obedience to the commandments of God; they have been called to walk in opposition to Christendom, to sacrifice position and the favor of their fellowmen. They have been called to a life of temperance, and reform, of sacrifice of time and of money for the salvation of others. They have been called in a special way to separate from the degenerate world, and for many it has meant the endurance of hostility, and for some it has, and will mean imprisonment and even martyrdom. Before the close of probation, "there will be many martyrs." (14) Already in some areas, men and women have sacrificed their lives for Christ, and before the close of probation, many more will be called upon by God to bear testimony by their death. God rewards them according to their works and it appears that their reward will be to share in the special resurrection. At the commencement of the Three Angel's Messages, there is revealed a special reward for the living - the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1-5) and at the close, of the Three An-gel's Messages, there is a special reward for those who die under those messages.

In what way is the partial resurrection different or superior to the general resurrection of all the saints at the Second Advent? The partial resurrection occurs a few days prior to the actual appearance of Christ. The rest of the righteous are raised up at the actual Advent, when Christ is already in the heavens above. With those who are raised several days before the Advent, there will be a vast difference.

They will witness the awe-inspiring events that climax in the Advent. They will experience events to which, in life, they looked with great anticipation and for which they labored so diligently. They rise from death after the living saints are delivered from their would-be slayers. Probably they will witness the destruction of the religious leaders by their own followers; they will undoubtedly see the awful earthquake, the mountains disappearing, the hail devastating the earth and they will pass through it unharmed. They will see the atmosphere depart, the dark clouds rolling away amid the deepest thunder, and way yonder on the eastern horizon they will behold that small distinctive, captivating cloud, on which, all eyes will be riveted. With awe and inexpressible gratitude, they gaze upon that cloud as it moves toward the zenith of the sky and with the living saints, they will cry,

"Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25:9.

They have waited in their graves for a period but they have waited nevertheless, and at last, God rewards them by giving them the privilege of seeing Christ coming. They behold the remarkable transformation of that small dark cloud from black to brilliant white, as it draws nearer the earth; and soon they discern in the midst of the cloud the figure and face of the Lord Jesus enthroned and crowned, with a sickle in his hand and surrounded with multiplied millions of radiant beings. They witness the greatest event ever known in the history of the universe, the transcendent glory of the returning Christ with the heavenly hosts. With awe-inspiring rapture, they hear the clear resounding peals of the trumpet echoing across the heavens. They hear that incredible voice, in moving tones, calling to the sleeping saints of the ages,

"Awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust and arise!"

What a call! What a command! In that voice is creative power, and throughout the earth, from every cemetery, graves split open, and in an instant the sleeping saints rise up and step from the tomb. The special resurrected group behold the angels - guardian angels - flashing from the cloud to the gravesides, to welcome back to life the ones whom they tended through life. Throughout the earth, are the resurrected dead, a vast army of multiplied millions of glorified beings, of all ages, and races. They are aglow with immortality. When they come forth from the grave, they realize they have been delivered from death and they burst forth into grateful and glorious song. As the prophet declared,

"Thy dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise; Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." Isaiah 26:19.

What do they sing? Here it is:

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

What a song! And undoubtedly the living righteous, join in and proclaim the marvelous victory over death. What a victory! What a reward!

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2. The Revised Standard Version.
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4. See the author's work, "God Sets A Date".
5. See the author's work, "Time No Longer", an Exposition of Revelation chapter 10.
6. See the author's work, "Antichrist - 666," an Exposition of Revelation chapter 13.
7. In scripture the number '8' is frequently associated with regeneration or resurrection. We suggest that the 8 principles involving true worship, declare that only the regenerated believer can render true and acceptable worship to God.
8. Hebrews 12:22-23.
9. See Weymouth on Revelation 22:11 in The New Testament In Modern Speech.
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11. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, page 982.
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27. Grapes Of Wrath Or Harps Of God?

An Exposition of Revelation 14:14-20 & 15:1-4.

Through the years, scholars have found the latter half of Revelation 14 to be difficult to interpret. We suggest that the verses involved in this exposition form a distinct chapter.

"I looked, and behold a white cloud. And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown mid in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice unto Him that sat on the cloud: 'Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for Thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped."

This section commences with the expression: "I looked and behold. . ." This denotes a new vision, as distinct from the previous vision of the three angels.

"Behold, a white cloud."

As previously shown in Revelation 10, a cloud represents the presence of the Deity. Clouds are also associated with judgment. The above expression is culled from Daniel 7:13 where Jesus Christ, "the Son of man" is pictured being transported by "the clouds of heaven" into the judgment scene, into the presence of "the Ancient of Days" in the great heavenly temple.

Thus in verse 14 we have a representation of Jesus Christ, amid the angels, coming to this world at the Second Advent in judgment. John describes the cloud as a "white cloud". This is the only time the cloud is described as white. The Spirit of Prophecy reveals that at the Second Advent the cloud first appears as a small dark cloud on the eastern horizon, but as it nears the earth it is transformed into glorious white. White denotes righteousness and justice and is also associated with judgment. The judgment scenes of Daniel 7:9, 10 and Revelation 20 are associated with white.

"Whose garment was white as snow and the hair of His head like pure wool" Daniel 7:9, 10."I saw a great white throne." Revelation 20:11."Upon the cloud one sat." How could Christ sit upon a cloud? The cloud here is composed of angels, or the cherubim, one of whose functions is to transport the deity when He moves in state. In Ezekiel, chapters 1 & 10, the Lord is shown upon His throne which is borne by a gigantic chariot formed of cherubim. The living chariot wheels are as high as the heavens and above the chariot was a firmament or platform, and on the platform, a throne, and on the throne the "appearance of a man."

SON OF MAN

The One seated upon the cloud is described as “The Son of Man”. Why at the Second Advent is Jesus not referred to as the “Son of God”? We suggest that there are two reasons. The first is derived from the Old Testament. The term represents the Messiah, the great deliverer of the race who was promised in Eden to Adam and Eve. He appeared first at Bethlehem, but now “He appears the second time without sin unto salvation”.

The second reason for “Son of Man,” is that it represents Christ in His humanity. In the New Testament the term is used 88 times. The number 8 represents regeneration, newness of life or resurrection. The word “Jesus” in Greek adds up to 888. (In Greek every letter represents a number). The 88th time that the term

“Son of Man” is used in the New Testament is in Revelation 14:14 where Jesus is pictured as the great harvester, coming to gather the harvest of the earth which involves the mighty resurrection of His people.

AND ON HIS HEAD A GOLDEN CROWN

In the first description of Jesus in the heavenly temple (Revelation 13-14), nothing is said in regard to the covering of His head. Probably as high priest He would wear a miter, but now it is a golden crown. He is no longer a priest but King of Kings. He has received His kingdom. This world has been given to Christ, and now He is coming to take possession.

THE SICKLE

“And in His hand a sharp sickle.”

For two thousand years Jesus has had in His hand a smoking censer denoting his priestly intercession for his people, but now he holds a sickle denoting that He is about to reap the harvest of the earth.

“Thrust in Thy sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” (Verse 15)

What is the harvest? There are two harvests in this passage. Jesus said:

“The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels.” Matthew 13:39

What does “the end of the world” mean? It is not the final destruction by fire; it means the period of the end of the world. The Spirit of Prophecy says that the “harvest is the end of probationary time.” (1)

The harvest commences at the close of probation and the reapers are the angels. In this scripture three angels are employed in the harvest. They probably represent the angelic host. In the previous passage of scripture (Verses 6-13) another three angels are represented as producing the crop. In this final passage or Revelation 14 three angels are pictured as reaping the crop. The expression, “another angel” is mentioned three times in this passage, (Verses 16-18).

THE HARVEST AND THE TEMPLE

“Another angel came out of the temple.”

Why is the temple involved in the reaping of the harvest? Jesus is now on the cloud. He has left the temple, His mediation is no more. However, it is in the temple that the sin question is resolved. It is in the temple that decisions are determined regarding the destiny of men. The reaping of the harvest involves destiny and judgment, rewards and penalties, and all this is resolved in the heavenly sanctuary.

“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.” Psalm 77:13.

“I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their end.” Psalm 73:17.

David is here referring to the destiny of the wicked. He concluded that the wicked unfairly prospered until he went into the sanctuary. When he saw in the sanctuary service the fate of the unsaved he understood. God’s justice is revealed in the heavenly temple. That is why the heavenly temple is associated with the great harvest -the end of the world. Undoubtedly these three angels are symbolic, just as the three angels of verses 6-9 are symbolic. These represent the three final messages to the world before the coming of Christ. To be logical, this second trio of angels should also be symbolic. We will endeavor to discover what they represent.

THE CRY TO CHRIST ON THE CLOUD

Of the latter trio of angels, the first and the third cry with a loud voice. Likewise, the first and third angels of the first trio cry with a loud voice. The first angel of the latter trio (verse 5) cries to Christ on the cloud. Could this represent a message, an appeal from earth to Christ above? Will there be any cry after the close of probation? Will there be any appeal or message to God? Yes there will! There will be a mighty cry around the globe from the afflicted saints - a cry for deliverance from their persecutors and would-be slayers. There will also be a cry from the afflicted saints for God's approval in the time of Jacob's trouble

when they are mentally assailed by Satan. We suggest that this angel, crying with a loud voice to Christ on the cloud, represents the cry of the saints around the world.

In Revelation 18:1-4 before the close of probation, there will be a "loud cry" on the part of God's people while Jesus is still in the temple. This cry of Revelation 14:15, however, is after probation closes, when Jesus is on the cloud. We suggest that this cry is illustrated by the parable of the unjust judge of Luke 18:1-8.

"He spoke a parable to them . . . that men ought always to pray, and not to faint: saying; 'There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came to him saying; 'Avenge me of mine adversary. ' And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself; 'Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. ' And the Lord said; 'Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night to Him though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?'" Luke 18:1-8.

The widow represents the elect, God's remnant people. In this parable we have a parallel in the experience of God's people after the close of probation.

PARALLELS BETWEEN

The Widow

1. The Widow with no earthly support.
2. Her adversary.
3. The judge "would not for awhile."
4. Finally the judge responds and avenges the widow.

The Persecuted Saints After The Close of Probation.

1. The elect (Verse 7). The Remnant without earthly support - no mediator.
2. Satan, (which means adversary), opposes the Remnant through his earthly agents.
3. God prolongs the time of waiting and pleading by the saints in order to purify them from the last vestiges of earthliness. (The time of Jacob's trouble.)
- 4."And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry night and day to Him. He will avenge them speedily."

It is interesting to note the comment from the Spirit of Prophecy on this angel's cry.

"This will not take place until Jesus has finished His priestly office in the heavenly sanctuary and lays off His priestly attire and puts on His kingly robes and crown, to ride forth on the cloudy chariot to thresh the heathen in anger, and deliver His people. Then Jesus will have the sharp sickle in His hand. Then the saints will cry day and night to Him to thrust in His sickle and reap. This will be the time of Jacob's trouble out of which the saints will be delivered by the voice of God. (2)

In response to the cry of the persecuted saints, Christ finally takes action."He thrust in his sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped." Verse 15

This represents a work of separation. The righteous are severed from the wicked, God turns the captivity of his persecuted, pursued saints and delivers them. This occurs under the sixth and seventh plagues. (See: "The Drying Up Of The Great River Euphrates.")

"Another angel came out of the temple, also carrying a sharp sickle." Verse 17. This is the second reaper, denoting a second harvest.

“Another angel came out from the altar which had power over fire, and cried with a loud voice to Him that had the sickle: ‘Thrust in Thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’” Verse 18

It appears that God delegates authority to angelic beings to control the various elements of the natural world. We read of the “angel of the waters” (chapter 15:5) and “angels controlling the winds” in Revelation 7:1 and Job 1:19.

The fire, over which this angel appears to preside, represents two processes - purification or punishment: cleansing or consuming. When fire and incense were mixed with the prayers of the saints, their prayers were purified; when fire is unmixed with incense it punishes. The fire in verse 18 undoubtedly represents punishment. In Revelation 8:5 a glimpse is given of the heavenly temple and how an angel takes fire from the altar and flings it to the earth. As a result, the judgments of God in the seven trumpets afflict the inhabitants of the earth. Likewise with this angel of verse 18. He has power over fire, or authority to administer punishment, and he gives the signal for the punishment of the unsaved to commence in the seven last plagues.

Now the altar within the temple is the altar of incense, and the fire is associated with that altar. As Revelation 8:5 says; “The fire of the altar.” Why the fire from the altar in the harvesting of the wicked? The altar was associated with the record of sin.

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond: it is graven. . . upon the horns of your altars.” Jeremiah 17:1

In the Old Testament the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled upon the horns of the altar of incense. Thus the altar, we suggest, represents here the record of the sins of the unsaved, so from the incense altar comes the fire of God’s judgment or retribution.

“The angel took the censor and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth, and there were voices and thundering and lightning and an earthquake.” Revelation 8:5, 6.

HER GRAPES ARE FULLY RIPE

In scripture the unsaved are likened to grapes. What is meant by their being “fully ripe”? We suggest this represents two aspects.

1. It represents the fact that the unsaved are fully developed in their wickedness. Just as the saved, when fully ripe, reflect the image of Christ in character, so the unsaved, when they are fully ripe, fully reflect the image of the evil one.
2. It also represents the fact that the unsaved have reached the peak of rebellion. They have filled up the cup of their iniquity. In what way? Their cup overflows with wickedness when they determine to slay the saints of God.

We suggest that the cry of the altar angel represents Heaven’s response to the death decree against the saints and is a signal for the harvest of the wicked to commence. What is the harvest of the wicked? It is retribution, it is vengeance on the part of Heaven.

“The angel thrust in his sickle and gathered the vine and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden without [outside] the city.” Verses 19, 20.

In the Old Testament the punishment of the unsaved is likened to the treading of grapes in a wine press.

“The Lord bath trodden underfoot all the mighty men, the lord has trodden the daughter of Judah as in a wine press.” Lamentations 1:15.

In Isaiah’s portrayal of the punishment of the Edomites, the inveterate enemies of Israel, he wrote,

“Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Like him that treads in the wine vat? I have trodden the wine press alone. For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments . . . for the day of vengeance is in mine heart-and I will tread down the people in mine anger and make them drunken inn my fury and I will bring down their strength to the earth.” Isaiah 63:1-6

In the punishment and destruction of Edom, God likened Himself to treading the grapes in the winepress. This picture is drawn upon by the Revelator to describe the punishment of the unsaved, when they fill up their cup of iniquity, as they attempt to destroy the saints.

What and where is this wine press of Verses 19-20? Some claim it is the literal valley of Jehoshaphat, that steep little valley on the eastern side of Jerusalem, now called the valley of Kidron. If this were true, that valley is so small, it could not contain even a small part of an army. The wine press does not represent a battle field nor a military conflict. Others claim that the wine press represents the valley of Megiddo or the plain of Esdraelon, east of Mount Carmel. But when the wine press is trodden, the blood comes up to the horses’ bridles.

How could such depth of blood accumulate in the vast plain of Esdraelon? The answer is found in the Old Testament books of Joel and Ezekiel.

“Proclaim you this among the Gentiles. Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say; ‘I am strong.’ Assemble yourselves and come all you heathen, gather yourselves together round about, Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, [margin: concision or threshing]. For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon shall be darkened and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem and the heavens and the earth shall shake. The Lord will be the hope of His people and the strength of Israel.” Joel 3:9-16.

This prediction had its initial application to literal Israel back in the Old Testament times, when Israel returned from Babylon if Israel had been faithful, Satan would have inspired the surrounding nations to unite and destroy Israel; but God would have intervened and destroyed them in the valley of Jehoshaphat. That steep valley was likened to a wine press, and Israel’s enemies were likened to grapes crushed in the press. This prediction was not fulfilled. Why? Because it was a conditional prophecy based on Israel’s faithfulness. Israel was not faithful, therefore the prediction was not fulfilled. Zechariah makes clear, the conditional nature of many of the Old testament predictions.

“This shall come to pass IF you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.” Zechariah 6:15.

Joel’s prediction now has a spiritual application to spiritual Israel - the remnant - in the final conflict of Armageddon. Notice the twelve parallels between Joel’s prophecy and the final conflict:

12 PARALLELS OF

Joel 3:9-16

- 1.”Proclaim you this among the Gentiles.” Verse 9. 2, “Prepare [sanctify] war.”
- 3.”Wake up the mighty men. All men of war draw near and come up.”
- 4.”Beat your plough shares into swords.”
- 5.”Assemble yourselves and come, all you heathen, gather yourselves together.” Verse 11.
- 6.”Let the heathen be awakened and come up to the valley Jehoshaphat [punishment].”
- 7.”There will I sit to judge [punish] all the heathen round about.” (Literal Jerusalem).
- 8.”Put you in the sickle for the harvest is ripe, get you down (into the wine press) the press is full.”
- 9.”The fats [vats] overflow; for their wickedness is great.” Verse 9.
- 10.”Multitudes in the valley of decision.” (Concision or threshing).
- 11.”The day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (Concision or threshing).
- 12.”The Lord shall utter His voice from Jerusalem and will be the hope and the strength of Israel.” Verse 16.

The Battle Of Armageddon

1. The unsaved - the enemies of God.
2. Proclamation of a holy war against dissenters.
3. A call to the unsaved for action.
4. Preparation for the conflict.

5. The union of all the unsaved against spiritual Jerusalem - the church of God.
6. The unsaved resolve to attack the saints and thereby become worthy of punishment.
7. A symbol of Jesus Christ sitting in judgment, in the valley of this world, to punish the unsaved.
8. A call to the army of heaven to punish and destroy the unsaved. (Revelation 19:14-15)
9. The cup of iniquity of the unsaved overflows - in their attempt to slay the saints.
10. Millions of the unsaved about to receive the wrath of God.
11. Day of the Lord commences at the close of probation. Then the wrath of God comes.
12. Christ will be in the midst of spiritual Jerusalem, i. e. His people, and will deliver them.

“The wine press was trodden without [outside] the city.” Revelation 14:20.

The city is spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God, the Remnant. The wine press is trodden outside the Remnant church. In Revelation 11:2 it declares that the holy city (Jerusalem), “shall they tread underfoot; forty two months.” This was fulfilled by the Papacy, which for forty two prophetic months, or 1260 years, trod down the church of God. In the final conflict, the combined powers of the unsaved, led by the Papacy, endeavor to tread down the church of God once again, but this time God intervenes and treads them down outside the spiritual city of the church. When the saints are surrounded by the unsaved, who determine to slay them, then it is that God intervenes and treads the unsaved down instead.

THE WINE PRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

The wrath of God is exhibited in the seven last plagues.

“I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” Revelation 15:1.

The church in the last days will be world-wide, so the wrath of God in the seven last plagues will be worldwide in extent. (3) The winepress represents the world.

“Blood came out of the wine press, even to the horses’ bridles.” Verse 20.

In Old Testament times it was not uncommon, in treading down the grapes in the winepress to use horses. In Revelation this practice is drawn upon to symbolize the destruction of the unsaved.

“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon it was called faithful and true, in righteousness doth He judge [punish] and make war-and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, and He treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of the almighty, God.” Revelation 19:11, 14, 15.

In Revelation 14:20 these angelic horsemen are pictured treading down the unsaved in the great worldwide wine press of God’s wrath. So terrific is the slaughter that the blood is symbolized as being so deep that it reaches the bridles of the angelic horses. What a picture:

“By the space of a thousand and six hundred furloughs.” Verse 20.

This appears to be the measurement of the wine press. The word furlough is “Stadia” in the Greek, and the total circumference adds up to about two hundred miles. What is the significance of this measurement? Undoubtedly it is symbolic. This symbol is drawn from the latter chapters of the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament where the drama of Gog and Magog is presented. This ancient power was predicted to invade Israel and attempt to destroy the city and the temple. If Israel had been faithful, God would have transformed the land of Israel into a purified, elevated plateau. On it he would have created a superlative city and temple. The Temple and city area, called the oblation, would have been approximately two hundred miles in circumference. Satan would have inspired Israel’s enemies to invade Israel, and around the circumference of the oblation they would have been totally destroyed by God. The Revelator borrows this picture in Ezekiel and uses it to represent the complete destruction of the enemies of the saints in the final conflict.

There is no break in the original so we continue.

“I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”
Revelation 15:1

What is this sign that is great and marvelous? It is the exhibition of God’s wrath, the seven last plagues. If this is great and marvelous, why then do we tend to shun, even to shift the responsibility of the plagues onto Satan or upon natural causes? To the sinner the wrath of God is certainly something to be afraid of.”Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” But the prophet says that it is “great and marvelous”.

These plagues are described as the “seven last” or as the Greek renders it “seven, which were the last. . .” There have been, and will be other plagues, and they will increase in their number and intensity. The seven trumpets were classed as plagues, (Revelation 9), but the trumpets are not the seven LAST plagues. Here is revealed the difference between the plagues and the trumpets. The purpose of the trumpets’ was to bring apostates to repentance and reformation, but the purpose of the plagues is to punish the impenitent. They are an exhibition of the justice of God and no doubt this is what is “great and marvelous.”

IN THEM IS FILLED UP THE WRATH OF GOD

In the plagues God’s wrath is consummated. God’s wrath is spent. Never again will be witnessed the display of his wrath as in the seven last plagues. Thank God for that.

Why is this verse (15:1) inserted between the winepress of Revelation 14:20 and “the sea of glass” of Revelation 15:2? It is the culmination of the scene of punishment of chapter 14:17-20. It shows what the treading of the wine press really is - the visitation of the last plagues in which God’s wrath overflows. In chapter 15:1-4 is revealed the culmination of the harvest; the destiny of the wheat and the tares. In the parable of the harvest Jesus declares of the tares,

“The angels shall cast them into a furnace of fire, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 13:41, 42.

This will be fulfilled, first in the seven last plagues, and finally in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20.) Chapter 15:2-4 reveals the destiny of the righteous remnant. In the harvest parable Jesus says:

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.” Matthew 13:43. Here is the fulfillment of this promise:

“I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast and his image and his mark and the number of his name.” Verse 2.

These are they that have come through the final conflict and now receive their due reward. They stand on the sea of glass. What is the sea of glass? It appears to be a vast and colorful assembly area where the heavenly host assemble before the eternal throne.

According to Revelation 4, it is in the holy place, the apartment of the heavenly temple. If so, it tells us how vast and awesome the heavenly temple must be.

MINGLED WITH FIRE

The sea of glass no doubt reflects the glory of God. In the Old Testament the Lord is pictured as being bathed in fire. (4) This is the fire that issues forth and devours the unsaved in the final judgment. It is “everlasting fire”. This is because it is associated with Him “who is from everlasting to everlasting”. (Psalm 40:2)

“Them that had gotten the victory over the beast and his image.”

This is the same group which was revealed in Revelation 14:1-5, and which are symbolized by the number 144,000. This group exists only in the end time, for only then is the conflict of the beast and his image an issue.

GOTTEN THE VICTORY

How much is involved in that expression? What an ordeal! What a conflict! The generation that goes through this will probably have experienced the greatest contest ever known to man, a contest similar in some ways to what Jesus went through in the garden of Gethsemane. This group will have faced adverse public opinion. They have been compelled to disobey the laws of the land, to endure public ridicule and universal contempt. They have been boycotted, and threatened with starvation. They have lost family, friends, every thing. Finally, they have faced the death decree, forced to forsake everything and flee to the mountains or be imprisoned. The only item

they retain is their implicit faith in God and their confidence in His promises. What a conflict! What a victory! They stand on the sea of glass.

“Having the harps of God and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb.” This portrayal is likewise drawn from the Old Testament, from the Exodus of Israel from Egypt under Moses. Israel was then pursued by Pharaoh and cut off between the mountains and the sea, but God divided the sea, the waters of which were congealed (perhaps like glass) and Israel marched through the divided sea to safety on the eastern shore. When the Egyptians attempted to follow Israel, the sea became a trap and destroyed them. (5)

8 PARALLELS BETWEEN THE EXODUS AND THE REMNANT This experience of Israel’s deliverance is typical of spiritual Israel in the final conflict.

The Exodus From Literal Egypt

1. Egypt rejected the witness of Israel to the truth of God.
2. The result was the oppression of Israel.
3. Egypt was visited with the judgments of God in the ten plagues.
4. Israel was delivered from the effects of the plagues.
5. The threat of death from the Egyptians - Israel pursued.
6. Israel cut off - they cry to God for deliverance.
7. The sea opens - Israel pass through it to safety.
8. Israel, an the other side of the sea, witness the destruction of their enemies and sing the song of deliverance.

The Final Remnant

1. This world - spiritual Egypt will reject the witness of spiritual Israel - the Remnant - to the truth of God.
2. The result will be the oppression of the Remnant.
3. The world will be visited with the judgments of God in the seven last plagues.
4. Spiritual Israel - The Remnant - will be delivered from the seven last plagues.
5. The threat of death from the unsaved world - the Remnant pursued.
6. The Remnant cut off - they cry to God -day and nights, for deliverance.
7. Heaven opens - Christ appears. The Remnant pass through the heavens to safety.
8. The Remnant witness the destruction of their enemies and on the “other side” - sing the song of their deliverance.

HAVING THE HARPS OF GOD

Three times the harps of God are mentioned in Revelation. The 24 elders have harps (Revelation 5:8), the 144 000 have harps (Revelation 14:2), the remnant, (whom the 144,000 represent) also have harps. (Revelation 15:2) There must be special qualities about these harps. No laborious learning process is involved; at a single touch they respond with inspiring and entralling tones. We suggest that there will be special qualities possessed by the saints. They will have restored to them, gifts and abilities which through sin, have been lost to mankind. In the kingdom, for example, they will take the harps of God, and without any learning, perfectly produce the tunes of heaven. But more!

They have first learned to spiritually sing on earth before they can sing in heaven. In the kingdom of grace on earth they have learned to praise God, to rejoice amid persecution. As Jesus said:

“Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: For so persecuted they the prophets which were sent before you.” Matthew 5:10-12.

Persecution awaits the remnant in the near future, and those who learn to sing amidst conflict and suffering will receive the harps of God and sing on the sea of glass, “the song of Moses and the lamb.” What is the significance of this song? It is a song of deliverance. The deliverance of the Remnant will be a twofold deliverance. First, it will be a deliverance from earthly foes; from the beast, from the death decree, from pursuit. Secondly, it will be deliverance from spiritual foes; from the power of Satan, from the slavery of sin and self. Those who sing this song are overcomers, they are without fault. There is no guile in their mouths. What a wonderful deliverance!

It is significant to note a section of the song that the Remnant sings: “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty.” (Verse 3)

The seven last plagues are also said to be great and marvelous. Undoubtedly this refers to the exhibition of justice of God in the destruction of the enemies of the saints. This song approves of God’s dealings with the beast: “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou king of saints”. This is an acknowledgment of God’s justice and righteousness. It is a vindication of His character, His law, and His ways.

“Who shall not fear Thee and glorify Thy name, for Thou only [alone] art holy.” Verse 4.

The word “holy” is a different word from the usual. It denotes that which is right. It involves the vindication of God, especially in His dealings with others. It is a recognition of moral obligations.”Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25) When God metes out His judgments, it will be a revelation of His righteousness and justice in the great controversy between Christ and Satan and in which the Remnant have played a vital part. Before the universe, the Remnant will proclaim the righteousness and justice of God’s dealings. On earth, under the severest test, the Remnant have displayed their loyalty and obedience. They prove that God’s law can be kept even by those from earth’s weakest and most corrupt generation. Now before the illimitable universe of sinless worlds they celebrate the character of the Creator. What a privilege! What a reward!

Finally: “All nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest.” The word for judgment in this verse means righteousness. Is this a prediction of the universal acknowledgement of God’s righteousness! Will all nations, will all the unsaved finally worship before God? Yes! In the final judgment before the great white throne, when all nations, all men, stand before the judgment seat of Christ, then all nations will acknowledge God’s justice and righteousness.

“For we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written; ‘As I live, said the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue confess to God, so then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10-12.

What a statement! So far only a few knees have bowed to God, only a few tongues have confessed, but when all nations return to life, when “all that are in the grave shall hear His voice and come forth, they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation,” this will be fulfilled. The only time that all nations will be in existence together, will be in the final judgment. Then all men, from Adam to the last born on the earth, are together, facing the Most High in judgment. Then all nations, all the unsaved, will bow in acknowledgement of God’s justice. (6) All will bend the knee and confess that God indeed, is a God of love and justice.

REFERENCES

1. Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, page 72.
2. Ellen G. White, A Word To The Little Flock, page 12
3. For further evidence that the last 7 plagues are world-wide but not universal, see “God’s Strange Act,” Revelation 16, by the author.
4. Exodus 19:18; 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:11-12, 24; 5:22; 33:2; Daniel 7:9-10; Hebrews 12:29.
5. Exodus 14-15.
6. See the topic: “The Final Windup of History,” by the author.

28. God’s Strange Act

The How, When And Why Of The Seven Last Plagues An Exposition of Revelation 15:5-8 and 16:1-11, 16:17-21. The introduction to the seven last plagues commences with Revelation 15:5.”After that I looked and behold.”

This expression denotes a new section or chapter. The prophet once again employs the principle of “repetition and enlargement”. This chapter deals in detail with the seven last plagues.

PLAGUES INTRODUCED BY A TEMPLE SCENE

“The temple of God was opened in heaven.” Revelation 15:5.

The book of Revelation is mostly a series of temple scenes. Revelation 14:14-20 revealed Jesus Christ outside the temple on the white cloud. However, directions continue to come from within the temple.

Why is the temple involved? The plague-angels emerge from the temple. This means that retribution upon the unsaved emanates from the temple. God the Father presides in the temple. Christ has moved out on the white cloud. He is about to come to earth to take possession of his kingdom. Why the unusual description of the temple?

“The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.” Verse 15.

The term “tabernacle of the testimony” is used in only one other place in the New Testament.”The tabernacle of witness in the wilderness.” Acts 7:44 (or “The tent of the testimony.” N. E. B.)

The term is derived from the Old Testament where it refers to the Ten Commandments which comprise the great moral law of God. (See Exodus 31:18; 32:15, 16; 25:16; Numbers 17:7, 8, 10.)

Why are the Ten Commandments called “the testimony” or “witness”? The Ten Commandments are a testimony or witness to the person and character of God. A law is a revelation of the lawgiver. God’s law is a revelation of the character and nature of God. As one author declared:

“The law is a transcript of God’s character.” (1)

The expression “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony”, means it is the temple of God’s law. Heaven is declaring its high estimation of the law. This is significant. Approximately seventy years after Calvary, the Revelator declared that the eternal temple, where the Most High reigns, that building containing the eternal throne, the central structure of the universe, is the temple of the testimony, the temple of the Law. It emphasizes that God’s eternal law is the foundation of His throne and government.

“Justice [Hebrew: righteousness] and judgment are the habitation [margin: establishment] of thy throne.” Psalm 89:14.

“Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.” Psalm 97:2.

What is this righteousness which is the basis of God’s government? The Psalmist answers “All thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172.

What is the significance of this introduction to the plagues which are the outpouring of divine wrath? It is rebellion against God’s law that brings this retribution.

“The law works wrath.” Romans 4:15.”The law brings wrath.” RSV.

“The law inflicts punishment.” Weymouth.

God’s justice and punishment are not the result of caprice, emotion or anger but are based on righteous principle, His divine law. In His amazing mercy God provided an atonement for the broken law that all men might escape the law’s fearful penalty. However, at the close of the Day of Salvation, this is no longer available. The law now must take its course. All who have spurned the mercy of God must take the consequences.

“The seven angels came out of the temple having the seven plagues.” Verse 6.

The retribution for defiance of God’s law by worshipping the beast and his image etc. , comes from the temple. Why the temple? The psalmist gives us the clue.

“I was envious when I saw the prosperity of the wicked until I went into the sanctuary [temple], then understood I their end.” Psalm 73:3, 17.

It is in the heavenly temple that the judgments of God are determined. The plagues are not the result of natural forces. They are dictated by God. They are superintended by Christ and the angels.

“The same shall drink of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, and he shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” Revelation 14:10.

“Clothed in pure and white linen.”

This reminds one of the attire of the priests in the earthly temple. The garments of the plague-angels represent purity of motive. Their work is just and righteous.

“One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God.” The cherubim are associated with the throne. They appear to be involved in the administration of the throne. (2) This would include the administration of justice. The Father is not autocratic - heavenly beings share in responsibility. They are in full agreement.

“The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.” Verse 8

In Revelation two kinds of smoke are featured in the heavenly temple. There is the smoke of the incense which mingles with the prayers of the saints, (8:3, 4), and the smoke of God’s glory and power. Isaiah the prophet was shown the same when he saw in vision the Lord upon his throne.

“The house was filled with smoke.” Isaiah 6:1-4.

God’s presence at Mt. Sinai was accompanied by smoke.

“And Mt. Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire and the smoke ascended as the smoke of a furnace and the whole mount quaked greatly.” Exodus 19:18.

Scripture speaks of “the fire of God’s jealousy”. This is godly jealousy (2 Corinthians 11:2). The Most High is bathed in “everlasting fire”. “Our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29.

“And no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues were fulfilled.” Verse 8.

Here we are given a glimpse of the awfulness of God’s wrath. The original reads “no one was able to enter”. So fearful is the wrath of God that not even an angel can abide in his presence.

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:31. “Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” 2 Corinthians 5:11.

The recipients of this wrath are the rejectors of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12. What a warning! This speaks of the tremendous importance of these three messages.

“There was no men in the temple.”

Currently there is a man in the temple - “the man Christ Jesus.” The “one mediator between God and men.” (2 Timothy 2:5.) When the plagues commence, no one stands between guilty man and an offended God. Christ’s intercession has ceased. Likewise, the Holy Spirit, our spiritual intercessor on earth, is withdrawn from the earth. At present “He makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.” Romans 8:26. While Jesus interceded before God, the Holy Spirit was freely available. “I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever.” (John 14:16.) However, God warns, “My spirit shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:3.) Thus at the Close of Probation, the divine restraint will be withdrawn from men and the race will be under Satan’s complete control. Then will be completely fulfilled, the prediction, “in the last days perilous times shall come.” (2 Timothy 3:1.) As one author declares:

“The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.” (3)

SHOULD WE MAKE PREPARATION FOR THE PLAGUES

Scripture reveals that there is a certain type of preparation that will be essential. This is alluded to in the destruction of old Jerusalem.

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.” Matthew 24:15.

The “holy place referred to the area of ground which extended several furlongs outside the city wall.”(4) This prediction referred to the armies of Imperial Rome, which besieged Jerusalem and destroyed it. (Luke 21:20-24.) What literal Rome did to literal Jerusalem is typical of what spiritual Rome (the Papacy) will endeavor to do to spiritual Jerusalem, the church. The instruction Jesus gave has now an application to the church.

PARALLELS BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND ‘THE REMNANT’

JERUSLAEM IN 70 AD

1. Literal Rome invaded literal Jerusalem.
2. Matthew 24:16 “Let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.”
3. Matthew 24:17 “him which is on the house top not to come down to take anything out of his house”, [i. e. take outside stairway from rooftop to ground.] Matthew 24:18 “neither let him that is in the field return to take his clothes.” [i. e. immediate flight.]
4. Matthew 24:19.”Woe to them that are with child and to those who give suck.”
5. Matthew 24:20.”Pray that your flight be not in the winter nor on the Sabbath day.” (See Appendix.)

LAT DAY REMNANT

1. Spiritual Rome will invade Spiritual Jerusalem -the Remnant.
2. The saints are also to leave the large cities and to later flee to the mountains. Isaiah 33:14-17.
3. When the sign is given, the saints must take flight immediately otherwise they will be caught and imprisoned.
4. A warning to the saints to cease multiplying when the end is near, for those who are pregnant or have infants it will be too great an ordeal.
5. The saints likewise in the end time will need to pray that the weather will not be severe at the time of their flight and also that the Sabbath will not be transgressed by flight.

The flight of the saints from the cities will be a blessing in disguise. While they will be compelled to forsake everything and exist amid the mountains and the wilderness regions, they will be separated from the rest of the population - from the unsaved - who are the worshippers of the beast and his image. Thus, when the deadly plagues fall, the saints being apart will escape most of the terrible effects of the judgments of God.

“The time is coming when large cities will be swept away and all should be warned of these co+. ang judgments.” (5)

GOD’S ANSWER TO THE ATTACK UPON THE SAINTS

The plagues commence with. . .

“A great voice out of the temple.” Revelation 16:1. They end in the same manner.”There came a great voice out of the temple.” Verse 17.

Why out of the temple? God is enthroned there. The plagues are under his direction. He is in control. They will not get out of hand. This is an assurance to the saints. Does God punish and kill, or is this a work that Satan is permitted to do? The plagues involve suffering and pain and the taking of life.

Undoubtedly millions will perish. Is not this a transgression of the principles of God’s holy law? Is not God bound by His own law? How can God kill? The answer is that God never transgresses His law. That is impossible. It is an expression of His very own nature. However, God in taking life, does not transgress his law because all life is His. Created beings are forbidden to unlawfully take life because life is not theirs to take. The sixth commandment means murder. Jesus said of the sixth commandment – “Thou shall do no murder.” (Matthew

19:18.) On the other hand, God can lawfully take life because it is rightfully His to take. He is the giver of life and He is also the taker of life. The Creator must administer justice, otherwise He would be an unjust God. Therefore God is responsible for the plagues.

AREAS WHERE PLAGUES ARE Poured OUT

The plagues are poured upon six areas - earth, sea, waters, sun, atmosphere, peoples.

Are the plagues literal or symbolic? In the past the general view has been that six of the plagues are literal and one, the sixth, is symbolic. The sixth is the drying up of the Euphrates and this generally has been interpreted in a symbolic sense. Why should not the whole seven plagues be entirely literal or entirely symbolic?

It is curious to notice that in the prediction of the seven seals of Revelation 6 and 8:1, six of the seals are symbolic while one, the sixth, is literal. Likewise, in the prediction of the seven trumpets, six are symbolic

while one, the seventh, is literal. But in the prediction of the seven last plagues six are literal, while one - the sixth - is symbolic. Why this apparent inconsistency? This commentary, to date, has not an answer, unless it be for the same reason that Jesus spoke in parables. (Matthew 13:10-17.) God deliberately hides the truth from the insincere. Only the dedicated searcher will find the truth. (Matthew 7:6-8.) However, there is a principle as to why the sixth plague must be applied symbolically and the other six applied literally.

Six of the plagues are based upon the Old Testament description of the plagues of Egypt when God punished that nation and delivered his people Israel. In the book of Revelation the things pertaining to Egypt are applied in a literal sense. The sixth plague is based on the Old Testament description of ancient Babylon when she was punished and literal Israel was delivered from Babylonian captivity. In Revelation the things pertaining to Babylon have a symbolic or spiritual application.

THE FIRST PLAGUE

“There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image.” Verse 2.

Other translations render it:

“A loathsome and painful sore.” T. C. N. T.

“A foul and painful sore.” Amp. N. T.

“A severe and malignant sore.” Lam.

“A loathsome and malignant sore.” Phillips.

“A foul and malignant sore.” N. E. B.

“A terrible and painful sore.” G. N. B.

The Greek word is “helkos” which means “ulcer, a suppurating wound”. The Septuagint version uses the same word for the boils of one of the Egyptian plagues. (Exodus 9:9, 10)

So severe is the continuous pain of the sores that during the fifth plague it declares that “they gnawed their tongues for pain”. Nothing brings relief. Painkilling drugs will be either useless or non-existent. This plague is specifically “upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image.” Verse 2.

This harks back to the third angel’s message and its terrible warning. Now it is being fulfilled, reminding us that God never wastes words, he always means what he says. How important this reveals the third angel’s message to be. Is this plague worldwide? Yes! Because the mark of the beast will be world-wide.

“All the world wondered after the beast.”

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship him.” Revelation 13:3, 8.

How then does one reconcile the statements that the plagues will not be universal?

“This plague will not be universal” (6)

“The plagues are not universal or the inhabitants would be wholly cut off, yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals.” (7)

What does the term “universal” mean?

“The whole world or the whole of created things.” “Applicable to every member of a genus.” (8)

Will the plagues fall on every member of the race? No! They fall on the rejectors of Christ but they do not fall upon those who “keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.” Seeing that the three angels’ messages go to “every nation, kindred, tongue and people”, that is, the whole world, the plagues

then must also be worldwide but not universal. There is a distinct difference between the terms “universal” and “worldwide”. As the author quoted above has written:

“The people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her [America’s] example [in enforcing the mark of the beast].” (9)

THE SECOND PLAGUE

“The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.” Verse 3.

In this plague the world’s oceans are affected. They become as blood. In what way? Some believe that they will coagulate like blood but the inference seems to be that the sea will become deadly poisonous and putrid. The waters turning to blood in the plague upon Egypt did not coagulate, but became poisonous and all the fish died. (Exodus 7:17-20.) Likewise, with this plague, the oceans become poisonous and “every living soul died in the sea”. It is a recognized medical fact that in the conducting of autopsies, extreme care is required because the blood of a dead person contains very toxic qualities and is extremely putrid. When we visualize the mammoth amount of life in the oceans, what a horrendous calamity this will be. Probably the dead sea-life by the multiplied millions of tons will be washed ashore layer upon layer, maybe for miles in extent. Not only will the harbors, river mouths and beaches be choked with rotting flesh but the overpowering stench will pollute the air for miles and make life a misery.

There have been two examples of such an experience on a small local scale off the coast of Florida as reported by the United States Admiralty and published by the “Associated Press”.

““The ‘Red Tide’ Reappears.”

“The reappearance of a ‘red tide’ which experts say is caused by tiny sea organisms known as ‘gymodinium’ has been reported by commercial fishermen in waters off the Gulf coast. Dead deep-sea fish are stated to be strewn along the beaches. One fisherman is reported to have been rendered unconscious by fumes given off by organisms. Bulldozers were required to clear beaches of dead fish when the reddish waters were last reported in January.”

The Associated Press report says that the “red tide” has “reappeared”. Its first appearance is detailed in United States Admiralty records kept at Washington, DC. At that time the extent of the strange occurrence was a strip of water off the Florida coast three hundred miles long by forty miles wide. All fish in this strip of ocean died and the water had the appearance of blood and also a poisonous effect on sea-life. (10)

Will the second plague be universal? No, but undoubtedly it will be world-wide because, “All nations have drunk of the wine of wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 18:3.

Therefore all nations, all the unsaved, must be involved in this punishment meted out by heaven.

THE THIRD PLAGUE

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood.” Verse 4.

In a few short words the third catastrophe is described. All the drinking water of the world becomes blood. But not “as the blood of a dead man” which is extremely toxic. The waters will probably be like blood in appearance and odor. In other words, all the domestic waters will become extremely nauseating. Of the Egyptian plagues, upon which six of these plagues are based, one is described as follows:

“Stretch your hand upon the waters of Egypt, their streams, rivers, their ponds, their pools both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone, that they may become blood.” Exodus 7:19.

When you wash your car, it will be red like blood. When you wash your clothes they will be red like blood, when you attempt to swim, bathe or shower, it will be as in blood, but with an overpowering stench. When you wash your dishes and cook your food it will be red with a nauseating smell. But worst of all when you attempt to drink, all liquids will be red and repulsive. The natural reaction will be, that the population will refuse to drink. The fourth plague compels them to drink.

THE FOURTH PLAGUE

“The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun and power was given to him to scorch men with fire and men were scorched with great heat.” Verses 8, 9.

What must one do in a heat wave? One must drink and the only liquid available whether it be soft, hard, bottled, brewed, boiled or filtered, will be the blood red, foul-smelling repulsive fluid. But because of the unrelenting, inescapable heat, they will be compelled to drink, drink, drink. Probably all sources of power will be out of action and air-conditioning, etc. , will be non-existent.

If they resort to the beaches for relief, they will be confronted by vast masses of rotting flesh with an odor that will drive them away. If they resort to the forests or reserves in the hope that some relief might be found in their shades, they will be driven out by the far flung forest fires which will add to the heat.

“Me day of the Lord is at hand and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Fire hath devoured the pastures. Rivers of water are dried up.” Joel 1:15-20.

Undoubtedly, this plague will result in the destruction of the food supplies of the world. Fruit and vegetables, etc. , will wither and famine will afflict the world as never before.

“The wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence. There shall be many dead bodies in every place, they shall cast them forth with silence.” (11)

What agony! What torture! Each plague adds to the agony. Does not this reveal our God as a God of cruelty? Is he not vindictive? The unsaved have lost eternal life, why torment them? Is not this playing into the hands of Satan? This is what scripture describes as “God’s strange work.”

“The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.” Isaiah 28:21.

Never before has God exhibited his wrath as he will in the seven last plagues. At isolated times a few drops of wrath have fallen upon sinners as revealed in scripture, but in the plagues his wrath is filled up. The last generation of man will be the generation that will be given more opportunities, more privileges and more enlightenment than any other generation in history. Their rejection of truth and their persecution of the saints, will make them more guilty - the most guilty generation of all time.

Notice the verdict of the sinless beings who will witness the terrible scenes.

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and was and shall be, because thou hast judged [punished] thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou has given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another [angel] out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.” Revelation 16:5-7.

Will the blood of saints be shed in the coming time of trouble? Yes, but only prior to the close of probation. After probation closes, none of the saints will suffer martyrdom. Why? Because martyrdoms are permitted for the purpose of witness, to convince men of the truth of God and to lead them to Christ. After the Close of Probation no one needs to be convinced. All have made their decision, the Day of Salvation is ended. Therefore, martyrdoms would be superfluous. At this time Michael (Christ) delivers his people (Daniel 12:1). They are not permitted to be martyred.

However, the death decree is issued and a worldwide attempt is made to rid the earth of dissent.

“He had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause [compel] that as many as would not warship the image of the beast, should be killed.” Revelation 13:15.

While the unsaved will not be permitted to take the lives of the saints after the close of probation, God will nevertheless take the intention for the deed.

“By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands.” (12)

In these plagues we have a demonstration of the justice of God. Woe betide the man or power that afflicts his faithful people.

“Vengeance belongs to me. I will repay said the Lord.” (Hebrews 10:30.)

Are these two plagues worldwide? Yes, undoubtedly, but they will not be universal. The death decree against the saints will involve all nations.

“Many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bandage.” (13)

“There will be in different lands a simultaneous movement for their destruction.” (14) “Every country on the globe will follow the example of the United States.” (15)

On the basis of the statements above, the third and fourth plagues must also be worldwide.

THE FLIGHT OF THE SAINTS

How will the saints fare amid the devastations of the plagues? The following statement reveals that they will feel some of the effects of the plagues.

“The people of God will not be free from suffering, but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah, will not pass by one of his self-sacrificing children. He will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied.” (16)

Various scriptures reveal how God will succor his people during the plagues:

“The sinners in Zion [the church] are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire [the fourth plague]. He that walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he that despises the gain of oppressions [margin: deceits] that shakes his hand from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high [heights or high places] his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure. Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty. They shall behold the land that is very far off.” Isaiah 33:14-17.

The above scripture reveals that the saints will find refuge in the “high places”, that is in the mountain regions, in the wilderness.

“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and dry land springs of water.” Isaiah 41:17, 18.

The ninety-first Psalm has been recognized as having a final application to the time of trouble in the seven last plagues.

“He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence [first plague]. He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shall thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shall not be afraid for the terror by night [fifth plague] nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday [seventh plague]. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” Psalm 91:1-11.

When all drinking water is as blood, probably God will bring water from the rocks just as he did with Israel in the Sinai wilderness. When there is no food and the saints face starvation, God may provide manna, just as he did in the long ago with Israel.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat [throne] of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.” Verse 10.

The word “seat” in the Greek actually means “throne”. This means that the fifth plague is poured upon the throne -the center of control of the Beast, or of the Papacy. This must be the Vatican. The result or effect of this plague is darkness, but not the Vatican only; “his kingdom was filled with darkness”. The kingdom of the Papacy by this time will be worldwide for “All the world wondered after the beast.”

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life.” Revelation 13:3, 8.

This means, then, that the entire globe will be enshrouded in the blackest of night. The world has rejected the spiritual light of the lamb for the spiritual darkness of the beast, and now God gives them literal darkness. It will be so intense that nothing will be able to penetrate it. As the prophet declared:

“That day is a day of wrath [of God] a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess a day of clouds and thick darkness.” Zephaniah 1:15.

It will be a darkness that will be felt as well as seen. The darkness of the Egyptian plague involved,

“Darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which maybe felt. . . and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt.” Exodus 10:21, 22.

With the sun’s rays blacked out, which will result in intense cold, the unsaved must experience terrible misery. Whereas in the previous plague there was extreme heat and hunger and thirst, now there is extreme cold, with hunger and thirst amid the impenetrable, terrifying darkness and from which there is no relief. Understandably, all heating systems and power supplies will have broken down and in the concentrated cold, the deep ulcerated sores that cover their bodies will be so painful that “they will gnaw their tongues” because of the awful agony.

The wording of the original Greek indicates that the darkness involves a period of time. The darkness is not short and swift. This leads to the question as to the length of time that the plagues continue. When the purpose of the plagues is understood, we believe it is apparent that time is required for that purpose to be realized. On this ground, we believe that the period of the plagues would have to be much longer than a few days or weeks. The Revelator, in alluding to the period of the plagues, specifically uses the term “one day” and according to the usual interpretation of time in a symbolic prophecy, this represents a period of one year. (17) However, some have concluded that because the term “one hour” is used thrice in Revelation 18 in regard to Babylon’s punishment, that the plagues must be of very short duration.

When the three expressions of “one hour” are analyzed however, it is quite clear that they apply to the final dissolution of Babylon.

“In one hour is thy judgment [punishment] come.” Revelation 18:10.

Verse 9 reveals that this refers to the symbolic burning of Babylon.”For in one hour so great riches is come to naught.” Revelation 18:17.

Verse 15 reveals that the one hour refers to Babylon’s torment.”For in one hour is she made desolate.” Revelation 18:19.

Verse 18 reveals that the one hour refers to the symbolic burning of Babylon. We believe that the “one hour” of punishment will be meted out in the last three of the seven plagues. They are especially for Babylon. The fifth plague is upon the throne of the beast, the central power of Babylon. The sixth plague is upon the Euphrates, the numerous peoples supporting Babylon and the seventh plague completes the punishment of Babylon.

“And the great city was divided into three parts, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” Verse 19.

Why is Babylon divided into three parts? In order to deal out appropriate punishment. Some sections of Babylon are more guilty than others. According to verses 13, 14 the three parts of Babylon are the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet. In the following chapter it is shown that these three symbols represents. (18)

Dragon: Kings, rulers and governors under the brand of antichrist. (19)

Beast: The Papacy.

False Prophet: Apostate Protestantism.

Of the three, the Beast and the False Prophet will be more guilty. They comprise the spiritual leadership of Babylon. They will deceive and lead the rest of mankind to perdition. Their punishment will be ten times greater than that of other sections of Babylon.

“Their suffering as tenfold greater than that of their people.” (20)

We suggest that the first four plagues fall upon the apostate Babylonian world. Four often denotes universality or the whole world. The final three concentrate upon the leadership of Babylon.

If the “one day” of Revelation 18:8 refers to one year, is there any reason why heaven would require a year for the plagues to be fulfilled? We believe there is. Not only are the plagues an administration of divine punishment, but they are also a revelation of heaven’s righteousness and justice. The plagues will reveal the true character and spirit of the unsaved and the justice of their punishment. From an external view it could appear that the majority of the world’s inhabitants have been deceived by the leaders of Babylon and may not necessarily be in rebellion against God. Therefore afflicting them with the plagues could be seen to be harsh and unjust. In this light, a period of time would be essential in order to demonstrate the true spirit of the unsaved. A few days or weeks would be insufficient, we suggest, to reveal this.

In the first three plagues it is significant to notice that there is no apparent reaction by the unsaved against God. However, in the fourth, fifth and seventh plagues, the unsaved finally give vent to their true feelings.”And men blasphemed the name of God and they repented not, to give him glory.” Verse 9.

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores and repented not of their deeds.” Verse 11.

“And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail.” Verse 21.

We suggest that the normal reaction of humans to such extreme pain would be to cry to God for mercy and relief. However, in the first three plagues there is no apparent reaction, but when the fourth plague falls upon them, they finally burst forth in rebellion, blaspheming God and REPENTED NOT. This will reveal to the universe the true state of the unsaved. Though they had been misled, deluded, hoodwinked by the religious leaders, nevertheless, they themselves at heart, are in rebellion against God.

Another evidence that the plagues will require more than a short period of time is that in the sixth plague, the supporters of the religious leaders withdraw their support and turn against the religious leaders. It will require time for this to develop, because at the commencement of the plagues the supporters of the religious leaders are seen to be in complete agreement with their leaders, whereas in the sixth plague their eyes have been opened and they realize that their religious leaders have deluded and used them for their own ambitious ends. This, we suggest, will also require time.

Further evidence regarding the time span of the plagues, we suggest, could be in the typical experience of the Jews in the days of Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus of Persia, as recorded in the book of Esther. A decree was enacted against God’s ancient people, that on a certain date, eleven months after the issuance of the decree, the Jews were to be put to death. (21) This experience is a picture of how the death decree against the saints is to be enacted in the end-time.

“The decree which is to go forth against the people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jew in the time of Esther.” (22)

The book of Esther records how Haman, the Jews’ enemy, initiated the decree and set the exact date on which the decree was issued and the exact date thereafter on which it was to be put into effect. According to Ezra 3:6-15, an eleven month period elapsed between the issuance of the decree and its execution. Seeing the decree against the saints in the end-time “will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus” we suggest that the period between the issuance of the death decree of Revelation 13:15 and its execution could likewise be a period of eleven months.

If this application is valid, it means that if the death decree is issued around the close of probation, then its execution would be eleven months later. This is what will lead to the events of the sixth plague. It also means that the duration of the plagues would need to be about twelve . months or one prophetic day.”

The sixth plague is dealt with under the three titles:

- 1.”The Three Powers that Will Lead the World to Armageddon”,
- 2.”The Drying up of the Great River Euphrates” and,
- 3.”The Kings from the Sun rising.”

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying,

“It is done.” Verse 17.

God’s wrath has been manifested against rebellion. Now it done, it is over, it is completed. Justice is satisfied. God has no pleasure in the administration of punishment, but it must be done and undoubtedly heaven is well-pleased to see it concluded.

“And there were voices and thundering and lightning.” Verse 18.

This describes the awe-inspiring events that end the plagues and usher in the Second Advent of Christ. As one author describes it,

“Fierce lightning leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked.” (23)

“And there was a great earthquake, such as was not, since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great-and the cities of the nations fell, and every island fled away and the mountains were not found.” Verses 18-20.

This will be the greatest earthquake of all time and corresponds to the second earthquake of the sixth seal of Revelation 6.

“And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” Revelation 6:14.

In this final plague the earth is made a desolate wilderness. All the proud works of men are brought to the dust. The lofty skyscrapers that presently pierce the sky will come tumbling down. The cities of earth with their teeming millions are soon to disappear.

“The time is coming when large cities will be swept away.” (24)

“the proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves crumble to ruin before their eyes.”(25)

No wonder God instructs his people beforehand to leave the cities and to retire to quiet country places. (26)

But how will God’s people fare when amid the mountains, the mightiest of earthquakes levels the mountains and fills the valleys? The author of *The Great Controversy* declares:

“The mountains shake like a reed in the wind and ragged rocks are cast on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. The whole earth heaven and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up, mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The sea ports are swallowed up by the angry waters.” (27)

The saints of God will share in one of the most awe inspiring experiences ever to transpire upon the earth. As the psalmist wrote,

“God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Psalm 46:1-3.

“He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Psalm 91:10-12.

At this time the ministry of angels will be a special feature in the protection and deliverance of the saints.”And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.” Verse 21.

A talent amounts to approximately 56lbs. Imagine the devastation as these mammoth hailstones hurtle from space and smash onto the earth. This will complete the demolition of human civilization and turn the earth into a worldwide abyss.

Some scientists are convinced that huge quantities of ice exist in outer space. It is believed that some of the giant satellites of our planetary system could be composed of ice. Additionally, the delicate wispy cirrus clouds are claimed to be ice crystals floating four to seven miles above the earth.

In Siberia there exists a giant crater two miles in diameter and 50 miles in circumference. On examination it was found that instead of containing metal, it was filled with mud. The flattening of forests for miles around indicated that a cosmic iceberg had hit the earth. It was so immense that the friction of the earth's atmosphere failed to melt it. Scripture intimates that God has in reserve huge quantities of ice for such a time as the above.

"Hast thou entered into the treasure of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasure of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war." Job 38:22, 23.

As the psalmist sang under inspiration, "Fire and hail, snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word." Psalm 148:8

This is the conclusion of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. The plagues climax in the return of Christ who rewards every man according as his work shall be. To the remnant of the unsaved who still remain, it means destruction; to the remnant of the saints who have passed through them unscathed but have experienced the marvelous protection of God, it means life everlasting.

APPENDIX

Some mistakenly claim that the reason Jesus gave instruction regarding the Sabbath was because on the Sabbath, in Jerusalem, the gates were shut, and his disciples would not be able to escape. But in the siege of Jerusalem the gates were shut continuously. It is therefore obvious that the reason for Jesus' instruction, was that 40 years after the resurrection, the Lord desired his people to observe the fourth commandment.

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29. The Kings From The Sun Rising

An Exposition Of Revelation Chapter 16.

“The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” Revelation 16:12.

Who are the kings from the Sun rising? In the study of the seven last plagues, it is clear that the plagues fall upon Babylon. (Revelation 18:4, 8.) Babylon represents the apostate churches of Christendom, the leader of which is the Papacy, the church of Rome.”Babylon” also includes all those that support her. Number “6” is Babylon’s number, and the sixth plague is especially for Babylon. (1) It is in the sixth plague that Babylon is exposed. This plague is couched in symbolic terms whereas the other plagues are couched in literal terms. The sixth plague has always been understood to have a symbolic application but the other plagues have been given literal applications. (2)

Why is it that one of the seven plagues is symbolic, while the others are literal? The answer is that six of the seven plagues are based on the plagues of Egypt, and Egypt is applied in a literal sense in the book of Revelation. The sixth plague is symbolic because it is based on ancient Babylon and Babylon, in the book of Revelation, is always employed in a symbolic sense. Therefore the sixth plague, being Babylonian in its symbolism, should be interpreted in a symbolic way. The sixth plague brings about the drying up of the Euphrates. This represents the millions of people who will support spiritual Babylon, and how their support will be dried up, or turned away, and turned against the religious leaders. (3) This momentous event “prepares the way for the kings of the east”, or “Sun rising”. Who then, are the kings from the Sun rising? Chapters 12-19 of Revelation bring to view the opposing powers in the great controversy. In each chapter the two sides are presented - God’s side and Satan’s side.

THE TWO SIDES IN THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

The Lord’s Side

Revelation 12.

The woman (church),

The man child (Jesus), and the woman’s seed.

Revelation 13:1-18; 14:1-5. The Lamb and the Saints; The 144,000.

Revelation 14:6-13.

The Lamb, holy angels and the Saints.

Revelation 14:14-20.

The Son of Man and the Harvest of the Saints.

Revelation 15.

Those that have gotten the victory over the beast and his image.

Revelation 16.

The kings from the Sun rising.

Revelation 17.

The Lamb and they that are with him.

Revelation 18.

God and His people.

Revelation 19:11-21.

The King of kings and the armies of heaven.

Lucifer's Side

Revelation 12

The Dragon - Satan

The Dragon - Pagan Rome, and "Kings, rulers & governors under the brand of Antichrist". (4)

Revelation 13 and 14

The 7 Headed - 10 Horned Beast.

The 2 Horned, Lamb-like Beast.

The Image to the Beast."All whose names are not in Book of Life."

"All the world."

Revelation 14:6-13

Babylon, the Beast and his image, and they who worship them.

Revelation 14:14-20

The clusters of the vine of the earth and its fully ripe grapes - the unsaved. The beast and his image.

Revelation 16

The dragon, beast & false prophet.

The kings of the earth and the whole world.

Revelation 17

The whore, the 7 Headed Beast and the 10 Horns.

Revelation 18

Babylon - the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and all nations.

The Beast, false prophet, and the kings of the earth and their armies. Those that receive the mark of the beast.

In Revelation 16, the forces on the side of Lucifer are “the kings of the earth and the whole world”, and the dragon, beast and the false prophet. On the side of Christ are the kings of the east. They are synonymous with Christ and the armies of heaven, the Lamb and the saints, etc. Is there other Scriptural evidence that the “kings of the east” represent the heavenly powers in the final conflict? Why are they designated as the “kings of the east”, or the “sunrising”, as the original reads? One answer is that the term “Sun rising” is used in scripture of Jesus Christ. In the inspired song of Zacharias, notice how the Holy Spirit refers to Jesus Christ as the “Sun rising”.

“And thou, child, [John the Baptist] shall be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of

their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.” Luke 1:76-78.

For “dayspring” the margin says “Sun rising”, or “branch”. The original Greek means “Sun rising”. Jesus Christ is clearly referred to as “the Sun rising”. This is confirmed by the prophet Malachi who, when alluding to Jesus Christ, declared:

“Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Malachi 4:2.

The sun is a symbol of Christ. As the literal Sun rising in the east, sheds its literal beams of light and life upon the physical world, so Jesus, the spiritual sun, rises and sheds his spiritual rays of light and life upon the souls of men. When the Revelator describes the sealing message of the Sabbath, that was to come to the world in the last days, he likens it to an angel “ascending from the east” (5), from the Sun rising. This describes the origin of the message and the method of its rise. The Sabbath message comes from heaven. It is heaven inspired. It comes from Christ.

Secondly, as the sun rises gently and slowly at first, and finally reaches the noonday of its power, so the sealing message began gently and slowly at first, and then waxes stronger until it will reach its fullness in the “Loud Cry” of Revelation 18.

The prophet Ezekiel informs us that the glory of the Lord that was to come to the renewed temple at Jerusalem was to come from the east.

“The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.” Ezekiel 43:2.

God’s chosen direction from which he comes to His people, is the east. At the Second Advent, when Christ returns in power and glory, He comes from the east.

“As the lightning shines out of the east even unto the west, even so shall the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27.

Lightning may appear in any direction, but Jesus says his coming will be as the lightning that shines from the east to the west - not from north to south or from west to east, but from the east to the west. His glory will first appear on the eastern horizon and will then stream across the heavens to the west and envelope the globe. One author vividly describes the scene.

“Soon our eyes were drawn to the east for a small black cloud had appeared about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious till it was a great white cloud.” (6)

It is understandable why the term “east or “Sun rising” is used in connection with the heavenly forces coming to destroy Babylon. But why are the heavenly powers termed “kings” when Jesus Christ is THE king? This term or imagery is borrowed from the Old Testament description of the fall of literal Babylon. When Isaiah and Jeremiah forecast the destruction of Babylon, this term “kings” was used.

Notice the remarkable prediction by Isaiah of the overthrow of Babylon.

“That said to Jerusalem, thou shall be inhabited. That said to the deep [the Euphrates] be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers. That said of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus said the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved [river] gates; and the gates shall not be shut.”

“I will go before thee [Cyrus] and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron, that thou may know that I, the Lord, which call thee by name, am the God of Israel.” Isaiah 44:27, 28; 45:1-3.

Over one hundred and fifty years before Cyrus' birth, God revealed to Isaiah, the very name of the Persian king that would overthrow Babylon and deliver Israel. This is one of the most remarkable predictions in scripture. Only one other person was forenamed in this way, and that was Jesus Christ! Cyrus is a classic type of Christ as will be shown below. This has been recognized by many scholars. (7) There are at least fourteen remarkable parallels between Cyrus and Christ. (See page 18.) According to history, Cyrus was a remarkable character, strikingly distinctive from other rulers of ancient times.

"He had subdued all the east from the Aegean Sea to the river Indus and thereby erected the greatest empire that had ever been in Asia to that time; which work was owing as much to his wisdom as his valor, for he equally excelled in both. And he was also a person of that great candor and humanity to all men, that he made greater conquests by his courtesy, and his kind treatment of all he had to do with, than by his sword, whereby he did knit the hearts of all men to him; and, in this foundation, lay the greatest strength of his empire." (8)

"Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, was one of the greatest characters of history, comparable to Nebuchadnezzar himself. Herodotus declared that 'wherever Cyrus marched throughout the earth, it was impossible for nations to escape him.' Of the nobility of his character, Dr. John Lord said: 'The early Persians chose the bravest and most capable of their nobles for kings, and these kings were mild and merciful.'"

"Xenophon makes Cyrus the ideal of a king - the incarnation of sweetness and light, conducting war with a magnanimity unknown to the ancient nations, dismissing prisoners, for-giving foes, freeing slaves, and winning all hearts by a true nobility of nature. He was a reformer of barbarous methods of war. In short he had all the qualities which we admire in the chivalric heroes of the Middle Ages." (9)

Xenophon, the ancient Greek historian declared of Cyrus,

"I came to this judgment that it was easier to rule every sort of creature than to rule man. But when I considered Cyrus the Persian, who rendered many men, many cities, and many nations, obedient to him, I was then necessitated to change my opinion that to rule men is not impossible if a person undertakes it with understanding and skill. There were some who willingly obeyed Cyrus that were many days' journey, and others that were even some months' journey distant from him; some, too, who had never seen him, and some who knew very well that they never should see him; and yet they readily submitted to his government; for he so far excelled all other kings, as well as those who had received their dominion from their forefathers."

"He was able to inspire all with so great a desire of pleasing him, that they ever desired to be governed by his opinion; and he attached to himself so many nations as it would be a labor to enumerate." (10)

"The giant figure of Cyrus the Great appears all the more splendid in the sunlight. He is fitly called the Great, as belonging to the small number of the immortals to whom humanity cannot deny this highest title he attained unheard of success with insignificant means. He was great, too, if it be great to fight and even to fall for the sake of justice. More than this, he was the most humane. His shield is stained by no horrible deeds of blood, of frightful revenge and cruelty, such as disgrace the son of Olympias. He spared, and made gifts to conquered enemies. Thus he was the greatest, far beyond the spirit of his nation and age, anticipating the remotest future both as man and statesman, carried by a commending personality who not only compelled the admiration of his own people, but also brought his enemies to their knees. Who is there that approaches him? Above all, the little people of the Jews hailed him as they have done no other mortal before or since, as the victor and rescuer, the liberator and savior, the favored of God and lord of the earth. . . He was not the product and child of his age. He was its creator and father, solitary and unique in the world's history; he took firmer grip of the wheel of time than any other mortal; in the term of his life he brought an epoch to its close, snatched the lordship of the earth from the Semites and Egyptians, and won it for the Aryans for all time." (11)

"Cyrus must have been a great warrior and statesman. Nor is his character without nobility. He excels in the humanity with which he treated the vanquished. He destroyed no town nor did he put the captive kings to

death by the Persians his memory was cherished as 'the father of the people' and the Greek tradition-shows that his greatness was acknowledged also by his enemies. He therefore deserves the homage which Xenophon paid to him in choosing him as hero for his didactic novel." (12)

"Cyrus was preceded by a reputation for clemency. Thus the history of Babylonia closes peaceably upon the noble figure of Cyrus, the Achaemeniad prince, who commands our warmest sympathies." (13)

"The builder of this empire was the mighty Cyrus, one of the most powerful and, if tradition is to be credited, one of the best of the great conquerors of history." (14)

Thus Cyrus is a suitable symbol or type of Jesus Christ. In the invasion of Babylon Cyrus is also described as coming from the east.

“Who raised up the righteous man [Cyrus] from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him and made him rule over kings.” Isaiah 41:2.

“Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man [Cyrus] that executes my counsel from a far county.” Isaiah 46:11.

“A ravenous bird.” This denoted the rapidity of Cyrus’ march from distant regions to pounce upon the prey.”The standard of Cyrus was a golden eagle on a spear”. (15) Cyrus was from the Persian province of Anshan or Susiana in Elam which was directly east of Babylon. Isaiah also predicted that Cyrus would be raised up from the north.

“I have raised one up from the north and he shall come from the rising of the sun.” [the east] Isaiah 41:25.

Cyrus, by his father, was a Persian, and by his mother, a Mede. His army consisted of Persians, whose country was to the east of Babylon, and of Medes whose country was north of Babylon. While Cyrus’ native province was Anshan directly east of Babylon, when he assembled his allied forces to invade Babylon, it was from the north that he led them.

In view of the fact that Cyrus fulfilled the amazing prediction of Isaiah, made 150 years before his birth, it maybe profitable to take a glimpse at some of the historical details concerning this event. The character that stands out in this scenario is not only Cyrus, but the beloved Daniel. What a remarkable witness to God was this man before the leading lights of the world.

Initially Daniel was used to introduce Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to the true God. (16) Under Daniel’s influence, plus the divine interventions in Nebuchadnezzar’s life, Nebuchadnezzar finally became a convert to the true God. Undoubtedly Nebuchadnezzar will be among the saved in God’s kingdom. What a star will be in Daniel’s crown. It is a remarkable fact that Nebuchadnezzar, on his deathbed, was given some kind of prophetic foresight by which he foretold the end of Babylon. Under the symbol of a Persian mule, he declared how Cyrus would reduce the Babylonians to servitude. (17)

The second episode was the writing on the palace wall of Babylon. Daniel was conspicuous by his absence from the scene. Belshazzar had rejected the lessons God had taught his grandfather. Instead of submitting to Jehovah as had Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar defied him. This defiance climaxed in his blasphemous use of the sacred vessels of Jehovah in the worship of the gods of Babylon. God’s response was the appearance of a bloodless hand, which suddenly emerged from the sleeve of darkness, and inscribed in letters of fire on the palace wall, the words of doom. None understood the words. Why? It is claimed that the language was the old Samaritan Hebrew, which was unknown to the Babylonians. (18) The queen mother reminded Belshazzar of the aged Daniel and his celebrated wisdom.

Daniel was summoned. The words were interpreted and Babylon’s doom was pronounced:

“Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” Daniel 5:28.

In fulfillment of Isaiah’s prediction of 150 years before, Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon. He was informed of the handwriting on the wall of the previous night and how Daniel, the renowned prime-minister of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, had foretold Babylon’s capture and fall, by the Medes and Persians.

“There can be no doubt, but that this decree in favor of the Jews was obtained by Daniel. When Cyrus first came to Babylon, on his taking the city, he found him there an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom all over the east, and long experienced in the management of public affairs of the government, and such counselors wise kings always seek for: and moreover his late reading of the wonderful handwriting on the wall, which had puzzled all the wise men of Babylon besides, and the event which happened immediately after, exactly agreeable to his interpretation had made a very great and fresh addition to his reputation; and therefore an Cyrus having made himself master of the city, he was soon called for, as a person who was best able to advise and direct about the settling of the government on this revolution, and was consulted with on all the measures taken therein. On which occasion, he so well approved himself. He was made prime minister. And when Cyrus returned from his Syrian expedition again to Babylon, he found a new addition to his fame, from his miraculous deliverance from the lion’s den, which gave sufficient reason for that wise and excellent prince to have him in the highest esteem. And since he had been so earnest with God in prayer for the restoration of his people. And to induce him [Cyrus] the readier to grant his request, he showed him the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah, which spoke of him by name one hundred and fifty years before he was born, as one whom God had designed to be a great conqueror, and king over many nations, and the restorer of his people, in causing the temple to be built, and the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem to be again dwelt in by its former inhabitants. That Cyrus had seen and read these prophecies, Josephus tells us; and it is plain from his decree in Ezra for the rebuilding of the temple. And who was there that should show them unto him but Daniel, who had constant access unto him. In the first year of Cyrus’s monarchy over the east, he issued out his royal decree for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, and the return of the Jews again into their own country.” (19)

The author of “Prophets and Kings” declares:

“The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of far seeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty,”

“As the king saw the words foretelling, more than a hundred years before his birth, the manner in which Babylon should be taken; as he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe, ‘I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me;’ as he saw before his eyes the declaration of the eternal God, ‘For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me;’ as he traced the inspired record, ‘I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward,’ his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission.” (20)

Was Daniel successful in leading the great Cyrus to a knowledge of the true God?

“Through association with him, [Daniel] these heathen monarchs were constrained to acknowledge his God, as ‘the Living God and steadfast forever and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’” (21)

In the decree issued by Cyrus for the restoration of Israel to their homeland, it is of thrilling interest to notice how Cyrus worded his decree.

“Thus said Cyrus King of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.” Ezra 1:2-3.

Does the wording of this decree indicate that Cyrus had accepted Israel’s God? Cyrus acknowledges Jehovah as having given him the kingdoms he had conquered, and also acknowledges the truth of Isaiah the prophet of 150 years before, which Daniel had brought to Cyrus’ attention. When he included in his decree that “the LORD God of Israel (he is the God)”, did that mean that Cyrus received Jehovah as the true God?

Seeing Nebuchadnezzar had been won to the true God by Daniel, was Cyrus also won to the true God by Daniel? If so, what a marvelous testimony to the character, personality, and influence of Daniel. One stands in awe at the remarkable influence of this man. His name rang with renown for centuries throughout the world of that day. What a testimony to what Heaven can do for one who devotes himself unreservedly to God. No wonder Daniel was beloved of heaven. The life, character and influence of such a man, should move one to cherish, study and understand his inspired writings.

The next important point in which Cyrus was a type of Jesus Christ, was that he was titled, “King of kings.” And made him to rule over kings.” Isaiah 41:2.

Under Cyrus there were other kings. Jeremiah, in predicting the destruction of Babylon, wrote,

“Many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.” Jeremiah 50: 41.

“The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon.” “Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes.” Jeremiah 51:11, 28.

The angel. Gabriel, in interpreting the symbols of Daniel 8 declared:

“The ram which thou saw, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia.” Daniel 8:20.

It is an established fact that in the overthrow of Babylon, more than one king was involved. With Cyrus were many other kings, “the kings from the east”. Xenophon, in speaking of Cyrus and the Persian kings, declared:

“Still more usual is the title ‘King of kings’ the description which, as is well known, has remained the regular appellation of the Persian king it would seem to express the summit of royalty.” (22)

When the greater than Cyrus, Jesus Christ, is pictured leading the armies of heaven to destroy spiritual Babylon at the Second Advent, he is described (in capital letters), as

“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:16.

This title suggests that there must be other kings under Christ. These could not be earthly kings because all earthly kings, by supporting spiritual Babylon, will be destroyed at the Second Advent. (23) Who then are the “other kings” that will be with Christ? The answer is that there are heavenly kings. There are kingly powers in the sinless universe. The apostle Paul wrote,

“Now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” Ephesians 3:10.

In heavenly places there are principalities. A principality is a domain, ruled over by a prince, indicating kingly power. Ephesians 1:20, 21 repeats the fact that in “the world to come” there are “principalities and powers”. Our great God shares his rule. He delegates responsibility amongst his intelligent creatures. Our God is not a dictator. Christ has “created thrones, dominions and principalities in heavenly places.” Colossians 1:16.

There are heavenly beings to whom God has delegated kingly or ruling authority. Scripture depicts at least five classes or groups to whom has, or will be delegated kingly authority.

1. Certain angels. When Isaiah described how Lucifer coveted the position of God (the Son), he spoke of him as having a throne.

“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” Isaiah 14:13.

This reveals that Lucifer had kingly, or ruling authority. The Spirit of Prophecy declares,

“When Satan rebelled, there was war in heaven and he with all his sympathizers, was cast out of heaven. He had held a high office in heaven, possessing a throne radiant with light. But he swerved from his allegiance to the blessed and only Potentate and fell from his first estate.” (24)

2 The leaders of other worlds could correctly be classed as kings. Originally Adam was a “son of God”. (26) As the leader of this world God gave him dominion and authority over this earth. (27) He was the king of this world and when Satan usurped Adam’s position, he became, “the prince of this world”. (28) At various intervals, “the sons of God”, leaders of other worlds, assemble in the great councils of heaven. (29) These leaders of other worlds are kings just as Adam was the king of this world.

3 The saints are classed as kings.

“You have made us to our God kings and priests.” Revelation 1:5, 6.

In a spiritual sense the saints are kings now, but in the kingdom, the saints literally will share Christ’s throne. They “will sit on his throne.” They will be given kingly authority. (Revelation 3:21.)

4 The 24 elders who now assist Christ in his priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, declare that they are “kings and priests” and “shall reign on the earth 8, Revelation 4:4; 5:10. To them also, will be delegated kingly power.

5 The 12 apostles will be kings in the renewed earth. Jesus promised,

“In the regeneration you also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matthew 19:28.

Thus, there are several groups who could rightfully be classed as kings under Jesus Christ “the King of kings and Lord of lords”. At the Second Advent the universe will witness the greatest display of power and glory ever known. They will behold Jesus Christ in “his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and the glory of the holy angels”. With him will be the angelic hosts with their leaders, possessing kingly power. There will be the 24 elders, kings and priests. Undoubtedly there will be the saints who have been resurrected or translated to heaven, such as Enoch, Moses and Elijah. There will be the leaders of other worlds. All these will comprise “the armies of heaven” that escort Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven will be empty, and this is when there will be “silence in heaven”, as the Father awaits the return of his Son, with the redeemed from the earth. (30) In the sixth plague, all the heavenly powers that come with Christ to destroy Babylon, are termed, “the kings from the Sun rising”.

CYRUS: A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST

14 Parallels Between Cyrus and Jesus Christ

1 The name Cyrus means the sun.

1. Jesus Christ is called “the sun of righteousness” Malachi 4:2

2. At his birth an attempt by reigning king to destroy him. (31)

2 At his birth an attempt by reigning king to destroy him.

3 Named by God 150 years before his birth.

3 Named by God 700 years before his birth. Isaiah 9:6.

4 “Raised up in righteousness.” Isaiah 45:13.”The righteous man.” Isaiah 41:2.

4 “Christ Jesus, is made unto us righteousness”. 1 Corinthians 1:30.”This was a righteous man.” Luke 23:47.

5 “He shall call upon my name” Isaiah 41:25.”Thus said Cyrus The Lord God of heaven. (He is THE God)” Ezra 1:1-3.

5 Jesus continually called on God’s name in prayer.”Our Father which art in heaven”°.

6 “I will direct his ways.” Isaiah 45:13.”Whose right hand I have held.” Isaiah 45:1

6 I seek the will of the Father who hath sent me.” John 5:30.”I will hold your [Christ’s] hand.” Isaiah 42:6.

7 “Thus said the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus.” Isaiah 45:l.

7 “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.” John 1:41. (Margin: “the anointed”)

8 “That said of Cyrus, He is my shepherd.” Isaiah 44:28.

8 “I am the good shepherd.” John 10:11; “The great shepherd.” Hebrews13:22; “The chief shepherd” 1 Peter 5:4.

9 “The man that executes my counsel” Isaiah 46:11. (Margin: “the man of my counsel”)

9 “The counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zechariah 6:13.

10 Cyrus was officially titled, “he King of kings”

10 Jesus will be titled “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16.

11 God “gave the nations before him.” Isaiah 41:2.

“As the dust to his sword”; “as the driven stubble to his bow.” “To subdue nations before him.” Isaiah 45:1.

11 “Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:” Revelation 19:15.

12 Cyrus came from the east of Babylon - Anshan or Susiana a Persian province.”The righteous man from the east”, Isaiah 42:2; “from the rising sun [east] he calls upon my name.” Verse 25.”Calling a ravenous bird from the east.” Isaiah 46:11.

12 “The dayspring (margin: Sun rising) from on high hath visited us” Luke 1:78.”The glory of the

God of Israel came from the way of the east.” Ezekiel 43:2.”As the lightning comes out of the east and shines even to the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.” Matthew 24:27

13 He overthrew literal Babylon:

“That said to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers.” Isaiah 44:27.

“A drought is upon her waters and they shall be dried up”, “I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry, and Babylon shall become heaps.” Jeremiah 51:38; 51:36-37.

13. Christ overthrows spiritual Babylon:

“The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates and the water there of was dried up.” Revelation 16:12.”And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” Revelation 18:21.

14 “That said of Cyrus, Jerusalem, thou shall be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Isaiah 44:28.”He shall build my city and shall let go my captives, not for price, nor for reward.” Isaiah 45:13.

14 “A city whose builder and maker is God.” Hebrews 11:10.

“He shall build the temple of God.” Zechariah 6:13.

“The captives of the mighty shall be taken away and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.” Isaiah 49:25.

Now the prediction of Revelation 16:12 declares, that the “drying up of the great river Euphrates prepares the way of the kings of the east”. What is the significance of this? The drying up of the Euphrates involves the exposure of Babylon, that is the clergy and religious leaders. It represents their supporters turning against them and destroying them. How could this be the signal, how could this prepare the way for the coming of Christ and the heavenly hosts? Why prepare the way? We suggest that there is great significance in this. All of these events are a part of the final conflict of the great controversy. Because grave questions have been implanted in the minds of fallen and sinless beings, it has been necessary for God to permit certain events to take their course in order to vindicate his actions.

When Christ returns the second time, there will take place the most devastating act of destruction, on the part off the Deity, that the universe has ever witnessed. All of the unsaved comprising many millions of people, will be destroyed upon the earth. But before God does this, before Christ performs “his strange act” of judgment as the Avenger, Babylon is exposed; Babylon is revealed in all her guilt.

Babylon is shown to be the great rebel against God. This is absolutely essential. Even amongst believers who know the truth concerning Babylon, there are many who are not convinced of the awful guilt of spiritual Babylon. There is a reluctance to believe all that scripture declares about Babylon. When Babylon’s exposure is complete and all see the depths of her awful guilt, there will be no question concerning God’s justice in the fearful slaughter of the clergy as well as the staggering destruction of the unsaved.

“By thy sorceries were all nations deceived, and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” Revelation 18:23-24.

That is an incredible indictment. How many, even among God’s people, fully realize the depths to which spiritual Babylon has fallen? A recent publication entitled “The Secret History of the Jesuits” documents how World War I and World War II were engineered by the Jesuits. (32) The Papacy planned these terrible conflicts with the purpose of restoring Catholic world power. What guilt! What a need to expose Babylon. This is why God decrees, that before Christ comes to destroy Babylon, she must be exposed. Thus, in the last days, God permits Satan to set up his kingdom, Babylon the Great. He permits Babylon to attain universal dominion. Before Christ destroys Babylon, He brings about Babylon’s exposure. He gives her sufficient room so that she will reveal her true character to the world and to the universe.

Thus, when Christ destroys Babylon and all who support her, there will be no note of dissent, no whisper of disagreement throughout the universe of God. (33) There will be a vast “Amen” to Christ’s awful act of carnage. We suggest that this is why “the drying up of the Euphrates”, the exposure of Babylon, prepares the way for the coming of the heavenly host that destroys her. As a previously quoted author has so vividly written,

“Soon there appears in the east, a small black cloud-the cloud that surrounds the Savior. The sign of the son of man. It draws nearer the earth until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth a mighty conqueror. Not now ‘a man of sorrows.’ He comes to judge the living and the dead. In righteousness he doth judge and make war. And the armies which were in heaven follow Him. A vast unnumbered throng attend Him on His way. No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind can conceive its splendor. Every eye beholds the prince of life. A diadem of glory rests on his holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. Upon the rejectors of His mercy falls the terror of eternal despair. The faces of the righteous light up and joy fills every heart. The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire.”

“The heavens roll together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, the derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed. Naught now is heard, but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation. The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing, ‘The great day

of His wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?' The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains, rather than meet Him who they despised and rejected."

"That voice [of Jesus] they know. How often have its plaintive, tender tones called them to repentance. How often has it been heard in the touching entreaties of a friend, a brother, a Redeemer. To the rejectors of His grace, no other could be so full of condemnation, so burdened with denunciation, as that voice which has so long pleaded, "Turn ye from your evil ways for why will ye die?" That voice awakens memories which they would fain blot out - warnings despised, invitations refused, privileges slighted." (34)

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30. Drying Up The River Euphrates

When? How? Why?

An Exposition of Revelation 16:12

The Euphrates is the river that emerges from the mountains of Armenia, flows southward into Syria and then turns southeast into Iraq and finally empties into the Persian Gulf. This great river is mentioned in the book of Revelation in two different predictions. The sixth trumpet of Revelation 9 and in particular in Revelation 16 in the sixth plague. It is connected with the seven last plagues that fall upon the earth after the close of probation and preceding the second coming of Christ

“The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” Revelation 16:1.

The prophet then describes the powers that unite the world for the final conflict against God and his people.

“The spirits of devils working miracles which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather (or unite) them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Verse 14.

In the tremendous climax-between good and evil the river Euphrates is involved. It is necessary, therefore, to ascertain what is the Euphrates. The view that was once held by some Bible students was that a river represents a country through which it flows. Last century the Euphrates flowed through the territory of the Ottoman Empire and so it was declared that the Euphrates represented the Ottoman empire. However, the Ottoman empire has vanished, so no longer can the Euphrates be so applied. (What of the attempt to apply the Euphrates to the Islamic religion?) (1).

Today the Euphrates still rises in the mountains of Armenia, and flows through Syria but mainly Iraq. Some might conclude on the basis that a river represents a country, that the Euphrates represents Iraq. However, when we allow scripture to answer the question as to what is the Euphrates, a different conclusion must be drawn. The Bible reveals that the river Euphrates is the river of Babylon. Ancient Babylon is employed in the book of Revelation as a type or picture of modern Babylon. The Euphrates therefore is a symbolic river, connected with modern Babylon in the last days. Babylon looms large in the book of Revelation.

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 14:8.

Babylon plays a major part in the final conflict. The seven plagues fall on Babylon. (Revelation 16:19) The harlot church is called "Babylon the great." (Revelation 17:5.) Babylon is also likened to a great city - the enemy of God. One thing is crystal clear and that is that in the last days, Babylon is to dominate the world. In chapter 18 of Revelation it tells how.

"All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her [Babylon's] fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." Revelation 18:3.

This indicates that the world at large will support Babylon.

"How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously [luxuriously] so much torment and sorrow give her, for she said in her heart I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." Revelation 18:7.

Babylon is to sit as queen of the nations, just as did ancient Babylon. Who, then, is Babylon? The Revelator reveals that Babylon is comprised of three parts.

"The great city was divided into three parts-and, great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Revelation 16:19

What are these three parts of Babylon? The answer is found in verse 13.

"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and-the beast and the false prophet."

In the chapter entitled "THE THREE POWERS THAT WILL LEAD THE WORLD TO ARMAGEDDON", it shows that the dragon represents.

"Kings, rulers and governors who have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist and are represented as the dragon that goes to make war with the saints." (2)

Kings, rulers and governors, or political powers, that unite with the Papacy, are the ones that comprise the dragon. They form one of the three parts of Babylon. The second part is "the beast". Revelation 13:1-10 shows the beast is the papacy. (3) The third part of Babylon is "the false prophet" which represents apostate Protestantism. (4) Here we have the three main sections of spiritual Babylon, which in the last days will lead the world against God. Now the scripture shows that not only do the three powers above comprise Babylon, but their supporters also will form a part of Babylon.

"All the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3.

This indicates that the time is to come when Babylon will gain control of all the peoples of the world.

"All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life." Revelation 13:8.

In other words, all who are not faithful to Christ, all who do not "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus", will ultimately support Babylon. Why is the final apostasy called Babylon? We suggest three main reasons

1. To hide the truth from those who do not appreciate it, so that only the searcher will find it. One of the reasons Jesus spoke in parables was to hide the truth from those who did not appreciate truth. (5)
2. Because the spirit, the philosophy, the teachings, the doctrines of modern Babylon in principle are the same as those of Babylon of old.
3. The Old Testament Babylon is used by the Revelator as a type of modern Babylon. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle to cull from the Old Testament many expressions concerning ancient Babylon and apply them to modern Babylon. Therefore, in order to understand the significance of the descriptions of spiritual Babylon in Revelation, we need to study the type in the Old Testament. There are at least fourteen parallels between ancient Babylon and modern Babylon. (See Appendix 1.),

Ancient Babylon. gained control of the world. It was a world power. Nebuchadnezzar, after conquering the then known world, declared:

"Is not this great Babylon that I have built." Daniel 4:30.

In the book of Revelation, "Babylon the great" is used four times denoting the worldwide influence that this power will gain. (5a)

In the Old Testament Babylon was called "the lady of kingdoms" (Isaiah 47:5) denoting that she was the best, she was supreme.

“I shall be a lady forever.” Isaiah 47:7.

Her aim was to rule forever. This has always been the spirit of Babylon.

“I am, and none else beside me, I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” Verse 8.

This portrays Babylon’s intentions, and reveals her arrogance, pride and ambition. In Revelation the same picture is presented of modern Babylon. Little does the world dream of the aims of the apostate religious system that will be led by the Papacy. Little do they dream what is in store.

“She said in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow.” Revelation 18:7.

In 1798 Spiritual Babylon was widowed when she received the deadly wound. (3) She is determined to regain her husband and have her power restored. She will be illicitly united to the State again.

“The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” Revelation 18:3.

There is to be another illicit union of church and state, then Babylon will no longer be a widow. Old Babylon was situated on the Euphrates river.

“Thou that dwells on many waters.” Jeremiah 51:13.

The many waters were the great river Euphrates. She was situated on both sides of the river. She dug canals from the river by which she irrigated the fertile plains of Babylon, making them one of the most productive gardens the world has ever known. In Revelation spiritual Babylon is also pictured as dwelling on many waters.

“Come hither and I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters.” Revelation 17:1.

What are these waters? The book of Revelation, being a book of symbols indicates that the waters are symbolic.

“The waters which thou saw where the whore sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” Revelation 17:15

The waters on which modern Babylon will sit are the numerous peoples all over the world who will support the great religious apostasy.

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship” [obey] the beast. Multitudes of people around the globe are finally to give their allegiance to Babylon. The great river Euphrates in ancient times was the glory and protection of that great city. Rollins’ Ancient History declares:

“Babylon reckoned the Euphrates alone was sufficient to render her impregnable.” The author of “Prophets and Kings” declares:

“Babylon, with its massive walls and its gates of brass, protected by the river Euphrates, and stocked with provision in abundance, the voluptuous monarch, felt safe and passed his time in mirth and revelry.” (6)

Just as the river Euphrates was the protection of ancient Babylon, so modern Babylon will find its protection and its glory in the symbolic Euphrates. The millions of people around the globe who are to give their support to Babylon will be her glory and protection. All the nations, the kings or rulers of the earth, the merchants of the earth. (18:3), the world’s financiers and the multinationals etc. , will all support modern Babylon. This will be her glory and her protection. What a picture of the tremendous organization and power that is rising in our midst.

In the original language, the word “Euphrates” means “to break forth, to rush, rushing”. (7) This word was used of the Euphrates river because when the snows melted on the mountains of Armenia, it gave rise to sudden flooding. The waters would overflow their banks and spread over the land in various parts of its course particularly in the north of Israel. The Euphrates was appointed by God to be the northern boundary of Israel. In the times of David and Solomon, Israel’s territory finally reached to the Euphrates. (8)

The Old Testament prophets employed the overflowing of the Euphrates to represent an invasion by enemy forces from the north into the land of Israel.

“Behold, waters rise up out of thee north and shall be an overflowing flood and overflow the land.” Jeremiah 47:2.

Military invasions generally came from the north. Even though some invasions came from the east, they were forced to travel up the Euphrates river, because of the desert, and turn down from the north into Israel.

“The Lord brings upon them, the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and he shall come up over all his channels and go over all his banks. He shall pass through Judah and reach even to the neck.” Isaiah 8:7, 8.

This was a prediction of the Assyrian King, Sennacherib, who invaded the land of Israel and besieged Jerusalem, the head or capital of Judah. The invasion is likened to the overflowing of the many waters of the river - the Euphrates. The same symbolism is repeated:

“Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty [margin. many] waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters, but God shall rebuke them.” Isaiah 17:12, 13.

This was also a reference to the invasion of the Assyrians and alludes to the flooding of the Euphrates. In the book of Joshua the Euphrates is significantly referred to as “the flood”.

“Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old times, even Terah, the father of Abraham . . . and I took your father, Abraham, from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan.”

“Put away your gods which you served on the other side of the flood.” Joshua 24:2, 3, 14, 15. The term “flood” is used to represent an invasion, or attack, by hostile powers. (9)

In the book of Revelation, the term “Euphrates” has a similar significance. In the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9:14 it describes the loosing of the four angels which are bound in or at the great river Euphrates. This represents an invading hostile power that would overrun the empire of Eastern Rome like a flood. It represented the Turks who fulfilled to the very letter all the details of the sixth trumpet. (10) In Revelation 16 the Euphrates has the same connotation. The Euphrates represents an invasion or an attack by Babylon upon God’s remnant people. In ancient times, literal Babylon attacked literal Israel. Finally, Spiritual Babylon is to attack Spiritual Israel, the church of God. The Revelator in his reference to the supporters of Babylon declares:

“The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” Revelation 17:2. Babylon’s supporters will be deluded, or intoxicated by Babylon’s doctrine or philosophy, and as a result they will be manipulated and used to attack God’s people. In the sixth plague this attack is symbolized by

the term “Euphrates”. It represents the invasion by hostile people, like a mighty flood, against the church of God. In the sixth plague the Revelator uses this terminology to portray details of the final conflict when “the dragon makes war on the remnant which keep the commandments of God,” (Revelation 12:17) ; when “the ten horns and the beast make war with the Lamb,” (Revelation 17:12-14) ; and when the two-horned beast causes all that “would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” (Revelation 13:15) The “many waters” on which the whore sits, rise up in wrath against the saints.

Anciently, after literal Babylon in her oppression of Israel had filled up her cup of iniquity God brought about her destruction. How was Babylon overthrown? It was affected by the drying up of Babylon’s waters - the Euphrates.

“A drought is upon her [Babylon’s] waters and they shall be dried up.” Jeremiah 50:38. “I will dry up her sea [waters] and make her springs dry.” Jeremiah 51:36.

“That said to the deep [the Euphrates] be dry and I will dry up thy rivers.” Isaiah 44:27.

These predictions were abundantly fulfilled by King Cyrus with his Medes and Persians in their conquest of Babylon. As the author of the book “PROPHETS AND KINGS” wrote. . .

“Even while he [Belshazzar] and his nobles were drinking from the sacred vessels of Jehovah . . . and praising their gods of silver and of gold, the Medes and the Persians having turned the Euphrates out of its channel were marching into the heart of the unguarded city.”

“In the unexpected Entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors.” (11)

When God overthrew ancient Babylon he dried up her waters. Cyrus turned the Euphrates out of its course. He cut a channel and turned the river aside so that the waters flowing under the wall of Babylon ran low, enabling the Persian soldiers to enter in under the walls and capture the city. (12)

In the final conflict, when spiritual Babylon attempts to destroy the saints, and the symbolic waters on which she sits overflow against them, God intervenes and dries up those symbolic waters. He turns away from Babylon all those that support her. In Revelation 17 this same event is described in another way. After the ten horns join with the beast to make war against the Lamb, it declares:

“And the ten horns which thou saw and the beast, (13) these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire for God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” Revelation 17:16, 17.

After the ten horns and the beast give their united support to the woman to make war against the Lamb, there is then a complete reversal. They are led to turn on the woman and destroy her. This is the same as “the drying up of the Euphrates”. It is the removal of the support of the peoples all over the world from the great apostate religious system. How does this eventuate? How does God dry up, or turn away, the support of millions of people from the religious leaders? The purpose of the seven last plagues is not only to punish Babylon, but to expose her. She has been the most deceptive power ever known and it is essential that her true character be revealed to all. Babylon’s exposure climaxes in the fifth plague, the plague of darkness.

“The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat [throne] of the beast and his kingdom was full of darkness.”

By that time the kingdom of the beast will be worldwide, for “all that dwell on the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life.” (Revelation 13:8.) God’s people at this time have been under pursuit, they have fled to the wilderness, to the mountains, to the outback. They are on the verge of destruction. It is at this moment that God at last intervenes. Notice how the author of “The Great Controversy” describes it,

“When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. [Notice, it is the people, the symbolic Euphrates, the supporters of Babylon]. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof. The people of God - some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains - still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men are preparing for the work of death.”

“It is now in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of his chosen. With shouts of triumph, jeering and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey [Euphrates means “rushing”] when lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night [fifth plague] falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God’s covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.” (14)

What a devastating experience this will be. The millions of Babylon’s supporters, convinced that Babylon is right and that the dissenting remnant are entirely wrong, convinced that there is only one alternative and that is to put them out of existence, are now confronted with shattering evidence that this small people, this remnant, is protected of God. Continuing:

“When the voice of God turns the captivity of his people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life. The world sees the very class whom they have mocked and derided and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of his law a devouring fire, is to his people a safe pavilion.” (15)

What a scene! What a reversal! In the fifth plague of extreme blackness, this blinding rainbow envelopes each little group of praying saints. The supporters of Babylon are suddenly shocked into the realization that these despised, hated and peculiar people are the chosen of God. This is how the symbolic Euphrates is dried up. This is how the “many waters” are diverted. This is the taking away of the support of the people from Babylon. This is God’s answer to the attempt to destroy his loyal people. What a deliverance! The prophet Jeremiah describes the reaction of Babylon’s supporters after their eyes are opened.

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture. Behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings.” Jeremiah 23:1, 2.

When the eyes of the multitude are opened and they realize that they have been deluded, what a recompense will be meted out to the pastors.

“They have healed the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Jeremiah 8:11.

This is the theme today and it will be more pronounced in the future.

“With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.” Ezekiel 13:22.

Do we not witness this type of thinking in religious teaching amongst us today? In the sixth and seventh plagues the recompense comes. The Remnant are revealed as God’s chosen, but in the multitudes whom the religious leaders have manipulated, they see the awful fruitage of their ministry. As the author of “The Great Controversy” declares:

“The minister who has sacrificed truth to gain the favor of men, now discerns the character and influence of his teachings. Every act that led men to rest in a refuge of falsehood has been scattering seed; and now, in the wretched, lost souls around him, he beholds the harvest.” (16)

What a grim picture this will be! Under such devastating exposure the unfaithful clergy, in awful remorse, confess their deceptions and admit that the persecuted ones are God’s true people.

“I will make then of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews [Christians] and are not, but do lie, I will make them to come and worship before thy [saints] feet and to know that I have loved thee.” Revelation 3:9.

“The clergy cringe at the feet of the saints admitting that they are wrong and that the saints are right. What a reversal!

“No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever - eternal life. Men whom the world has worshipped for their talents and eloquence now see these things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression and they fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided, and confess that God has loved them.” (17)

What a challenge this is to decide for the right. What an encouragement this is to be faithful to the “commandments of God and the faith of Jesus”. How vital it is to take the long look and see where our path is. Let us shun the popular way for it will lead to shattering disappointment in the future. As the prophet warns,

“Howl ye shepherds, and cry; wallow yourselves in ashes ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are accomplished: and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. The shepherds [clergy] shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of crying of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock shall be heard, for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.” Jeremiah 25:34, 35.

As the previous author has penned,

“The priests who are leading oil their flock to death are soon to be arrested in their dreadful career. The plagues of God are coming, but it will not be sufficient for the false shepherds to be tormented with one or two of these plagues. God’s hand at that time will be stretched out still in wrath and justice, and will not be brought to Himself again, until His purposes are fully accomplished and the hireling priests are led to worship at the feet of the saints and to acknowledge that God has loved them because they held fast the truth and kept God’s commandments.” (18)

But more than that! The multitudes, witnessing the confession of their religious leaders and realizing that the clergy have deluded them and robbed them of eternal life, react with frightful violence.

“The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, ‘You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it, you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us. ’ The ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people.” (19)

Again,

“The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. ‘We are lost!’ they cry, ‘and you are the cause of our ruin; and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most, will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God’s people are now employed to destroy their enemies, Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.”

This is the “drying up of the Euphrates”. This is the turning away of the people’s support from the religious leaders. Instead of supporting them, they destroy them with their own hands.

“The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. THE FALSE WATCHMAN ARE FIRST TO FALL. There are none to pity or to spare.” (20)

Many believe that the prediction of the prophet Zechariah has its full application at this time.

“This shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; [the church] their flesh shall consume away, while they stand upon their feet and their eyes shall consume away in their holes [sockets] and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” Zechariah 14:12.

What a fearsome judgment!

“The false shepherds had been the signal objects of Jehovah’s wrath. Their eyes had consumed away in their holes and their tongues in their mouths, while they stood upon their feet.” (21)

All this will be fulfilled under the sixth and seventh plagues. But the end is not yet! After the clergy are destroyed, the prophet then portrays the tragic end of the supporters of Babylon.

“It shall come to pass in that day that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold, everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.” Zechariah 14:13.

The supporters of Babylon will turn upon each other. In their fearful frustration and devastating disappointment, one can readily understand it. They have lost everything.

“Many of the wicked were greatly enraged, as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of fearful agony. Parents were bitterly reproaching their children and children their parents, brothers their sisters and sisters their brothers. Loud, wailing cries were heard in every direction, “It was you who kept me from receiving the truth which would have saved me from this awful hour.” (21)

This experience is with us today. It will continue to a greater degree in the future. Loved ones, relatives, friends, are hindering people who desire to accept the truth of God. There will be terrible recriminations when the plagues come.

“After the saints had been delivered, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other.” (23)

The term “Armageddon” means “Mount of slaughter”. Undoubtedly the scene depicted above is the exact fulfillment of Armageddon. It is not the clash of earthly armies, but the terrible conflict, first against God’s people, then against the false clergy, bringing about their destruction and then the unsaved destroying each other all over the world. Worldwide destruction, worldwide bloodshed. What a tragic scene. All this prepares the way for the coming of, Christ. The Euphrates was dried up, “that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” How does it prepare the way? This is dealt with under the topic, “The Kings From the Sun rising!”

In conclusion, when Christ finally appears to receive his people at the Second Advent, the Revelator declares:

“And the remnant were slain.” Revelation 19:21.

This is referring to the remnant of the unsaved. The majority of the unsaved have turned on one another in slaughter and there is only a remnant left. This remnant is destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming when He returns to the world. (2 Thessalonians 2:8) Thus in the book of Revelation we have two remnants. Firstly, the remnant of the woman’s seed that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. These will be preserved during the plagues and translated at His appearing. On the other hand, the second remnant will be those who have survived the plagues but will be destroyed at the Second Advent.

APPENDIX 1

PARALLELS BETWEEN LITERAL BABYLON

1. Literal Babylon Ruled the then known world

2. Literal Babylon claimed to be “The Lady of Kingdoms”, “I shall be a lady forever”, “I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” Isaiah 47:5-8.

3. Literal Babylon was situated on the Euphrates river."That dwells on many waters." Jeremiah 51:13. i. e. The Euphrates and its numerous canals." Anno. Par. Bible
4. The literal river was literal Babylon's glory and protection.
5. The literal Euphrates in flood was used to represent invasions by literal Babylon, from the north, against literal Israel.
6. In the downfall of literal Babylon, her literal waters were dried up.
7. This prepared the way for Cyrus and other kings from the east to invade literal Babylon.
8. The name Cyrus means "the Sun."
9. Cyrus was called God's "anointed" or messiah."Thus said the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus." Isaiah 44:1.
10. Cyrus was called God's shepherd."That said of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd.'" Isaiah 43:28.
11. Cyrus conquered literal Babylon Isaiah 45:1-3.
12. Cyrus delivered literal Israel from literal Babylon. Isaiah 45:1, 13.
13. Cyrus came from the east. Isaiah 41:2; 46:11.
14. Cyrus ordered the rebuilding of Jerusalem and restored Israel to the Promised Land. Isaiah 44:26, 28.

SPIRITUAL BABYLON

1. Spiritual Babylon is to rule all the world.
2. Spiritual Babylon will reach a similar position."I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." Revelation 18:7.
3. Spiritual Babylon will be situated on the symbolic Euphrates."That sits on many waters." "The waters where the whore sits are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues." Revelation 17:1, 15.
4. The symbolic river or the peoples and nations of the world will be spiritual Babylon's glory and protection.
5. The symbolic Euphrates or peoples will rise in rage, like a flood and invade spiritual Israel.
6. In the downfall of spiritual Babylon, her symbolic waters (or supporters) will be symbolically "dried up."
7. This will prepare the way for Jesus Christ, the symbolic Cyrus and other kingly powers to invade this world, the realm of spiritual Babylon. Revelation 16:12.
8. Cyrus represents Jesus Christ, "The Sun of Righteousness"
9. Jesus was called THE Anointed, the Messiah."We have found the Messiah the Christ." John 1:41.
10. Jesus is called "The Good", "The Great" and "The Chief Shepherd." John 10:14; Hebrews 13:22; 1 Peter 5:4.
11. Jesus will conquer spiritual Babylon. Revelation 17:14; 19:2.
12. Jesus will deliver spiritual Israel from spiritual Babylon. Revelation 18:4, 8.
13. Jesus Christ comes the second time from the east to destroy spiritual Babylon. Matthew 24:27.
14. Jesus builds New Jerusalem and restores spiritual Israel to the earth made new. John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-3.

APPENDIX 2

The historical account of the turning aside of the river Euphrates by Cyrus the Great in the capture of Babylon in 538 BC - From Xenophon's "Cyropoedia". (Translated from the Greek by Nelson.)

1. When Cyrus appeared before Babylon he stationed his whole force about the city and then rode around it himself in company with his friends and the staff-officers of the allies.

2. But when he had taken a survey of the walls, he prepared to draw off his army from the city. But a deserter came out and told him that they were going to attack him as soon as he began to draw his army off."For," the man went on, "your lines looked weak to those who observed them from the walls." And it was no wonder that they appeared so; for, encompassing walls of such extent, the lines necessarily had but little depth.

3. On hearing this, therefore, Cyrus took his place with his bodyguard in the center of his army and gave orders that the hoplites should fold back the phalanx from the extremity of either wing and move toward each other behind the main body, which had been halted, until each of the extreme wings should meet in a line with him, that is, in the center.

4. By this maneuver the men that remained standing in their places were at once given more courage, for the depth of the line was thus doubled; and those who had fallen back were likewise rendered more courageous, for thus those troops which had been kept standing had now come to face the enemy, and not they. But when, as they marched in from both sides, the ends came together, they stood thus mutually strengthened - those who had shifted their position were supported by those in front of them, those in front by the men behind them.

5. And when the phalanx was thus folded back, the front ranks and the rear were of necessity composed of the most valiant men and the poorest were drawn up between them. And this arrangement of the lines seemed well adapted both for fighting and for keeping the men from flight; and the cavalry and the light-armed troops upon the wings were in each case brought as much nearer to the commander as the phalanx was shorter when doubled.

6. And when they had thus closed up, they retired backward as long as they were within range of the missiles from the wall; but when they were out of range, they would face about and go forward at first only a few steps and wheel to the left and stand facing the wall; and the further off they got, the less of ten did they thus wheel around; and when they seemed to be out of all danger, they marched off without stopping until they arrived at their tents.

7. When they had encamped, Cyrus called together his staff officers and said: "Friends and allies, we have viewed the city on every side. But I am sure I cannot see how any one could take by storm walls so massive and so high; but the more men there are in the city, the sooner they can, I think, be brought by famine to capitulate, seeing that they will not come out and fight. Therefore, unless you have some other method to suggest, I propose that we use this method of laying siege to those gentlemen."

8."But," said Chrysantas, "does not this river flow through the midst of the city? And it is more than two stadia in width." "Aye, by Zeus," said Gobryas, "and its depth is such that two men, one standing on the other's shoulders, would not reach the surface of the water, so that the city is better defended by the river than by its walls."

9."Chrysantas," Cyrus answered, "let us not trouble ourselves with that which is beyond our powers; but we must apportion the work among ourselves as quickly as possible, to each contingent its proper share and dig a ditch as wide and as deep as possible, so that we may require only as many men on guard as are absolutely indispensable."

10. Accordingly, he took measurements in a circle round about the city, leaving just enough room by the river for the erection of large towers, and began on either side of the city to dig an immense trench; and the earth from it they threw it on their own side of the ditch.

11. First of all, he began to build towers by the river, laying his foundations with the trunks of date palms not less than a hundred feet long - and they grow even taller than that. And they were good material for this purpose, for it is a well known fact that date palms, when under heavy pressure, bend upward like the backs of pack asses.

12. These he used as "mud sills" in order that, even if the river should break into his trench above, it might not carry his towers away. And he erected many other towers besides upon the breast-works of earth, so that he might have as many watch-towers as possible.

13. Thus, then, his men were employed, while the enemy upon the walls laughed his siege-work-s to scorn, in the belief that they had provisions enough for more than twenty years. Upon hearing of this, Cyrus divided his any into twelve parts as if intending each part to be responsible for sentry duty during one month of each year.

14. But the Babylonians, in their turn, when they heard of that laughed much more scornfully still, at the thought of Phrygians and Lydians and Arabians and Cappadocians keeping guard against them, for they considered all these to be more friendly to them than to the Persians.
15. At last the ditches were completed. Then, when he heard that a certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink and revel all night long, Cyrus took a large number of men, just as soon as it was dark and opened up the heads of the trenches at the river.
16. As soon as that was done, the water flowed down through the ditches in the night, and the bed of the river where it traversed the city, became passable for men.
17. When the problem of the river was thus solved, Cyrus gave orders to his Persian colonels, infantry and cavalry, to marshal their regiments two abreast and come to him and the rest, the allies, to follow in their rear, drawn up as before.
18. They came, according to orders and he bade his aides, both foot and horse, get into the dry channel of the river and see if it was possible to march in the bed of the river.
19. And when they brought back word that it was, he called together the generals of both infantry and cavalry and spoke as follows:
- 20."My friends," said he, "the river has made way for us and given us an entrance into the city. Let us, therefore, enter in with dauntless hearts, fearing nothing and remembering that those against whom we are now to march are the same men that we have repeatedly defeated, and that, too, when they were all drawn up in battle line with their allies at their side, and when they were all wide awake and sober and fully armed.
21. Whereas now we are going to fall upon them at a time when many of them are asleep, many drunk, and none of them in battle array. And when they find out that we are inside the walls, in their panic fright they will be much more helpless still than they are now.
- 22."But if any one is apprehensive of that which is said to be a source of terror to those invading a city - namely, that the people may go up on the house-tops and hurl down missiles right and left, you need not be in the least afraid of that; for if any do go up upon their houses, we have a god on our side, Hephaestus. And their porticoes are very inflammable," for the doors are made of palm wood and covered with bituminous varnish which will burn like tinder;
23. While we, on our side, have plenty of pine wood for torches, which will quickly produce a mighty conflagration; we have also plenty of pitch and tow, which will quickly spread the flames everywhere, so that those upon the house tops must either quickly leave their posts or quickly be consumed.
- 24."But come, to arms: and with the help of the gods I will lead you on. And do you, Gadatas and Gobryas, show the streets, for you are familiar with them. And when we get inside the walls, lead us go by the quickest route to the royal palace."
- 25."Aye," answered Gobryas and his staff, "in view of the revelry, it would not be at all surprising if the gates leading to the palace were open, for all the city is feasting this night. Still, we shall find a guard before the gates, for one is always posted there." "We must lose no time, then," said Cyrus."Forward, that we may catch the men as unprepared as we can."
26. When these words were spoken, they advanced. And of those they met on the way, some fell by their swords, some fled back into their houses, some shouted at them; and Gobryas and his men shouted back to them, as if they were fellow revelers. They advanced as fast as they could and were soon at the palace.
27. And Gobryas and Gadatas and their troops found the gates leading to the palace locked and those who had been appointed to attack the guard fell upon them as they were drinking by a blazing fire and without waiting they dealt with them as with foes.
28. But, as a noise and tumult ensued, those within heard the uproar, and at the king's command to see what the matter was, some of them opened the gates and ran out.
29. And when Gadatas and his men saw the gates open they dashed in, in pursuit of the others as they fled back into the palace, and dealing blows right and left they came into the presence of the king; and they found him already risen with his dagger in his hand.
30. And Gadatas and Gobryas and their followers overpowered him; and those about the king perished also, one where he had sought some shelter, another while running away, another while actually trying to defend himself with whatever he could.

31. Cyrus then sent the companies of cavalry around through the streets and gave them orders to cut down all whom they found out of doors, while he directed those who understood Assyrian to proclaim to those in their houses that they should stay there, for if any one should be caught outside, he would be put do death.

32. While they were thus occupied, Gadatas and Gobryas came up; and first of all they did homage to the gods, seeing that they had avenged themselves upon the wicked king, and then they kissed Cyrus's hands and his feet with many tears of joy.

33. And when day dawned and those in possession of the citadels discovered that the city was taken and the king slain, they surrendered the citadels, too.

34. And Cyrus at once took possession of the citadels and sent up to then guards and officers of the guards. As for the dead, he gave their relatives permission to bury them. He furthermore ordered the heralds to make proclamation that all Babylonians deliver up their arms; and he ordered that wherever arms should be found in any house, all the occupants should be put to the sword. So they delivered up their arms and Cyrus stored them in the citadels, so that they might be ready if he ever needed them for us.

REFERENCES

1. The view that the Euphrates represents the Islamic religion appears to be based on the belief that that river flows through countries that are Islamic in religion. This interpretation is derived from the now discarded principle that in prophecy a river represents a country through which it flows. There is no sound scriptural support for this assertion, nor is there any hint in scripture that a river represents a religion.

2. Ellen G. White."Testimonies to Ministers", page 39.

3. See the author's: "The Antichrist 666".

4. See "The 3 Powers that will Lead the World to Armageddon".

5. Mark 4:11, 12.

5a. Frequently, in scripture, the number 'four' represents universality, or the whole world.

6 Ellen G. White, "Prophets and Kings", page 523.

7 Dr. James Strong.

8 Genesis 15:18; 1 Kings 4:21, 24.

9 Daniel 9:26; Revelation 12:15, 16.

10 See the author's: "The Triumph and Tragedy of the Turk".

11 Ellen G. White."Prophets and Kings", pages 531, 532.

12 See Appendix 2 for further historical evidence on Cyrus and the Euphrates.

13 In the original, the word is "are", not "upon".

14 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", pages 635, 636.

15 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 654.

16 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", pages 654, 655.

17 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 655.

18 Ellen G. White."Early Writings", page 124.

19 Ellen G. White."Early Writings", page 282.

20 Ellen G. White."Great Controversy", page 655.

21 Ellen G. White."Early Writings", pages 289, 290.

22 Ellen G. White."Early Writings", page 282.

31. The Three Powers Of Armageddon

An Exposition of Revelation 16:13-16

One thing is certain in scripture and that is that sin and rebellion are to come to an end. After six thousand years of human history, there will climax the greatest conflict ever known, the conflict that involves God and his people, and Satan and the enemies of God. This conflict will reach its climax just before the second advent of Christ. Today evil is increasing and the conflict is intensifying between good and evil. As the Revelator declared,

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down to you having great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time." Revelation 12:12

The closer we approach the climax of history, the more frenzied will be Satan's efforts to bring the world to ruin. (See Appendix 1) The climax of this conflict, is called in scripture, by the term, Armageddon. In the book of Revelation, up to the Second Advent, all proper nouns have a symbolic application. Armageddon is symbolic of the great finale of the conflict between good and evil. It is featured in the sixth plague. When we study the seven last plagues it is evident that the seventh plague brings about the destruction of Babylon. (1) The sixth plague prepares the way for its destruction, and reveals who is the prime mover in precipitating Armageddon.

"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth to the kings of the Earth and the whole world to gather [or unite] them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Revelation 16:13-14, 16.

Today in the professedly Christian world there has been a tremendous revival of the powers of the occult. This revival commenced in 1848 with the manifestation of modern spiritualism. Under various guises this deceptive power has rapidly spread throughout the western world and is making its mark in every strata of society.

According to this prediction of Revelation 16 the "spirits of devils" are to work through three great powers or organizations symbolized by "the dragon, the beast and the false prophet". The three unclean spirits come "out of the mouth" of each of these three powers, indicating that the "spirits" must first take possession of the three powers and then speak and work through them. These three powers or organizations become the mediums of Satan to convince and to unite the rest of the world.

It is important to correctly interpret these three symbols so that we know where to watch for the fulfillment of prophecy. We will examine first, the central power which is called "the beast". This organization, we will show, is to be the earthly leader in Armageddon. The beast is fully described in Revelation 13:1-10 and it is indisputable that this power is the Papacy. (2) This means that according to the prediction, "the spirits of devils" are to take possession of the Papacy and speak and work through it, to influence the rest of the world to unite against God and his people. There is ample evidence to show that in the past as well as the present, the powers of Spiritualism have resided within the Papacy.

Not only does the Roman Catholic Church hold festivals to honor the departed spirits of loved ones, but it claims to have within the church, members who claim to receive messages from the dead. Instead of calling this practice of the occult, NECROMANCY, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CALLS IT MYSTICISM. AND INSTEAD OF CALLING THE PEOPLE WHO PERFORM THIS ABOMINATION (MEDIUMS), THEY ARE CALLED MYSTICS." (3)

Roman Catholicism is famous for its miracles and so called responses from departed saints. Some miracles are inexplicable from a human point of view. The miracles at Lourdes, that great Catholic center of Mariolatry, speak of a supernatural power, At Lourdes, there are not only Catholic but Protestant and non religious doctors. They all admit that miracles occur. These miracles confirm in the mind of the Catholic that God is in the Catholic Church. The miracles also convince many Protestants that God must be in the Catholic Church. Thirdly, the miracles in the church of Rome declare to the world at large that God is in the Catholic Church. Lourdes is impressive. One who is unaware of the warnings of scripture in regard to the deceptive and alluring influence of evil spirits, would be soundly convinced that the power of God is present at Lourdes.

At this juncture let it be clearly understood that while scripture exposes the Catholic system it also reveals that some of God's true people are in the church of Rome, but he will ultimately call them out."Come out of her my people" (Revelation 18:4) Generally speaking, the evidence reveals that the church of Rome is under the influence of occult powers but generally in an attractive way, in order to deceive.

Undoubtedly in the future, the influence of evil spirits in the Church of Rome will become more pronounced. The beast then, the central power through which the spiritual forces of Satan will work in the last days to unite the world against God, represents the Papacy.

The next row is called the dragon? There has been much confusion in identifying the dragon. The current view that the dragon represents Spiritualism cannot be upheld from scripture. It is based, we believe, on a misunderstanding of an isolated statement in the book, "The Great Controversy." (4) The dragon is first introduced in Revelation 12. In verses 3-4 a woman is pictured, representing the Church of God. She is described as giving birth to a man child - Jesus. A great red dragon stands before the woman to devour her child as soon as it is born. Who is the dragon here? First of all the dragon is Satan, ". . . that old serpent called the Devil and Satan". (Verse 9) But Satan always works through earthly agencies, through political powers, etc. Some have held that the dragon represents "paganism", but this must be rejected entirely. (See Appendix 2) What power was used by Satan to try and destroy Jesus at his birth? According to history it was Pagan Rome under the Caesars. It was Herod the Great, King of Judaea, the Roman governor, who endeavored to destroy the Christ child, in the destruction of the babes of Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:16) As one author correctly comments:

"While the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome." (5)

But the dragon or serpent power in Revelation 12 continues down through the Christian era to the last days. Therefore the dragon involves more than Pagan Rome. In prophecy a beast represents a political power (Daniel 7:17) therefore the dragon (which is a beast) must represent political powers that are used by Satan to oppose the cause of God. What political powers were used by Satan to oppose his people after the fall of pagan Rome? Rome's territory was occupied by the Gothic barbarians who formed themselves into the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. Most of these powers of Europe at various times were effective agents of Satan in opposing God's people.

In Revelation 12:3 the dragon is described as having "ten horns". These represent the ten divisions of Western Rome (Daniel 7. 24). Whenever one reads of the ten horns in Daniel or Revelation, they always represent, at least, or initially, the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. Thus the original kingdoms of Western Europe are clearly a part of the dragon power. The same author quoted above lays down a principle as to what constitutes the dragon power.

"Kings, rulers and governors have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist and are represented as the dragon who goes to make war with the saints." (6)

If the dragon of Revelation 12:3-4 was Pagan Rome and in Revelation 12:14-16 was the ten kingdoms of Western Europe, who then comprises the dragon in verse 17 in the end time? The answer is, "Kings, rulers and governors [who] have placed themselves under the brand of antichrist." The earthly Antichrist is the Papacy. The dragon, therefore, of verse 17 represents the political powers who in the last days, place themselves under the brand of the Papacy and make war on God's people. (Further details for rejecting the view that the dragon represents Spiritualism are outlined in Appendix 3.)

Do the scriptures reveal any particular political powers that could fulfill the description of the dragon in the last days? Notice the prediction in Revelation 17 concerning the final conflict.

"The ten horns which thou saw, are ten kings [or kingdoms] which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings [or kingdoms] one hour with the beast [the Papacy]. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful" Revelation 17:12-14

The ten horns in this prediction play their part in the end time, at which time they give their strength and power to the beast or Papacy. In doing this, do they not "place" upon themselves the brand of antichrist, and are represented as the dragon? If so, then it is important to identify the powers who comprise the horns in the end time. Revelation 17 is a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16 especially the portion dealing with the punishment of Babylon. Seeing "the dragon" is one of the agencies through which the powers of the occult or spiritualism is to work, we suggest that whoever is represented by the ten horns or ten kingdoms comprises the dragon.

The ten horns were initially the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. However, the civilization and culture of Western Europe has not remained static. In the process of exploration, discovery and colonization of the new areas of the world - it was the Western European powers that were involved. These were the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, French, German, Belgian and Italian - all Western Europe.

In this way the Western European kingdoms extended their territories and multiplied their numbers and influence.

On analyzing the origins of the new countries which were once colonies, it is obvious that they were all Western European. If Western Europe itself is included, there are, we suggest, ten approximate, geographic entities that are of West European influence and culture today. These we suggest could come under the caption of the ten horns or kingdoms in the last days. The ten political entities are:

1. Modern Western Europe including Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia.
2. The U. S. A, which is mostly Anglo-Saxon and West European in culture.
3. Canada - which is of British and French stock.
4. Mexico - which is of Spanish stock and culture.
5. Inter America - Spanish stock and culture.
6. Portuguese South America - Brazil, Portuguese stock and culture.
7. Spanish South America - Argentina, Chile etc. , all are of Spanish stock and culture.
8. South Africa - Dutch and British stock and culture.
9. Australia - British stock and culture.
10. New Zealand - British stock and culture.

THESE POLITICAL POWERS HAVE SEVERAL POINTS IN COMMON

1. Nine of them originated as colonies of one of the ten kingdoms of Western Europe.
2. They are Western European in culture and civilization.
3. They are either republican or Protestant in their form of government.
4. They all have strong Roman Catholic populations.
5. The Protestant Churches in them are no longer anti Catholic.
6. They all have similar ideologies.
7. Behind the scenes Roman Catholicism is very influential.

The prediction of Revelation 17 is clear that the political powers represented by the ten horns are to unite. The similarities mentioned above could form a solid basis for unity, in fact already there is a growing unity among these powers. The prediction declares that finally they will “have one mind and will give their power and strength to the beast”, or the Papacy.

We are witnessing closer ties being woven among the above groups. There are economic, financial and trade ties. Political ties are in the making. Finally religious union with the Papacy will be a recognized fact. In the strong Protestant sections of the above ten groups, astute students of the scene, declare that astonishing advances by the Roman Catholic church are now in progress.

Further evidence that the political powers mentioned above could come under the caption of “the dragon” is given in Revelation 13:11-12. These verses predict that the U. S. A. , when it compels the earth to worship the papacy, “speaks as a dragon”, The U. S. A. in doing this “places itself under the brand of antichrist”. (Testimonies to Ministers, page 39) Seeing that the U. S. A, is the leader of the Western powers it will influence them to follow its example. As one author declares,

“In the book of Revelation under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view, those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law, and persecuting His people.” (7a)

We suggest that the “earthly governments” that are represented by the dragon in the end time, are the “kings, rulers and governors” of the Western world who “place themselves under the brand of the antichrist”.

According to the prediction of Revelation 16, the bewitching powers of Spiritualism are to come “out of the mouth of the dragon”. This could mean that the political powers of the Western world are to especially come under the control of Spiritualistic powers. There are concrete examples of how the forces of the occult have influenced some of these powers in the past.

In the interval between the two world wars the people of Germany became very involved in the practice of witchcraft. It has been suggested that it was this influence that prepared the soil for the reception of Nazism by which Adolph Hitler was enabled to seize control of the German nation. It is also well established, that during World War II, Mussolini and Hitler were influenced by the occult.

Mussolini did nothing of importance without first consulting his astrologer. Hitler also spent many hours of the night in communication with unseen powers. Leading spiritualists of Europe have admitted that Hitler was deeply involved in the occult. According to the famous American medium, Jean Dixon, Franklin D. Roosevelt, during World War II, spent many hours with his war chiefs in contact with occult powers, to obtain direction for the conduct of the war. Today witchcraft, sorcery, astrology and numerous other forms of the occult are riddling the Western world. We believe that this could be preparing the ground for the fulfillment of the prediction of Revelation 16:13-14.

The third power, or organization through which “the spirits of devils” are to work, is termed “The False Prophet”. A false prophet is one who claims to be a spokesman for God, but is not. He is one who claims to receive messages from God but who does not. He speaks falsely. We believe that the False Prophet is a

symbol of Apostate Protestantism. Once the Protestant churches were God’s spokesmen, proclaiming God’s message, but today they are in apostasy, yet they still pose as God’s spokesmen.

The Revelator appears to equate the False Prophet with the Image to the Beast. In Revelation 19 where the False Prophet is described, it will be seen that his details correspond with the description of the Image to the Beast of Revelation 13:12-17. When we recall that “the image to the beast” comprises the united Protestant churches and the U. S. A, civil power it can be seen how the False Prophet and the image to the beast could be identical. (7)

Notice the parallels between the two.

THE FOUR PARALLELS BETWEEN THE IMAGE & THE FALSE PROPHET

The following points may make the above a little clearer.

1. The False Prophet is one who was once a genuine spokesman for God but has since become apostate and continues to pose as God’s spokesman. Balaam, the false prophet in Numbers 22-24 is considered by some to be typical of the False Prophet of Revelation.
2. The False Prophet, or Image to the Beast, is connected with the second beast of Revelation 13 (the U. S. A.), when it compels obedience to the Papacy, Thus it is a religious entity and is connected with the U. S. A. (Revelation 13:11-14, 16)
3. The False Prophet will also be involved with the Papacy and deceives the people into accepting Papal worship in the form of the mark of the Beast. (Revelation 19:20)

The only religion-political power that fits the above specifications are the American Protestant churches when they finally unite and ally themselves with the civil power of the U. S. A. (8) In Revelation 19 where the final conflict of Armageddon is symbolized, it shows that “the False Prophet” is involved in that conflict:

“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army and the beast [Papacy] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast and them that worship his image.” Revelation 19:19-20.

In a previous chapter it has been shown that the Image to the Beast or the False Prophet will be formed when the united apostate Protestants combine with the civil power to enforce the conscience by enacting religious laws. (7) In doing this they will constitute another Papacy, or an Image to the beast. This means then that if “the spirits of devils” are to come out of the mouth of the false prophet, they must first enter into the Protestant or non-Catholic churches and take control. For many decades non-Catholic leaders have revealed a favorable attitude towards Spiritualism. This be expected when the majority of the clergy cling to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, upon which Spiritualism is based.

The evidence is indisputable that Spiritualism has reached a far greater degree of influence in the Protestant churches than is generally realized. (See Appendix 5)

Revelation 13

Verse 12. He causes them to worship the first beast (the Papacy).

Verse 14. 'Miracles he did in sight of the beast' (Papacy).

Verse 14. He deceives by the miracles which he did causes all to receive a mark (Verse 16).

Verse 14. To make an image to the beast

Revelation 19

Verse 19. He is 'with the beast' (The Papacy).

Verse 19. 'Worked miracles in sight of the beast' (Papacy).

Verse 19. 'By which he deceived them who received the mark of beast. '

Verse 19. 'Those who worshipped his image. '

A striking example of Spiritualistic infiltration of Protestantism is the 'charismatic movement'. Thousands of sincere people are led to believe that they receive the Holy Spirit in the form of so-called speaking in tongues. The evidence however, shows that the power involved in this movement, is a form of spiritualism, an impersonation of the Holy Spirit. This charismatic movement is pervading the Protestant churches as well as a section of the Catholic church and it is quite apparent that its aim is to unify all Christians and lead them toward Rome. This is exactly what the prediction of Revelation 16 includes. The spirits of devils will gather or unite the whole world.

Undoubtedly we will witness prolific manifestations of spiritualism in the future within the non Catholic churches, and the political leadership of the Western world.

At this juncture let us analyze the statement from "The Great Controversy" which describes the order in which the three powers, the dragon, beast and false prophet, unite with Spiritualism.

"The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hand across the gulf to grasp the hands of Spiritualism; they [Protestants and Spiritualism] will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; [Papacy] and under the influence of this threefold union, this country [U. S. A.] will follow in the steps of Rome In trampling an the rights of conscience." (9)

In the above statement four powers are involved, the same powers as featured in Revelation 16:13. Spiritualism, the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. The above statement reveals how the coming great union of these four powers will eventuate.

1. The Protestants of the USA take the initiative.
2. Protestants in the USA unite with Spiritualism.
3. The above two then unite with the Roman power.
4. The 3 powers above, in union, then influence "this country" (U. S. A.) to follow in the steps of Rome, i. e. the anti-Christ.
5. Next there will be a five-fold union of Protestantism, Spiritualism, Romanism, the civil powers of the Western world.

The prediction of Revelation 16:13-14 shows that after Spiritualism unites with and takes possession of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, these four then combine to unite the whole of mankind. The prediction reveals the method by which this is accomplished.

1. They will form the False Prophet.
2. Spiritualism is represented by "the 3 unclean spirits".
3. The Roman power is the Papacy - The Beast.

4. The USA in doing this places itself under the brand of anti-Christ and becomes a part of “the dragon.” Being the leader of the Western World, the USA will influence the Western World to follow suit by which they will also come “under the brand of anti-Christ” and become the dragon also.

5.”The kings of the earth and of the whole world”. i. e. the now, western world.

“I saw three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet for they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather, [Or unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13-14.

The word “gather”, in the Greek also means, “unite”. Thus the prediction declares that the “spirits of devils” working through the Dragon, Beast and. False Prophet, go out to the rest of the world to deceive

and unite them against God. (On the question of “Kings, rulers and governors” and “The kings of the earth” see Appendix 3)

A natural question that arises in connection with the above prediction is, how can all the world possibly be united? This appears to be an utterly impossible proposition. The world has always been divided politically, racially, religiously. Today Communism controls approximately one third of the earth. Much of the intellectual world is atheistic. When we think of China and the millions of Hindus and Moslems, such a union seems out of the question. But the prediction is clear, “the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather [or unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”.

How will such a union eventuate? The very prophecy itself tells us how the union will be accomplished.

“They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather [unite] them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.”

It is by the working of miracles. Evil spirits - the spirits of devils - the powers of the occult, working and speaking through the three great agents of Satan, the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, will perform astounding miracles that will sweep in the rest of mankind. These miracles will break down all opposition, and convince the rest of mankind, except the saints that Papal policy is of God. In his Second Advent sermon, Jesus Christ also warned of tremendous deception.

“For there shall arise false christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before.” Matthew 24:24-25.

This is a very clear warning that irresistible deceptions are to come. These signs and wonders will be so overpowering that they will almost deceive God’s very own elect. What overwhelming deception! Revelation chapter 13 makes a similar prediction of amazing miracles that will be performed to produce the desired effect upon the people of the U. S. A. In describing how the U. S. A. brings about the formation of “the image to the beast”, it declares:

“He does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Revelation 13:13.

Fire from heaven! This reminds us of Elijah, who was given power to bring down literal fire from heaven. This convinced all that he was of the true God. The fire from the heavens in the last days will probably be a counterfeit. The powers of the occult it seems, will manipulate the elements and cause fire or lightning to flash from the heavens in such a way, that it will convince the unsaved, that the leadership is inspired of God. What hope would the most stubborn of men have, of not being taken in by such dramatic, awe inspiring miracles. What hope would the most fervent Communist or the most fanatical religionist have, in the face of such overpowering delusions. Notice how the author of “Great Controversy” describes it thus.

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to fasten them in deception and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last great struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and people will be alike deceived.” (10)

Again, “The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power.” (11)

Today we are witnessing movements of all kinds toward union. In the commercial world we are seeing great mergers. In the economic world we are seeing whole nations uniting. In the labor world, the unions are waxing bigger and becoming more powerful. In the financial world there is evident an increasing monopoly. In the religious world there are great movements toward union and not only in the professedly Christian world. The church of Rome uses the term “pandeism”, to describe her current program of bringing under her wing the non-Christian religions of the world. In this, Rome will finally succeed, because the prediction says, “all the world wondered after the beast”. (Revelation 13:3) In the political

world we will see increasing efforts towards union. Currently it seems that the opposite situation prevails in some areas, but if the Papacy is to lead the world, it means that we will see great changes in regard to Communism and other divergent forces. A form of political world union is coming. Of recent years new movements have risen with the avowed aim of bringing about world government. Dr. Alberto R. Rivero in his revelations of the aims of the Jesuits, of which he was a member, has published a diagram depicting the various organizations which are agents of Rome in bringing about world government. (11a)

“The Catholic Church is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust, government or state of the whole globe. The pope, as the visible ruler of this immense amassment of wealth, is consequently the richest individual of the twentieth century. No one can realistically assess how much he is worth in terms of billions of dollars.” (‘The Vatican Billions’ by Avro Manhattan)

Undoubtedly the plans that are now in action will succeed. World government will eventuate as envisaged by the following author.

“There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan’s forces. In the warfare to be waged in the last days, there will be united in opposition to God’s people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.” (12)

This means that all who do not genuinely belong to Christ, all who are not loyal to God’s law, will be united together against God. Finally there will be only two groups - two sides - in the last great conflict. One group - the majority - are classified as worshippers of the beast.

“All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, [the beast] whose names are not written in the book of Life of the Lamb.” Revelation 13:8.

On the other side are the minority, those that worship the Lamb, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus”. (Revelation 14:12)

This is the picture in regard to Armageddon, the great finale of the conflict between Christ and Satan, between the church of God and her enemies. The Revelator declares of those involved in the first group, “These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them.” Revelation 17:14.

In the impending battle of Armageddon, how do the enemies of God attack or make war on the Lamb? They attack “the Lamb” when they attack his people for Jesus said,

“In that you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me.” Matthew 25:40 “The dragon was wrath with the women [the church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

The word for “war” is the same as the word for “battle” - the battle of Armageddon. It appears that Armageddon begins with the attempt to destroy the people of God. As it is written:

“The world is filled with storm and war and variance, yet under one head, the papal power, the people will unite to oppose God in the person of his witnesses.” (13)

This statement shows that while on the one hand the world unites against the saints of God, on the other hand there is continual tension among the various groups, “storm, war and variance”. If this involves military conflict, such conflict will not comprise any part of Armageddon, the last great battle.

As the same author quoted above declares,

“Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on his side bear his signet, they are obedient to his commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.” (14)

This is the powerful truth in regard to Armageddon. We conclude with the most important question of all. What is the secret of victory? How can we be victorious in the great battle that is imminent and which involves every person on the globe? (15)

“The Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful.” Revelation 17:14.

The secret is being with the Lamb. If we are with Him, we will share in His victory. Those with the Lamb, it says, “are called and chosen and faithful”. Every person, sometime in his life, is conscious of the Spirit of God calling him. Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen”. Why are few chosen? Because only a few respond to the call. Only a comparative minority respond to the gospel, and they are the ones who are chosen as God’s elect. But not only are they “called and chosen”, they are also “faithful”.

They remain loyal, they stand true - they do not yield when opposition comes, they faithfully follow Christ. God is made first in their lives.

By the grace of God they endure, and “he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved”. (Matthew 24:13)

Not only are we to know Christ as our Savior and sin bearer but we must know him as our king. This is the emphasis in the light of the coming conflict. “He is King of kings and Lord of lords.” If he is to be our King and Victor in the coming conflict he must be our King now.

“Every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in battle against the ruler of the universe.” (15)

“BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHES”

What is the significance of verses 13-15?

The claim is made that because verse 15 exhorts the reader to “watch and keep his garments”, the timing of the sixth plague must be prior to the close of probation. The answer to this claim is that verse 12 is the verse that actually tells what is involved in the sixth plague. Verses 13-16 are a parenthesis. They are inserted into the sixth plague for a specific purpose. We suggest that one reason is that verses 13-15 reveal the preparations essential to bring about Armageddon.

1. To show the preparations of the powers of evil. (Verses 13-14, 16)

These preparations are now in progress and have been for some time. The “gathering” or uniting of the powers of evil is proceeding. As one author declared in speaking of the influence of Spiritualism on the unsaved, “They are binding in bundles, ready to burn.” (16)

2 To show the essential preparation of the believer who is to be involved in the final conflict.

The preparation of the powers of evil is to effect the union of all the unsaved. Verses 13 and 14 reveal how this is done. The preparation of the saints for the conflict is symbolized in verse 15. It Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” The terminology of this verse appears to be borrowed from the experience of the temple watchmen of Jerusalem in their guard duty during the night. The inspector of the guard was called “The man of the mountain”. If in his nightly rounds of inspection he discovered a guard asleep at his post, the man of the mountain would set fire to the hem of the sleeping guard’s garment, resulting in the rude awakening of the guard and the mutilation of his garment. In the morning parade at the end of the watch, the mutilated garment of the guard would be glaringly apparent, bringing shame upon him. (17)

In the preparation for the final conflict, the saints of God, like the temple guards, are to be at their posts, in spiritual Jerusalem - the remnant church. They must be wide awake, alert to the greatest onslaught of deception ever experienced in the history of the church.

Therefore watchfulness is essential. Thus, “Blessed is he that watcheth. Jesus in his special instruction to the saints awaiting the Second Advent, repeatedly charged them “to watch”. Twelve times the word is used in this setting, indicating the danger of being lulled into a state of false security. (18)

“Watch therefore, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” Matthew 24:42 “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be ready.” 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Many modern preachers are saying the opposite. Belief in the nearness of the Advent is played down. “Don’t be overly concerned, because if He does not come, you will not suffer discouragement”, is the warning. But Christ’s instruction is, “Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments”.

What is the spiritual garment that covers our spiritual nakedness in the sight of heaven? It is the garment of Christ’s righteousness. This is righteousness imputed and righteousness imparted. It is righteousness credited to us to cover our lack and it is also righteousness imparted, to enable the saint “to keep the commandments of God”.

The warning is that if we fail to continue watching we will lose our spiritual robes and be seen as spiritually naked in the sight of heaven.

The greatest stimulus to inspire the saint to keep prepared for the Advent is the belief that it is near. This is the teaching of the New Testament. (Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:44-51)

APPENDIX 1

“As the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is at work with greater power. All the depths of Satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict, the coming struggle will be marked with terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan’s deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined.” Great Controversy pages 11-13.

APPENDIX 2

What of the view that the dragon represents paganism? This application has been made popular by Uriah Smith in his work “Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation”, first published in the 1870’s. However, after a hundred years of study of the subject, the reasons given by Smith for his conclusions need to be seriously questioned.

Uriah Smith correctly concluded that the dragon “in a secondary sense represents pagan Rome”, (page 557) but he then enters the realm of private interpretation and states that the dragon represents Rome “in its pagan form to which all must agree. The dragon then is a false system of religion.” (page 563) This is pure assumption and clashes with correct Biblical interpretation, in which a beast in prophecy represents a kingdom or political entity. (Daniel 7:17, 23) A dragon is undeniably a beast, therefore it must also represent a political entity.

The religious element such as paganism does not enter the picture unless it is specifically mentioned. Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece are represented in Daniel 7 by particular beasts and all three of those kingdoms were completely pagan in religion, but this is not featured in the symbolism. Likewise with the dragon which represented firstly the Roman Empire under the Caesars. Often when the religious system of Rome is referred to in scripture, it is under the term “abomination of desolation” etc.

Secondly Rome is referred to in prophecy as “the dragon” after it had officially renounced paganism as the state religion. Revelation 13:2 states that the “dragon gave him [the Papacy] his power, seat and great authority”. This was fulfilled first, by the emperor Constantine the Great (330 AD) who professed to be Christian, and later by emperor Justinian, a strong Catholic, (483-565 AD). It was in 380 AD, that the Christian emperor Gratian relinquished the pagan title “Pontifex Maximus” where upon it was assumed by the so-called Christian Bishop of Rome, named Damascus (366-384 AD.)

Thus the dragon does not represent any religious element. What it does represent is a political or civil power which is the agent of Satan in opposing God and his people. The dragon of Revelation 12:17 for example represents the political powers used by Satan in the end time but these political powers are professedly Christian in religion, not pagan.

APPENDIX 3

What of the current view that the dragon represents Spiritualism? This view is based on the following statement,

“The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hand across the If to grasp the hands of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influences of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rare in trampling on the rights of conscience.” (Great Controversy page 588)

This statement makes no hint that Spiritualism is the Dragon. It appears that because a “threefold union¹⁰ is mentioned, it must be the threefold union of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet. But the union involving the latter three is actually a fourfold union, because the three are united with Spiritualism.

To apply the Dragon to Spiritualism confuses the picture. Revelation 16:13-declares that the three unclean spirits that is, spiritualism, “come out of the mouth of the dragon” beast and false prophet. If the dragon is also “spiritualism” then the prediction is made to say that Spiritualism comes out of the mouth of Spiritualism. This does not make sense, so the view must be totally rejected especially in the light of the statement that “Kings, rulers and governors have placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist and are represented as the dragon.” (Testimonies To Ministers, page 39) and “In the book of Revelation under the symbols of a great red dragon a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law, and persecuting His people.” (Great Controversy, page 276, 1886 Edition.)

APPENDIX 4

“Kings, rulers and governors.” If the dragon represents “Kings, rulers and governors”, how is it that “the kings of the earth” of Revelation 16:14 are included among those who are deceived etc. , after the unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon (or “Kings, rulers and governors”) ? The answer to this apparent confusion is that the dragon represents the “Kings, rulers and governors [who] have placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist, that is, the Papacy. However there are other kings and rulers in the rest of the world who have not placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist. These are described as, “The kings of the earth and of the whole world”.

APPENDIX 5

In 1949 a spirit medium in Australia Informed the author that he was in contact with two thousand Protestant clergymen in that country who were involved in Spiritualism. In a leading city of Australia in 1960 it was reported to the author by one who was involved that in a prominent popular Protestant church, instead of weekly prayer meetings, spiritualistic sittings were being conducted. Similar practices were reported in other leading cities of Australia.

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- 5.”Great Controversy”, Ellen G. White, page 438.
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7. See the Tract or Chapter entitled “America’s Ominous Future”. 7a.”The Great Controversy”, Ellen G. White, page 276, 1886 edition.
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17. The “New Testament Pocket Commentary” on Revelation 16:15.
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32. The Woman On The 7 Headed Beast

The Riddle of Revelation 17

The Harlot Rides The Beast & The Beast Burns The Harlot!

Two chapters in Revelation deal specifically with Babylon. These are Revelation 17 & 18. The introduction to Babylon is presented in the 2nd Angel's message of Revelation 14 where it declares,

"And there followed another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (Verse 8)

WHY TWO SYMBOLS OF BABYLON?

Babylon is pictured under two symbols. In Revelation 17, she is portrayed as an immoral woman, and in Revelation 18, as a dominating city. These symbols are combined in Revelation 17:18 to show that they represent one and the same power.

"The woman which thou saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

What is the purpose of these two symbols? The harlot depicts Babylon's corruption and her ripeness for destruction. The city depicts Babylon's oppressive power, and how she will be totally and eternally destroyed. Both symbols represent a powerful religious organization. In Revelation are featured two women and two cities. The imagery is drawn from the Old Testament, where two women are used to represent the two cities of Babylon and Jerusalem.

Of Babylon it declares: "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon." (Isaiah 47:1) And of Jerusalem: "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." (Jeremiah 6:2)

In Revelation, these two women represent spiritual Babylon and spiritual Jerusalem, two opposing religious organizations. Spiritual Jerusalem represents the church of God, and spiritual Babylon represents the church or "synagogue of Satan" - the counterfeit church.

THE PLAN OF REVELATION 17

Let us notice the plan of Revelation 17. In verse one we have the announcement of the theme of the chapter which is the judgment or punishment of the woman. In verses 2-6 there is a description of the woman and her crimes, showing why she is worthy of punishment.

In verses 7-11 we have the identification of the beast that supports the woman. In verses 12-14 we have the identification in particular of the seventh head and what the woman inspires it to do. In verses 15-18 it reveals how the seventh head turns on the woman in punishment and destroys her.

THE HARLOT IDENTIFIED

Let us identify the woman.

"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Revelation 17:4-5)

Through the centuries, the majority of Protestant scholars have been unanimous that the woman of Revelation 17 represents, in the main, the Church of Rome. There are at least fourteen specifications by which the woman may be identified and every point perfectly fits that organization. In identifying the church of Rome and any other religious bodies, this commentary is not referring to any individuals but to a system.

HER COLOURS

The most arresting item that greets the eye in the city of Rome, is scarlet color. This is the color in which the popes are generally portrayed. Likewise the cardinals. In "St. Paul's Outside the Wall", in Rome, 109 popes are portrayed around the ceiling of that great building. Every single one is in scarlet. The throne room of the Pope is also in scarlet. The floors, walls and ceilings are in scarlet. Why the scarlet? Scarlet often denoted kingliness but in scripture it denotes sinfulness. "Though your sins be as scarlet." (Isaiah 1:18)

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, St. Paul symbolized the Papacy as "the man of sin", or lawlessness, who sits (enthroned) in the temple of God, (the Christian church) "showing himself that he is God". One can understand why Protestant commentators through the centuries have mostly agreed that the Babylon of Revelation 17 is none other than Rome. Purple is recognized as the official color of Roman bishops and archbishops. In Catholic festivals one beholds the blending of the purple and the scarlet.

Verse 5 declares that the woman was "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls". It has been the practice of the church of Rome to deck her altars, images, statues and leaders with such items. This was especially true during the Middle Ages, but much of it was stolen or

destroyed at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Motley, in his "Dutch Republic" declares that at the time of the great image-breaking Crusade in the Netherlands in 1566,

"Pictures, statues, organs, ornaments, chalices of silver and gold, reliquaries, chausables, copes, cibores, crosses, chandeliers, lamps, censers, all of richest material, glittering with pearls, rubies and other precious stones, were scattered in heaps of ruin upon the ground." (1)

In Catholic countries, the infant Jesus and other images in the principal churches are decked with gold and other precious stones. In Jerusalem, at the traditional Calvary, the image of the Virgin, on the altar of that church, is loaded with precious stones. In Spain one sees the same sight of images and statues loaded with jewels.

"In 1512 AD, a book was compiled by Archbishop Marcellus of Rome and dedicated to Pope Leo X. It enumerates five different articles of dress of scarlet color that only popes and cardinals can wear. A vest is mentioned studded with the Pope's miter is of gold and precious stones. These are the very characteristics Revelation thrice ascribes to Babylon." (2)

Another Roman Catholic authority has written:

"Pope Paul 2 wore vestments decorated with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolithes, jaspers and all manner of precious stones." (3)

HER GOLDEN CUP

"A golden cup in her hand." Two cups are brought to view in scripture; God's cup and Rome's cup. God's cup is called "the cup of salvation".

"I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psalm 116:13)

On the other hand the cup of Rome is a cup of damnation for it says,

"A golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." (Verse 4)

It is a striking fact that the church of Rome has officially represented herself as a woman, holding a golden cup in her hand. At least two medals have been struck depicting this very fact. (4) The first medal depicts the church of Rome as a woman, standing at Rome, holding the cross with her left hand, and in her right hand she holds a cup containing the host, the wafer, which she is extending to the world. The cross and the cup are the two leading symbols of the church of Rome.

The second medal depicts the church of Rome, as a woman, seated on a globe of the world, with a cross in her left hand, and a cup in her right hand, which she is also extending to the world. The inscription on the medal reads "Sedet Super Universum"; which means "The whole world is her seat." The globe, or world on which the woman is seated, we all know, consists of about 70% of water. Thus this official symbol of Rome agrees perfectly with the prediction,

"The great whore that sits on many waters." (Revelation 17:1)

The cup is "a golden cup, full of abominations". This represents the fact that outwardly, spiritual Babylon has a splendid appearance. It looks good, it sounds good. It is very impressive, but inside, are "abominations and filthiness of her fornication". In what way is this so?

Inside the cup, is "the wine of her fornication" (Verse 2), Wine represents doctrines or teachings. These are classed here as "an abomination" to God. This means that Rome's teachings and influence, in essence, are corrupt and offensive to God. This is a shocking statement but in making it, we do not refer to individual Catholics as such. This divine prediction is referring to a system of religion. It is therefore extremely important to know what constitutes the wine of Roman Babylon. What are her doctrines and teachings that are so offensive to God? The following list reveals most of the doctrines that constitute her wine.

THE WINE OF BABYLON

1. The primacy of the Pope - that he is head of the church, whereas Jesus Christ alone is head of the church.
2. The authority of the church is tradition, not scripture only.
3. An earthly priesthood instead of the heavenly priesthood of Jesus Christ.

4. Mary and the Roman Catholic priesthood as mediators, instead of Jesus Christ alone.
5. The immortality of the soul. That is that man's soul cannot die.
6. Prayers to and for the dead.
7. Purgatory.
8. Eternal torment in hell fire, instead of "everlasting destruction"
9. The doctrine of original sin - that all are born guilty of Adam's sin.
10. Infant baptism by sprinkling.
11. Sunday sacredness.
12. The celebration of Christmas, Easter and Lent and other pagan festivals under a Christian cloak.
13. The sacrifice of the mass.
14. Auricular confession, penance, and absolution through an earthly priest.
15. The use of material aids in worship, such as the altar, cross, images, etc which are contrary to the second commandment.

"On her forehead was a name written. MYSTERY. BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Verse 5.)

What offensive language this is, but it is the solemn language of Holy Writ. It is Heaven speaking, therefore we need to take heed, and endeavor to understand it.

"MYSTERY" ON FOREHEAD

In ancient times it was customary for harlots to bear their name on their foreheads, and this imagery is used here to identify the Harlot Church, the church of Satan. It is interesting to note that originally on one of the Pope's tiaras or crowns, there was a golden plate with an inscription in Latin, "MYSTERIUM." This means "MYSTERY." The Protestant Reformers drew the attention of the world to this inscription and showed how it was a fulfillment of Revelation 17:5. This Protestant exposure was so powerful that Pope Julius III (1550-1555) had the inscription removed and in its place he had engraved upon the crown the words, "Vicarius Filii Dei", which means "The Vicar Of The Son of God" (5) Astonishingly the Pope as it were, jumped from the frying-pan of Revelation 17, into the fire of Revelation 13 because Revelation 13:18 declares that "the number of the beast, is the number of a man and his number is 666". "Vicarius Filii Dei" is the official title of the bishop of Rome and it adds up in Latin to exactly 666! (6)

However the word "mystery" means more than the title on one of the crowns of the Pope. It is connected with Babylon.

WHY ROME IS CALLED BABYLON

Why is the church of Rome called Babylon? Because in truth her religion is the same as old Babylon's. As Dr. Alexander Hislop declared,

"It has been known all along that Popery was baptized paganism, but God is now making it manifest, that the paganism which Rome has baptized is, in all its essential features, the very paganism which prevailed in the ancient Babylon. The essential character of her system, the grand objects of her worship, her festivals, her doctrine and discipline, her rites and ceremonies, her priesthood and their orders, have all been derived from ancient Babylon." (7)

In Revelation 13 where the papacy is also portrayed, it declares that the leopard beast "had the mouth of a lion". Why the mouth of a lion? In Daniel 7 the lion represented Babylon. This means that when the Papacy speaks, it is Babylon speaking. Dr Grattan Guinness, the famous Anglican preacher and scholar of last century, has shown that Romanism and paganism bear an exact and extraordinary resemblance. He lists eighteen similarities. (8)

ORIGIN OF THE MYSTERIES

Ancient Babylon was famous for its mysteries. The church of Rome also has her mysteries. The Babylonian mysteries were invented by Semiramis, or Ishtar, queen of Babylon, widow of Nimrod. Nimrod had been slain and Sun worship was outlawed. Semiramis invented the mysteries, a diabolical system inspired by Satan, in which Sun worship, or Satan worship, continued underground. Its true nature was concealed until it could practice its perverted rites in safety. (9) The same system is practiced today in witchcraft, which comes from the same source as the mysteries of the church of Rome, from Babylon.

There are two mysteries mentioned in scripture. One is “the mystery of Godliness”. The invisible union of Jesus Christ with his church, is termed a great mystery.

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church.” (Ephesians 5:31, 32)

The Babylonian mysteries, involved a union of apostate people with Satan, and it is called “the mystery of iniquity”. (2 Thessalonians 2:7) It possesses a system of intellectual philosophy which is in opposition to the Christian philosophy. This system has permeated the thinking and the religions of the non-Biblical world.

“Upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY.”

This denotes not only her name, but also her character. Anciently harlots wore their names on their foreheads indicating their lifestyle, etc. So the Papacy, having the name “mystery” upon her forehead, denotes in a symbolic sense, her lifestyle, her union with Satan. The Jewish High priest had inscribed on his forehead,

“Holiness to the Lord”; but Rome has on her forehead, “Mystery Babylon the Great the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” What a contrast!

THE MOTHER CHURCH

The term “mother of harlots”; indicates that this church is a mother church. The true church of Christ is also called the mother church.

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” (Galatians 4:26)

The church of Rome is the great counterfeit mother church. She has officially titled herself as the Mother Church. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Council of Trent decreed,

“I acknowledge the holy catholic apostolic Roman church the mother and mistress of all churches.” (16)

St. John’s Lateran church in Rome, was the leading Roman Catholic church for centuries before St. Peters was built. Inscribed in its interior in Latin, are the words, “The Mother and head of all churches.”

In AD 1725 Pope Benedict XIII, in his declaration of a jubilee, described the church of Rome as “The mother of all believers and the mistress of all churches.” (11) It is interesting to notice, that according to the original Greek, there are two striking parallel expressions in Revelation.”The harlot and the beast” and, “The bride and the lamb.” (12)

MEANING OF “ABOMINATION”

What is the significance of this term, “mother of abominations”? In scripture this word is associated with idolatry, which in the sight of heaven is detestable, abhorrent and offensive. The fact that the harlot is termed, “the mother of abominations”, indicates that she is first of all, the originator of false worship of idolatry, of astrology, of satanic worship. It is an indisputable fact that all false worship originated in the great city of ancient Babylon. (13) The term “mother”, indicates that Rome is the source of all false worship, and this has been abundantly proven. Secondly, it indicates that spiritual Babylon has been the inspirer of false worship. By her union with satanic power, she has multiplied it. Through the centuries Rome has been notorious for her encouragement of degeneracy. Thirdly, it indicates that she has daughter churches, religious organizations that imitate her.

DAUGHTER CHURCHES

Are there churches that have come out of Rome, and who now are also spiritual harlots? Later we will explain the significance of spiritual harlotry, or adultery. The term “abomination” that is used in prophecy, is a term that applies to both Imperial and Papal Rome. (See Appendix 1.)

PAPAL PERSECUTION

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” (Verse 6)

This terrible description coincides with the prophetic picture of the Papacy in Daniel 7 & 8, and also in Revelation 12 & 13.

“He [the Papacy] shall wear out the saints of the Most High.” (Daniel 7:25)

“He shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. (Daniel 8:24)

“They that understand, [i. e. the saints] shall fall by the sword and by flame and by captivity, and by spoil many days.” (Daniel 11:33.)

“He shall scatter the power of the holy people.”(Daniel 12:7.)

“The serpent cast out of his mouth, water, as a flood after the woman [the true church] that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.” (Revelation 12:15)

“It was given to him [the Papacy] to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” (Revelation 13:7)

Without question, these tragic predictions were horribly fulfilled in the reign of the Papacy during the Middle Ages. This has been acknowledged by both non Catholic and Catholic historians. (15)

CHURCH PERMITS DENIALS OF HISTORIC FACTS

The destruction of God’s people by Papal persecutors is confirmed by paintings, medals, and memorials both Catholic and Protestant. Today many Catholic writers deny these historical facts, and they do so with the permission of their church. Cardinal Baudrillart, a Roman Catholic scholar, in his book “The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism” has declared,

“Indeed even among our friends and our brothers we find those who dare not look this problem in the face. They ask permission from the church to ignore or even deny all those acts and institutions in the past which have made orthodoxy [Catholicism] compulsory.” (16)

This book bears the sanction of Roman Catholic authorities and of their “censor”. This is an indisputable admission, that Roman Catholics have been given by their church, permission to deny the terrible persecutions of the past. This is why our history books of today are whitewashed. The truth is kept from the people regarding the awful guilt of Rome.

THE TRUTH ON THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW

A classic example of Papal guilt is revealed in the accounts of the massacre of St. Bartholomew August 24, 1572. That massacre was planned by the church of Rome in conjunction with Spanish and French Catholic kings. At the tolling of a bell, the Roman Catholic population set themselves upon the unsuspecting Protestants of France. and according to the Catholic Archbishop of Paris, Perefice, 100,000 Protestants perished. (17) According to the Huguenot or Protestant historian, Sully, 70,000 perished. According to the author of “The Great Controversy” 70,000 perished. (18) Dr J Wiley states:

“Sully, from his access to official documents, and his unimpeachable honor, has been commonly reckoned the highest authority.” (19)

A medal was struck by Pope Gregory XII to celebrate the massacre. Three frescoes were also ordered by the same Pope and displayed in the hall of the Vatican, illustrating the terrible slaughter. (20) It has been confirmed by reliable historians, that the total number of martyrs executed by the church of Rome during the Middle Ages was at least sixty million people. (21) Others declare that there were many more.

The woman was indeed “drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”. “When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Verse 6) This is an unfortunate translation. It should read, “I was amazed with great amazement.” “The angel said unto me, Wherefore [or why] didst thou marvel?” The record of the Papacy is perhaps the most amazing phenomenon of history. After such an appalling record, how is it that Rome has deluded mankind for so long? How is it that after she was exposed in 1798 and received the deadly wound, she is now being restored to greater favor than ever before? No wonder the apostle was amazed. It appears that the Revelator views the woman after the time of persecution or the Middle Ages because she is “drunken [past tense] with the blood of the saints.”

THE TIME-SETTING OF REVELATION 17

What then is the time setting of Revelation 17? The statements made by the angel could indicate that John views the woman when spiritual Babylon is in the process of being restored to power, i. e. after 1798 A. D. Babylon is called “Babylon the Great”. In the Old Testament, on which the book of Revelation is based, ancient Babylon was called “great” when she had conquered the then known world.

“The king, [Nebuchadnezzar] spoke and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30)

Likewise spiritual Babylon becomes “great” when she gains world support, when she is restored to power, when she “sits upon many waters” (Verse 1), when she is supported by the peoples of the world when she rides or controls the beast, i. e. uses the beast to do her bidding (Verse 3). When she says “I sit a queen and am no widow. (18:7)

THE PUNISHMENT OF SPIRITUAL BABYLON

The angel that explains Babylon to John is one of the angels that delivers the seven last plagues.”There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials saying. Come hither I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters.” (Verse 1)

The angel reveals to John, the judgment or punishment of the woman. The woman is located in the wilderness.”He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness and I saw the woman.” Revelation 12 also reveals God’s woman in the wilderness. This was for 1260 years, from 538-1798 AD. But in Revelation 17, there is no mention of the 1260 years. The reason, we suggest, is that Revelation 17 applies after the time of the 1260 years, when Rome’s power has been restored. It applies to the time after the healing of the wound. Why then is she pictured as being in the wilderness? This is a description of the woman under punishment, the time when the harlot church loses her support. The punishment of Babylon proper is administered in particular in the final three, of the seven last plagues. They particularly apply to Babylon. The fifth plague was poured upon the seat or throne of the beast, and its kingdom was full of darkness. The throne of the beast is the Vatican, but its kingdom will involve the whole world. This plague is upon the central power of Babylon, which is the beast. The sixth plague is poured upon Babylon’s river.”The Euphrates is dried up”, i. e. the peoples who support Babylon around the world, withdraw their support. In the seventh plague.

Babylon is divided into three parts. Why the division? For the sake of punishment. Some sections of Babylon are more guilty than others. Thus when the angel said “I will show thee the judgment [punishment] of the great whore” of Babylon, it indicates that Revelation 17 deals with the punishment of Babylon. Maybe the angel that speaks to John is the angel with the sixth vial because he says, “I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters.” The waters comprise the great river Euphrates (16:12) and in Revelation 17:15 the Euphrates or “many waters” are interpreted as “the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues” on which the whore sits. It is these waters that are dried up in the sixth plague. In Revelation 17:16 it tells us how these waters are dried up, how the support of the peoples, worldwide, is turned away from Babylon.

“The ten horns which thou saw and the beast, [not “upon the beast” as in the KJV] these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and eat her flesh and burn her with fire.” (Verse 16) This tells us how the supporters of the false church finally turn on her, and bring about her destruction.

HOW BABYLON UNITES THE WORLD

In verses 1 - 2 it reveals how the world will be united under Babylon. It says she “sits upon many waters” meaning that Babylon is supported by the peoples of the world.”All the world wondered after the beast.” (Revelation 13:3) How is this accomplished? How does Babylon reach her goal? Verse 2 gives the answer, “With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.”

“The kings who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her.” (Revelation 18:3, 9)

What is the meaning of this term “fornication”? It is used here in a symbolic sense. It refers to the illicit union of the kings [or rulers] of the earth, with the false church.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WHOREDOM?

The term “whore” is also used in a symbolic sense. According to scripture, there are three ways by which a church can be guilty of spiritual fornication or whoredom.

1. By the practice of idolatry, which is spiritual unfaithfulness to Christ.

“Thou hast made to thyself images of men [idols] and did commit whoredom [fornication] with them.” (Ezekiel 16:17) By the practice of idolatry ancient Israel was unfaithful to God.

“She committed adultery with sticks and stones.”(Jeremiah 3:6, 9.)

2 By the church becoming friendly with the degenerate world.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4)

3 By the union of church and state.

Fornication is illicit union, and when the rulers, or civil powers of the state unite with the church or support the church, it is an unlawful union. It is spiritual fornication in the sight of God. According to scripture, the spiritual husband of the church is Jesus Christ; therefore if a church unites with or receives favors of one who is not her husband, she commits spiritual adultery. The kings or rulers, who are involved in this practice, are also guilty of spiritual adultery with the harlot church.

The most effective method that will restore Babylon’s power will be the union of church and state. The state will eventually support the false church and make effective by law, the desires of that church.

WINE OF FORNICATION

The second method by which Babylon is being restored to power, is that “the inhabitants of the earth are made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Wine denotes doctrine or teaching. Fermented wine denotes false doctrine or erroneous teaching. Alcohol in the wine is poisonous. It benumbs the senses and beclouds the brain. So it is with false teachings. They becloud the spiritual senses of those who receive them. This reveals the tremendous importance of pure doctrine, or correct teaching. It exposes the danger of the claim that is heard today that doctrine is unimportant. True doctrine is vital, especially in the end-time, when millions will be deluded by the wine of Rome’s errors.

“Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.” (22)

“It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.” (23)

“The mind in which error has once taken possession, can never expand freely to truth, even after investigation.” (24)

So it is with the wine of Babylon’s fornication, or false doctrine. It leads to spiritual fornication or adultery, which exhibits itself in idolatry and/or friendship with the world, and the union of church and state. Are not the peoples of the world being led into these forms of spiritual adultery today? Millions are being deceived; millions are being led into various forms of idolatry and worldliness and this is preparing the ground for the dominance of Rome.

THE RIDDLE OF REVELATION 17:7- 8

“And the angel said to me, wherefore [or why] didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou saw was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they

behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” (Revelation 17-7, 8) This is one of the enigmas of Revelation 17. What does it mean?

“It was.” It existed previously.

“And is not” It is out of existence – i. e. It is dead.

“And shall ascend out of It comes back into existence. It returns from the dead. The bottomless pit”

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

What is meant by the bottomless pit or abyss? Seven times in the book of Revelation, the term “bottomless pit” is used. Five times it is used in a symbolic sense and two times in a literal sense.

1. In Revelation 9 it is used three times to describe the source and inspiration of the symbolic locusts that are inspired by Satan to bring woe to the inhabitants of the earth, under the fifth trumpet.

2. In Revelation 11 it is used to describe the source from which Revolutionary France, in its attack upon Christianity, received its inspiration. This undoubtedly was of Satan. (25)

3. In Revelation 20 it is used twice in a literal sense to describe the prison-house of Satan during the millennium when the earth will be turned into a worldwide graveyard, or place of death.

4. In Romans 10:7 the same Greek word is translated “deep” and is used to describe the grave or the place of death.

All the above usages indicate two things in common: Satan is the inspirer and controller, and it is a place of death. Whose territory is the place of death? Whose prison-house is the grave? It is the realm of Satan (Hebrews 2:14). It is his stronghold or arsenal. The bottomless pit represents Satan’s realm, and any person or power that is pictured as rising from the bottomless pit is inspired by him. In scripture the things of God are described as coming “from above”, while the things of Satan are described as emerging “from beneath”.

“This wisdom descends not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.” (James 3:15) The beast of Revelation 17:8 ascends out of the bottomless pit. This means that it emerges from the place of death. It is experiencing a resurrection, it is returning to power, it is a restoration.

What of the claims that this beast represents Communism? There is no evidence in scripture to confirm this. Scripture indisputably shows that this beast represents the political powers supporting the false church. It is the political power of Rome.”All the world wondered after the beast.” (Revelation 13:3) There is no room for Communism in the final conflict. But more than that! This beast is identical with the beast of Revelation 13:1. The book of Revelation employs the principle of repetition and enlargement. Revelation 17 enlarges on Revelation 13 and gives more detail. There are seven parallels between the beasts of Revelation 13 & 17 showing that they are one and the same power.

1. Both have seven heads and ten horns (13:1; 17:3)

2. Both are blasphemous (13:1; 17:3)

3. Both persecute the saints (13:7; 17:6)

4. Both are slain. (13:3 “deadly wound” or slain – margin 17:8 “is not” i. e. no longer exists, it is dead.)

5. Both revive (13:3 wound healed; 17:8, “yet is”, and “shall ascend out of the bottomless pit” or place of death.)

6. Of both - (“All the world wondered” 13:3.”They that dwell on the earth shall wonder” 17:8) 7 Of both – “names are not written in Book of Life” (13:8 & 17:8)

The beast of Revelation 13:1-10 is fulfilled only in the Papacy. (26) The beast of Revelation 17, especially the 6th head, is also fulfilled in the Papacy. This shows that the beast of Revelation 17 cannot be the same beast as in Revelation 11. It is claimed that because the beast of Revelation 11 also emerges from the abyss - or bottomless pit - that therefore it must be the same beast as that of Revelation 17. This is a mistake. Because there may be one identical point between the beasts, it is no evidence that they are one and the same beast. In fact, there are many contrasts between the two beasts showing very conclusively that they are not identical. (27) (See Appendix 2) These points show that the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 are distinct and altogether different from the beast of Revelation 11.

There are three tenses used of this beast of Revelation 17 which may reveal the time-setting of the chapter. We now come to another enigma in this chapter on which there have been varied opinions.

“Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. And there are seven kings: five are fallen and one is and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space.” (Revelation 17:9, 10)

In the past some have interpreted the seven mountains to be literal mountains or hills. Because Rome is situated on seven hills, the beast was applied to the city of Rome or the Papacy. In the great Protestant Reformation the Protestant Reformers used this application with deadly effect. However, Constantinople [Istanbul] the new Rome, was also built on seven hills. Likewise, Moscow is situated on seven hills. We must therefore re-examine the old Protestant application. Some apply the seven heads to seven kings and claim that they represent seven popes since 1929. This claim is pure speculation and must be rejected.

The angel declared, “The seven heads are seven mountains.” Here we have a double symbolism; mountains and heads. There is another double symbolism in verse 18 - the woman and the city. Both the woman and the city are symbols of a religious organization. The seven mountains and seven heads represent seven political kingdoms or empires. A mountain is a symbol of a kingdom.

“I am against thee, O destroying mountain.” (Jeremiah 51:25) This is an allusion to Babylon. The kingdom of God is also likened to “a great mountain which filled the whole earth.” (Daniel 2:35, 44) The seven mountains and the seven heads represent seven kingdoms or empires. The angel then declares: “Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come.” (Verse 10) This statement reveals that the seven kingdoms are successive: one follows the other. How then can we identify these seven kingdoms?

The seven kingdoms are symbolized by seven heads on the beast on which the false church sits or controls. In other words, they are seven political powers which support the great pagan religion of Babylon through the centuries. Secondly, they are agents of Satan in opposing God and His people. In an endeavor to identify the seven kingdoms comprising the beast, some have arbitrarily concluded that the guide for such identification is the book of Daniel alone. Because Revelation complements the book of Daniel, it is argued that Daniel 7 and especially the four beasts of Daniel 7 provide the key to the seven heads of Revelation 17.

Such a conclusion is quite unjustified. The book of Revelation is based, not on Daniel but on the whole Old Testament. It has been correctly described as “a mosaic of the Old Testament.” Over five hundred O. T. quotations are to be found in Revelation. Therefore the whole Old Testament should be employed in seeking the identification of the seven heads. Who then were the leading kingdoms in the Old Testament that supported Babylonian Sun worship and opposed God’s people?

The first we suggest, was the original Babylonian empire recorded in Genesis 10 & 11. This was founded by the infamous rebel named Nimrod. Under him and his queen Semiramis, Sun worship was initiated and established. Nimrod’s empire “was one of the Most powerful in the world of ancient times”. According to Charles Rollin in his “Ancient History”, Nimrod’s kingdom extended over all of the Fertile Crescent (28). This means that it involved Egypt, Palestine, Assyria, down to the Persian Gulf and across to Bactriana and India. Nimrod’s empire was involved in the building of the Tower of Babel and from thence the worship of the Sun spread over the entire habited world.

Surely Babylon then must be counted as one of the seven heads or empires upholding Babylonian Sun-worship and opposing God and his people. The second empire after ancient Babylon that fits the symbolism

was Egypt. It was in Egypt that Babylonian Sun-worship flowered into a highly sophisticated civilization. The Pharaohs of Egypt at times controlled most of the Fertile Crescent and as the book of Exodus records, Egypt was a leading opponent of the true God and his people. Seven hundred times the Old Testament refers to Egypt in twenty seven Old Testament books. Egypt played a major role in the O. T. scenario. For at least 1600 years she held a dominating position. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel distinctly describe Egypt as the dragon power.

“Are thou not it, that has cut Rahab [Egypt] and wounded the dragon.” (Isaiah 51:9) “I am against thee Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his rivers.” (Ezekiel 29:3) Seeing the seven-headed beast of Revelation 12, 13 & 17 is alluded to as the dragon, it is logical that Egypt should be counted as one of its seven heads. Finally the Revelator himself employs the nation of Egypt to symbolize Revolutionary France. It is described as “the street of the great city,” and “the tenth part of the city.” The symbolic city represents spiritual Babylon, and Revolutionary France.

“Spiritually called Egypt”, (Revelation 11:7-8,13) was one of the ten kingdoms of spiritual Babylon. (29) The third head, it is suggested, is the Assyrian-Chaldean or Neo-Babylon. The Assyrians settled the Chaldeans in Assyria in order to infuse new blood into the Assyrian armies. Ultimately the Chaldeans gained supremacy and formed the Neo-Babylonian empire. (30)

The Assyrians and Chaldeans were zealous devotees of Sun-worship and fiercely opposed Israel and the true God, as revealed in the OT books of Kings, Chronicles and Daniel. Historians class the Assyrians and Chaldeans as one empire, the Assyrian-Chaldean. The Chaldeans are also described as Neo-Babylon because, under the brilliant Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient metropolis of Babylon was rebuilt and enlarged and became the glorious center of the then-known world.

The fourth empire to make up the seven heads of the beast was that of Medo-Persia It was under this head that Babylonian Sun-worship assumed new forms under the names of Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. It spread southward into India and westward into the Roman Empire. Later Mithraism became a serious threat to Christianity. Finally it amalgamated with apostate Christianity and developed into the great apostasy of the church of Rome.

The fifth empire undoubtedly was Greece. Babylonian Sun-worship had been firmly established among the Greeks from earliest times. The famous “wisdom” or philosophy of the Greeks originally emanated from ancient Babylon. Even the unique Greek architectural knowledge originally came from Babylon.

The Grecian system of belief called Gnosticism, also from Babylon, developed into a strong and difficult opponent of the early Christian church. It finally infiltrated Christianity and was one of the chief elements in bringing about the great apostasy. These five empires we suggest, comprised “the five that are fallen”. All of them dominated the world of their day and supported Sun worship. They certainly were powerful agents of Satan in opposing the true God and his people.

To what time was the Revelator referring when he declared “five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come” (Verse 10). Undoubtedly he was referring to the period of the sixth head. What kingdom or empire comprised the sixth head? Unfortunately some endeavor to fit Atheism or Communism into Revelation 17 and claim that the sixth head represents that philosophy. They base this claim on a faulty interpretation of the beast of Revelation 11:7-8 which slays the Two Witnesses.

This prediction was fulfilled by Revolutionary France. In the prediction, that political power was symbolized as “Egypt” Why Egypt? Because in the O T at one period, Egypt rejected the existence of the true God. This was a form of Atheism. It denoted that the nation featured in Revelation 11 would be atheistic. This was exactly so of Revolutionary France. But some, either carelessly or failing to think it through, dogmatically assert that the beast is Atheism. This claim clashes with a fundamental law of prophetic interpretation. In prophecy a beast represents a kingdom, not a religion, or philosophy.

“These great beasts are four kings [kingdoms].”

“The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.” (Daniel 7:17-23.)

To try and confirm the above error, they misuse or misapply the S. O. P. In applying the prediction of Revelation 11:3-11 to Revolutionary France. The S. O. P. declares of France’s rejection of the true God as “a new manifestation of satanic power” and “This is Atheism.” But the S. O. P. then declares,

“And the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance.”

“This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France.” (G. C. , page 269)

The beast represented an atheistic political power, not a philosophy. To so apply it, amounts to twisting the S. O. P. to make it fit into ones private interpretation. But another compelling reason that Atheism, etc. cannot be represented by one of the seven heads is that the heads represent political powers that uphold or are controlled by the harlot - the Babylonian religion. Atheism or Communism has never upheld the Babylonian system, nor has it accepted the guidance of, or control by, the harlot church. Therefore, Atheism must be completely rejected as being one of the seven heads.

What kingdom then, comprises the sixth head? We believe it refers to the Roman power. Which Rome? Was it Rome under the Caesars or Rome under the Popes? It makes no difference. Scripture as well as secular historians, class Imperial Rome and Papal Rome as one and the same power. Therefore, we suggest that the sixth head is Rome, Imperial and Papal.

With only one exception, Imperial and Papal Rome are counted as one power in Daniel and Revelation. In Daniel 7:8, 20, 24 the little horn, [the Papacy] is represented as coming out of the fourth beast, [Imperial Rome]. The little horn is a continuation or part of Imperial Rome. In Daniel 8 the little horn power finds its fulfillment only in Imperial and Papal Rome combined.

Heaven counts them as one. In Daniel 11 the King of the North represented both Imperial and Papal Rome. Both are termed “the King of the North.” In Revelation 12:3-4 the dragon power that endeavors to destroy the Christ child was Imperial Rome. (31) But verses 13-16 reveal that during the 1260 years, the dragon cast water out of its mouth to sweep away the woman. This was during the reign of Papal Rome. The dragon power of verses 15-16 involved the ten horns. These, we need to recall, were a part of the dragon. (12:3)

They also formed a part of the Papal beast of Revelation 13:1. However, in 13:1 the ten horns are crowned, indicating that the ten kingdoms were ruling when the Papacy was supreme. The ten kingdoms were the political supporters of the Papacy and on her behalf they persecuted the saints. Therefore the ten kingdoms of Europe should correctly be classed as part of the dragon. This harmonizes with the S. O. P. which declares: “Kings and rulers and governors, have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist, and are represented as the dragon who goes to make war with the saints.” (32)

Revelation 13 is the only occasion where a clear distinction is drawn between Imperial and Papal Rome. Revelation 13:2 declares that “the dragon” [Imperial Rome] gave his power, seat and great authority to the leopard beast [the Papacy]. Why the distinction in this chapter? We suggest it is to indisputably identify the Papacy.

However, in this prediction Imperial Rome was still closely connected with the Papacy because “the dragon [Imperial Rome] gave him [the Papacy] his power, seat and great authority.” In other words, without the support of the Roman Empire, the Papacy could not have been established. History confirms that it was Constantine the Great who gave the seat of the empire to the Bishop of Rome when he transferred his capital to Constantinople. (33) It was the emperor Justinian who established Papal authority. In 533 AD he pronounced the Bishop of Rome as “the Universal Bishop of the World and the Corrector of heretics”. (34) In 538 AD by military power, Justinian crushed the Arian Ostrogothic power in Italy and compelled all in his domain to accept Catholicism or forsake the empire. This gave the Papacy freedom to exercise its political power. (35)

Secular and ecclesiastical historians also class Imperial and Papal Rome as one. Thomas Hobbes, English historian and philosopher declared: "If a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other then the ghost of the deceased Roman empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." (36)

Adolph Harnack stated,

"The Roman church in this way; privately pushed itself into the place of the Roman world empire, of which it is the actual continuation; the empire has not perished. but has only undergone a transformation. That is no mere clever remark, but the recognition of the true state of the matter historically, the most appropriate and fruitful way of describing the character of this church. It still governs the nations. It is a political creation, and as imposing as a World-empire because the continuation of the Roman Empire. The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and 'Pontifex Maximus' is Caesar's successor." (37)

Philip Schaff, church historian, says,

"When the western empire fell into the hands of the barbarians, the Roman bishop was the only surviving heir of this imperial past or in the well-known dictum of Hobbes, the ghost of the deceased Roman empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." (38)

Dr. Arthur Stanley declares,

"The Popes filled the place of the vacant emperors at Rome, inheriting their power, prestige, and titles from paganism. Constantine left all to the Bishop of Rome and the Papacy is but the ghost of the dead Roman empire, sitting crowned upon its grave." (39)

Many other reliable historians confirm that Imperial and Papal Rome are one and the same. (40) Finally J. P. Conroy stated,

"Meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the Vicar of Christ took up the scepter, to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages." (41) On the above grounds, we suggest that the sixth head is Rome - Imperial and Papal.

THE NUMBER SIX IS ROME'S NUMBER

It is a significant and proven fact that the number six is the number of both Imperial and Papal Rome. Six was originally the number of Babylon and Rome has rightly been termed, The Second Babylon.

1. The name of the pagan Sun god from the whom the Romans claimed descent was called "Lateinos" which in the Greek language adds up to exactly 666.
2. The Greek term for "the Latin Kingdom" adds up in the Greek language to the number 666.
3. The original Roman numerals: I, V, X, L, C, D, were six in number and added up to 666.
4. The official seal of the Roman Empire was of Babylonian origin It was called "Sigillum Solis" - the Seal of the Sun. It was comprised of a series of numbers which added up to 666.
5. The official title of the Pope of Rome is "Vicarius Filii Dei" In Latin, this name adds up to 666.
6. The Hebrew term for the Roman power was "Romiiith" which in the Hebrew language adds up exactly to 666.
7. The Pope's official signature is - "Dux Cleri," 'Chief of the Clergy' In Latin this also adds up to 666. (42)

THE SEVENTH HEAD

"The other [seventh head] is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." (Verse 10). The identity of the seventh head is intimated in verse 11."The beast that was, and is not. even he is the eight. , and is of the seven, and goes into perdition." What is the solution to this riddle?

WHY THE EIGHTH?

The original Greek reads, "even he is eighth." There is no definite article. This may denote that the number eight, does not refer to an eighth head or kingdom, but is a symbol. What does eight symbolize in scripture? Eight generally denotes regeneration, newness of life or

resurrection. (43) This means that the seventh kingdom would experience regeneration or resurrection or restoration. Only one kingdom has experienced death and resurrection, and that is Rome.

“I saw one of his heads. as it were wounded to death [Margin: Greek. - slain] and his deadly wound was healed.” (Revelation 13:3) This experience concerning Rome is repeated three times in Revelation 17 and is expressed in the form of a tantalizing riddle,

THE RIDDLE SOLVED

EXISTED IN THE PAST NON-EXISTENT EXISTS AGAIN

(Dead) (Resurrected)

Verse 8.”The beast that was and is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit.”

Verse 8.”The beast that was and is not and yet is.”

Verse 11.”The beast that was and is not even he is eighth.”

“Even he is eighth and is of the seven.” (Verse 11)

The Greek reads “out of the seven.” This means that the head that was wounded or slain, on returning to life, becomes the seventh head. Thus the seventh head we suggest, is Rome resurrected, Rome restored, Rome after the deadly wound is healed, Rome reaching world power in the end time.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST

What is the difference between the woman and the beast? The harlot woman represents the religious element, the Babylonian religion. The beast, or any one of its heads, represents the political or civil element of this power. Why is the woman featured in the 17th chapter but not in the 12th and 13th chapters? In Revelation 13, the religious element is evident because the Papacy is a union of church and state.

Chapters 13 to 19 are an enlargement of Revelation 12, especially 12:17, where the dragon makes war on the remnant. Revelation 17 goes into more detail concerning Babylon’s punishment and reveals how the woman, the religious element of spiritual Babylon comes to its end.”I will show thee the judgment [punishment] of the great whore that sits upon many waters.” (Revelation 17:1)

In 1798 the political element of Rome was wounded or slain. It was not the religious element. The head of the beast was wounded to death, (Revelation 13:3) It was the 6th head, the Roman head. The political or civil power was stripped from the harlot. The beast on which she rode to power was wounded to death. The harlot was made a widow. No political powers supported her.

The healing of the wound is the restoration of the political element that had been stripped from the church. The next section of Revelation 17 reveals more fully all the powers that comprise the seventh head. These are the powers that will support the Papacy, in the final drama of the end time.

“The ten horns which thou saw are ten kings, [kingdoms) which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings [kingdoms] one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” (Verse 12, 13.)

Who are the ten horns or kingdoms of Verse 12, 13. Originally they were the ten divisions of West Europe. This is the initial and primary application. But in the end time, symbols apply in a world-wide sense. These end time predictions involve the entire world. The final conflict is a global conflict and every person will be involved. (See Appendix 5)

There are some who claim that the seventh head is the second beast of Revelation 13:11. This beast unquestionably represents the U. S. A. It is true that the USA is to play a leading role in the final conflict. The prediction reveals that the USA is the prime mover in the global movement for the restoration of the Papacy,

“He exercises all the power [authority] of the first beast [the Papacy] before him [in his presence] and causes [compels] the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship [obey] the first beast [Papacy] whose deadly wound was healed.” (13:12)

The above verse reveals that the USA gains a position of global control and whole-heartedly enforces Babylonian worship. She becomes an agent of Satan in oppressing God’s people.

“He had power to give life to the image of the beast and cause [compels] that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” (Revelation 13:15)

The USA will certainly form a part of the seventh head but it will not be alone. In the final conflict, all nations are involved. All will support the USA in enforcing Papal policy. As the S. O. P. clearly stated: “Romanism in the Old World [Europe and Asia] and apostate Protestantism in the New [The Americas, South. Africa, Australasia] will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.” (44)

As the prediction declared:

“All the world wondered after the beast.”

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship [obey] him whose names are not written in the book of life.”(Revelation 13:3, 8)

This clearly reveals that the final powers supporting the Papacy involve all the unsaved world. While USA plays a leading role, ultimately the real power is spiritual Babylon whose leader is the Papacy.

“In both the Old and the New World, The Papacy will receive homage in the honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman church.” (45)

In the terminology of Revelation the seventh head involves:

“The dragon, beast and false prophet.” (Revelation 16:13)

“The kings of the earth.” (Revelation 16:14; 17:2; 18:3, 9; 19:19)

“And of the whole world.” (Revelation 16:14)

“All nations” (Revelation 18:3; 14:8)

“The merchants of the earth.” (Revelation 18:3, 11)

“The inhabitants of the earth.” (Revelation 17:2)

“All the unsaved.” (Revelation 13:8)

“All the world.” (Revelation 13:3)

“The earth and them which dwell therein.” (Revelation 13:12)

“The false prophet” or “apostate Protestantism.” (Revelation 19:20; 13:14-15)

“The lamb-like beast as a dragon.” (Revelation 13:11)

“The image to the beast.” (Revelation 13:14-15)

“The seven horns or kingdoms.” (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3; 12-14)

Is there any evidence that reveals the emergence of a global organization that fits the prophetic picture? The answer is becoming abundantly clear. Such an organization commenced in 1776 in Bavaria, Germany, under the guidance of a university professor Dr. Adam Weishaupt. This man was a Jewish Jesuit. Posing as a Freemason, he organized the Illuminati, meaning “the enlightened ones”; and connected it with the Grand Orient Masonic Lodge of France. Its members were initiated into the secret teachings of Lucifer. Its aim was to create a new world order through the policy-making circles of European government. Although officially banned in the 1870’s, it continued in disguise under the mantle of High-Freemasonry. (46)

While Freemasonry in general has been seen to be in opposition to the Papacy, it has recently been revealed that the leaders of High-Freemasonry are answerable to the Pope. (47) The Illuminati inspired the formation of the Jacobin Society in France in 1789, which was notorious for its policy of conspiracy and revolution, and was responsible for organizing the French Revolution.

In 1913 America was unwittingly led into creating The Federal Reserve System. This gave the “Illuminists a permanent role in controlling America’s finances.” Earlier in the same period there was union between “the Illuminists” and the one-world interests of the Rothschild-Warburg-Rockefeller cartel.

After the Great War of 1914-1918 the same group played a major role in the formation of The League of Nations. This was the first political attempt to form a one world government. (48) The next step was the setting up of national groups to advise their respective governments on international affairs. In 1921 “The Council of Foreign Relations” was officially formed in the USA with counterparts in London, Paris and Hamburg. This organization declared publicly, “We shall have world government whether or not you like it - by conquest or consent.” (49)

The C. F. R. from its inception has employed the term “New World Order” in describing the coming world government The United Nations is the brainchild of the C. F. R. The European counterpart of the C. F. R. is known as the Bilderbergers, which began to function in 1954. It is responsible for the unification of Europe Another step was the formation of the Club of Rome in 1968. It is responsible for the regionalization and unification of the entire world.

Most of the directives for world government have come from the C. O. R. In 1973 it released a highly confidential report entitled “Regionalized and Adaptive Model of the World Global System.” (50) This document divides the world into ten political-economic regions which it called “kingdoms”. In 1974 the word “kingdoms” was changed to “regions”, allegedly to conceal the true nature of the plan.

The C. O. R. in its philosophy is New Age. This is deeply involved in the occult. (51) The next step was the formation of “The Trilateral Commission” by David Rockefeller. This was in reaction to the exposure of the C. F. R. in the USA. (52) Its mission is “to promote world government by encouraging economic interdependence among the superpowers.” The USA government is under the control and guidance of the C. F. R. (53) and the Trilateral Commission.

Another organization bent on establishing The New World Order is The Fabian Society founded by George Bernard Shaw. Its motto is “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing”. In the realm of religion, the new world order is also being strongly promoted and with phenomenal success.

The worldwide ecumenical movement which has infiltrated almost every religious group is involved in the one world government of the new world order. The ecumenical movement basically is aiming for the union of all churches of all persuasions and of all religions, Christian or non Christian. The ultimate aim is union with the Vatican, which will be the dominant power.

The popular charismatic movement which is involving millions of Christians of all persuasions, is having huge success. However unwittingly it is under the control of the occult, in the so-called gift of tongues. This has been exposed as inspired by the occult. The ministry of healing which it possesses is inspired by evil spirits posing as the good. Only God can heal, they claim, and as a result, millions are deceived and many become possessed by evil spirits. Exorcists admit that the majority of cases in which they are involved, are those caught up in the charismatic scene.

Similar admissions are made by psychiatric authorities concerning the inmates of psychiatric institutions. All these phenomena clearly declare that behind the various bodies aiming for world union is the occult - “The spirits of devils” in disguise.

“The ten horns are ten kings [kingdoms], which have received no kingdom as yet, [with the beast] but receive power as kings [kingdoms] one hour with the beast; These have one mind and shall give their power and strength to the beast.” (Verse 12, 13.)

ONE HOUR WITH THE BEAST

What is the significance of “one hour with the beast”? This does not denote a specific period of time but according to the Greek it may denote “in the same era”. It means that the ten kingdoms are contemporaneous with the seventh head of the beast. (54)

According to the economic-political model of the New World Order, the whole planet is to be organized into ten distinct regions. These will cooperate with the Papacy in the proposed design for world government and the third millennium of peace. Some inquire, Why do not the ten horns give their power and strength to the woman? Is there a difference? There is no difference, for the beast supports or carries the woman, or the woman rides and controls the beast. The ten horns being a part of the 7th head of the beast, naturally would also come under the control and direction of the woman.

Thus there is to be a vast worldwide union of the political powers represented by the ten kingdoms. This we suggest, is what comprises the 7th head. Today, this union of the political powers is taking place before our eyes. The regions listed above are moving closer together through manipulation and pressure of powerful organizations that seek world government. They are being aided and abetted by the powers of the occult as predicted by the Revelator.

BABYLON'S FINAL AIM

Revelation 17:14 reveals the ultimate aim of spiritual Babylon. "These shall make war with the Lamb." (Verse 14.) The Lamb represents Jesus Christ. This means the united powers of earth led by Rome attack Jesus Christ. How does Babylon make war with Christ? By attacking the saints, the followers of Christ. By attacking "the remnant of her seed."

"The dragon was wrath with the woman [of Revelation 12-2] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [followers] which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17)

The word "war" in Greek is the same as for "battle". When Babylon proclaims "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow", she persuades her supporters to rid the world of all dissent. "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him [Christ] that sat on the horse, and against his army." (Revelation 19:19)

This is a symbolic picture of the final conflict. How do they make war against Christ? He that touches a true believer touches Jesus Christ. He declared:

"In that ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." (Matthew 25:40)

To Saul of Tarsus, Jesus said,

"Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?" (Acts 9:4)

"He that touches you touches the apple of his eye." (Zechariah 2:8)

Whoever touches a saint of God in the final conflict touches Christ and this will result in divine intervention. "The Lamb shall overcome them."

HOW CHRIST INTERVENES

How does the Lamb overcome them? In the sixth and seventh plagues. First "by the drying up of the waters of the great river Euphrates". (Revelation 16:12) The angel explains what the waters represent. "The waters

which thou saw where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes and nations, and tongues." (Revelation 17:15)

In the sixth plague the support of all these millions of peoples around the world dries up, or is withdrawn. The Lord accomplishes this when the woman [the religious leaders] is revealed as the one who has deluded and manipulated her followers. (55) Verse 16 tells how this support is removed.

"The ten horns which thou saw AND the beast [The KJV reads "upon the beast". In the Greek it is "AND the beast"] these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (Verse 16)

METHOD OF PUNISHMENT

The most devoted and staunchest supporters of the woman will be the ones who will finally turn on her and destroy her. In their fierce rage at being duped and thereby losing eternal life, they are symbolized as taking four actions against the woman. Four denotes universality - embracing the whole world. It will involve not just the Vatican, but the religious leaders, world-wide.

1. "They make her desolate." "Desolate" is from the same word as "wilderness" of verse 3. It means to be made an outcast. The religious leaders become outcasts. They are universally scorned and damned.

2. "And shall make her naked." This means to strip her of her gaudy and splendid apparel, to tear away her cloak of pretended piety and religious fraud. Her real character is made public. She is seen as the arch hypocrite, the great satanic counterfeit, the source of all woe upon mankind.

3. "And shall eat her flesh." This denotes the consuming of her spoil. The Greek suggests "eating masses of flesh". The imagery is borrowed from the Old Testament description of the fate of Jezebel, of whom "the whore" is the great anti-type. When Jehu went to bury Jezebel he found no more of her than her skull, her feet and the palms of her hands - in fulfillment of the prediction of Elijah "the dogs

shall eat the flesh of Jezebel.” 2 Kings 9:35, 36. The figure in Revelation 17:16 means to despoil, to be violently and pitilessly destroyed.”They have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him and consumed him.” (Jeremiah 10: 25)

4.”And burn her with fire.” This picture is drawn from Leviticus.

“The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the whore, she profanes her father she shall be burnt with fire.” (Leviticus 21:9.)

The mother and daughter churches of spiritual Babylon, by their spiritual harlotry, suffer the penalty of being burnt with spiritual fire. The religious leaders are destroyed by the burning anger of their supporters. As one author portrays the final drama:

“The people see they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who keep it holy. Now in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. ‘We are lost,’ they cry, ‘and you are the cause of our ruin’; they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most, will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels, will be raised for their destruction. The swords that were to slay God’s people, are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.” (56)

In these four judgments on the harlot, is spelt out her complete exposure and destruction. All this is according to the plan of Heaven.”For God hath put it in their heart to fulfill his will.” (Verse 17)

Heaven has ordained that the very supporters of spiritual Babylon should be the ones that will bring about her end. They will be the agents of destruction. Verse 18 introduces us to Revelation 18.”The women which thou saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

In Revelation 18 the symbol of Babylon changes from a woman to that of a great city. The reason for this is that a great city is a more fitting symbol by which to picture the total destruction of the gigantic religion-political system of Babylon.

CONCLUSION

In these last days, there are two calls to mankind - the call of the harlot and the call of Christ. The harlot calls to earth’s inhabitants to drink of the cup of her wine of false doctrine. Christ invites men to drink of the pure water of everlasting life. One cup will make you spiritually incapable (Verse 2), the other will give you heavenly wisdom and discernment (Verse 9). One will keep your name out of the Book of Life, the other will keep your name in the Book of Life.

The harlot calls for complete loyalty and faithfulness, so does Jesus Christ. One is very popular and in the majority. The other will be increasingly unpopular and in the minority. One side is united against Jesus Christ, the other is united with Jesus Christ. Those with the harlot finally face disillusionment and disaster Those with Christ face conflict, victory and translation to the Kingdom of God. If we are faithful to the Lamb now, He will be faithful to us in the coming conflict, and will deliver us. The choice is ours.

APPENDIX 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM “ABOMINATION”

The term ~abomination” is employed three times in the book of Daniel.

1. Daniel 9:27 The term refers to Imperial Rome in her destruction of old Jerusalem in 70 AD.
2. Daniel 11:31 This refers to papal Rome in setting up its idolatrous system of worship and mediation.
3. Daniel 12:11 Here it refers to the same event in connection with the 1290 and 1335 days which began in 508 AD. In that year the church of Rome set up her counterfeit idolatrous system of mediation. (57)

The term abomination is employed 6 times in the New Testament.

1. Matthew 24:15 This is a reference to the pagan Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem with their idolatrous standards. The author of “The Great Controversy,” in commenting on this says,

“When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in holy ground which extended some furlongs outside of the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight.” (14)

The term “abomination” was connected with Rome’s idolatry.

2 Mark 13:14 Here it is applied to the same event involving the Roman armies.

3 Luke 16:15 This refers to mankind in general.

4 Revelation 17:4 Here it applies to papal Rome.

5 Revelation 17:5 Again it is applied to papal Rome.

6 Revelation 21:27 Here it is applied to all idolaters.

Thus twice it is applied to Imperial Rome and twice to Papal Rome, but every time it refers to idolatrous worship. This is the main significance of the term “abomination” as it is used in scripture.

APPENDIX 2

The Contrasts Between The Beast Of Revelation 11 And The Beasts Of Revelation 13 & 17

REVELATION 13 and 17 REVELATION 11

Beast wounded or slain 1798. Beast rises about 1798.

Beast’s territory included the ten kingdoms Beast is only one of the ten kingdoms.

Beast makes war on the saints. Beast makes war on the Papacy

Beast is controlled by Scarlet Woman Beast is “Egypt” i. e. atheistic - [anti-religious].

This beast the two witnesses “prophecy.” Under this beast the two witnesses are slain.

APPENDIX 3

Comments On Isaiah 23:13.

“Behold” - Calling attention to the fact, humiliating to Tyre, that a people of yesterday, like the Chaldees, should destroy the most ancient of cities, Tyre.

“Was not” - had no existence as a recognized nation; the Chaldees were previously but a rude, predatory people (Job. 1:17)

“Assyria founded it” - The Chaldees (“them that dwell in the wilderness”) lived a nomadic life in the mountains of Armenia originally [Arphaxad, in Genesis 10:22 refers to such a region of Assyria near Armenia], north and east of Assyria proper. Some may have settled in Mesopotamia and Babylonia very early and given origin to the astrologers called ‘Chaldees’ in later times. But most of the people had been transferred only a little time before this prophecy from their original seats in the north to Mesopotamia and soon afterwards to South Babylonia.

‘Founded it’ means “assigned it [the land] to them who had [heretofore] dwelt in the wilderness” as a permanent settlement (so in Psalm 104:8) [Maurer]. It was the Assyrian policy to infuse into their own population of the plain, the fresh blood of hardy mountaineers, for the sake of recruiting their armies. Ultimately the Chaldees, by their powerful priest-caste, gained the supremacy, and established the later Chaldean empire.” A Commentary on the Old and New Testament.” by Jamieson, Fausset & Brown.

APPENDIX 4

In the book of Revelation, under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law and persecuting his people. Their war is carried forward to the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, are greatly in minority. In the last

days only a remnant exists. John speaks of them as those that “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” E. G. White.”The Great Controversy.” 1884 Edition page 276.

“Thus while the dragon, primarily represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.” “The Great Controversy.” 1911.

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APPENDIX 5

In the official document of the Club Of Rome, issued in 1973 there were outlined the ten economic-political regions of the globe. This reveals how the New World Order is to organize and control the whole political world. On examining the ten regions it is evident that no one political power is to control mankind in the end time. The ten kingdoms or regions embrace the following groups of nations:

1. North America
2. Western Europe, Turkey and Israel.
3. Japan.
4. Australasia and South Africa.
5. Russia and Mongolia.
6. South and Inter- America.
7. The Islamic nations of the Middle East.
8. Africa.
9. India to Papua - New Guinea.
10. China.

APPENDIX 6

Revelation 17 appears to be a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16-13, 14. These verses reveal how the whole unsaved world will be brought into the final union.

“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

The “three unclean spirits” represent the powers of the occult in its various forms. They are to speak and work through three agencies called “the dragon”; “the beast” and “the false prophet”. The beast is the Papacy, the false prophet is apostate Protestantism, but who is the dragon? In my pamphlet “The 3 Powers That Will Lead The World To Armageddon”, it is shown that the dragon is not Spiritualism, as is taught by some today, but civil or political powers. The dragon is a beast and a beast represents a political power. (58) In harmony with the above definition, one author declares “kings rulers and governor” have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist, and are represented as the dragon who goes to make war with the saints”. (32)

Who then are “the kings rulers and governors under the brand of antichrist”; that comprise the dragon? Revelation 17:12-13 shows that they are the political powers represented by the 10 horns. We suggest then that the dragon represents the united political powers as listed previously. These, even now, are sympathetic towards the Papacy, the antichrist. When they unite to support Rome they will truly “place upon themselves the brand of antichrist.” Thus, according to Revelation 16:13-14, spiritualistic powers [3 unclean spirits] will work and speak through the Papacy, Apostate Protestantism and the united political powers of the whole world, in order to gather, or unite the kings of the earth and the whole world to Armageddon.

APPENDIX 7

In 1985 when the author was in the USA he visited the publishing company owned and operated by Mr. Jack Chick. Mr. Chick is a southern Baptist, whose aim is to win Roman Catholics to Christ. He is well known and recognized throughout the US and many other countries. While in discussion with Mr. Chick on current religious affairs, he revealed that the previous day he had received a personal visit from the newly elected leader of Freemasonry in the USA. This leader, Mr. Chick declared, had just resigned from his top Freemason position. The reason he had resigned was that he discovered that now as the leader of High-Freemasonry, he was subject to the Pope.

This confirms that the Illuminati, and with it High-Freemasonry has its source and inspiration from the Papacy. In other words the ultimate power behind the New World Order is Rome.

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33. God's Final Call Out Of Babylon

An Exposition of Revelation 18:1-24 and Revelation 19:1-6.

We have shown in previous chapters that the great apostate religious system of Babylon has risen and fallen throughout history. Revelation 17 and 18 depict Babylon's final fall and God's final call to his people who still remain in Babylon. There is a close link between Revelation 17 and 16. Revelation 17:18 declares:

"The women which thou saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

This is a double symbolism. A woman and a city. Both represent a religious system. There is another double symbolism in Revelation 17:9 where it speaks of seven heads and seven mountains. Both are symbols. Why the change in symbols from Revelation 17 to 18? In Revelation 17 the woman, the whore, represents Babylon's corruption. The great city of Revelation 18 represents Babylon's oppressive and dominating power and is a more fitting symbol to picture the destruction of spiritual Babylon.

It is essential to understand the plan and purpose of Revelation 18.

1. It aptly portrays the utter and final destruction of Babylon.
2. This is portrayed in the form of seven songs or dirges.

Why is so much space given to describe Babylon's end? Her destruction comes suddenly and quickly. Verse 8 declares:

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire."

Three times in this chapter also, it says "in one hour", her destruction comes. The extensive scripture used, reveals how large Babylon looms in the sight of heaven. Babylon is a bigger threat than most of us believe. Babylon is more dangerous than we dream. Babylon is more deceptive and more guilty than we have possibly guessed. Babylon is the great enemy of God and man, greater than we have ever estimated. The natural tendency regarding Babylon, is to compromise with her and this has been the story throughout history. Why is this? Because Babylon is the expression of the natural heart. Babylon is the outworking of the sinful nature. Babylon has a powerful appeal to the normal man. The religion of Babylon temporarily satisfies the spiritual longings, but such satisfaction is unsatisfactory to God and will not meet the spiritual need of man.

This section of scripture is constructed in the form of seven songs, in three groups of two and three and two. The first and last duos are heavenly inspired. The central trio is earthly inspired. The first duo tells us why Babylon must be destroyed and the source of that destruction. The central trio tells how Babylon will be destroyed and the totality of her destruction. The final duo of songs tells how long Babylon will be destroyed and the justice of that destruction.

THE FIRST SONG

"After these things I saw."

This expression denotes that it is a new vision. The term "after" does not mean after the events of chapter 17 but after that vision. Revelation 18 is a second vision concerning the fall of Babylon. Once more we have the principle that is prevalent throughout scripture of repetition and enlargement. Revelation 17 is a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16:19 where it says:

"The great city was divided into three parts, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Revelation 16:19.

Revelation 18 is an enlargement of Revelation 17 especially verse 16 where it says:

"The ten horns and [Greek] the beast, these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Verse 16.

GOD'S FINAL CALL

"I saw another angel came down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1.

"Another angel"

The previous angel was one of the plague-angels, (Revelation 17:1). This angel is distinctly superior in authority and in his message. Three features reveal this.

1. Having great power or authority. He commands attention and respect.
2. The earth was lightened with his glory indicating that his message is worldwide.
3. He cried mightily with a strong voice. It has a powerful effect. There is no escape from it. When we compare this message with the message of Revelation 10 there are similarities.

Revelation 10 Revelation 18

- 1."Another mighty angel" "Another angel having great power"

2."His face as the sun" "The earth was lightened with his glory"

3."Cried with a loud voice." "Cried mightily with a strong voice"

The similarities suggest a similar type of message. The message of Revelation 10 was the First angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7. It was fulfilled in the Great Second Advent Movement of 1833-1844. (1) A second angel's message followed the first angel's message of Revelation 14 proclaiming the fall of Babylon. The similarities between the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8 and the message of Revelation 18:1,2 indicate that Revelation 18:1,2 is a repetition of the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8 which also commenced in 1844.

Similarities Between the Messages of

Revelation 14:8 Revelation 18:1-3.

1."Babylon is fallen is fallen." "Babylon is fallen is fallen!" Verse 2

2."That great city." "That great city." Verse 3

3."All nations drink of her wine." "All nations have drunk of the wine." Verse 3

On the other hand, the contrasts between the two messages reveal that this message of Revelation 18 comes later.

Contrasts Between the Message of Revelation 14:8 and Revelation 18:1-3

1. Proclaimed in 1844.

1. Proclaimed prior to the seven last plagues.

2. No mention of Babylon's supremacy.

2. Babylon is supreme. Verse 7

3. No mention of kings, merchants etc. supporting Babylon.

3. Receives universal support including kings and merchants.

4. No mention of the depth of Babylon's fall.

4. Babylon has fallen to the depths of apostasy. Under Satanic control.

5. No mention of the extent of her guilt.

5. Babylon's guilt is as high as heaven.

6. No mention of her destruction.

6. Babylon is fully ripe for destruction.

7. Fulfilled in the Protestant churches of the USA in 1844 rejected the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7.

7. Fulfillment yet future when Christendom will be fully apostate and corrupt.

There are further points which reveal the time setting of this message of Revelation 18.

1. Babylon is termed, "Babylon the great". In the Old Testament from whence this term is borrowed, Babylon was called "great" when she gained universal sway.

"Is not this Great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Daniel 4:30.

Likewise, with spiritual Babylon. She will be called great when she gains universal sway.

2 The depth of Babylon's fall from grace. This fall was a fall of the Protestant division of Babylon and it began in 1844 when the Protestant churches in the USA, in general, began to reject the truth of God. Ever since, they have been sliding deeper and deeper into apostasy. At the very time when the churches are making lofty claims, God reveals that these churches are coming under the control of occult powers.

"Babylon is become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Verse 2.

The condition of the churches of spiritual Babylon is described in three different ways."In the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established." Matthew 18:16

1. Babylon becomes "the habitation of devils". Habitation means dwelling place or residence. This word is used only twice in the New Testament. St. Paul declared of believers,

"In whom [Christ] you also are built together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:22.

The Christian Church is to be the habitation of God, the dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit, but if the church disobeys or apostatizes and grieves away the Holy Spirit, His place is taken by another spirit, "the spirits of devils". This will be the situation with the churches of Babylon. What a warning to all churches

and individual Christians. Christian bodies that were once the habitation of God are now fast becoming the habitation of devils. What is true of a church, may also be true of an individual.

2. Babylon becomes "the hold of every foul spirit". That is, of every unclean angel. The word "hold" means "keep" or prison. The unclean spirits are spiritually and morally unclean. They are filthy. They defile those who do not shun them.

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, [spirit – mediums] neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them." Leviticus 19:31.

Spiritualism defiles. Evil spirits defile and today the churches are in the process of becoming the hold or prison of these spirits, and once they have gained entrance, it will be impossible to be rid of them.

3 Babylon becomes "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird". John draws on the Old Testament description of ancient Babylon, Nineveh and Edom, in their desolate, ruinous state, in which they were the abode of unclean birds. (2) This represents the spiritual desolation that modern Babylon will ultimately reach.

How does Babylon finally gain world pre-eminence? The answer is given in verse 3."For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

This is a repetition of Revelation 14:8 – "Babylon is fallen because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 18 reveals the final result of Babylon leading the nations to drink of her wine. Wine represents teachings or doctrines. Intoxicating wine denotes false or erroneous doctrines.

As a result of the nations absorbing the false teachings of spiritual Babylon, they have become spiritually benumbed. Just as intoxicating wine benumbs the senses and paralyses the brain, so the wine of Babylon does the same. It benumbs the spiritual faculties; it prevents people from discerning truth from error and right from wrong. False teaching enables leaders of false religion to manipulate the people, to deceive them and secure their support, so that they will gain their goal-the domination of mankind. Why is this wine spoken of as "the wine of the wrath of her fornication"? The answer is that Babylon's doctrines lead those who assimilate them, to become wrathful and intolerant toward those who differ from them. Babylon begets intolerance. Why the term fornication? "The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her". This denotes unlawful or illicit union.

It is spiritual adultery. Scripture associates fornication with three practices.

1. Idolatry. This is spiritual unfaithfulness to God. The prophet Ezekiel declares:

"Thou hast made to thyself images of men, [idols] and didst commit whoredom with them." Ezekiel 3:6, 9 (referring to idolatry.)

2 Friendship with the degenerate world is classed as spiritual adultery.

"You adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" James 4:4.

3 The union of church and state. This is what is emphasized in Revelation 17 and 18.

The first form of spiritual adultery has been exhibited through the centuries in Catholic forms of worship; by the use of statues, pictures and the adoration of the wafer in the mass, etc. The second form has been exhibited in the Papacy by its worldly practices. The same applies to apostate Protestantism with its worldly standards and the acceptance of worldly practices. The union of church and state has been practiced by the church of Rome through the ages, in her union with civil governments. Today the apostate Protestant churches also seek political support for their policies. (3)

Verse 3 tells how the commercial, economic and financial world will also support Babylon in the final conflict.

“The merchants of the earth are waxed rich, through the abundance of her delicacies.” Verse 3 [or “the power or influence of her luxuries” as one puts it.]

“The reference is to spiritual wares, indulgences, idolatries, superstitions, worldly compromises, wherewith the apostate church has made merchandise of men. This applies especially to Raw, but the Greek and even in a less degree the Protestant churches are not guiltless.”(4)

Undoubtedly, it has a literal application in the enrichment of financiers, multinationals, etc. , through their co-operation with spiritual Babylon. Avro Manhattan has declared:

“The Catholic church is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust government or state, of the whole globe. The Pope as the visible ruler of this immense amassment of wealth, is consequently the richest individual of the 20th century. No one can realistically assess how much he is worth in term of billions of dollars.” (5)

The Church of Rome is the largest multi-national in the world. Her tentacles spread through nearly all other multi-nationals as a result of clever financial investment. This means that she influences much or most of the finance of the world. By their co-operation with Babylon, the world’s merchants will be entrenched and in this way, Babylon will be able to boycott all who do not comply with her policies as predicted in Revelation 13:17.

There are three features that reveal the timing of this message of Revelation 18.

1. It is in the end time, prior to the close of probation and the outpouring of the seven last plagues.
2. It is when spiritual Babylon is supreme - receiving universal support.
3. It is when Christendom is enveloped in dense spiritual darkness, when satanic powers are in full control of religious bodies.

How may this heavenly message of Revelation 18:1 be identified? The key is found in the Old Testament. There are two sources from which the imagery of the message is drawn. (Isaiah 60; Ezekiel 43:2.) Initially these two predictions applied to literal Israel but were not fulfilled. They now apply to spiritual Israel. (6)

Isaiah describes a time of worldwide spiritual darkness and how God’s people will receive spiritual light and glory in such a measure, that it will enlighten the world. The result will be a vast ingathering of converts to Christ and the afflicted remnant will become a great people. The second source from which John draws is the prophet Ezekiel.

“And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: his voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.” Ezekiel 43:2.

This prediction would have been fulfilled to literal Israel if she had been faithful. It now applies to spiritual Israel in the last days. Revelation 18:1 will be its fulfillment. It is yet future. This prediction indicates that the spiritual temple of the church will be fully restored.

The glory of God will flow into it and this glory - the spiritual glory of character, will shine throughout the earth. As a result, the voice of God, the message of God, will sound throughout the world like the sound of many waters, i. e. with great power.

Other scriptures confirm the above conclusions. The prophet Joel predicted that at the time of the day of the Lord (the time of judgment) dramatic events will occur to complete the work of the gospel to the world. Initially, Joel’s prediction applied to the invasion of the Babylonians and their desolation of Israel. God promised Israel that if they repented, he would restore their land and prosperity. Instead of drought there

would have been abundant rain - both the former and the latter rain. (7) The rain represents the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28). This would have been poured in great measure and as a result, there would have been deliverance from the forces of Babylon. This prediction was not fulfilled, therefore in the New Testament it applies in a spiritual sense to spiritual Israel, particularly in the last days. It had a partial fulfillment at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in great measure on the early church as brought to view in Acts 2:16-21. Its final and complete fulfillment will be in the last days, for Peter at Pentecost declared:

“It shall come to pass in the last days before that great and notable day of the Lord came.” Act 2:17, 20.

This will be prior to the close of probation and the Second Advent of Christ. Thus, there is a final Pentecost coming, and this is the significance of Revelation 18:1-4.

There are at least ten parallels between the first Pentecost and the final Pentecost. The first Pentecost is an illustration of what the final great Pentecost will be, when the gospel will be proclaimed with tremendous power to the whole world.

Parallels Between the Two Pentecost's

1. Fulfilled at commencement of the Christian era.
1. Will be fulfilled at the conclusion of the Christian era.
2. The Holy Spirit was likened to the early rain of the natural world.
2. The Holy Spirit is likened to the latter rain of the natural world.
3. The Holy Spirit fell upon a purified people.
3. The Latter Rain will fall upon a purified people.
4. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself in spiritual glory in the lives of believers.
4. The Spirit will manifest Himself in spiritual glory in the lives of those comprising the remnant.
5. The Gospel was proclaimed with power and speed to the Jews and the world of that day-multitudes converted to Christ.
5. The final gospel message will also be proclaimed with power and speed to the whole world and multitudes will be converted to Christ.
6. The believers sold or shared their possessions and they had all things common.
6. Believers' possessions will be sold or shared and they also will have all things common.
7. Wonders and miracles were wrought among the people by the power of the Spirit.
7. Wonders and miracles will be wrought among the people under the power of the Latter Rain.
8. Fierce persecution fell upon believers.
8. Fierce persecution will come to true believers in reaction to the power of the Latter Rain.
9. The Gospel among the Jewish people was completed. The probation of the Jewish nation closed.
9. The “everlasting gospel” to the world will be completed and the probation of the world will close.
10. The judgments of God fell upon and ended the Jewish nation that had rejected Christ.
10. The judgments of God will fall upon and end the civilization of this world which has rejected Christ.

THE SECOND SONG

The second song of the first duo is in verses 4-8. It tells us the reason and the source of Babylon's destruction.

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Cane out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges her.” Revelation 18:4-8.

“Another voice.” Verse 4.

This denotes a distinctive call that joins with the message exposing Babylon.”Come out of her my people”. This indicates that almost to the close of probation some of God’s people will still be in Babylon, in the false churches. But are not God’s people to be called out prior to this time? Yes, all through history God has been calling his people out of apostasy and spiritual corruption. As St. Paul declared,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness and-light with darkness. Wherefore come out from among then and be ye separate said the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.

This call is the final call to come out of spiritual Babylon. This call commenced in 1844, when the Protestant churches rejected the first and second angels’ messages. At that time thousands came out of the apostate churches. The call out of Babylon will reach its climax in the message of Revelation 18.

How is it that true believers are in Babylon almost till the close of probation? We suggest two reasons.

1. These people have not received the light to reveal to them the errors of Babylon.
2. While in Babylon they could have found Christ and become children of God. Therefore they will need to be called out.

Why must they be called out? The answer is given in verse 4, “That ye be not partakers of her sins.” A man who is aware of Babylon’s sins and remains there becomes a partaker of Babylon’s sins. He is judged as sharing the responsibility for those sins. This is why God has called his people out of apostasy through the years. One’s example influences others. If a man remains in Babylon and supports it, he is publicly declaring that he believes in that organization, whereas by his coming out of it, he declares that he rejects that organization. He bears witness for Christ to his fellow men. This call of God flies in the natural trend of our world today. The calls sounding from the fallen churches are sounding to tell us to unite, to drop our differences, to find accord. Union is the order of the day and this is apparent in almost every sphere of modern life. But Cod’s call is the opposite: “Come out”, separate, divide, polarize. Instead of fellowshiping together, separation. Instead of forgetting our differences, cherish them if they are Biblical. Instead of unity ‘:n error, it must be unity only in truth. Instead of sentimental love, it must be love as a principle.

“For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:3.

True love involves obedience to Christ and this is unpopular. In the end time Babylon’s sins will be so evident, that to remain in Babylon will mean that one is equally guilty. To remain in Babylon means that one loves popularity more than Christ, that one loves error more than truth, that one loves tradition more than the commandments of God, that one loves the praise of men more than the praise of God.

This final call also means escape from Babylon’s punishment.”Come out of her my people that you receive not of her plagues.”

The seven last plagues are for Babylon.”Therefore shall her plagues come in one day.” (Verse 8) Finally the whole world will comprise Babylon, because:

“All the world wondered after the beast. All that dwell on the earth shall worship him.” Revelation 13:3, 8.”For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 18:3.

This is why all the plagues, though not universal, must be worldwide. Verse 5 reveals the extent of Babylon’s sins - “For her sins have reached unto heaven and God has remembered her iniquities.”

The word “reached” means “to mass together in a great pile”. The RSV says, “her sins are heaped high as heaven”. This is how God regards the sins of Babylon. What further reason does one need to come out of Babylon when her sins appear like that to God. This description maybe an allusion to the Tower of Babel of Genesis 11. There are four parallels between the building of the Tower of Babel and the building of Spiritual Babylon.

1. Anciently it was a literal tower that was built. In these last days a great spiritual tower is being built.

2. The Tower of Babel was built in defiance of God. Today a great spiritual tower is being built in defiance of the true God.
3. The Tower of Babel was inspired by Lucifer. The great spiritual tower of Spiritual Babylon in the end time is inspired also by Lucifer.
4. The Tower of Babel was destroyed by the judgments of God. The great spiritual tower of Spiritual Babylon will also be destroyed by the judgments of God.

The call out of Babylon is typified in the Old Testament by the call of Lot and his family out of Sodom. There are several parallels in that experience that apply to our day.

1. The sin of Sodom was 'very grievous.' The sins of Spiritual Babylon are so grievous that "her sins have reached unto heaven".
2. God decreed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:13). God also decrees the destruction of spiritual Babylon.
3. A remnant of believers were in Sodom. A remnant of believers are in Babylon.
4. The remnant from Sodom were protected by angels. Angels again will protect the remnant in Babylon.
5. The remnant were called out of Sodom. God calls the remnant in Babylon to come out.
6. Three angels were involved in the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. There were three calls (Genesis 19:12, 15, 17). Likewise, in the call out of Spiritual Babylon, three angels with three messages are involved in bringing out the remnant.

There were three people delivered from Sodom, Lot and his two daughters. Those who will be delivered from Spiritual Babylon will be those of the three angels' messages.

When God's people come out of Babylon, where do they go? In the end time there are finally two groups, Babylon and the Remnant. The majority and the minority. The worshippers of the Beast and the worshippers of the Lamb. Those who have the mark of the beast and those who have the seal of God. Those

who have the character of Satan and those who have the character of Christ. When the remnant in Babylon come out, they come into God's final remnant. They bring to completion the final remnant of God. This will be a repetition of the experience of the early church. At that time Jesus said,

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, [the early church] them also I must bring [out of the Gentiles] and they shall hear my voice [the gospel] and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." John 10:16.

There are six parallels between the early church and the final Remnant.

1. There were other sheep - the Gentiles. Today there are other sheep.
2. Which are not of this fold, the early church. Today there are other sheep, not of God's final remnant.
3. "Them also I must bring" into the Christian faith.

Today the remnant are to be brought out of Babylon, into the faith of the final Remnant.

4 "They shall hear my voice" in the gospel. In the end time Christ's scattered sheep will hear the voice of Christ in the special message of Revelation 18.

5 "There shall be one fold" or one flock, the early Christian church. In the end there will be one remnant, the final flock of Revelation 12:17, "the remnant of her seed" on whom the dragon makes war, the remnant It which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

6 Jesus finally said of his day, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd" - himself. In the end there will be only one shepherd. No earthly leaders claiming to be divine shepherds, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone. His people shall be gathered together in a final union with Christ alone as their shepherd. This call out of Babylon completely separates the righteous from the wicked and prepares the way for the punishment of Babylon.

What is Babylon's punishment?

"God has remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you and double to her, double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double." Verses 5, 6.

God recalls the crimes of Babylon in order to render just retribution. Generally he punishes according to one's works, but the degree of Babylon's punishment is to be double that which she meted out to the saints. Jeremiah declared of literal Babylon's punishment, "As she hath done, do to her." (Jeremiah 50:15.) But with spiritual Babylon it will be with double measure. One version reads, "Repay her double, mix a double draft in her cup."

"How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her." Verse

"As she glorified herself and played the wanton." RSV.

"Metre out grief and torment to match her voluptuous pomp." NEB.

"For she said in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death mourning and famine." Verse 8.

In response to Babylon's secret boast, God makes her a widow, "death, mourning and famine".

Death probably denotes the loss of husband. Babylon's husband comprises the political rulers of the earth. Finally these will turn on her - thus, instead of "shall see no sorrow", Babylon mourns, because of the loss of her supporters.

"And famine."

As a result of the loss of those who have provided "or her, she suffers great want. This corresponds with Revelation 17:16.

"The ten horns and the beast these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (8)

Verse 8 declares:

It shall be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges [or punishes] her".

How is Babylon burned with fire? This refers to the whore of Babylon, the religious element of Babylon, because a woman represents a church. The whore represents the religious leaders, the clergy. The burning is not the burning of the Vatican. The Vatican, in Revelation is represented by the "seat" or the "throne of the beast." Revelation 16:10. 1 Babylon consists of three main parts."Babylon was divided into three parts" (Revelation 16:19). These three parts are "the dragon, beast and the false prophet."

(Revelation 16:13.) The dragon represents "kings, rulers and governors under the brand of Anti-Christ." (9) The beast represents the Papacy. The false prophet represents the apostate Protestants allied with the civil power. On top of these three is the Euphrates (Revelation 16:12) which represents the multitudes who support Babylon around the world. They also form a part of Babylon. The portion of Babylon that is burned is the whore or the woman, for she says, "I sit a queen." This indicates that this is the religious element, the ecclesiastical section. The burning is a spiritual burning, not a literal burning. Babylon's punishment is in the plagues. There is no literal fire as such, in the plagues. How, then, do the religious leaders come to their end? They will be destroyed by their own followers. (10) This is the same as the drying up of the Euphrates, and in this chapter it is represented as spiritual fire.

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day".

Some question the application of the year/day principle here, because verses 10, 17 and 19 speak of Babylon's punishment as coming "in one hour", not in a day or a year. We suggest that the "one hour" could apply to a particular aspect of punishment in the plagues. Notice the three statements.

"In one hour is thy judgment come." Verse 10.

"In one hour so great riches is come to naught." Verse 17.

"In one hour is she made desolate." Verse 19.

We believe that this will be fulfilled in the sixth and seventh plagues. The seven plagues altogether are poured upon the Babylonian world. This involves the whole world except the saints. In this manner we suggest, the plagues are not universal but worldwide. Nevertheless, the punishment of those comprising Babylon proper, is in the seventh plague.

“And the great city [Babylon] was divided into three parts. And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”

It is in the period of the sixth and seventh plagues that the punishment of Babylon’s leaders is meted out and when the riches of Babylon come to naught, and she is made desolate. (11) It appears that the seventh plague lasts a few days. If so, it could not be a literal hour nor a literal day. When one studies the purpose

of the plagues, it is quite clear that more time is required than one literal day. On this ground we hold that a symbolic day, or a literal year, is completely justified in this verse. (12)

THE CENTRAL TRIO OF SONGS

The central section of chapter 18 contains three songs or dirges. These are earthly songs sung by Babylon’s three main supporters. The kings, or political rulers, the merchants, and the maritime world.

First Song

The first song is sung by the kings, or political rulers,

“And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off, for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.” Revelation 18:9, 10.

The kings lament the suddenness of Babylon’s doom. This is a symbolic picture. It is borrowed from Jeremiah’s description of ancient Babylon’s destruction and also Ezekiel’s description of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (12) It is a symbolic picture denoting the sudden and total destruction of Spiritual Babylon.

The Second Dirge of the Central Trio

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.”

“And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee. . . and thou shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught.” Verses 11-17.

The merchants of the earth wail, because by the destruction of Spiritual Babylon, their lucrative trade, by which they were enriched, is no more. This description is drawn from Ezekiel’s prediction of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (13) The merchants supporting Babylon trade in thirty commodities - the same commodities as ancient Tyre. Thirty is a multiple of six (6x5) which is Babylon’s number. (14)

The thirty commodities commence with gold and conclude with “the souls [persons] of men”. (Verses 12, 13.)

“This reveals how Babylon and those who are influenced by her doctrines, evaluate human beings. Their estimation is exactly the opposite to that of Heaven.

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his am soul?” Matthew 16:26.

The Third Dirge of the Central Trio

“And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing,

saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." Verses 17-19.

This is the maritime world. This section of mankind has also been enriched by its support of spiritual Babylon. Here they are pictured bewailing the destruction of their trade. This description again is borrowed from Ezekiel's description of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (15) It is another symbolic picture denoting the complete destruction of spiritual Babylon.

Each of these three groups declare that Babylon's doom has come "in one hour." (Verses 10, 17, 19.) In Revelation 17, Babylon's supporters unite with her against the lamb and the saints, "for one hour" (Verse 12.) God's response to Babylon's attack upon the saints is, "in one hour" her punishment and desolation comes. The three uses of the term could indicate divine completeness, in God's dealing with Babylon.

THE THIRD GROUP OF SONGS - A DUO

Revelation 18:20-24; 19:1-6. These two songs declare the finality and justice of Babylon's punishment. These songs are of heavenly origin.

The First Song of the Last Duo

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Verses 20-24.

In this dramatic description, the Revelator draws from the Old Testament descriptions of four different cities. These were all destroyed for their persistent rebellion against Heaven.

1. Verses 20, 21, 24. Babylon. Jeremiah 51:28; Isaiah 44:23; Jeremiah 51:63,64,49.

2. Verses 22. Jerusalem Jeremiah 25:10.

3. Verses 22, 23. Tyre Ezekiel 26:13; Isaiah 23:8.

4, Verses 23. Nineveh Nahum 3:4, 7.

This is another symbolic picture of Babylon's eternal doom.

"Rejoice over her thou heaven for God hath avenged you on her." Verse 20.

How may saints and angels rejoice over death and destruction? "The fall of Babylon is the removal of one vast hindrance to holiness:

"Thus do all holy men, whether on earth or in heaven, joy when any giant evil is swept away." Ellicott.

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Verse 21.

The doom pronounced in this verse coincides with the doom Jesus threatened upon anyone who would cause His children to fall.

"Whoso shall offend [hurt] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Matthew 18:6.

The expression "no more at all", in verses 21-23, is employed six times. Six is Babylon's number."Like a funeral knell this expression is repeated over the departed greatness of Babylon."

Six items will never be found in Babylon anymore.

“And the voice of harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.” Verse 22

REPEATED EMPHASIS UPON BABYLON’S DESTRUCTION?

Two chapters of forty-two verses are used to describe the doleful destruction. We suggest two reasons.

A. The Babylonian system of religion is Satan’s masterpiece of deception. It has had numerous revivals throughout the four thousand years of its existence. It has frequently been overthrown but has always risen again. There appears to have been six main revivals of Babylonian Sun worship. It originated in ancient Babylon under Nimrod and Semiramis, his wife. There it finally was overthrown by Shem and the Shemites.

1. It revived and was established in Egypt under the Pharaohs.
2. It revived in Babylonia under the Assyrians and Chaldeans. After being overthrown by the Medes and Persians it was.
3. Revived in a different form by the Persians under the name of Zoroastrianism and Mithraism,
4. It was revived in Greece - expressing itself in the form of Greek philosophy, etc.
5. It revived in Imperial Rome in the form of Mithraism.
6. It revived in the Papacy under the guise of Christianity - claiming to be the true Christian church.

In Babylon’s final overthrow, six times it declares “it shall be no more at all”, indicating that Babylon and all it stands for will never revive or rise again.

THE SECRET OF BABYLON’S SUCCESS

“For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” Verse 23.

What is sorcery? It is from the Greek, “pharmakeia” from which we derive our word pharmacy or pharmaceutical. According to Dr. Young it means, “Enchantment with drugs”. This probably refers to the use of drugs by the pagan priests to prepare their minds for communication with the powers of the occult. There is evidence that the use of drugs in many instances is involved with the occult today. (16) By paralyzing the mental faculties, people are being manipulated by -he invisible powers of evil. Sorcery is the occult. It =s the practice of consulting and using Satanic powers. This has been the diabolical secret of Babylon’s phenomenal success through history. It is a repetition of the prediction of Revelation 16:13, 14.

“I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet [the three sections of modern Babylon]. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather [unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (17)

Babylon’s Guilt is Measured by Blood

“And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who were slain upon the earth.” Verse 24.

In what way will this be so? In a symbolic sense, not literally. It is the same principle enunciated by Jesus in the gospels.

“That upon you Jewish leaders may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias”. Matthew 23:35.

Jerusalem did not shed all the blood spilt from Abel onwards. But Jerusalem possessed the same hateful spirit against the saints. So it is with Babylon.

3. The second reason, we suggest, for the emphasis on Babylon’s destruction, is to try and convince the saints of the unseen dangers regarding Babylon. Babylon is the sworn enemy of God and His people, a continual menace to the cause of God. But it is a masterpiece of deception, therefore it is a continual threat to the church of God. While the Christian is to love all men, there are some things he must learn to watch and hate. The main one is Babylon and the wine of her doctrine. Babylon’s inspirer and king is Lucifer, therefore any support of, or compromise with Babylon, is support of Lucifer and is therefore disloyalty to Christ. The general tendency through the

centuries has been for God's people to compromise with Babylon. The call "to come out of Babylon" is a call that needs to be continually sounded and obeyed, especially in the end time.

THE SECOND SONG OF THE FINAL DUO

This is of heavenly origin. (Revelation 19:1-6.) The song is arranged in the form of an antiphony, i. e. responsive with two anthems and two responses.

Verses 1-3. An anthem celebrating Babylon's destruction.

"Alleluia, Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God; For true and righteous are his judgments; for he has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever."

Verse 4. The response of the twenty four elders and the four cherubim.

"And the four and beasts elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

Verse 5. A voice calling for universal praise of God.

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."

Verse 6. The response from the entire universe.

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns."

"After these things." Verse 1

After the destruction of Babylon, i. e. after the Second Advent. It is then that Babylon is completely destroyed with all who support her. As St. Paul declared:

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

"I heard a great voice of much people in heaven."

According to Revelation 8:1 during the events of the Second Advent there is silence in heaven". (18)

This is because all the heavenly hosts escort Christ at his return to this world and witness the final destruction of Babylon. But after the Second Advent, the heavenly hosts with the translated saints return to

heaven. The saints are the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Verse 9), and this is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

"In my father's house are many mansions, I go and prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

A Three-fold Plan of Praise

"Saying Alleluia; Salvation and glory and power unto the Lord our God."

In the original the word "honor" is missing. A similar plan of praise sounded in heaven at Calvary.

"Now is come salvation and strength and power." Revelation 12:10.

At Calvary the fearful price for salvation from sin was paid. At the Second Advent salvation is concluded. The great plan to save the race has been completed.

“Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28.

The Reason for the Heavenly Praise After the Second Advent?

“For true and righteous are his judgments, [punishments] for he hath judged [punished] the great whore which did corrupt the earth.” Verse 2.

In what way is it righteous for God to punish? If God allowed the guilty to remain unpunished, He would be unjust. Thus the destruction of Babylon is an exhibition of God’s justice.

The Reason for Babylon’s Punishment

“Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication.”

That is, her illicit union with the degenerate world including political powers. Here is Heaven’s estimate of Babylon’s influence. No matter what her appearance - she corrupts. No matter what her claims - she corrupts. No matter what she teaches - she corrupts. No matter what she performs - she corrupts. No matter what people are within her - she corrupts. This is why God calls his people out of Babylon, and destroys her.

“And hath avenged the blood of his servants.”

That is, his servants who suffered under Babylon’s oppression in the end-time. This is not the fulfillment of Revelation 6:9-11 because those who shed the blood of the martyrs of the Dark Ages are dead and will not rise to receive punishment until the final judgment at the end of the one thousand years of Revelation 20.

Undoubtedly, this statement alludes to “the many martyrs” before the Close of Probation, and of the saints after the Close of Probation, who will be under the threat of death, but who will be delivered. (19)

It is God who avenges, not man. This is an important principle. The believer is never to seek revenge. Why? Revenge is the expression of the sinful nature. It is satanic in its origin. Jesus’ instruction was to:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.” Matthew 5:44.

This is an utter impossibility for the unconverted person, but the Christ-centered person can do it. When he reaches this state of mind he is not far from the kingdom of God. Vengeance belongs to God alone.

“Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense.” Hebrews 10:30.

If it is satanic for man to seek revenge, how may God take vengeance? One answer to that question is that only God knows all the facts. Only He can read the heart and motives of the perpetrator, therefore only he can justly administer punishment.

“And her smoke rose up forever and ever.” Verse 3.

This expression is similar to Revelation 14:11.”The smoke of their torment rose up forever.” It is a symbolic expression drawn from Isaiah’s description of the destruction of Edom.”It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up forever.” Isaiah 34:10. It denotes everlasting destruction.

This final song of Revelation 19:1-6 is full of threes

a. There are three groups -

1. Much people Verse 1

2. Four and twenty elders Verse 4

3.”All his servants and you that fear him, small and great”

b. Three voices – Verses 5, 6

c. The third voice of verse 6 expresses itself in three ways -

1. Great multitude

2. Many waters

3. Mighty thundering

d. Three items of praise in verse 1

1. Salvation

2. Glory

3. Power [Honor: not in original]

Three represents Divine Completion. Thus this final song speaks of:

1. The completion of the reign of evil.

2. The restoration of the saints.

3. The destruction of the Mystery of Iniquity.

4. The conclusion of the Plan of Salvation

“Alleluia, for the Lord God reigns.” Verse 6.

THE SEVEN SONGS CONCERNING BABYLON’S DESIRIJCIZON

Heaven Inspired Verses 1-3; Verses 4-8.

Reason for Babylon’s Destruction.

Source of Babylon’s Destruction.

Morally and spiritually corrupt. Demon possessed. Enormous guilt.

Earth Inspired Verses 9-10; 11-17; 17-19

Manner of Babylon’s Destruction.

Totality of Babylon’s Destruction.

Three groups lament “in one hour” denoting the suddenness of destruction.

Heaven Inspired Verses 20-24; 19:1-6.

Duration of Babylon’s Destruction.

Justice of Babylon’s Destruction.

Six times “no more at all”. Babylon will never revive.

Universal celebration of God’s justice in destroying Babylon

APPENDIX 1

How The Imagery Of The Old Testament Is Used In Revelation 18.

Revelation 18:1 "The earth was lightened with his glory." Ezekiel 43:2 "The earth shined with his glory."

Revelation 18:2 "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Isaiah 21:9 "Babylon is fallen is fallen."

Revelation 18:2 "Is became the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Isaiah 13:21 "Wild beasts shall lie there-and satyrs [demons] shall dance there."

Isaiah 34:15 "There shall the vulture also be gathered with his mate."

Jeremiah 51:37 "Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons."

Revelation 18:3 "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Jeremiah 51:7 "The nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."

Revelation 18:3 "The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." Ezekiel 27:33 "Then thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filled many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise."

Revelation 18:4 "I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Isaiah 48:20 "Go ye forth out of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans."

Jeremiah 50:8 "Remove out of the midst of Babylon"

Jeremiah 51:6 "Flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance, he will render to her a reward."

Revelation 18:4 "Her plagues."

Jeremiah 51:45 "my people go ye out of the midst of her and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord."

Jeremiah 50:13 "Everyone that goes by Babylon shall hiss at her plagues."

Revelation 18:5 "For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities." Jeremiah 51:9 "For her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up, even to the skies."

Revelation 18:6 "Reward her even as she rewarded you, double to her double, according to her works in the cup which she has filled, fill to her double."

Jeremiah 50:15 "Take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do to her."

Jeremiah 50:59 According to all that she hath done, do to her."

Isaiah 51:49 "As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth." [Margin: country]

Revelation 18:7 "Now much she hath glorified herself."

Ezekiel 28:2-7 "Say to the prince of Tyrus because your heart was lifted up and you have said, 'I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man and not God, though thou set your heart as the heart of God.'"

Revelation 18:7 "And lived deliciously or luxuriously."

Isaiah 47:8 "Thou [Babylon] that art given to pleasures, that dwells carelessly."

Revelation 18:7 "For she said in her heart I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow."

Isaiah 47:7, 8 “I shall be a lady forever. I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.”

Revelation 18: 8 “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning and famine.”

Isaiah 47:9 “These things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day. The loss of children and widow hood.”

Revelation 18:8 “She shall be utterly burned with fire.”

Isaiah 47:14 “The fire shall burn them; they shall not be able to deliver themselves from the power of the flame.”

Revelation 18:8 “For strong is the Lord God who judges her.”

Jeremiah 50:34 “Their Redeemer is strong and he shall disquiet [trouble] the inhabitants of Babylon.”

Revelation 18:9 “The kings of the earth shall bewail her and lament for her.”

Jeremiah 50:46 “At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved and the cry is heard among the nations.”

Jeremiah 51:8 “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed, howl for her.”

Revelation 18:10 “Saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon that mighty city for in one hour is thy judgment come.”

Ezekiel 26:16, 17 “All the princes shall take up a lamentation for thee and say. How art thou destroyed the renowned city which was strong in the sea. Their kings shall be sore afraid they shall be troubled.”

Revelation 18:11-21 Merchants of land and sea lament the destruction of Babylon. Ezekiel 27:27-36 Merchants of land and sea lament the destruction of Tyre.

Revelation 18:18 “What city is like unto this great city.”

Ezekiel 27:32 “What city is like Tyrus like the destroyed in the midst of the sea.”

Revelation 18:13 Babylon trades in the souls of men. Ezekiel 27:13 Tyre “they traded in the persons of men.”

Revelation 18:19 “They cast dust an their heads.” Ezekiel 27:30 “They cast dust upon their heads.”

Revelation 18:19 “They cried, weeping and wailing.”

Ezekiel 27:31 “They shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart.”

Revelation 18:12 Babylon’s merchants trade in 30 items, the same commodities as Tyre. (6 X 5) Tyre trades in 36 items. (6 X 6)

Revelation 18:20 “Rejoice over her, thou heaven and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God bath avenged you on her.”

Jeremiah 51:48 “The heaven and the earth and all that is therein shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come to her from the north, said the Lord”

Isaiah 44:23 “Sing O ye heavens. Shout ye earth, break forth into singing, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob.”

Revelation 18:21 “A mighty angel took up a stone like a giant millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down and shall be found no more at all.” Jeremiah 51:43-64 “Thou shall bind a stone to it [the book] and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shall say, “Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.”

Revelation 18:22 “And the voice of harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen shall be found any more at all in thee and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.”

Jeremiah 25:10 “I will take from thee [Judah and surrounding nations] the voice of mirth. The voice of the bridegroom. The bride, the sound of millstones and the light of the candle.”

Revelation 18:23 “For thy merchants were the great men of the earth.”

Isaiah 23:8 “Tyre the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers [merchants] are the honorable of the earth.”

Revelation 18:23 “For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”

Nahum 3:4 “The well-favored harlot [Nineveh, Verse 7], the mistress of witchcrafts, that sells nations through her whoredom, and families through her witchcrafts.”

Revelation 18:14 “In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Jeremiah 51:49 “As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall the slain of all the earth.” [Or land of Babylon].

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34. 2 Armies! 2 Suppers! 2 Destinies!

Awaiting Our Destination

An Exposition of Revelation 19:7-21

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage [supper] of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready.” Revelation 19:7.

In sharp contrast to the three previous chapters of Revelation, this section commences with a scene of joy and celebration. It is the celebration of the marriage of Christ and his bride. It is the marriage supper.

“Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” Verse 9.

What is the marriage? When was it consummated and who is the bride? There has been much misunderstanding and confusion on this question. Often, in scripture, there are two items with the same name. The “two’s” of the Bible are a fascinating study in themselves.

There are two marriages in the plan of salvation as well as two brides. There is a spiritual bride, a spiritual marriage, with a spiritual marriage supper. There is also a literal bride, a literal marriage and a literal supper. The spiritual bride is the Christian church, God’s chosen people.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Therefore shall a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:23, 25, 31, 32.

“As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall God rejoice over you.” Isaiah 62:5.

The spiritual marriage takes place at conversion. After the believer is wooed by the Holy Spirit, he yields his heart to Christ and is joined to Him in a spiritual union, or marriage. The believer takes the husband’s name - Christian. The husband provides the food - the word of God - and also the clothing for his wife. This is the robe of Christ’s own righteousness. At the same time the spiritual marriage supper is celebrated.

“If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me.” Revelation 3:20.

The literal marriage is of Christ to the New Jerusalem. This concept is based on an Old Testament practice of a ruler involving his son in the rule of the kingdom. This was initiated by a ceremony of marrying the son to a leading city of the kingdom. (1) Likewise, God the Father, at an appointed time, conducts the ceremony in which He marries His Son to the leading city of the kingdom, the New Jerusalem. This city is the literal bride of Christ.

“Come hear, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem.” Revelation 21:9, 10.

This marriage of Christ to the New Jerusalem is being conducted during the pre-advent, or investigative Judgment, which the book of Daniel reveals commenced in 1844 and concludes at the Close of Probation of the human race. In this period, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [placed] and the Ancient of days did sit. The Judgment was set and the books were opened. One like the Son of man came to the Ancient of days and there was given him a kingdom and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14.

This same truth is confirmed in the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 -

The ten Virgins

The professed people of God as guests invited to the marriage

The Bridegroom

Jesus Christ entering into the judgment scene to receive his kingdom

The Bride

The holy city New Jerusalem which will be given to Christ during the pre-advent judgment

Wise Virgins enter

Since 1844 when the pre-advent judgment began, some of God's people, by faith, have entered into the wedding into the judgment scene, to the union of Jesus to the New Jerusalem

At the conclusion of the wedding, the bridegroom comes to gather the guests for the marriage supper. After the close of probation [When the judgment closes] Christ comes to earth to gather the guests, to take them to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Other scripture confirm the truth of this parable.

"Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say to you that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12:35-37

This will be fulfilled when the prediction of Revelation 19:7-9 takes place after the Second Coming of Christ.

"His wife hath made herself ready." Revelation 19:7

How does the holy city make herself ready? Verse 8 gives the answer -

"To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

In what way is the holy city arrayed in fine linen? In a symbolic sense. The fine linen represents the righteousness or the righteous deeds of the saints. In what way is the holy city arrayed or adorned by the righteousness of the saints? We suggest that this will occur when the saints, resurrected and translated, at the Second Advent, in perfection of character and body, enter into the holy city and dwell there. This will be the union of the spiritual bride and literal bride. They become one. The chief adornment of a city is its citizens. Thus, when the saints on reaching heaven are welcomed into the New Jerusalem, that city will literally be arrayed or adorned with the righteousness of the saints. What adornment!

"And he said unto me, write, Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Verse 9

The call to the marriage supper is sounding now. Ever since man was driven out of Paradise, the call has been sounding to return to the fold of God. This is the call of the gospel of Christ. To all who respond, to them will be granted the inestimable privilege of sharing in the glorious celebration of the marriage supper in the kingdom. Then Christ will fulfill his promise.

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," Matthew 26:29

This is when Jesus Christ will also wait on us and serve us.

"He shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12:37.

In this life the believer is called to serve Christ.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.

In the kingdom Christ declares that he will serve us, especially at the marriage supper. The fact that in the kingdom of God, in the heavenly realm, we will eat and drink, reveals that in the Hereafter the saved will possess real, tangible bodies. It also indicates that we will enjoy eating as well as socializing.

"And he said unto me these are the true sayings of God." Verse 9.

To aid the believer to believe, God confirms what he declares by emphasizing that God's Word is the truth. Heaven is no pie in the sky. It is not a dreamland nor a figment of the imagination.

"It is impossible for God to lie." Hebrews 6:18. Marvelous events await the child of God.

“Eye hath not seen or ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“I fell at his feet to worship him [the angel] and he said to me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” Verse 10.

Why is the worship of an angel forbidden? Because angels are created beings. The only one who may call for worship is the one who can create, for the power to create is the mark of divinity. This is why the first and second commandments forbid the worship of anyone except God alone. It is disloyal to the Creator and detrimental to man.

“Thy Fellow servant”

i. e. of John the prophet. Though the angel was of a higher order of being than man, possessed of supernatural powers, yet he classes himself as a fellow servant of John. Here is an example of the humility of mind of those of the heavenly world. Pride does not dwell there. Love of self cannot abide there. This is why St. Paul declared:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. . . who made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form OF A SERVANT.” Philippians 2:5,7.

Humility is the mark of the genuine believer just as it is of those of the heavenly world. But more than that. The angel used the term “servant”. One of the main principles of God’s kingdom is service. Heaven is not an existence of inactivity but of service to others and this brings contentment, happiness and fulfillment, just as it does in this earthly realm.

“And of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.”

John’s brethren having the testimony of Jesus were those with the prophetic gift, i. e. prophets. This is confirmed by Revelation 22:9.

“Then said he unto me, see thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them that keep the sayings of this book: worship God.”

Notice the parallels between the two verses of 19:10 and 22:9. Revelation 19:10. Revelation 22:9.

“He said unto me“ Then said he unto me

See thou do it not See thou do it not

I am thy fellow servant I am thy fellow servant

And of thy brethren And of thy brethren

That have the testimony of Jesus. That have the testimony of the prophets.

The testimony of Jesus is equated with the gift of prophecy.”For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” The term “testimony of Jesus” is employed four times in Revelation

Revelation 1:2.”The testimony of Jesus Christ,”

Revelation 1:9.”The testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 12:17.”The testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 19:10.”The testimony of Jesus.”

Some translators have incorrectly rendered the phrase, “The testimony about Jesus Christ” or “the testimony to Jesus Christ” or “the testimony for Jesus Christ” etc, but the Greek means “the testimony of Jesus Christ”. This means that the testimony is a message from Jesus Christ through his prophet.

The word “testimony” is often employed in scripture to represent the message that a true prophet receives from God to deliver to His people.

“They rejected his statutes and his covenant that he had made with their fathers and his testimonies which he testified against them.” 2 Kings 17:15.

“Neither have our kings, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened to thy commandments and the testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.” Nehemiah 9:34.

“You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord, and his testimonies which he hath commanded thee.” Deuteronomy 6:17. See also Jeremiah 44:23; Psalm 25:10; Psalm 93:5.

In Psalm 119, the word “testimonies” is used twenty three times. See also Nehemiah 9:26, 30, Deuteronomy 32:46, and 2 Kings 17:15, where it shows that when a prophet testifies as to what God has revealed to him, that is “the testimony.”

In what way could the angel be of John’s brethren, the prophets? Maybe in the sense that when God communicates his testimonies to the church there is a divine order - four persons are involved. The testimony proceeds from the Father, through the Son, to his angel, and then to the prophet.

“The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant.” Revelation 1:1.

An angel of God is always involved in the transmission of God’s messages to his prophets. Jesus Christ and the Armies of Heaven Invade This World.

Verses 11-16. A Symbolic Scene of Armageddon “And I saw heaven opened.” Verse 1.

“And I saw” denotes a new vision. The scene reverts back to the Second Advent. It is repetition and enlargement again.

“Behold a white horse”

This is a repetition of Revelation 6:2.”I saw and behold a white horse.” There are two white horses in Revelation - one at the commencement of the Christian era, and the other at its close. Both are symbolic. Both are associated with Christ’s opposition to evil. The Revelator lists 7 features of Christ at His Second Advent.”He that sat on him was called faithful and true.” This is Christ, for in Revelation 3:14 he is called, “The faithful and true witness”.

1.”Faithful” - Denoting Christ’s faithfulness and loyalty to the Father - even unto death.

“Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him.” Hebrews 3:1, 2.

It denotes also the faithfulness of Christ to his people. He has made ceaseless intercession for them before God for two thousand years. He has been continually with his people amid their earthly conflicts, in fulfillment of his promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” What faithfulness!

“And True Witness” - When on earth he declared, “I am the truth.” John 14:6. After two thousand years, Jesus Christ is still the truth. His witness, his word is eternal truth. Why is Christ pictured riding a white horse? A horse denotes warfare and white denotes righteousness and purity.

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” Isaiah 1:18.”In righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

Therefore the white horse represents a war of righteousness by Christ. In Revelation 6:2 it represented a spiritual war by Christ and his people against the spiritual forces of evil (2). At the close of the Christian era it represents a literal war by Christ against the literal forces of evil, as we shall show. Under Christ, the Christian church commenced the warfare against evil triumphantly, as predicted in the first seal of Revelation 6:1, 2.”He went forth conquering and to conquer.” However, as time continued, the church was well-nigh overcome, but the scene of Revelation 19:11 depicts the church as being finally triumphant.

A War Picture

“He doth judge and make war.” Verse 11.

“Judge” means to avenge or punish. This is a scene of vengeance. At the Second Advent Christ rewards every man.

“My reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. The rejectors of salvation, who turn on his people, he will reward with destruction.

2 “His eyes as a flame of fire.” Verse 12

This is a repetition of Revelation 1:14 and 2:18 which represents Christ as the all-seeing One. Nothing is hidden from him. He sees the good and he sees the evil, to which he is utterly opposed and will destroy.

3.”On his head were many crowns.” Verse 12

This denotes not only royalty but that he is King of kings. The bishop of Rome wears a triple crown to indicate that he is “king of earth and of heaven and of the lower regions.” (3) He is the counterfeit Christ. The true Christ, since the close of his priestly ministry, is King of kings. This denotes that there are other ruling powers under Christ. These involve the leaders of other worlds and leading angels to whom is delegated ruling authority as well as others whom heaven classes as kings under Christ. (4)

4 “He had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.”

It has been suggested that this name represents Jesus Christ in a new role as the great Avenger of his people. (5) It is indeed a new role. We now witness “the wrath of the Lamb.”

“Hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come.” Revelation 6:16, 17.

5 “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,” Verse 13.

This cannot represent his sacrificial or priestly ministry. He has laid off those garments for those of the King. He is now the Avenger; the other role of the kinsman redeemer of Revelation 5 is being fulfilled. The seventh seal has been removed from the book containing the title deeds of the kingdom of this world and Christ, as the lion of the tribe of Judah, invades his rightful domain to take possession and to punish those who have usurped his authority and despised and slain his servants.

This scene of Christ’s garment stained with blood is borrowed from the Old Testament description of Christ in Isaiah 63, in his work of vengeance against the Edomites, because of their inveterate hatred of his people Israel. There are several parallels between Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 19:11-16 which indicate that the scene of Isaiah 63 finds its antitype in the Second Advent of Christ.

Isaiah 63:1-6.

1.”Who is this that comes from Edom.

2.”With dyed garments from Bozrah”. Bozrah means vintage. The dyed garments reveal that the one coming was involved in treading grapes.

3.”That is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength.”

4.”I that speak in righteousness.”

5.”Mighty to save.”

6.”Wherefore [why] art thou red in your apparel and thy garments like him that treads in the wine vat” [wine press].

7.”I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with me.”

8.”I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury.”

9.”Their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments and I will stain all my raiment.”

10.”The day of vengeance is in mine heart.”

11.”The year of my redeemed is come.”

Revelation 19:11-16.

1. Edom represents the enemies of God "The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever." Malachi 1:4.
2. The harvesting of the unsaved."Thrust in thy sickle and gather the vine of the earth for her grapes are fully ripe." Revelation 14:18.
- 3."The Son of men coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:3.
- 4."In righteousness he does judge and make war."
- 5."Thy people shall be delivered." Daniel 12:1.
6. Unsaved likened to grapes who are trodden down in destruction by Christ in the worldwide winepress of this world. Revelation 14:19, 20.
- 7."He [himself] treads the winepress." Verse 15."Vengeance belongs long to me, I will recompense." Hebrews 10:30.
8. He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" Verse 15.
- 9."He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood" [of the unsaved]. Verse 13.
- 10."The day of vengeance of our God." Isaiah 61:1, 2. He does judge [punish] and make war." Revelation 19:11.
- 11."The Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful." Revelation 17:14."He (shall) appear the second time unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.
- 12."His name is called the Word of God." Verse 13

Christ is the living Word, the expression of the divine will, the revelation of the Father. He was the Word of God in creation [Psalm 33:6, 9], the Word of God in redemption [John 1:1, 14] and he is the Word of God in judgment and destruction.

7 "Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." Verse 15.

By his word which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword [Hebrews 4:12] he smites or destroys the unsaved.

"Whom he shall destroy with the spirit of his mouth." 2 Thessalonians 2:8."With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Isaiah 11:4.

The Word of God can create or destroy. This is true not only in a literal sense but spiritually in the life of the believer. The Word of God gives life to the believer (I Peter 1:23), and the Word of God destroys sin in the believer. (Psalm 119:11)

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Verse 14.

This imagery is borrowed from Isaiah 13:1-3 where the prophet describes the invading forces of the Medes and Persians and their allies to conquer literal Babylon. This description is typical of the destruction of spiritual Babylon.

Revelation 19:11-16

1. The conquest of spiritual Babylon.
- 2."The armies of heaven" Verse 14."The kings from the Sun rising" Revelation 16:12.
- 3."The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8.
- 4."The Lord shall roar from on high-as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. The Lord hath a controversy with the nations. He will give them that are wicked to the sword." Jeremiah 25:30-33.
- 5."In righteousness he doth judge and make war, and the armies of heaven followed him." Verses 11, 14.

6."The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

7."The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. Sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape." 2 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

8."He shall smite the nations and he shall rule them with a rod of iron and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:15.

Isaiah 13:1-3

1. The burden of Babylon Verse 1. Literal Babylon.

2."I have commanded my sanctified ones", [the soldiers sanctified or dedicated to war].

3."My mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness." Verse 3.

4."The noise of a multitude in the mountains. The Kingdoms of nations gathered together." The allied nations supporting the Medes and Persians. Verse 4.

5."The Lord of hosts mustered the battle." Verse 4.

6."They come from a far country, from the end of heaven even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land." Verse 5

7."Pangs shall overtake them as a woman in travail." Verse 8.

8."The day of the Lord comes, cruel and with wrath to lay the land desolate and destroy sinners." Verse 9.

"And he shall rule them with a rod or iron."

Some conclude that if Christ is to rule the nations, then they cannot be destroyed at the Second Advent, but the Greek reads:

"And he [himself] shall shepherd them with a rod of iron."

The shepherd's crook at its other end consisted of a piece of iron which was used as a weapon of defense by the shepherd to slay wild beasts and other enemies of the flock. The term denotes rule that destroys evil opposition. It is a fulfillment of the messianic prediction of the Psalmist:

"Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2:9.

"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth." Isaiah 11:4.

"And he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Verse 15.

This is an allusion to Isaiah 63 (see under Verse 13), and the punishment and destruction of the unsaved. This same symbolism is employed in Revelation 14.

"If any man worship the beast, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Verse 9, 10.

"Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the cluster of the vine of the earth for her grapes are fully ripe [for punishment] And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without [outside] the city [the church]." Revelation 14:18-20.

This passage refers to the outpouring of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues (15:1) which conclude with the return of Christ. The earth is likened to a worldwide winepress and the unsaved are likened to over-ripe grapes. The angelic horsemen are represented as treading down in slaughter the unsaved. The carnage is so enormous that the blood is symbolized in depth as reaching the bridles of the angel horsemen. The symbol is one of complete slaughter. It is Armageddon and Armageddon is a Hebrew term meaning "mount of slaughter." (6)

“And he has on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords” Verse 16

This title denotes the universal supremacy of Christ at his return to the world. But what a contrast. At the First Advent he was born to be king, but now he has earned that kingship. The first time he came in humility. This time he comes in glory and power. This title is also employed in Revelation 17:14 in connection with the final battle between Christ and Satan and the church and Babylon. Christ in intervening on behalf of his people in the final conflict is titled “Kings of kings”. It denotes at least three things -

1. The supremacy of Christ.
2. He is victor even before the battle begins.
3. There are other ruling powers associated with Christ in the final conflict.

Is Revelation 19:11-16 a literal description of the Second Advent? No! Christ returns, not upon a white horse but upon a white cloud.

“Behold he comes with clouds and every eye shall see him.” Revelation 1:7.

“Behold a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle.” Revelation 14:14.

He returns in the same manner as he went to heaven at his ascension -

“This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like [the same] manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11.

Jesus left the earth as a man, visible to all, slowly ascending to heaven. He returns as a man, slowly descending the heavens and “every eye shall see him.” Revelation 1:7. He ascended publicly, he returns publicly, not secretly.

“All kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of him.” Revelation 1:7.

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man and then shall all the tribes of the earth tremble and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30, 31.

The glory of the Second Advent is a triple glory -

“He shall come in his own glory and in his Father’s [glory] and of the holy angels.” Luke 9:26. The holy angels in number amount to hundreds of millions, plus!

“The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousands [100 million] and thousands of thousands.” Revelation 5:11.

Undoubtedly this is what forms the great white cloud enveloping the Son of Man. (7) Four mighty events transpire at the Second Advent:

1. The sleeping saints of all the ages are resurrected from their graves.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

- 2 The living saints with the resurrected saints are changed.”In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump.” 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

They are then caught up or translated, to meet Christ in the air.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 2 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

“He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31.

As the saints rise in the air, the angels gather them into where Christ is “in the air”. This reveals that at the Second Advent Christ does not land upon the earth.

3 The unsaved are destroyed by the glory of Christ.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God and that obey not the gospel. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

“The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night, [unexpectedly]. Then sudden destruction comes upon them the unsaved] and they shall not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

4 The resurrected and living saints who are caught up with “the Lord in the air” then return with Christ to the kingdom of heaven.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am, there ye maybe also.” John 14:2, 3.

“The Lord Jesus Christ has begotten us to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled reserved in heaven for you.” 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

“Many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abram, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 8:11.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit [the humble] for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven.” (See also Matthew 5:20; 6:20; Revelation 2:7; 22:1, 2.)

God’s people at the Second Advent ascend together to the kingdom. This is the great reunion day.

Does God the Father accompany the Son at the Second Advent? There is no scripture to suggest this. Titus 2:13 is misinterpreted by some to try and teach that the Father also appears but this scripture is speaking of the deity of Jesus Christ. It refers to him as “the great God and our Savior.” Seeing the Father is the first person of the Godhead, surely, if He were present at the Second Advent, scripture would proclaim it? The silence of scripture declares that Jesus Christ is the supreme One at the Second Advent. The apostle Paul declares that to Christ has been delegated by the Father the responsibility of putting down all authority that is in rebellion against God. When Christ has accomplished this, he then subjects himself to the Father. It is at the Second and Third Advents that Christ puts down all rebellion. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28.) See Appendix 1.

THE SECOND SUPPER - FOR THE BIRDS

In Revelation 19:17, 18 we have another symbolic picture of destruction.

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; That you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond both small and great.” Revelation 19:17, 18.

This is not a literal scene, but a symbolic picture of destruction. It is drawn from Ezekiel 39:17-20 where it would have had a literal application or fulfillment had the conditions been fulfilled. It now has a symbolic application to the final destruction of the rebel hosts of Spiritual Babylon.

If one compares the classes of people in Revelation 19:17, 18 with those of Revelation 6:15, 16 who rush to the mountains and rocks to hide from Christ at the Second Advent, it is seen that they are exactly the same classes. Will there be literal birds after the Second Advent to devour the unsaved? No! There will be no life left on earth whatsoever. It is not a literal picture - it is a symbol of utter destruction. It is the fulfillment of the seventh trumpet, when “he will destroy them that destroy [or corrupt] the earth.” (Revelation 11:18.) This picture of being devoured by birds represents the terrible curse of God that will be pronounced upon the unsaved. When Moses, under inspiration pronounced the blessings and curses upon Israel, one of the curses was “thy carcass shall be meat to all fowls of the air and no man shall fray [frighten] them away.” Deuteronomy 28:26.

The graphic portrayal of the great feast of the birds upon the unsaved of Revelation 19:17, 18 denotes that the unsaved have received the curse of God and as a result are doomed to destruction.

THE TWO SIDES IN ARMAGEDDON

“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gather together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army. Revelation 19:19.

This verse shows indisputably that Armageddon is not a conflict between earthly powers. While it is true that “there will be storm and war and variance”, (8) until the end, among the unsaved, yet Armageddon is a war between heavenly and earthly powers.

Verses 19-21 are a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16. 14-16.

Revelation 16:14-16. Revelation 19:19-21.

The Dragon The kings of the earth (9)

The Beast The Beast

The False Prophet The False Prophet

“The whole [unsaved] world” And their armies

Working miracles That wrought miracles

To gather them.” Gathered together

“He gathered them”

The battle of the great day. To make war [or battle]

Of God Almighty “Against him that sat on the horse and against his army”

Verse 20 also connects Armageddon with Revelation 13 and the image of the beast and his mark. This, again, shows what Armageddon is all about. It is the final conflict over worship, over the commandments of God. It is between Jesus Christ and Antichrist, the Remnant and the majority, commandment-keepers and commandment breakers, those who worship the Lamb and those who worship the beast.

“I saw the beast [Papacy] and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to make war against Him [Christ] that sat on the horse and against his army.” Revelation 17:19.

This corresponds with Revelation 17:12-14.

“The ten horns with the beast shall make war with the Lamb and they that are with him.”

The “gathering” of verse 19 cannot be a literal gathering of the earthly forces of evil against Christ and his people. Like the “gathering” of Revelation 16:14, 16 it can only be a symbolic gathering. The Greek word may also be translated “unite” which is a more accurate interpretation.

How then do the earthly powers make war, or battle, against Christ?

“In that ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren [says Christ] ye have done it unto me.” (10)

Armageddon begins with the attack upon the people of God.

“The dragon was wrath with the woman and went to make war [or battle] with the remnant of her seed.” Revelation 12:17.

This leads to the intervention by Christ and his angels in the sixth and seventh plagues under which “the beast and the false prophet”, (i. e. the clergy, the religious leaders), are brought to their end.

“These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Verse 20.

This parallels the descriptions in Revelation 17 and 18 of the destruction of the harlot -

“These shall hate the whore and shall burn her with fire.” Revelation 17:16.

“She shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges [punishes] her.” Revelation 18:16.

The harlot - the religious leaders - are brought to their end by spiritual fire, (11) by the burning anger of their followers. The lake of fire of 19:20 is a spiritual lake of fire. As James White correctly concluded,

“So, if you please, there are two lakes of fire, one at each end of the thousand years.” (12) The first lake of fire is spiritual, the second is literal.

“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth and the fowls were filled with their flesh” Verse 21.

In Armageddon the first to fall are the clergy. (14) The second to fall are their supporters when they turn on one another in slaughter. The remnant are those of the unsaved who still remain alive. These are symbolized as being slain with the sword out of Christ’s mouth. This represents the word of Christ which will be one of the agents of destruction of the unsaved at the Second Advent.

“Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

“And the fowls were filled with their flesh” Verse 21.

This harks back to the symbolic picture of destruction in verses 17, 18. Seeing all life on earth will cease at the Second Advent, (15) there will be no birds in existence to feed upon the unsaved. Therefore, it must be a symbolic expression denoting complete destruction. At the Second Advent there will be two remnants -

THE TWO REMNANTS

Revelation 12:17

1. The remnant of her seed [God’s woman]
2. Which keep the commandments of God
3. That worship the Lamb
4. That have the testimony of Jesus - a true prophet
5. That receive the Seal of God
6. In the Army of Christ
7. Are guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
8. Receive the wrath of the Dragon
9. End on the Sea of Glass

Revelation 19:21

1. The remnant of the harlot [Satan’s woman]
2. Which keep the commandments of men
3. That worship the beast and his image
4. That are deceived by the false prophet
5. That receive the Mark of the Beast

6. In the Armies of the Beast and the Kings of the Earth

7. Are food for the Supper of the Birds

8. Receive the wrath of God

9. End in the Winepress of Blood

APPENDIX

“When comes the end when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Jesus] shall have put down all rule and authority and powers. For he [Jesus] must reign till he has put all enemies under his [Jesus] feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he [the Father]. Has put all things under his [Jesus] feet. But when he said, All things are put under, him [Jesus] it is manifest that he [the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus]. And when all things shall be subdued to him [Jesus] then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him [Jesus] that God [the Father] maybe all in all.” 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

These verses show that the Son reigns or is in charge of the work of ending the reign of rebellion. This is what is involved at the Second Advent. It is Christ the Son of God who is in charge - not God the Father. On these grounds, we conclude that the Father is not present or is not involved in the Second Advent, in cleansing this planet of rebellion. This is the work of God the Son.

REFERENCES

1. See Dr. Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament, Volume 1, page 209, on Matthew 22.

2. See the author’s: “The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse”.

3.”Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions.” F. Lucii Ferraris.”Prompta Bib. Can. Jurid. Morelis Theologica”.

4. See the author’s: “The Kings from the Sun rising”.

5. See SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, pages 873, 874.

6. See the author’s: “Grapes of Wrath or Harps of God.”

7. See the author’s: “A Glimpse of God on His Throne”.

8.”The world is filled with storm and war and variance, yet under one head, the Papal power, the people will unite to oppose God in the person of his witnesses.” Ellen G. White.”Testimonies”, Volume 7, page 182.

9. Ellen G. White.”Testimonies to Ministers”, page 39.

10. Matthew 25:40.

11. Ellen G. White.”The Great Controversy”, pages 654-656.

12. James White. [Review & Herald, January 21, 1862], SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 876.

13. This is in accord with the principle of prophetic interpretation that prior to the Second Advent symbols apply, but after the Second Advent, the literal applies.

14. Ellen G. White.”The Great Controversy”, page 656; “Early Writings”, pages 289, 290.

15. See the author’s: “The Final Wind-up of Human History”.

35. When Michael Stands Up!

The Significance of This Final Act in the End time Drama of the Book of Daniel

An Exposition Of The Eleventh Chapter Of Daniel

Why should one need to study the little book of Daniel? The answer is that Jesus Christ himself admonished his people to read this book and to understand it.

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whosoever reads, let him understand.) Matthew 24:15.

Jesus is here quoting from the ninth chapter of Daniel where it foretold that:

“The people of the prince that shall come (Titus and the Roman armies) shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary,” Daniel 9:26, 27.

Daniel chapter, nine is a supplementary vision to Daniel 8. In this vision the prophet was permitted to hear two heavenly beings in conversation. One was heard to ask:

“How long (or “until when”) shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice -and the transgression of desolation to give both the sanctuary and the host (of God’s people) to be trodden underfoot?” Daniel 8:39

In this question there are two significant parts:

(1) Until when shall the sanctuary be trodden underfoot?

(2) Until when will the host of God’s people be trodden underfoot?

The first part of the question is answered in Daniel 8-9.

“Until 2300 days (years) then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14.

The second part of the question is answered in the vision of Daniel chapters 10 to 12.”Understand what shall befall thy people (the host), in the latter days.” Daniel 10:14.

“For he (the king of the north) shall come to his end . . . and at that time shall Michael stand up . . . and thy people (the host) shall be delivered.” Daniel 11:45; 12:1.

This final vision of Daniel commences with “Cyrus” (Daniel 10:1) “the prince of Persia” (10:13). The vision closes with Michael , the greater than Cyrus, “the great prince which stands for thy people.” Cyrus has been recognized as a fitting symbol or type of Jesus Christ; who is none other than Michael. Cyrus delivered literal Israel from literal Babylon. Michael or Christ will deliver spiritual Israel from spiritual Babylon. There are approximately fourteen remarkable parallels between Cyrus and Christ in connection with the deliverance of God’s people from Babylon. [1]

In the book of Daniel there are four main prophetic outlines which delineate the plan of heaven in regard to the history of the human race and God’s dealings with man. These four outlines are set out in Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 11. See pages 27-28 (middle of pamphlet) for a diagram of the four outlines.

These four outlines of prophecy are constructed on the principle of “repetition and enlargement”. Each outline covers the same period of time, and pinpoints the same chief characters or powers involved. However, according to the above principle of Bible interpretation, the purpose in repeating the history of the various powers outlined, is to enlarge on certain areas or characters or powers involved. Thus it will be recognized that in each repetition more details are added. Daniel 2 presents the basic prophecy, Daniel 7 adds to it, chapter 8 gives additional details and finally chapter 11 presents the greatest number of details, especially concerning the fourth power predicted in the chapter. But it is vital to note that a similar order is featured in each outline: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome - Imperial and Papal.

Adherence to the order outlined above, helps to protect the student of prophecy from the snare of private interpretation and of human applications which are not sustained by scripture. Elder James. White in the 1870’s, argued on this principle, in defending the pioneer

view of Daniel 11, against a new view to SDA'S, introduced by Uriah Smith, from other Protestant commentators on the book of Daniel.
[2]

AN OUTLINE OF DANIEL 11 TEN SECTIONS

- 1) Verses 1- 2 The Reign of Persia.
- 2) Verses 3 - 4 Reign of Greece under Alexander Gt. and its Division into Four Kingdoms.
- 3) Verses 5 - 14a The Two Divisions of Alexander's Empire. The king of the north and the king of the south.
- 4) Verses 14b - 30 Reign of Imperial Rome.
- 5) Verses 31 - 32a Imperial Rome Replaced by Papal Rome.
- 6) Verses 32b - 35 True Church in the Wilderness. Protestant Reformation.
- 7) Verses 36 - 39 Reign of Papacy in its Supremacy.
- 8) Verses 40a Papacy Receives a Deadly Wound.
- 9) Verses 40b - 45a Papacy's Revival and Final Onslaught.
- 10) Verses 45b - 12:1 Papacy's End - Saints Delivered.

Daniel 11: 1-2 "Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece."

After King Darius the Mede, three Persian kings would reign. These were Cambyses, son of Cyrus, Smerdis an imposter, and Darius Hystaspes. The fourth king was Xerxes the Great, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther, famous for his extreme wealth. He invaded Greece with an army of five million men.

Daniel 11:3-4 (a) "And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will, And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled."

The "mighty king" was Alexander the Great whose territory of conquest was the greatest on record up to that time. He reigned from 331 BC. At the height of his reign, in the peak of his power, at just over thirty years of age, Alexander died an untimely death."His kingdom shall be divided not to his posterity." Alexander's son was murdered so that none of his posterity inherited any part of his empire.

For eleven years Alexander's military generals fought strenuously among themselves for the leadership of Alexander's kingdom."By 312 BC four figures emerged in control. These were (1) Cassander in Macedonia, (2) Lysimachus in Thrace, (3) Antigonus in Asia Minor and Syria, and (4) Ptolemy in Egypt.

In the same year the Seleucids rose to" power in Babylon thus forming five divisions. In 310 BC four of the leaders built for themselves four capitals. Seleucus built Seleucia, near ancient Babylon. Soon he was driven into exile by Antigonus. Three of the other four leaders, combined with Seleucus to defeat Antigonus who was killed in the battle. His territory was divided between Seleucus and Lysimachus, leaving four divisions. Seleucus later transferred his capital to Syria, naming it Seleucia, on the Orontes river. It is now called Antioch.

Seleucus' territory now extended from the Indus river to Phrygia - Inner Asia Minor. In 281 BC Lysimachus died. His territory was then divided between Seleucus and Ptolemy leaving three divisions. In 275 BC the kingdom of Pergamum rose to prominence. This was a part of Lysimachus' territory thus restoring four divisions, until 168 BC when the Romans conquered Greece and gained control of the then known world.

For the sake of those who question the claim that there were four divisions of Alexander's empire, the times or periods of the divisions from 323 BC - Alexander's death - until 168 BC are listed in Appendix A . with geographical maps under Appendix "B."

Verse 5."The king of the south shall be strong." This was Ptolemy of Egypt "and one of his (Alexander's) princes; he shall be strong above him (Ptolemy) and have dominion. . . a great dominion." (The Seleucids of Syria)

Verse 6. They (Ptolemy and Seleucids) shall join themselves together, for the king's daughter of the south (Egypt) shall come to the king of the north, to make an agreement." (or marriage).

Here is brought to view the two leading powers that finally emerged out of Alexander's kingdom, "the king of the north" and "the king of the south." Verses 7 to 15 present a prediction of their clashes for supremacy. Between these two powers was the land of Israel and the struggles of these two kingdoms often affected God's ancient people. It is believed that this is one reason why this history was predicted.

It was for the instruction, warning and consolation of the Jewish people. Seeing the king of the north and the king of the south are featured throughout most of this chapter, it is essential to determine what the territory of the king of the north involved, for the sake of identifying this kingdom in later centuries. The territory of the Seleucidae, initially, involved Babylonia to the Indus river, and their first capitol was Seleucia near old Babylon. Then the Seleucidae commenced to expand and after the defeat of Antigonus in 301 BC, they transferred their capital to Syria. Their main territory is recognized as Babylon and Syria.

Seeing the Seleucidae are designated as "the king or kingdom of the north," it is instructive to note how scripture locates the north in that era. The prophet Jeremiah whose writings were closely associated with Daniel, [3] associated the north with the Euphrates, which was understood to be the river of Babylon.

"I will send and take all the families of the north and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and will bring them against this land." (Israel) Jeremiah 25:9.

"The north, by the river Euphrates." "The north by the river Euphrates." (Jeremiah 46:6, 10.)

Twenty-five times in Jeremiah the north is mentioned and it always has reference to Babylon. After Rome defeated the Greeks in 168 B. C. she began to extend her political influence and in 65 BC under Pompey her military general, she conquered Syria and began to occupy the territory of the king of the north. i. e. of the Seleucidae. Finally Rome's boundary stretched to the Euphrates river in Babylonia so that in truth Rome did occupy the king of the north's peculiar territory.

The Seleucidae never occupied all the territory of modern Turkey or of the Ottoman empire. In the past a popular interpretation applied the king of the north to Turkey, but this point, plus many others, discredits such an application.

Verse 14(b) "also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision but they shall fall"

We suggest that in this verse the Romans are first introduced into the scene of this eleventh chapter. The word "robbers" in the Hebrew is "breakers" and is used only of the Romans. In Daniel 7, the Romans are described as "the breakers."

"It devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with his feet." Daniel 7:7 "which devoured, brake in pieces and stamped the residue with his feet" Verse 19.

"Shall tread it down, and brake it in pieces". Verse 23

"Yes also the prince of the covenant" (shall be broken). Verse 22 Verse 14 (b) They "shall exalt themselves to establish the vision."

Rome's rise to power and events of her reign, as predicted by Gabriel in this eleventh chapter is a powerful confirmation of the accuracy of this prediction.

Verse 14(b) "but they (the Romans) shall fall."

Heaven permitted Rome a certain epoch of time in which to reign. This applied to both Imperial and Papal Rome. Of Imperial Rome, which was predicted to destroy Jerusalem and its temple, Gabriel declared:

"And the people (Romans) of the prince that shall come (Titus) shall destroy the city (of Jerusalem) and . . . he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator." Daniel 9:26-27.) K. J. Verse (margin)

Imperial Rome was granted a certain period of probation and when it closed, her rule came to an end. Imperial Rome was succeeded by the ten horns, representing the ten kingdoms of Western Europe, as predicted in Daniel 2:41 and Daniel 7:19-20, 23-24. The following verses of Daniel 11, predict with remarkable accuracy further details regarding Imperial Rome.

Verse 16."But he (Imperial Rome) that cometh against him (the king of the north) shall do according to his own will and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed."

This was fulfilled only by Imperial Rome in its military and political expansion in the Mediterranean world. Neither Syria nor Egypt could stand before him and in 63 BC Rome took control of Palestine and ultimately converted that lovely land into “a field of ruins.”

Verse 16 “The glorious land”

This term is used three times in this vision. (Daniel 11:16, 41, 45) It is also called “the pleasant land.”(8:9). The prophet Ezekiel reveals the location of this land as being the promised land inherited by Israel.

“I lifted up my hand to them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the, glory of all lands.” Ezekiel 20:6.

The word for “glory” in the Hebrew is the same as in Daniel 8:9; 11:16, 41, & 45, indicating that the glorious land was the land of Israel.”

In verses 17-22 are presented the first three Caesars of Imperial Rome, Julius, Augustus and Tiberius. This was approximately five hundred years before their birth.

Verse 17.”He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him . . . and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.”

It is generally believed that this prediction refers to Julius Caesar when he conquered Egypt and of his infamous affair with Cleopatra, Egypt’s co ruler, at that time.

Verse 19.”He shall turn his face toward his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found“ This was a prediction of the assassination of Julius Caesar by Brutus in Rome in 45 BC.

Verse 20.”Then shall stand up in his estate, a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed (or die) neither in anger nor in battle.”

This is a reference to Augustus, the successor of Julius who was famous for the fact that he was the Caesar that decreed that every man of the then known world, should repair to his birthplace in order to pay taxation to Caesar.

“In those days there went out a decree from Augustus Caesar that all the world should be taxed . . . and all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child and she brought forth her first born son. . . and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:1-7

This was the first time that the nation of Israel lost its legal right to tax its own people. Augustus Caesar took from the Jewish nation its last vestige of independence and by it the Jews were given an unmistakable sign that the time was due for the appearance of their promised Messiah.

“The scepter (ruling power) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, “W Shiloh come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Genesis 49:10

Shiloh was one of the names for the Jewish Messiah, and the loss of Judah’s independence by taking from her the right to exact taxation by Augustus, was to the Jews, certain evidence of Messiah’s arrival. The decree of Augustus, compelled Joseph and Mary, to travel to Bethlehem, and that very event, fulfilled another prediction of the Messiah. Approximately seven hundred years before, the prophet Micah had predicted that Messiah would be born in that very place.

“But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the ands (of villages) of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth (activities) have been from of old, from everlasting.” (margin: “the days of eternity.”) Micah 5:2

Exactly as predicted, Augustus Caesar reigned when Imperial Rome was in its golden age - in its most glorious period. Also, unlike most of the Caesars of Rome, instead of suffering assassination, he died peacefully in his bed.

Verse 21.”And in his estate shall stand up (or reign) a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom . . . but he shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries.”

None other than the successor of Augustus fulfilled this prediction. He was the only Caesar to whom was attached the stigma of being “vile.” He also fulfilled the other points of the prediction, especially that under him,

Verse 22.”The prince of the covenant” “shall be broken,” (or killed)

The term “prince” that is used in this verse, is used at least four times in Daniel 9 to 12, and in each of these verses it refers to the Messiah, “Messiah the prince.” Daniel 9:25; 10:21; & 12:1. It is an indisputable fact of history that Jesus of Nazareth, the only one who fulfilled the more than three hundred different predictions of the coming deliverer, was crucified by Imperial Rome during the governorship of Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius Caesar. The gospel of Luke records that Jesus’ ministry began during the reign of Tiberius.

“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee. . . Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests.” Luke 3:1-3.

Tiberius reigned from AD 14 until AD 37. Jesus was crucified in 31 AD. The next section - Daniel 11:23-28 we suggest, applies also to Rome under the Caesars. However we will pass over this section in this exposition.

Verse 29.”At the time appointed he shall return and come toward the south, but it shall not be as the former or as the latter.”

“At the time appointed.” In the divine plan it seems clear that an allotted period of time was permitted by Heaven for the reign of Imperial Rome under the Caesars. St. Paul refers to a particular power of which he says,

“He who now lets (hinders) will let (hinder) until he be taken out of the way.” 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 K. J. V.

This referred to Imperial Rome, which stood in the way of “the Man of Sin,” in his rise to political power.”At the time appointed”, the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, removed the empire’s capital from Rome on the river Tiber, to the new Rome, on the Bosphorus, Constantinople, named after himself. This transfer in 330 AD was a move to that part of the empire that included Egypt in the south.

Thus, Imperial Rome “came toward the south,” and left the western division of the empire free from political control. This opened the way for the Papacy to exercise political and religious control over the western division of the empire. i. e. West Europe.

Verse 29(b) “It shall not be as the former, or as the latter.”

Some kind of a change is indicated in this verse. We suggest that seeing the Roman Caesars had from this time professed to be Christian, and Imperial Rome was no longer officially pagan in religious belief and practice, that maybe this is what is indicated here. [4]

Verse 30(a) “For the ships of Chittim shall come against him.”

For comment on the accuracy of the word, “against,” see Number 5. under “References.” (last page). Chittim is a term used in the Old Testament to denote the islands and coastlands of the Mediterranean sea. Did ships in a significant number “come against” Rome after 330 AD when its capital had been removed to Constantinople? Decidedly so! This prediction was fulfilled to the letter, by a new naval power which had developed in North Africa at the site of ancient Carthage. A Gothic tribe called the Vandals, led by the Christian, Genseric, had migrated from north eastern Europe with the Visigoths and Burgundians. The Vandals crossed the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and settled in the northern coastal area of Africa. Here they built a navy and being of the Arian branch of the Christian faith, they were in aggressive opposition to the Roman Catholic branch, which was becoming increasingly apostate and intolerant. The Vandals’ fleets commenced a campaign of pillage against Imperial Rome. In particular they sought out the catholic centers and even sailed up the Tiber river and sacked Rome itself. This was at the beginning of the fifth century AD. At the sack of Rome there was included in their loot, the golden candlestick and the golden table that Titus had captured from the temple of Herod at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. However on the Vandals’ return to Carthage, one ship foundered in a storm that hit the Vandal fleet, and that ship was the one carrying the candlestick and table. [6]

Verse 30(b) “Therefore shall he (Imperial Rome) be grieved and return and have indignation against the holy covenant . . . he shall return and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.”

The Vandal invasions were a serious “thorn in the flesh” to Rome, and finally Justinian, the Eastern Roman emperor, determined to mount a crusade against them.

Verse 30.”Have indignation against the holy covenant.”

The holy covenant is a reference to “the new covenant,” a term denoting the true gospel of Jesus Christ. At this time Justinian, who had previously shown little interest in religion, became a strong supporter of the apostate church centered in Rome. In 533 A. D. he decreed that the bishop of Rome be declared, “The Universal Bishop of the World and the Corrector of Heretics.” He became a champion of the catholic faith. He had “intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant,” i. e. the papal apostasy, or, he shall give heed to those who forsake the covenant” or gospel. R. S. V. or, “He shall make common cause with those who abandon the holy covenant.” Amplified Bible.

The following year, Justinian charged Belisarius his military general, to lead an army to an area of Western Rome - North Africa - to deal with the Vandal power. After a despicable campaign, the Vandals were utterly defeated and destroyed. They disappeared completely, no longer existing as a people. Four years later in 538 AD Belisarius landed in Italy and staged a military campaign, in conjunction with the R. C. clergy, against the Arian Ostrogoths, who were in political control in Italy. The result was the defeat, destruction and disappearance of the Ostrogothic power. This paved the way for the Papacy to rise to its supreme period of power.

Verse 31.”And arms shall stand on his part and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength.”

We believe that there is a change here from Imperial Rome to Papal Rome. There are five events listed in verses 31-32b that find their fulfillment only in Papal Rome. We therefore suggest that the identity of the king of the north now transfers from literal Rome to spiritual Rome, from Imperial Rome to Papal Rome.

On what grounds may one apply the king of the north to the Papacy when the Papal power never occupied the territory of Seleucus, the original, literal “king of the north”? May one interpret a prediction that commences with a literal application and then change it to a symbolic or spiritual application? It is incorrectly claimed that Daniel 11 is a totally literal prophecy, and that therefore it should have a totally literal interpretation.

An examination of this vision of Daniel 10-12 reveals that there are a significant number of symbolic terms employed in the prediction. Therefore it is not a completely literal prophecy. The following 24 terms we suggest, could denote symbolism:

1.”The great river Hiddekel.” Daniel 10:4

2.”A certain man clothed in linen.” 10:5, 6

3.”The four winds of heaven” 11:4

4.”The robbers of thy people” 11:14

5.”The glorious land.” 11:16 & 41

6.”The prince of the covenant” 11:22

7.”Ships of Chittim” 11:30,

8.”The daily” 11:31, 12: 11.

9.”The abomination that makes desolate.” 11:31; 12:11

10.”The time of the end” 11:35, 40

11.”The god of forces” 11:38

12.”Edom, Moab, Ammon” 11:41

13.”Land of Egypt” 11:42-43

14.”Libyans and Ethiopians” 11:43

15.”Tidings out of the east” 11:44

16.”Utterly to make away many” 11:44

17.”Tabernacles of his palace” 11:45

18."Glorious holy mountain" 11:45

19."Run to and fro" 12:4.

20."Upon the waters of the river." 12:6

21."Times, times, and a half." 12:7

22."1290 Days 12:11

23."1335 Days. 12:12

24."Thy lot" 12:13

A second principle of interpretation of scripture that needs to be remembered, is that the term "Israel," and its associations, has a different application before Calvary, compared with after Calvary. In what is now called "the dispensation of the Spirit" [7] i. e. since Pentecost, Israel is no longer a term referring to natural or literal Israel. In the New Testament, Israel has a symbolic or spiritual application. This is true also of the term "Jew" and "Jerusalem," and other Old Testament terms.

"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; . . . of the heart, in the spirit . . . whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2:28-29.

The one who receives the praise of God, is the born-again believer, the true Christian.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed (Israelites) and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29.

"As many as walk according to this rule, (i. e. a new creature) peace be on them and mercy, and (even) upon the Israel of God." Galatians 6:15-16.

In Daniel 10-12 we see this principle applied. In the early section of the vision the term "thy people" is, applied to literal Israel, the Jews, (Daniel 11:14) whereas the same term in the latter section of the vision, i: e. after Calvary, represents the saints of God. (Daniel 12:1) These are the true Christians right at the end of time.

Therefore, if the term "Israel," has a literal application prior to Calvary, and a spiritual application after Calvary, or after Pentecost, why could not other terms associated with Israel, have a similar application? Could not the king of the north and the king of the south apply literally to Syria and Egypt prior to Calvary, and apply in a symbolic or spiritual sense in the Christian era, "the dispensation of the Spirit?"

There are also particular peoples mentioned in the latter part of the vision that no longer exist. These are "Edom, Moab and Ammon" of 11:41. For millennia these peoples have been extinct. Their non-existence is a fulfillment of divine predictions concerning them, made by five Old Testament prophets. Such predictions testify to the reliability of scripture. Therefore these terms cannot be applied literally. Should not we search the scriptures to ascertain if they have a symbolic or spiritual application in the Christian era?

If the above principle is carefully applied, it means that literal Rome, Imperial Rome, which occupied the literal territory of the Seleucids, is now superseded by spiritual Rome, Papal Rome, which succeeded Imperial Rome. Likewise the literal territory of the literal king of the north, may now represent the realm of spiritual Rome. In the same sense literal Egypt, the literal king of the south, may also apply, in the Christian era, to the symbolic or spiritual king or kingdom of spiritual Egypt."Spiritual Egypt" is clearly delineated in Revelation 11:8, "which spiritually is called . . . Egypt."

To confirm such an application of the above terms, let us now examine the five events of vv. 31-32a that find their fulfillment alone, in the history of spiritual Rome, the Papacy.

1."And arms (military power) shall stand on his part" (or behalf). Verse 31(a).

This prediction was abundantly fulfilled by two different military powers. Firstly, Clovis, king of the Franks in 301 AD in support of the Papacy, put down by military force the Arian Visigoths. He had previously brought into subjection, the Burgundians, and other peoples.

Later he conquered the pagan tribe of the Allemani. This cleared the way for the Papacy to dominate the religious world of Western Europe. Secondly, Justinian the emperor of Eastern Rome, in collusion with the Papacy, with his military might; put down the Arian Ostrogoths of Italy. This was in 538 A. D. and that date marks the commencement of Papal supremacy which was predicted to continue for 1260 years.

The next three actions that apply to the Papacy have been mentioned previously in the prophecy of Daniel 8, where the same symbols are employed.

“They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and place the abomination that makes desolate.” Verse 31.

In Daniel 8, Gabriel, describing the same actions of the little horn power:

“By him, the daily was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down;” Daniel 8:11. Or, “From him the daily was taken away.” (K. J. V. marginal reading)

This is upheld by the Hebrew, and most other translations. [8]

“How long concerning the daily. . . and the transgression of desolation,. . .” Daniel 8:13. .

In the K. J. Verse the translators inserted the word, “sacrifice,” in italics. This denoted that it was a supplied word and is not in the original Hebrew: The correct reading is “the daily.” Daniel 8 declares that the Papacy took away “the daily” from Christ, and that it cast down “the place of Christ’s sanctuary,” and that it set up “the transgression” or “abomination that makes desolate.” The repetition in Daniel 11:31 of the same three actions as in Daniel 8, provides strong confirmatory evidence that the king of the north of 11:31 onwards, must be the Papacy.

2.”They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength.” Daniel 11:31(b).

The word for sanctuary here, is the same Hebrew word used in Daniel 8:11 and it applies to the heavenly temple where Christ as our high priest ministers on behalf of the race. In Daniel 8:11 it states that “he (the Little Horn or Papacy) would cast down the place of his (Christ’s) sanctuary.” In this prediction of 11:31 it states that the king of the north, would “pollute or profane the sanctuary.” In what way did the Papacy profane Christ’s sanctuary? We suggest that it was profaned in a similar way to his “casting it down.” It was done in a symbolic sense. The Papacy, by extinguishing the knowledge of the heavenly sanctuary and its ministry, symbolically, cast it down. The Papacy in a similar way profaned Christ’s sanctuary. By setting up an earthly, human, sinful, and satanically inspired sanctuary system, it spiritually profaned or polluted the heavenly sanctuary. One particular author has commented on this work of the Papacy:

“Whoever would attract the people to himself as one in whom is invested power to forgive sins, incurs the wrath of God, for he turns souls away from the heavenly Pardoner to a weak and erring mortal.” [9]

3 “And shall take away the daily” Verse 31(c).

The word for “take away” is the Hebrew word “sur,” which it is held, always means to take away. In Daniel 8:11 the Hebrew word used for “take away,” of the “daily” is “rum.”

Some futilely argue that “rum” only means “to lift up” etc and that it cannot refer to Rome taking the knowledge of “the daily” from the minds of the people, etc. However this parallel term, used in Daniel 11:31, indicates that “rum” and “sur” can be used to mean the same action. [10]

What is meant by “the daily” and how was it taken away from the Prince of the host, by the king of the north? The Hebrew word is “tamid” which means “continual”. One interpretation of “tamid” of yesteryear, was that it referred to paganism, which it was claimed, was lifted up or taken away by the Papacy from Imperial Rome and that this was fulfilled by the removal of Imperial Rome’s capital from Rome to Constantinople.

This claim however does not fit the facts of history. At that particular time Imperial Rome was not pagan in regard to religion. It was in a process of transformation. Beginning with Constantine’s alleged conversion, the succeeding Caesars were generally Christian by profession and the practices of paganism were being discarded. By AD 330, Imperial Rome was legally declared to be Christian. [4] When Rome therefore removed its capital from Rome to Constantinople, historians indicate that it was becoming Christian Rome.

“When the Roman Empire became Christian, and the peace of the Church was guaranteed, the emperor left Rome to the Pope, to be the seat of the authority of the Vicar of Christ, who should reign there independent of all human authority, . . . to the end of time.” [11]

The official view of “the daily” today, and which has been verified by scripture, is that “the daily” represents Christ’s continual mediation in heaven above. This view was held by some of the Millerite believers prior to 1844. It was revived at the turn of the century and for many decades this has been the generally accepted interpretation by S. D. A’s. [12]

Did the Papacy take away the continual mediation of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary? If so, in what manner? How could an earthly power take from Christ His continual intercession for men? The answer is that the Papacy carried out this blasphemous action, by taking away the knowledge of Christ’s heavenly priesthood and setting up in its place the priestly system of the Church of Rome. The Papacy abundantly fulfilled the third item of the five points listed in verses 30-31. The fourth item in this five point list is:

4.”And they shall place the abomination that makes desolate.” Verse 31(d).

In three other places in Daniel, this, or a similar expression is found.”the transgression of desolation” Daniel 8:13 “the abomination of desolation” Daniel 9:27 LXX “the abomination of desolation set up.” Daniel 12:11

The key to understanding this term is found in the Septuagint version of Daniel 9:26-27.”Upon the temple shall be the abomination of desolation and at the end of the time (age) an end shall be put to the desolator.” Daniel 9:27 LXX (Marginal reading). The term is used in connection with the Roman armies under Titus. When Jesus foretold this destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, he quoted this very scripture, and described the Romans as the “abomination of desolation.”

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand).” Matthew 24:15.

That the “abomination of desolation” represented the Roman forces, compare the description as given in the gospel of Luke: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Luke 21:20.

This reveals that when Jesus spoke of the invading Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem, as “the abomination of desolation,” he was using Daniel 9:27 and applying the term to Imperial Rome under the Caesars. The term “abomination” as used in the O. T. generally referred to the false idolatrous- worship from Babylon - sun worship. The Romans were sun worshippers. The Roman armies were devoted worshippers of Mithra, a revised form of Babylonian sun worship produced by the Persians.

When Jesus applied the word “abomination” to Rome, he also included the word “desolation,” - “the abomination of desolation.” The significance of the word “desolation,” in connection with Rome, was that Rome was noted for her power to destroy or make desolate. This was particularly true of the land of Israel. Imperial Rome, as a result of the incredible stubbornness of the Jews, turned the land of Judea into a veritable ruin. As predicted in Daniel 11:16, “He shall stand in the glorious land which by his hand shall be consumed:”

The desolation of the land of the Jews by Rome reached its climax in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D, an event that was so devastating, it marked the end of an age. But the prediction of verse 31 indicates that the king of the north, in the form of spiritual Rome, would “place the abomination that makes desolate.” Does scripture also speak of the Papacy as an “abomination?” This is clearly spelt out in Revelation 17. In describing the apostate church under the caption of “the great whore that sits upon many waters,” the Revelator declares:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” Revelation 17:5.

Here spiritual Rome is named “abominations of the earth.” Why is she so named? Because her religion is idolatrous and is derived from ancient Babylon. Such worship is repeatedly stigmatized in the Old Testament as an abomination. This means that not only was Imperial Rome in its pagan condition, an “abomination” in God’s sight, but so also was its successor - spiritual Rome - in the form of the Papacy.

But the term employed in the prediction is “abomination that makes desolate.” Has the Papacy been guilty of producing desolation in her religious career? No other organization in history has wrought such desolation among mankind as has Papal Rome. This is true in the realm of religion as well as in many other areas of human existence. What Imperial Rome perpetrated in a political, military manner, Papal Rome perpetrated in a spiritual, religious manner. Thus the Papacy may also be correctly styled, “the abomination of desolation.”

The term applies to Rome in both its phases, Imperial and Papal, literal Rome and spiritual Rome. When was the Papal form of abomination put into place? When did the false system of worship begin to manifest itself? This is answered under Daniel 12:11 where the statement is made:

“From the time that the daily shall be taken away, to set up the abomination that makes desolate, there shall be a thousand; two hundred and ninety days.” Daniel 12:11. (margin K. J. V.)

This began to be fulfilled when the Papal leader was set up as “The Vicar of God on earth,” in the R. C. synod of 503 A. D. under Pope Symmachus. This papal decree became effective by 508 A. D. [13]

The fifth and final point of Daniel 11:31-32A that perfectly fits the Papacy is as follows:

5.”And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries.”Verse 32(a).

Through the centuries this has been the policy of the Papacy. In order to secure the support and favor of the world--those who “do wickedly against the covenant” or gospel of Christ, the Papacy has resorted to compromise and flattery. Instead of standing as a champion of Christian standards and principles, she has supported and enjoyed degenerative practices that undermine the moral fiber of society. Even at the present time, she is deeply involved in the gambling scenario. In some countries, she is the producer and distributor of alcoholic beverages. She is involved in the degenerative world of entertainment and of the mass media. She is accused of supporting and even maintaining in certain areas, the practice of prostitution and other illicit sexual practices.

Thus the five activities listed above, as predicted concerning the king of the north, have been completely fulfilled in the history of the Papacy.

Verse 32(b) “But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

This prediction applied to the true believers who, in order to maintain their faith, withdrew from the corrupt centers of civilization and retired to the regions where they could worship in freedom and peace. When the catholic emperor, Justinian in 528 AD ordered the entire population of the empire to embrace Roman Catholicism or depart from the empire, vast numbers of non-Catholic Christians forsook the Roman empire and migrated, “amid flight and massacre,” to regions beyond Justinian’s control. [14]

Many fled eastwards to Persia and then to India. Others to the mountainous areas of north Italy, others to southern and western Gaul (France), others to the north of the river Danube, others to the region of the Caucasus, as well as elsewhere. These non-Catholic Christians are described by the Revelator as “the woman (the church) in the wilderness,” where she fled from the wrath of the dragon. Revelation 12:13-14

Most of these Christians possessed the scriptures - the word of God - in their own tongue and steadfastly maintained their faith. The best known group was the Waldenses of the Cottian Alpine region, west of

Turin, Italy. These courageous people not only maintained their faith but trained their young men to travel abstrusely throughout benighted Europe, and secretly disseminate sections of holy scripture.

Another group was the Paulicians, who migrated into Europe from the Caucasus area and effectively witnessed for the Christian faith. In this way “those who knew their God, did exploits.” It is quite incredible how these humble people of God, kept burning - though dimly - the light of the gospel throughout the age of moral, spiritual and intellectual darkness of the middle ages. At that time was also fulfilled, the first part of Daniel 11:33.

Verse 33(a) “And they that understand (the word of God) among the people, shall instruct many.”

Certain historians have recorded the presence of these Christians in the areas mentioned above, and how they shared their faith and “taught many.”

Verse 33(b) “Yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”

This was sadly fulfilled by the Papacy which, by threats of excommunication and interdiction, and promises of spoil, compelled those in government, to conduct programs of persecution and destruction of non catholic believers. By employing the four methods exactly as predicted, millions of true believers were martyred over a period of many centuries of time, or “many days.”

Verse 34(a) “Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help”

It is generally believed that this prediction was fulfilled in the rise of the Protestant Reformation in 1517 AD. Although persecution did not cease, nevertheless great encouragement came to the small groups of true believers who had maintained their faith.

Verse 34(b) “But many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”

As the Protestant reformation became more popular, as is usual, numbers of people united with the reform movements who, while religious in outward demeanor, were not changed in heart. One may be religious, yet he may not be “born again.” Such people are always a hindrance to the cause of God.

The spirit of compromise and failure to grow in grace and truth, among some of the Protestants, could be evidence of the fulfillment of the above prediction.

Verse 35(a) “And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge and to make them white even to the time of the end.”

The Protestant Reformation brought more intense persecution upon those who openly stood for the gospel of Christ. History has recorded how leading lights, learned and able men, were maligned, arrested and imprisoned, and then martyred because of their refusal to submit to church authority and to agree to the erroneous doctrines of the church of Rome. The sufferings of these godly leaders certainly purged and purified them in heart, or “made them white.” The beauty of spirit, the Christ likeness of character, of so many of the Protestant martyrs who so willingly yielded their lives at the stake, is striking testimony to this fact.

Verse 35(b) “Even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.”

Opposition to the truth of God did not cease at the Reformation. Where the Papacy still dominated, persecution and martyrdoms continued. According to the above prediction however, the appointed time in which the Papacy would be permitted to break the power of the saints, (Daniel 12:7) would be till 1798, i. e. “to the time of the end.” This is confirmed by history.

What is signified by “the time of the end”? This expression is used at least six times in the book of Daniel. [15] It refers to the final period of human history prior to the Second Advent of Christ. In this 35th verse is

revealed the time when “the time of the end” began. The opposition and persecution of which the Papacy was so appallingly guilty, was to continue “to the time of the end.”

When did the Papacy’s reign terminate? In the year 1798, when Revolutionary France ordered the Pope’s arrest and the abolition of the papal government. This date marks the commencement of the end time, “the last days,” “the time of the end.” This date we will encounter again in verse 40.

The reason 1798 is brought to light at this point of this prophecy is to reveal how long God’s true people would suffer the enmity of the Papacy in persecution. The prediction now returns to “the king of the north.”

Verse 36.”And the king (of the north) shall do according to his will.”

The king of the north was last mentioned in verse 32. After digressing in order to reveal the lot of God’s true people during the Dark Ages, and the experience of the Protestant Reformation, Gabriel spells out the spirit, character and supremacy of the king off the north. This passage of Daniel 11:36 to 39 undoubtedly deals with the king of the north, during his dominating and oppressive reign over the then known world, as will be shown.

Attempts have been made to introduce a completely different power into this prophecy at this point. It has been claimed that a new power now emerges. It is asserted that this power rises after or around 1798 because verse 35 speaks-of “the time of the end.” But as has been shown, this term in v. 35 is used to reveal the length of time the saints would suffer persecution at the hands of the Papacy.

On the other hand when the activities of the king of the north are described at the “time of the end,” i. e. , around 1798, they are spelt out in Verse 40. We will show below that at that time, he is “pushed” by “the king of the south.” The passage in verses 36-39 deals with the king of the north prior to 1798, prior to the time of the end, that period which covered the time of papal supremacy.

Again it has been asserted that the expression in verses 36, “He shall do according to his will,” denotes the introduction of a new political power. Three times in Daniel 11 the above term is employed. It is used of “Alexander the Great” (verse 3), of “Imperial Rome” (verse 16), and of “The Papacy,” (verse 36), as “the king of the north.” But the above claim is without foundation. For example, it is asserted that a new power is introduced in verse 40, but in this verse, no such expression as mentioned above, is employed. Yet it has been asserted that a new power, the Ottoman empire, is introduced in verse 40.

Why then is the above expression employed of the three powers noted above? The answer, we believe, is that these three powers, actuated by the spirit of Lucifer, assumed the prerogatives of the Deity. Each applied to himself divine honors. Each one so exalted himself, that he permitted and even demanded the worship of himself as a god. The author of “The Great Controversy” in alluding to this power in Daniel 11:36 applies the description to the Papacy, “the man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4:

“The man of sin” . . . , that gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan’s power, - a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.” [16]

Another attempt to introduce a new power into this scene, has been made by claiming that the verse should or could read, in the original Hebrew, not, “And the king,” referring back to the king of the north, but “And a certain king.” [17] A few biblical critics of the past, are named, to give weight to this claim, but experts in the Hebrew language, will not allow such a translation.” [18]

It is indisputable that the king of verse 36, is the king, previously described in verses 31-32, whose identity is confirmed by the five specifications listed in those verses. Daniel 11:36-39 In these verses the angel Gabriel now deals with the king of the north when he rules supreme; Twelve clear points of identification are presented in this passage and only one power fits the whole twelve. It is the Papal power alone.

But do not the specifications also find fulfillment in Revolutionary France, as held by Uriah Smith from 1871 onwards? [19] Some of the specifications could apply to Revolutionary France but other points never have, nor ever will, fit that power. For example this king or kingdom:

“Shall prosper till the indignation shall be accomplished.” verse 36(b). or “shall prosper till the time of wrath is ended.” American translation.

This “time of wrath,” is when the wrath of God is manifested in the seven last plagues, which fall upon the earth at the close of probation, prior to the Second Advent. (Revelation 14:9-10; 15:1). The seven last plagues fall on spiritual Babylon, which, in truth, is the king of the north. (Revelation 18:4, 8) Revolutionary France no longer exists, so this specification can not possibly apply to it.

Again, the prediction declares that at “the time of the end” the king of the north shall come under attack from the king of the south. Did literal Egypt “push at” or attack, Revolutionary France, around 1798 AD? Decidedly not. The truth is exactly the opposite. Revolutionary France, in Napoleon Bonaparte, purposefully crossed the Mediterranean and “pushed at” or attacked Egypt.

Again the prediction states: “in his estate shall he honor the god of forces,” or fortifications. Verse 38. The margin of the K. J. V. reads, “or munitions”. Hebrew “mauzzim.” Dr. Alexander Hislop declares:

“Mauzzim does not signify ‘forces’ or ‘armies’ but ‘munitions,’ as is given in the margin, i. e. ‘fortifications.’” [20]

Hislop has traced this title back through Roman and Greek paganism to Semiramis and Nimrod. This title was identified by the wearing of a turreted crown which represented the Tower of Babel. The title denoted that Nimrod and Semiramis were the first -to fortify a city with embattlements. Nimrod began to surround ‘Babylon with a wall. It was completed by Semiramis after Nimrod’s death.

This aspect of paganism was later embodied in the Greek “Hercules,” which was another name for Nimrod. Hercules was “the god of fortifications or force.”

The prediction of Daniel 11:38 indicates therefore, that the king or kingdom of w. 36-39 would “honor the god, Hercules.” This was never even remotely fulfilled by Revolutionary France. Is it fulfilled by the Papacy? Every year on the 18th of January, Rome celebrates “The Feast of the Chair of St. Peter.” This ceremony is nothing more than the adoration of “Hercules, the god of fortifications,”²¹ and faithfully fulfills this aspect of the prediction. In the same manner the Papacy completely fulfills the remainder of the twelve specifications of the willful king of the north of verse 36-39.

Verse 36 (b) “He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, “

In Daniel 8 “the little horn” or Papacy, is also described in the same manner.”He shall magnify himself in his heart.” 8:25.”He magnified himself, even to the prince of the host.” 8:11. It is important to notice the New Testament application of Daniel 11:36. In 2 Thessalonians 2 the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to apply the king of Daniel 11:36 to “the man of sin.”

“that man of sin. . . who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. In the margin of the K. J. V. the translators refer the reader to Daniel 11:36 and Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:6 where the Papacy is clearly outlined.

Verse 36, (c) He “shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods.”

This activity again parallels the little horn power of Daniel 7:25, and the beast power of Revelation 13, both of which. , apply to the Papacy.

“He shall speak great words against the Most High:” Daniel 7:25.”a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” Revelation 13: 5-6

Verse 36 (d) “And shall prosper”

Again this parallels the Little Horn of Daniel 8.

“It practiced and prospered.” “And shall prosper and practice.” Daniel 8:12, 14.

Verse 36 (e) “till the indignation shall be accomplishing” or “till the time of wrath is ended “ (American translation) This will be fulfilled in the seven last plagues, prior to the Second Advent, as stated above.

“If any man worship the beast (the Papacy). . . he shall receive the . . . wrath of God” Revelation 14:9-10; 15:1.

This prediction also parallels Daniel 7 and 8 concerning the Little Horn power.

“They shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” Daniel 7:26 “he shall be broken without hand.” Daniel 8:25. (i. e. at the Second Advent)

Verse 37 (a) “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers”

This characteristic is in agreement with St. Paul’s description of “the man of sin,” “who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

This was certainly fulfilled by the Popes, who, in their titles and pretensions, totally disregarded the God of their fathers. In the whole history of man, none have made such arrogant and lofty claims as have the bishops of Rome.

Verse 37 (b) “nor the desire of women.”

It has been generally recognized that the instinctive desire of the average woman is to marry and bear children in a loving family relationship. Does scripture single out any particular power that would deliberately and officially disregard this God-given desire of women? The New Testament reveals one particular body that would. St. Paul in his letter to Timothy warns of this departure from the Christian faith.”Now the spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats” (or foods). 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

Christian scholars through the centuries, have been aware that this prediction is fulfilled very clearly in the church of Rome. When that church fell away into apostasy, she introduced into her system, various pagan rites and practices, including celibacy of the religious, and regulations in regard to fasting, etc, or, “abstaining from meats,” or foods.

Verse 37. (c) “Nor regard any god for he shall magnify himself above all.”

Once again this description parallels “the man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians 2:4, who is so clearly identified as the Papacy. No one has so blasphemously magnified itself to the place of God as has the Papacy. Some interpret the phrase, “nor regard any god,” to represent atheism, and argue that only atheistic France fulfills this point of the prediction. However it is well documented, that during the Papacy’s supremacy, there were several popes, who were decidedly atheistic as far as their belief in God was concerned, thus fulfilling this aspect of interpretation.

Verse 38. (margin) “And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold and silver and precious things and things desired.”

The Papacy has fulfilled this prediction in a greater measure than any other organization in history. The following abbreviated list of Catholic beliefs and forms of worship which were unknown and unheard of by their forebears, testifies to the truth of this prediction.

(1) In 503 A. D. Pope Symmachus was declared, with his approval, “to be judge as God’s Vicar and could be judged by no man.”

(2) In 750 A. D. Temporal power was officially conferred upon the popes.

(3) In 786 A. D. Official authorization was granted for the worship of the cross, images and relics.

(4) In 890 A. D. The worship of St. Joseph was inaugurated.

(5) In 995 A. D. The canonization of dead “saints” was introduced.

(6) In 1050 A. D. The mass was declared to be a sacrifice of Christ, and attendance at mass was enforced.

(7) In 1215 A. D. Pope Innocent III proclaimed the doctrine of transubstantiation, i. e. that the officiating priest has the power to command Christ to descend from heaven and be present on the altar in the form of bread and wine.

(8) In 1220 A. D. Pope Honorius III decreed that the wafer, or host, be adored.

All the above practices and beliefs were utterly foreign and unknown to the early Christians. Another fulfillment of this prediction has been the exaltation and veneration of, the Virgin Mary. Around the world one may see the images or statues of Mary, stacked with silver, gold, and jewelry, worth millions. This is in agreement with the Revelator’s inspired description of spiritual Babylon:

“And the woman (the false church) was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.” Revelation 17:4.

Verse 39(a) “Thus shall he do within the most strongholds with a strange god whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory.”

Has Papal Rome “increased with glory,” the Virgin Mary? Note the official steps taken by Rome which brought about the actual fulfillment of this prediction.

(1) In 431 AD the exaltation of Mary commenced when the Council of Ephesus applied to Mary the term, “Mother of God.”

(2) In 600 A. D. prayers were directed to Mary and other dead “saints” and angels.

(3) In 1508 A. D. the first part of “Ave Maria” was made official.

(4) In 1593 A. D. the final part of “Ave Maria” was composed and Pope Sixtus V decreed that it was to be used by the faithful.

(5) In 1854 the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX.

(6) In 1950 the bodily assumption of Mary to heaven was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII.

(7) In 1965 Mary was proclaimed “The Mother of God” by Pope Paul VI.

(8) Now Mary is to be proclaimed as “The Mediatrix of Mankind” and that the Father and the Son may be approached only through Mary.

(9) Soon Mary is to be proclaimed as the Co-Redemptrix of the world. Mary, it is claimed, shared with Christ, the sufferings that brought redemption to mankind. Who can deny that Rome has increased Mary with glory?

Verse 39(b) “he shall cause them to rule over many.”

This prediction was fulfilled by Rome during the Middle Ages, and it is soon to be fulfilled again. This prediction again is paralleled; in Daniel 7 & 8, & Revelation 13, where Heaven outlines the Antichrist, under the caption of “the Little Horn” and “the beast.”

“He shall wear out (destroy) the saints of the Most High . . . and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times and the dividing of time.” Daniel 7:25

This was the 3.5 prophetic years, which amounted to 1260 days and which represented 1260 years. This was the exact period that the Papacy ruled supreme, when she martyred so many millions of true believers.

“a little horn which waxed exceeding great . . . even to the host of heaven, and . . . it practiced and prospered and destroyed the mighty and the holy people (the saints). . . and by peace shall destroy many.” Daniel 8:9-12, 24-25.

And power (authority) was given him to continue (margin “to make war”) forty and two months . . . to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kingdoms and, tongues and nations.” Revelation 13:5-7.

In the near future, the Papacy will once again, for a brief moment, be permitted “to rule over many.” “All the world wondered after the beast.”

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship (or obey) him, whose names are not written in the book of life.” Revelation 13:3, 8.

“He causes (compels) the earth and them that dwell therein to worship (or obey) the first beast (13:1) whose deadly wound was healed.” Revelation 13:12.

Verse 39 “And shall divide the land for gain”

The Papacy alone, has claimed the right to divide the world among the nations. In the twelfth century AD Pope Adrian II granted King Henry II of England, authority to divide the land of Ireland. This he accomplished and thereby destroyed what remained of the Celtic church of Ireland, which had been originally established by the remarkable St. Patrick.

In 1493 A. D. Pope Alexander VI divided the western world between Portugal and Spain. A dividing line was drawn on the map, down the mid Atlantic. As a result, tremendous wealth, or gain, came into the treasury of the church of Rome. Thus the twelve identifying specifications of “the king” of verses 36-39 have been, and are being fulfilled, by Papal Rome alone, and in a complete and abundant manner. The prophecy of Daniel eleven now reaches “the time of the end,” in connection with the activities of the king of the north. This is the period around 1798 onwards, until the Second Advent of Christ.

Verse 40(a).”And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him, (the king of the north) and the king of the north shall come against him (the king of the south) like a whirlwind.”

In an attempt to introduce a power other than the Papacy into this part of the prophecy, a weak and unwarranted interpretation has been invented. The claim has been made that a third power is involved in v. 40, resulting in “a triangular war.” [22] For this claim there is no evidence in the verse whatsoever. The confrontation of v. 40 is solely between the king of the south and the king of the north.

Does history indicate that about 1798 AD the king of the south “pushed at” or attacked the king of the north - the papacy? To answer this it is necessary to identify, first of all, the king of the south. Literally he was Egypt, but around the period of 1798, literal Egypt had nothing whatsoever to do with the Papacy. Egypt at that period was absorbed in its relationship with the Ottoman empire. In the Christian era, we repeat, all things pertaining to “Israel” have a spiritual application, as outlined under Daniel 11:31.

Who then comes under the caption of the spiritual “king of the south?” A significant clue to this question is found in Revelation 11:8 where the expression “spiritual Egypt” is employed by the Revelator.

“And their dead bodies (of the two witnesses) shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt.” Revelation 11:8.

This deeply symbolic account is contained in a prediction concerning a beast or kingdom that rises from the abyss and attacks and kills “the two witnesses.” There are fifteen specifications in this prediction and they all met their fulfillment in Revolutionary France around 1798, when France officially outlawed or killed the holy scriptures, or the two testaments or “witnesses.” [23] The two witnesses are symbolized as lying unburied “in the street,” or division, or part of, the symbolic city of spiritual Babylon, (the Papacy). This street, or part of spiritual Babylon, is “the tenth part,” (v. 13) and spiritual Babylon’s realm involves “10

horns” (Revelation 17:3, 12-13) or “10 kingdoms.” These represent western Europe, and France was one of the leading kingdoms of Europe in support of the Papacy. When the Revelator describes Revolutionary France, he symbolizes her as “spiritual Egypt.” Why such a symbol? In the Old Testament, on which Revelation is based, Egypt was noted for its defiance of God and the rejection of his existence. Egypt represents atheism and it was this same spirit and belief that dominated the French revolution. It was aggressively atheistic. As one author in commenting on the rise of Revolutionary France declared:

“This is atheism and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance.” [24]

The conclusion then, is that around 1798, - “the time of the end,” Revolutionary France, as “spiritual Egypt, pushed at or attacked the Papacy, the king of the north. Does history confirm this claim? It is indisputable that the nation that attacked the Papacy around 1798, abolishing its political government, arresting and imprisoning the pope, was none other than Revolutionary France.

In this event was also fulfilled the remarkable prediction concerning the beast power of Revelation 13: “And I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death.”(margin “slain”) verse 3.

It was in 1798 that France delivered the death blow to the Papacy. It was then that the political governing power of the Catholic church was destroyed. The Catholic church remained in this condition for approximately 130 years. Its political power was not restored until

1929, when Italy's ruler, Benito Mussolini entered into a concordat or treaty with the Roman Catholic church, in which he restored to it, its independence, its court, its flag, its coinage, some of its wealth, and its political power. This was when the prediction began to be fulfilled:

“And his deadly wound was healed.” Revelation 13: 3.

The prediction then, of Daniel 11:40, of the king of the south, pushing at the king of the north, has been dramatically fulfilled. France did attack and put down the Papacy. But who at the present time is the king of the south? Revolutionary France is no more. Modern France, involved in the ten kingdoms, is now in the process of “giving her strength and power to the beast”. (Revelation 17:13.) Is there a political entity that possesses the characteristics of spiritual Egypt? It is an established fact that the philosophy and aims that inspired Revolutionary France, were later planted in the soil of Russia. They came to fruition in 1917, when under Nikolai Lenin, the bloody Bolshevik revolution changed the nature of that vast country. Not only was communistic Russia officially atheistic in its government, philosophy and aims, but it was also diametrically opposed to the Papacy, and remained so, throughout its career. We suggest then, that the king of the south from 1917 onwards, symbolized Soviet Russia.

The king of the south we also suggest, must represent an organized political entity. It is a king or kingdom or nation. It is incorrect we believe, to try and apply the king of the north to a philosophy, such as communism, or to Islam, or the illuminati etc. Soviet Russia has fulfilled the prediction. She has continually “pushed at” the Papacy. For seventy odd years Soviet Russia has masterminded worldwide resistance to Rome. The following list illustrates the reality of the king of the south as Soviet Russia, “pushing at” the king of the north, in the person of the Papacy.

- (1) 1936. The Spanish civil war. The main forces behind that conflict were the Fascists (Roman Catholicism) and the Communists. (Soviet Russia).
- (2) 1945. Soviet Russia took control of catholic Poland.
- (3) A little later Soviet Russia gained the ascendancy in Czechoslovakia—mostly catholic.
- (4) 1956. Soviet Russia violently took control of catholic Hungary.
- (5) In China, the forces of Chiang Kai shek -the catholic leader,- were driven out by Mao Tse Tung and his communists, with the support of Soviet Russia.
- (6) 1945 onwards, Italy and France both experienced intense political struggles for control, between Communism and Catholicism.
- (7) About 1960 Burma was overtaken by communist forces, backed by the Soviet.
- (8) 1960's. The Vietnam war. The forces behind the scenes were Communist Russia and Catholicism.
- (9) Chile--South America--voted into office a communist government. Catholicism, aided by U. S. A. effectively destroyed it.
- (10) Indonesia. --President Scekarno, in conflict with communism, shot hundreds of thousands of his countrymen in order to retain power.
- (11) Cuba--communism, under Castro, overthrew the R. C. dictatorship and has successfully resisted and-communist pressure.
- (12) Lebanon and Syria--conflict between communist elements supported by Russia against R. C. and Moslem forces.
- (13) The Philippines--A continuing conflict between communism and Catholicism. The latter is in the ascendancy.
- (14) In the Central & South Americas, for many decades there has been an intense struggle between Catholicism & Communism, under the guise of liberation etc.
- (15) For several decades after World War 11 there were intense struggles among many the labor unions of the West, involving Catholicism and communism.
- (16) In the academic world of the West, behind the scenes, there have been struggles for control, between catholic and communist-atheistic elements.

Over the last several decades the world has witnessed the conflict between the spiritual king of the south and the spiritual king of the north. There has been a deliberately planned ‘pushing’ by the king of the south against the rising power of the king of the north.

In verse 40 is presented the final effort of the king of the south. He receives not a single mention throughout the final drama of verses 41-45. Does this suggest that communism, masterminded from Russia or anywhere else, will have no part in the final drama? We would accept that conclusion. According to the outline of final events as portrayed in Revelation, it is the Papacy that is to dominate world affairs. There is no place for communism, or the king of the south, in the final conflict.

Let us now examine and analyze the remainder of Daniel 11 which we suggest concerns every living soul in our world today. In verse 40b onwards, there is presented the counter-attack of the king of the north against all who oppose him in the end time.

Daniel 11:40(b).”And the king of the north shall come against him (the king of the south) like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen and many ships.”

The reaction of the Papacy as here portrayed, is in the form of an irresistible, victorious, military power. He sweeps everything before him. The word for “whirlwind” in the Hebrew denotes “a flood,” illustrating how the Papacy, in the lead-up to the final conflict, will overwhelm all opposition. We suggest that this prediction has already begun to be fulfilled. In the dramatic downfall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, there has been witnessed a demonstration of revived Papal power. Soviet Russia is no more. The king of the south as such, has been overwhelmed. Unquestionably it was brought about- by the Papacy in collusion with the U. S. A. The Papacy itself has given credit for the victory to the Virgin Mary. However this is only the beginning of the end time drama, for the prophecy continues:

Daniel 11:40(c) “And he shall enter into the countries and shall overflow and pass over.” Not a single country, nation, or government will succeed in standing against Papal influence. Daniel 11:41 (a) “He-shall enter also into the glorious land and many . . . shall be overthrown!”

“The glorious land” as shown under verse 16, symbolized the promised land of literal Israel. In this “dispensation of the Spirit,” the glorious land represents the land or realm of spiritual Israel - the Church of God. Since 1798, where has spiritual Israel been mostly located? Where were the great majority of the true people of God? The answer is that they existed within the professedly Protestant churches. The realm of spiritual Israel, has been the realm of Protestantism. Has the Papacy entered into the realm of Protestantism

and overthrown many? The sad and tragic fact is, that the Papacy has gained, and is continuing to gain, resounding victories in her efforts to destroy Protestantism. Today, only small elements of true Protestantism remain; “many have been overthrown.”

Verse 41(b).”But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon.”

These three peoples no longer exist. They were blood relatives of literal Israel. However because of their continual hatred and opposition to Israel, God decreed, through five Old Testament prophets, their complete extinction. The fulfillment of these predictions is striking evidence of the reliability and divine inspiration of holy scripture.

On the above grounds therefore, Edom Moab and Ammon cannot have a literal application. Therefore to be consistent, these peoples must have a symbolic or spiritual application. Does scripture present any clues in identifying spiritual Edom, Moab and Ammon? The prophet Moses in recording the prediction of Balaam under divine inspiration, alludes to these three peoples in a spiritual or symbolic sense.

“There shall come a star out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth (or Moab). And Edom shall be a possession, Seir (Edom) shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.” Numbers 24:17-18.

In this prediction, Israel’s Messiah is symbolized as being victorious over Edom, Moab (and Ammon), the perpetual enemies of Israel. In other words, these pagan peoples represented the enemies of Israel, and of God. This is confirmed by the author of “Patriarchs and Prophets”:

“Edom and Moab represent the enemies of God.” [25]

How then will these enemies of God escape out of the hands of the Papacy, the king of the north? The answer, we suggest, is found in the thrilling prediction of Isaiah the prophet:

“It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people. . . from Assyria, . . . Egypt. . . Cush and Elam’. . . and from the islands of the sea . . . he shall set up an ensign for the nations and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel . . . from the four quarters of the earth . . . they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west and . . . they shall lay their hand upon Edom , and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.” Isaiah 11:11, 12, 14.

It has been recognized for centuries by historicists, that this prediction concerns spiritual Israel--the church. It is a forecast of how in the end time, God's final gospel message will sound throughout the world, and will gather in his true people who are scattered among the various groups of mankind. The "ensign for the nations," represents "the sign between God and his people," the true Sabbath. (Ezekiel 20:12, 20.) Under this ensign, the dispersed remnant is to spiritually gather or unite. They are to fly to the west and to the east, with the truth of God, in the coming "Loud Cry," under the power of "the latter rain." At this time some of those who have been relentless opponents of the truth, enemies of God symbolized by "Edom, Moab, and Ammon," "shall obey" the messengers of truth. [26]

Here is a prediction we suggest, that among the current enemies of God's people, there will be groups who, when the king of the north makes his final bid for world control, will take heed to the proclamation of the three Angels' messages, and the exposure of Babylon. This will lead them to "come out of Babylon," and become a part of God's final remnant people. They will then be on the Lord's side, and when the crisis bursts on spiritual Israel, these former enemies, will escape from the snare and power of the king of the north. Why will they escape? Because Heaven has guaranteed certain deliverance in the coming conflict, and that deliverance will be in the remnant of his church.

"And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance as the Lord hath said and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Joel 2:32.

Verse 42."And he shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape."

Here, we suggest, is emphasized the grim fact of how the Papacy will capture universal support. No area, no group, will be omitted. The realm of communism, no matter how or what its form, will be brought into subjection. This could involve communist, China and all other areas where atheism, etc, may predominate. Maybe it will also involve the academic, intellectual and scientific realm of society, where the philosophy of-spiritual - Egypt is based.

Verse 43(a) "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt."

Is this a divine forecast of how the papacy will finally gain control of the lands, possessions, etc, of the communist world? According to the message from Fatima in 1917, Russia is to play a leading role in the triumph of the Christian (Roman Catholic) faith. Such thinking is confirmed by the Revelator, who declared concerning the papacy:

"And his deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast." "and all that dwell on the earth shall worship (obey) him whose names are not written in the book of life." Revelation 13:3, 8.

"The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Or luxuries) "The merchants are made rich by her." Revelation 18:13, 15.

As the author of "The Great Controversy" described the coming situation, it will be: "Romanism in the old world, (Europe and Asia) and apostate Protestantism in the new." [27]

The "new" world will involve the U. S. A, Canada, South America, South Africa, and Australasia. The same author declared, "Every country on the globe will be led to follow her example." [28]

This is alluding to the U. S. A. and her enforcement of the mark of the beast, when all classes, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," will be compelled to acknowledge Rome's supreme authority.

Verse 43(6) "And the Libyans and Ethiopians shall be at his steps" or "in his train."

This means that the people represented by the Libyans and Ethiopians will be in subjection to the Papacy. This prediction cannot have a literal application. In the past some have attempted to fit this into the Ottoman Empire scenario, but these two peoples were never in subjection to the Ottomans. Who then could these two peoples represent in a symbolic or spiritual sense? Anciently these peoples were traditional allies of Egypt. [29] Maybe these peoples represent the various groups that have allied themselves with communism and Soviet Russia, but who when the Papacy becomes a threat, will change their allegiance and submit to Papal policy. As the Revelator declared:

"For all nations have drunk of the wine (or teachings) of the wrath of her fornication (or illicit union) and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, (united with Babylon) and the merchants of the earth (the multinationals etc.) are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" or luxuries. Revelation 18: 3

Verse 44."But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him, therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many."

The expression “utterly to make away,” in the Hebrew, is quite significant. Dr. Strong declares concerning these words: “Utterly - The whole (specifically a sacrifice entirely consumed) whole burnt offering sacrifice.

Away - To seclude; specifically (by a ban) To devote to religious uses (esp. destruction) make accursed, consecrate,(utterly) destroy, devote, forfeit. . . (slay, make away).”

Dr. Newton in his analysis of this scripture has declared: “The original word, we translate, “utterly to make away,” signifies to anathematize, to consecrate, to devote to utter perdition, so that it strongly implies that this war should be made on a religious account.” [30]

This prediction then, denotes a universal religious boycott and a death decree. Such a boycott and death decree is also predicted by the Revelator. In his forecast as to how the New World Order will be enforced, he declares:

“And he causes (or compels) all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.” Revelation 13: 16-17.

But what of the “tidings out of the east,” that will trouble the Papacy? The answer is found in Revelation 7, where a special “sealing” message is predicted to rise from the east in the end time:

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Revelation 7:2-3.

This message of the sealing, is connected with the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12, which contain God’s final warning to mankind. According to Revelation 18:1-4 this message is to rise to a “loud cry” under the power of the Holy Spirit when He comes in “the latter rain. This mighty revival, will stir the world and multitudes will respond to the final gospel call of God.

“The tidings” are also described as coming “out of the north.” In the Old Testament, the north was the direction from whence came the judgments of God. This could signify that the final message of God to the world, will involve warnings of impending judgments. Does the message of Revelation 18:1-4, contain judgment warnings? Notice the severity of the wording:

“I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice Babylon The Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils . . . for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And I another voice saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her (Babylon’s) sins and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven an God hath remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:1-5.

Clearly, this is a message of judgment on Babylon. As a result of this powerful, world--wide proclamation, spiritual Babylon, the king of the north, will furiously react. For generations Babylon has planned and schemed for this triumphant event, and now, when: “She said in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow,” (Revelation 18:7) multiplied thousands of voices, sound forth the final warning message, including the sealing message “from the east.” In response to this final call from heaven, hundreds of thousands come out of Babylon. They forsake her and join in the cry to “come out.” It is this that arouses the king of the north to fury. As the Revelator describes it:

“The dragon was wrath with the woman (the church) and went to make war with the remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17

As another author, in commenting on it declares: “The last great warning had sounded everywhere and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth, who would not receive the message.” [31]

The wrath of the dragon, the fury of the “king of the north,” culminates in the enactment of religious laws, a universal boycott, and a death decree. This is confirmed by the Revelator who states:

“And he (the two horned beast) had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause (or compel) that as many as would not worship (or obey) the image of the beast, should be killed.” Revelation 13:15

Finally the angel Gabriel describes the last act of the king of the north.

Daniel 11:45. (a) “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.”

A preferred translation reads, “between the seas and the glorious holy mountain.” [32] “The seas”-undoubtedly refer to the Mediterranean and the Dead seas. Between these two seas is located the city of Jerusalem, the Old Testament center of literal Israel, God’s chosen people of the O. T. It is described as “the glorious holy mountain”. The word “glorious” is the same word used for “the glorious land,” as shown under verse 41. It now represents the realm of spiritual Israel. It is now a symbol of spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God, and in particular, the final section of the true church-the remnant church, “which keeps the commandments of God, and has the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

The final act then, of the king of the north, is to attempt an invasion into the realm of the true church. He plants his forces in the area outside spiritual Jerusalem. He encircles it with the intent of treading it down in destruction. Once before, the king of the north, in the form of Imperial Rome, surrounded literal Jerusalem, and the literal holy mountain, but at that time, Jerusalem was in rebellion against God, and as a result, literal Jerusalem was destroyed. Again in the middle ages, the spiritual king of the north, the Papacy, also encircled in a spiritual sense, the city of spiritual Jerusalem, and “trod it down,” in persecution and martyrdom.

“And the holy city shall they (the Gentiles) tread underfoot, forty and two months.” Revelation 11:2 “Between the seas and the glorious holy mountain. Daniel 11:45

“He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas AND the glorious holy mountain.” Daniel 11:45

“The Gentiles” represent those outside the realm of spiritual Israel, i. e. non Christians, unbelievers. They represent the Papal power, the spiritual king of the north. The forty-two months represent the 1260 years of Papal supremacy (538-1798 AD.) when spiritual Rome trod down spiritual Jerusalem (true believers), for that appalling length of time. [33]

In the final conflict, the spiritual king of the north will endeavor to repeat what he succeeded in doing during the middle ages. He will once again encircle spiritual Jerusalem-the Remnant-and attempt to tread it down in destruction. But this time Michael intervenes, and the king of the north comes to his final end:

Verse 45 (b) “Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

How will the king of the north come to his end? The next verse continues the drama and answers this question.

Daniel 12:1.”At that time shall Michael stand up (or reign), the great prince which stands for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.”

The king of the north will be brought to his end “by the time of trouble,” after Michael stands up or reigns. This expression denotes the close of human probation, and the end of “the day of salvation”. It is then that Michael or Christ, reigns as king of kings. As the Revelator again confirms:

“The kingdoms of this world became the kingdom of our lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 11: 15.

“The time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,” is a time of trouble upon the nations. The word “nations” in the Hebrew denotes non--Israelites, unbelievers, the unsaved. This time of trouble represents “the wrath of God” in the seven last plagues, that fall on Babylon, the king of the north, and all his supporters. (Revelation 18:4, 8.) This is how the king of the north comes to his final end. Instead of the church of God being trodden underfoot as it was during the 1260 years, this time,

“Michael, the great prince which stands for thy people” or “which stands over thy people” at that time, thy people shall be delivered.” Daniel 12:1

The mighty Michael will deliver his people from the hands of the king of the north, as well as from the time of trouble, the seven last plagues. Here is presented the answer to the second part of the angel’s question of Daniel 8:13.

“How long concerning the host (God’s people) to be trodden down?” (Daniel 8:13).

God’s people will experience their final and greatest deliverance, when Michael stands up and destroys the king of the north.

APPENDIX A

The Divisions of Alexander’s Empire Alexander died in 323 B. C.

The Romans Conquered Greece in 168 B. C.

Period of divided empire of Alexander = 155 years.

From 323 BC to 312 BC (11 years) 4 divisions.

From 312 BC to 310 BC (2 years) 5 divisions.

From 310 BC to 301 BC (9 years) 5 divisions

From 301 BC to 281 BC (20 yrs.) 4 divisions

From 281 BC to 275 BC (6 years) 3 divisions

From 275 BC to 168 BC (107yrs.) 4 divisions

Total Years= 155

For 138 years there were 4 divisions For 11 years there were 5 divisions For 6 years there were 3 divisions

(S. D. A. Bible Commentary, Volume 9, pages 32-36).

APPENDIX B

“The God Of Fortifications.”

“First, as to the usurped ‘seat’ or throne occupied. In Francis Wey’s “Rome” illustrated, there is a picture of “St. Peter’s Chair,” by virtue of which the Pope claims to be Apostolic successor of the humble Galilean fisherman--but as it is a false claim, he is a False Apostle or “Son of Perdition,” as foretold. Here is Wey’s description of this chair.”There is, in the apse of the Cathedral, a sumptuous altar, and in the middle of a glory, the Chair of St. Peter, sustained by four colossal figures of bronze and gold, which represent two Fathers of the Latin and two of the Greek Church. The chair by Bernini is only an outside case, containing the curule seat of Egyptian wood faced with ivory, which is supposed to have been given by the Senator Pudens to his guest, the Apostle Peter. They show in the sacristy a model of this precious piece, which is rarely exhibited, as well as some of the small ivory facings that have been detached from it; they represent the Labors of Hercules, and are of indisputable antiquity” (p. 155; see also “The Chair of St. Peter,” by H. Forbes Witherby, and “Jacob Primmer in Rome.” Page 94). Cardinal Wiseman described these ivory

ornaments as “The Exploits of the Monster-quelling Hercules,” and said “there are eighteen small compartments, disposed in three rows.”

On the 18th of January every year this old heathen seat is “adored” by Papists on the “Feast of the Chair of St. Peter”; so the Pagan god Hercules receives homage annually by Rome’s dupes, exactly as foretold. These dupes are not aware that the ivory “Labors of Hercules” in this heathen seat are arranged in three rows of six emblems each, so that if one counts the lowest as six units, the next as tens, and the third as hundreds, one obtains the fatal “Number of the Beast”: 666. This Latin chair, therefore, is another link in the chain of evidence identifying “The Man of Sin:” for LATEINOS contains the “number of a man,” 666, in Greek numeral letters. LATEINOS was the founder of LATIUM, Rome’s original name, whilst Latin is the official tongue of the Papacy, and of no other system in the world masquerading as Christianity.” “THE ANTICHRIST.” By Baron Porcelli, page 97.

APPENDIX C

ROME BECOMES CHRISTIAN

About five months after the conquest of Italy, the emperor made a solemn and authentic declaration of his sentiments, by the celebrated Edict of Milan, which restored peace to the Catholic Church.” [34]

“The Edict of Milan was received as a general and fundamental law of the Roman world. The wisdom of the emperors provided for the restitution of all the civil and religious rites of which the Christians had been so unjustly deprived . . . the two emperors proclaim to the world that they have granted a free and absolute power to the Christians.” [35]

“As soon as the defeat of Licinius had invested Constantine with the sole dominion of the Roman world, he immediately. . . . exhorted all his subjects to imitate without delay, the example of their sovereign and to embrace the divine truth of Christianity.” [36]

“The irresistible power of the Roman emperors was displayed in the important and dangerous change of the national religion.”

“But the distinction of the spiritual and temporal powers . . . was introduced and confirmed by the legal establishment of Christianity.” [37]

“The Edict of Milan secured the revenue as well as the peace of the church. As soon as Christianity became the religion of the emperor and the empire, the national clergy might claim a decent and honorable maintenance eight years after the Edict of Milan, Constantine granted to all his subjects the free and universal permission of bequeathing their fortunes to the holy Catholic Church.” [38]

“Nor was it until after Constantine’s final triumph over Licinius that pagan symbols disappeared from the coinage and the Christian monogram became a prominent device. . . from this time forward . . . he not only identified himself more openly than ever with Christianity, but showed a determination to assert his authority in ecclesiastical affairs.” [39]

APPENDIX D

THE HISTORIC EVENT THAT MARKED THE TAKING AWAY OF THE DAILY

“Notes. Inasmuch as the taking away of the continual mediation of Christ is made the beginning of a prophetic period, there must be some definite act at some definite time which, in form and intent, takes from Christ His priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary. This act was the official decree of an ecclesiastical council held in Rome in A. D. 503, by which it was declared “that the Pope was judge as God’s vicar, and could himself be judged by no one.” See Hardouin’s “Councils”, Volume 2 page 983; Labbe & Cossart’s “Councils,” Volume 4, column 1364; & Bower’s “History Of The Popes” (3-volume edition) Volume 1 pages 304, 305. The work of Clovis, king of the Franks, who earned for himself the title of ‘the eldest son of the church’ by his campaigns to subdue the kingdoms hostile to the Papacy, contributed much toward

putting into practical effect this claim of the Papacy, which finally resulted in establishing the Pope as the head of the Roman priesthood which has usurped the priestly work of Christ, and has established another system of mediation in its place. This work of Clovis came to its climax in the period 503 to 508 AD, and this period therefore becomes the natural one from which to date the 1290 years of Daniel 12:11, which would accordingly end in the period 1793—1798 AD, at the same time as the 1260 years of Daniel 7:25. See notes on page 223.

“With Rome would have fallen her bishop, had he not, as if by anticipation of the crisis, reserved to this hour the master-stroke of his policy. He now boldly cast himself upon an element of much greater strength than that of which the political convulsions of the time had deprived him; namely, that the bishop of Rome is the successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, and, in virtue of being so, is Christ’s vicar on earth. In making this claim, the Roman pontiffs vaulted at once over the throne of kings to the seat of gods: Rome became once more the mistress of the world, and her popes the rulers of the earth.” – “The Papacy” by J. A. Wylie, page 34. From “Bible Readings for the Home Circle.” (1915 Edition) Signs Publishing Company Australia.

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- (14) See “Facts of Faith” by C. Edwardson. pages 40-42.
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36. The Vatican Global Conspiracy

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Preface

This is the fourth in a series of booklets on the Vatican in the Western world today. In this booklet we try to sketch the role that the Vatican plays in world politics today and the goal and plan it has for the world. We also look at the enormous financial resources that the Vatican possesses and the billions more which are at its disposal.

We also look at the part that the Jesuits play in helping to implement the goal of the Vatican. In our travels and teaching we find that there is almost a total blackout concerning the sinister aspirations of the Vatican and the Jesuits. Men who purport to write on the great conspiracy that is out to control the world not only never mention the Vatican, but if they do, they make the Vatican out to be the target of the conspiracy rather than the originator of the conspiracy.

It is obvious to anyone who is even remotely interested in the Vatican conspiracy that times have certainly changed the attitudes of Protestant Christians toward the Jesuits. The word "Jesuit" used to conjure up in the minds of those who heard it a malevolent and satanic ritual. But times have changed. Today Jesuits are accorded reverence and respect in all segments of western society, and yes, even allowed back into Eastern society after being banned from countries like China for almost thirty years.

Former President Nixon used a Jesuit to write his speeches. Jesuits are leading lights in the modern irenic dialogue of the ecumenical movement so that at least in the United States an aura of respectability now surrounds the workings of the Jesuits. Not all Americans or even all American Roman Catholics are impressed with the Jesuits, but the plans of the Vatican Hierarchy are proceeding along clearly defined lines no matter whether some Roman Catholics may approve or not. The Vatican and the Jesuits have the same goal in mind.

They are both working to bring the world to the feet of the Roman Pontiff. The Jesuits have been backing the Marxists in some trouble spots of the world, especially in Latin America. The Pope wants to retain the close backing he enjoys from men like Ronald Reagan; therefore, he pretended to reprimand the Jesuits for working with the Marxists in Central America. As we will see later, the Marxists in Central America, as in Northern Ireland, all have good Roman Catholic credentials.

What most people do not realize is that the Jesuits are the C. I. A. of the Vatican. That is, just as Washington often seems to conflict with, and disavow some of the covert activities of the C. I. A especially when they are going to prove embarrassing, so the Vatican from time to time will appear to disavow the activities of the Jesuits. In actuality just as Washington many times secretly hopes for the success of some clandestine operation of the C. I. A. although publicly disavowing any knowledge of it, so the Vatican hopes for the success of the Jesuits while publicly reprimanding them to appease those who are disturbed by their intrigue.

So although there may appear to be friction between the Jesuits and the Vatican, the friction has nothing whatsoever to do with Marxism per se as the American news media constantly affirms, it has to do with the possible break of some of the Marxists with the Vatican power structure, which might occur in countries like Nicaragua. The Vatican lost Cuba because it misjudged Fidel Castro, who at one time was a faithful son of the Church. It does not want to make the same mistake again with Ernesto Cardenal and his Roman Catholic henchmen in Nicaragua. So the preemptive moves of the Pope in Central America today are primarily self-serving. The Pope realizes that much governmental control will be lost in Central America if the "church" does not go along with the Marxist liberation movements fomented by "church" leaders. On the other hand if the Pope appears to support the Marxist liberation movements openly, he will lose the support of the United States in Latin America. So the present Pope gives the impression that he is against Marxism by calling upon the Jesuits to get out of politics in Latin America and by summoning the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff to Rome for an investigation.

These moves and others, which the present Pope is making, get mixed reviews in the U. S. press, but as Yallup points out in his recent book, *IN GOD'S NAME*, this Pope came to the Vatican with the attitude "business as usual," meaning that all the corruption which the former Pope, who was murdered, wanted cleaned up, would continue.

The present Pope is a master politician, so he has spoken out against Marxism to retain the support of the United States in Poland. It is plainly a part of his overall strategy, a strategy which has always played both ends against the middle. The Pope backs the Marxist-oriented liberation movements of Latin America to the hilt as long as they remain subservient to the overall goals of the Vatican. It was to reinforce this subservience that he met with the Jesuits.

The Vatican realizes that it has lost out completely in most of Latin America if it does not back the Marxist revolutionaries, 99% of whom are Roman Catholics. So when the Pope visited the area, he alluded to the struggles for justice and human rights, which were going on in that part of the world. However, since the United States looks with concern on the Marxist revolutionaries, the Pope has since shifted course again and pretended to reprimand the clergy, who were, and are, involved in this region.

The C. I. A. of the papacy are without a doubt the Jesuits. They are working night and day to further the global aspirations of the Vatican. Their zeal and persistence are as great as they ever were even though they enjoy much more respectability than they once did. We try to show with documented evidence that the Vatican-Jesuit intrigue, far from being a "protestant myth." Is a contemporary phenomenon, which is still functioning in the latter half of the twentieth-century.

The Jesuits In History

The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered reproach and endured persecution in almost every age since Stephen was martyred. In the early years of the church to confess Christ invited persecution and martyrdom. As the years rolled by and the church gained more power, it was not long until the church was doing the persecuting instead of being persecuted.

Augustine was one of the first, but certainly not the last, to advocate the necessity of force to extirpate error. As Farrar points out: "His writings became the Bible of the inquisition." [1] So from then on, inquisitorial methods became part and parcel of Rome's intrigues although stridently denied by some contemporary writers.

Martin Luther was used of God to set forth the liberating doctrine of justification by faith in the finished work of Christ and so dealt a death blow to Roman Catholicism. For this great Biblical doctrine destroys completely the whole-sacramentarian-good works-priestly enterprise known as Roman Catholicism. Since the time of Luther the Roman institution has been working day and night to overthrow Bible Protestantism and return the "separated brethren" to the one true fold-the Vatican. No greater effort has been made than that made by the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus, founded by Loyola, has been at the origin of many conspiracies directed against Protestantism. They are documented conspiracies, not figments of an over active imagination. So it is nothing short of amazing when Gary Allen, who claims to be an authority in the field of conspiracy, calls in Pedro Arrupe to substantiate his thesis that a conspiracy exists. At the time that Allen wrote ten years ago, Pedro Arrupe was the head of the Jesuits.

The Jesuits are famous in history for their conspiracies, intrigues, assassinations, and their undying hatred of the Protestant Reformation. Pedro Arrupe was the head of an organization which every well

informed Protestant knows was the main force behind the Counter Reformation. The Counter-Reformation sought by every means, fair or foul, to overthrow and undo the work of the glorious Protestant Reformation.

If there were no other reason to be against the Jesuits but this, that they attempted wherever possible to stop or hinder the true work of revival and gospel enlightenment in the church, it would be more than enough. But there are many more reasons than this. So for anyone claiming to be knowledgeable in the field of conspiracy to align himself with the head of the Jesuits is a severe blow, to say the least, to his credibility. Yet thousands of fundamental and conservative preachers speak constantly about Allen's "Insider" conspiracy without once stopping to consider the work of the Jesuits and their sponsor, the Vatican.

The Jesuits were so evil that they were feared even by Roman Catholic kings! MacPherson notes:

"The (Roman) Catholic king of Portugal says: it cannot be but that the licentiousness introduced by the Jesuits, of which the three leading features are falsehood, murder and perjury, deprive the laws of their power, destroy the submission of subjects, allow individuals the liberty of killing, calumniating, lying, and forswearing themselves as their advantage may dictate. [2]

McKinley adds his testimony to that of MacPherson.

This society which has dared to appropriate to itself the Name, which is above every name, by calling itself, "The Order of Jesus," deserved rather from the nature of its doctrines and from the work it has done in the world to be called the Order of Satan. [3]

Even the secular historian, W. E. Lunt, whose text was used for years in American colleges and universities, recognized the conspiracies of the Jesuits.

In this development the English Catholics had no small part . . . They were not a serious political menace until 1580 when two Jesuits came to England and began to plot with the Spanish ambassador . . . to place Mary on the throne. From that time Catholic plots were continually being hatched. Some had as their method a rebellion aided by foreign invasion while others sought their object by the simple mode of Elizabeth's assassination. None of the plots succeeded. . . Walsingham. . . laid bare the plots and arrested several of the conspirators. [4]

The Jesuits actually became so powerful and overbearing that they were disbanded by none other than the pope himself. In 1773 Ganganelli, who succeeded Clement XIII, issued a papal bull in which he declared them suppressed and extinct and their statutes annulled. They remained suppressed for forty years, but in 1814 Pius VII issued a bull solemnly reestablishing the society under the constitutions of "St. Ignatius."

The fact that the society was held in such disrepute even by its own institution is certainly not much of a recommendation for its evil practices. Yet, the man who headed this society when Gary Allen wrote his book, "NONE DARE CALL IT CONSPIRACY," was called in by Allen to corroborate the fact that an international conspiracy exists. It is obvious that it is very easy to postulate a Bilderberger, Insider, or Trilateralist type of conspiracy without generating any animosity among the general public. Everyone and anyone can identify against a few rich evil men lurking in the shadows and working to take over the world. But to identify religious men as conspirators causes millions of people to bridle in anger and disbelief.

It is obvious that very few people know anything about the Jesuits today. Let us look at the organization that Ignatius of Loyola brought into being. There were several steps through which every well-trained Jesuit was to pass before he was graduated from his training.

1. The Spiritual Exercises of Loyola.

These were undertaken with the object of inducing among other things a state of complete subjection of the will [5]

2 If the trainee passed the first test, he was invited to become a novice.

From this time on, he is excluded from all earthly friends and is to have no will of his own as to his future. He is to put himself in the hands of his director as the interpreter of heaven toward him. Complete obedience is the thing, that is absolutely required. His conscience must never assert itself in opposition to his superiors. Newman notes: "Absolute destruction of individual will and conscience is aimed at and to a great extent accomplished." [6]

Can anyone imagine a better base upon which to build a global conspiracy than complete and unquestioning obedience? In every small conspiracy about which details can be studied, one of the primary goals is to get each conspirator to give his unquestioning and complete obedience to the plan.

The Novitiate usually lasts two years. If the novice is found to possess the right qualities, he is accepted as a Scholar. Notice the weeding out process that continues all through the entire program. Only the most dedicated make it through to the final stages of the Society.

The Scholar now undergoes a protracted course of training in various branches of knowledge. Attention is paid to the cultivation of a sound physical make-up. If the Scholar is able to meet the requirements of this stage, he becomes a Coadjutor. Those who attain this rank are to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the advancement of the society. They serve as priests, missionaries, teachers and businessmen for the society.

The next rung on the ecclesiastical ladder is a group called the Professed. These are composed of a small proportion of the Coadjutors who have proved themselves and have been tested as to their complete trustworthiness regarding the aims of the society: It is from this group the officers of the society are drawn. They are the ones who are entrusted with its secrets. Watch care is another important part of the society. Each member including the general is responsible to another, and according to Newman:

To whom he must regularly make confession of his inmost thoughts, and who is required to exercise a watch care over him and to report every deviation from rectitude, according to the standards of the body. [7]

The aim of the Order was, according to Ignatius, the promotion of the greater glory of God. According to Newman:

The greater glory of God was identified by them in the most absolute way with the world wide and undisputed dominion of the Roman Catholic Church. [8]

The methods of the Order are well known. In most cases the Jesuits deny the charges against them. But it has been charged that they infiltrate into places of power, using as their watchword, the phrase “the end justifies the means.” The fact that they deny such actions should not cause any surprise since that is part and Parcel of their method of operation.

Their ethical system allows all kinds of loopholes by which to escape any situation that might cause embarrassment to the Society or to the Roman Catholic Church. The society did openly defend their recommendation that tyrants should be assassinated. [9] Their doctrine of Probabilism, although rejected by some members, nevertheless secured papal recognition. Their ability to escape responsibility by the method of “directing the intention” also demonstrates that the phrase “the end justifies the means,” although never appearing in their writings, is there in their purpose as plain as day.

Another equally objectionable doctrine was their teaching on mental reservation or restriction, whereby one, without burden to his conscience, might tell a downright lie provided the word or clause that would make it true is in his mind.

Thus, one accused of having committed a certain act last week in a certain place may swear that he was not there, reserving the statement “this morning.” [10]

The Secret Instructions, supposed to be the frank directions of the generals to the provincials and others involving unscrupulous commands, can no longer be used. The genuineness of the document has been denied by the society. It was first published in 1612, and, if not genuine, was probably the production of the ex Jesuit Hieronymus Zaorowski. [11] However, as Newman cogently reasons:

The repudiation of the work by the Society is, of course, no conclusive evidence of its spuriousness. It has been the consistent policy of the society from the beginning to deny everything disadvantageous to the church or to itself. [12]

The supreme end as noted above was the greater glory of God. So any superior can declare an end, however diabolical to involve the greater glory of God, and command his inferior to use any means whatever for the accomplishment of this end, including as Newman points out: deceit, theft, and even murder; and the inferior must unquestioningly obey.” [13]

Hodge also points out in his work the notoriety which the Jesuits attained through their principle of mental reservation.

The doctrine that the character of an act depended solely on the intention. If the intention be good, the act is good; whether it be falsehood, perjury, murder, or any other conceivable crime. Pascal quotes the Jesuit moralist Escobar as laying down the general principle “that promises are not binding unless there was an intention of keeping them, at the time they were made.” On the same principle, that the intention determines the character of the act, the murder of Henry III, in 1589; of the Prince of Orange in 1584; of Henry IV, of France in 1610; and especially the massacres on the feast of St. Bartholomew, were all justified. [14]

Gordon Liddy, who was also educated by the Jesuits, used the same type of reasoning for justifying his part in the Nixon Watergate scandal. It is very significant that Liddy, who now claims he does not believe in God, nevertheless uses the various definitions of the Roman moralists to justify murder.

It is the same rationale by which I was willing to obey an order to kill Jack Anderson. But I would do so only after satisfying myself that it was: (a) an order from legitimate authority; (b) a question of malum prohibitum; and (c) a rational response to the problem. [15]

Once we allow the reasoning of the Jesuits to prevail, then murder becomes a viable means of policy if we feel that it is necessary. It is tragic that many fundamental and evangelical Christians agree with this type of reasoning today, showing that Jesuitical casuistry has made vast strides since the sixteenth century.

We believe in capital punishment. We do not believe, however, that any man has the right to be judge, jury and executioner. Once allow this type of thinking, and Tomas Torquemada and the Inquisition will not be far away.

The Jesuits were well received in Italy and in Portugal at first. However in Spain, Charles V was opposed to their methods and to their ideas of papal absolutism. Leading Roman Catholic Spanish theologians such as Melchior Canus denounced them as the forerunners of anti-Christ foretold by the Apostle in 2 Timothy 3:2.

In France they met with opposition but finally gained a foothold and permission to establish a college at Clermont. In Lyons, their presence and preaching resulted in the burning of the books and churches of the Huguenots. It is probable that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day was due in some measure to their influence. [16]

In England, Trevelyan says of the Jesuits that their policy aimed “at the overthrow of the existing regime and the forcible extirpation of Protestantism.” [17] A likelier group to originate a global conspiracy would indeed be difficult to find. Their zeal knew no bounds. They were and are the heart and soul of the Counter Reformation. As Newman, the great Southern Baptist Historian, points out:

The chief means that were used by the Counter-Reformation from this time onward (1541) were the Council of Trent, The Society of Jesus, and the Inquisition. These means of fortifying the church and repressing heresy are closely interlinked. The Council of Trent, especially in its later and more important phases, and the establishment and working of the Inquisition, like the policy of the papacy in general, were due to Jesuit influence. [18]

So for someone to call in Pedro Arrupe to comment on the possible existence of a conspiracy is like calling in Adolf Hitler to comment on the possible existence of Nazism. It is better to go with known facts about conspiracy than to hint at hidden conspiracies which may not even exist.

The Jesuits were indefatigable in their efforts to restore Romanism to its former glory in the areas where Protestantism had gained a foothold. Von Ranke tells of the return of the idolatry of Romanism to parts of Germany.

In Cologne it was again an honor to wear the Rosary. Relics were once more held up to public reverence in Treves, where for many years no one had ventured to exhibit them. . . the youth of Ingolstadt belonging to the Jesuit school walked. . . on a pilgrimage . . . in order to be strengthened for their confirmation “by the dew that dropped from the tomb of St. Walpurgis.” [19]

The Jesuits were the first effective counter action against the progress of Protestantism that the Roman Catholic Church was able to wage. Yet few Protestants then, and now, fail to realize the eternal issues which are at stake in this battle. Grace and idolatrous works are mutually exclusive. Error is only defeated by the proclamation of the truth. It is never defeated by compromise, half-truths, or a failure to recognize its existence.

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The Jesuits Today

Many Americans, of course, while paying half-hearted attention to such historical matters are convinced that although there may be some misdeeds in history, the Jesuits of the present have changed. Others seem to believe that the intrigue of the Jesuits is needed today to counteract the communist menace.

G. Gordon Liddy of Watergate fame was taught by the Jesuits, and nowhere does he apologize for their teachings or for his philosophy of life which is based on the Jesuit teaching that the end justifies the means. In fact, he unashamedly advocates this teaching as the only way that America can survive. In his autobiography he states:

Fordham was a feast for the mind and a challenge to the spirit. To begin with, it was still under the absolute control of the Jesuits. As much as I had admired the German Benedictines, I admired the Jesuits more. The Society of Jesus was something special—the shock troop of the Catholic Church. [1]

He goes on to say that Heinrich Himmler used it as the model for his dreaded black-uniformed SS in Hitler's Germany and that the SS swore a special oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer, just as the highest order of the Jesuits swore a special oath of loyalty to the Pope. Liddy says later on that "just as I do, John Sirica believes the end justifies the means. [2]

The Jesuits obviously have gained respectability in our time. They have come a long way since John Adams, the second President of the United States, wrote in a letter to Thomas Jefferson: "If ever there was a body of men who merited eternal damnation on earth and in Hell, it is this Society of Loyola." [3]

John G. Schmitz, who ran for President on the American Party ticket a few years ago was educated by the Jesuits. His education by the Jesuits was put forward as something in his favor rather than a liability. He also wrote the foreword to Gary Allen's book "NONE DARE CALL IT CONSP/RACY." So we live in remarkable times when Jesuit trained leaders can write about conspiracy and be accepted not only by the general public, but by professed conservative Protestant Christianity.

Jerry Brown the Governor of California, who has twice sought the presidential nomination, was also educated by the Jesuits. Again, this was not something considered a liability, rather it was advertised as proof of his moral fiber and strength of character. Times certainly have changed in America.

Harry Reasoner, as he was signing off his nationally televised newscast a few years ago, also demonstrated how far the Jesuits have come in gaining complete acceptance in the United States. He told a joke about three orders in the Roman Catholic Church. It went something like this. The Dominicans, the Franciscans and, the Jesuits were all arguing about which order God loved the most. They went down to the altar and were told that they would receive the answer the next day. When they went back the next day, there was a note on the altar which said, "I love you all equally:" Signed, God, S. J. Harry signed off chuckling to himself. While we can appreciate a joke, we do not consider the Jesuits a laughing matter. For if the Bible is true, and we believe it is, then the Jesuit idea of salvation by works, masses, and ceremonies has led millions, and is still leading millions, to a lost eternity.

To those who cherish biblical truth and the freedom to preach the true Gospel, the rise of the Jesuits to a place of complete acceptance and indeed power in the United States today does not bode well for the future of this great land. Everything that Protestant Americans hold dear will be forfeited if these men ever gain the ascendancy in this land.

The greatest proof of all that the Jesuits have indeed gained complete respectability in the United States today is the startling fact that a man claiming to outline the global shadowy conspiracy that threatens the world should call in the leader of the Jesuits to substantiate and corroborate his thesis. No one informed in the area of church history would ever do such a thing unless he believed that the time had come when the Jesuits were no longer suspect themselves. Apparently, Gary Allen believes that this time has arrived. Millions of conservatively oriented Americans who agree with Allen are either totally ignorant of the historical record or believe that the Jesuits have changed. It can be said without fear of contradiction that whether or not one agrees with the idea of a Jesuit Conspiracy, no Protestant who has studied church history would ever call in the leader of the Jesuits to corroborate his view of conspiracy.

The Jesuits have not only gained complete respectability in the United States today but they have also gained great power. They own a controlling interest in the Bank of America as well as other financial interests. They are thus able to influence Roman Catholic politicians to serve the ends of the Roman Catholic Church more vigorously. (We will look at the Vatican's vast financial empire in more detail in the next chapter.)

The Jesuits were involved in intrigue at the highest levels of the United States government. During the administration of John F. Kennedy, the Jesuits had access to the most powerful office in the world. The Reverend James Vizzard, an American Jesuit who served as a labor lobbyist in Washington, disclosed that in 1963 he was having lunch with another Jesuit, Roger Vekemans, a Belgian priest on assignment to Chile, when a White House car picked Vekemans up and took him to a meeting with President Kennedy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and C. I. A. Director John McCone, certainly three of the most powerful men in the world at that time.

Vizzard said: "Roger came back with a big smile on his face and said, 'I got \$10 million-\$5 million overt from AID (Agency for international Development) and \$5 million covert from the C. I. A. '" [4]

Since that time some other investigations have shown that there was a Roman Catholic bishop on the payroll of the C. I. A. in Vietnam as late as 1971, that millions of dollars were sent by the U. S. government to help the Jesuits in Chile, a country then beset by assassinations and intrigue and still embroiled in murder and mayhem, and at this writing still controlled by a Roman Catholic military dictatorship.

Only the tip or the iceberg has ever been seen. It is obvious that the subject of Jesuit intrigue in the C. I. A. has so far never been explored in any depth whatsoever. Licio Gelli whom some writers believe is the man who helps hold together the Vatican conspiracy, which is out to control the world, has strong links with the C. I. A. He is called Il Burattinaco-The Puppet master. Yallop says of him, "Gelli was the puppet

master with a few thousand strings. The strings appear, to have led everywhere, to the heart of the Vatican, to the White House, to presidential palaces in a wide range of countries." [5]

Gelli was the man who bought Exocet Missiles from France for Argentina in its war with Britain. Yallop says that the Vatican indirectly funded Gelli through Calvi and the Bianco Ambrosiano. Gelli was an honored guest at Reagan's presidential inauguration. Gelli, of course, has strong ties with Michele Sindona. He is the head of P2 the mysterious organization founded in Italy which functions in Argentina, Venezuela, Paraguay, France, Portugal, Nicaragua, Switzerland, and the United States. It interlocks with the Mafia in Italy, Cuba and the United States and also with military regimes in South America, and also with the CIA and reaches right into the heart of the Vatican. [6]

So the tentacles of the Vatican power structure spread worldwide. Men come and go, but the organizations of the papacy perpetuate themselves and have done so for more than a thousand years, making the Vatican the source of the most formidable intrigue in world history. When Yallop sought to find out about the mysterious death of Pope John Paul, he said that:

The fact that men and women living within the heart of the Roman Catholic Church (Vatican City) cannot speak openly and be identified, is an eloquent comment on the state of affairs within the Vatican. [7]

The Pope has called for the Jesuits to cease from their intrigue in Central America. On March 2, 1982, over one hundred Jesuit Provincial Superiors, the leaders of the Order, were called to Rome for discussions with "Father" Paolo Dezza, the man the Pope had appointed to oversee the Order in 1981.

The Jesuits were accused by the Pope himself of engaging in "political activism under the guise of religious duties." [8] In the same article the Jesuits were reported to be "one of the primary groups controlling both extremes in Central America." [9]

So the Jesuits are still in the thick of the murders and assassinations which are being carried out by both sides in the war in El Salvador. The Pope, like others before him, is trying to curb their zeal to keep all factions in the war subservient to Rome.

With the rise of the death squads like those in Ulster, the focus of world opinion is forcing the Pope to do something to at least give the impression that he is not in favor of the murders and killings in El Salvador. But the high degree of Jesuit involvement with the extremists on both sides of the conflict in El Salvador is now a matter of public record.

The Extremists on both sides of this conflict are Roman Catholics. Roman Catholic Marxists are fighting Roman Catholic conservatives. The church is charting a course that will enable it to identify with whoever wins in the end. The Acting Archbishop said recently, "The left has lost its struggle against the government and therefore the influential church here must stay in a neutral, centrist position." [10] The acting Archbishop made this statement after the killing of 3 Marxist nuns, 10 Marxist priests, and the assassination of Marxist Archbishop Oscar A. Romero. It was after this reign of terror by the Roman Catholic conservatives that the "influential church withdrew to its neutral, centrist position." It is obvious that the conservative wing of Romanism, which has a large representation among the North American clergy, is backing the right-wing fighters in El Salvador. However, some local Roman Catholic leaders are calling for the United States to back off in El Salvador. So it looks like another capitulation to Marxism is shaping up in Central America.

Latin America sits on a veritable powder keg, because Romanism, which has been entrenched there for four hundred years, has not brought a scintilla of freedom or justice to the oppressed millions who live below the border of the United States and well below the abject poverty line. Romanism has managed to keep the multiplied millions in such a state of miserable existence that we have no hesitation in saying that if Americans rebelled against George III for his repression, they would have rebelled long ago against almost every government in Latin America.

Instead the United States bolsters the repression of Rome all over Latin America, paving the way for the inevitable revolution and “liberation” promised by the Marxists. It is time the United States stopped identifying with Romanism. But while the massive propaganda machine of Rome churns out its slanted coverage of the news, public opinion in the United States will enable Rome to keep its stranglehold on the people either by repressive fascist governments as in Chile or repressive Marxist government dictatorships as in Nicaragua. Not only that, but the Vatican wants the U. S. to fund the “rebuilding” of this region while the “church” retains control over the people.

Ed Asner has been blasted by many in the U. S. for his stand against U. S. involvement in El Salvador. Asner, of course, was the popular Hollywood actor in several recent television series. He was hounded into silence by being labeled a Communist or leftist or worse if that were possible. What was it that brought down the wrath of a large section of the American public upon Ed Asner? Simply because he

spoke out on the situation in El Salvador. What is the situation in El Salvador that Asner deploras? It is the conservative Roman Catholic death squads massacring hundreds of civilians under the guise of eliminating leftists. It is amazing the leftists that are in the world today. Everyone who opposes Romanism is a leftist, Marxist or Communist. The possibility of a Protestant Christian opposing Rome is so remote today that apparently it is safe to label everyone who opposes Romanism as a leftist. (A few years ago one conservative west coast commentator even called Paisley a communist.)

This is the propaganda that Asner was challenging, that anyone who opposes the totalitarian poverty and ignorance-producing regimes of Latin America today must be a leftist. There are leftists to be sure who challenge Rome’s 400 year reign of terror and extreme poverty, and the sad thing that should be noted but never is, is that there are few Americans who would not have challenged such regimes long, long ago!! The poor peons ground into the dirt for centuries look to the U. S. to liberate them, and all they get in return is the backing of the rotten tyrannical dictatorships by the powerful U. S. government, a mere lackey of the Roman Catholic lobby in Washington. So they turn to whoever will help them in their struggle for some semblance of freedom. It is one of the great tragedies of our times that the only choice left to the people of Latin America in many cases is between Romanism on one side and Marxism on the other, and the Marxism even is the Jesuit brand. They are never given the choice of choosing neither Romanism nor Marxism but Protestantism. Protestantism has become so weak and has been betrayed by so many lily-livered compromisers that there is no viable choice left to many of the peoples of the world. Yet when the world is examined, Protestant countries with but few exceptions are the only ones where even a semblance of freedom remains.

Sister Ann Gormly, associate director of the U. S. Catholic Mission Association, in commenting on some of the allegations made against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua said, “I hear of no limitations to the work of the church in Nicaragua.” She also said that it is good to have four churchmen in high government posts in Nicaragua. [11] So although there are many uncertain sounds emanating from Nicaragua, the Vatican is deeply embroiled in the present government, and no amount of doubletalk can dispel the fact that at least four sons of the “church” have the highest posts in the Sandinista government.

We certainly do not try to play down the fact that there are apparently deep rifts between some local priests and nuns who side with the poor and believe in “liberation theology” and the present Pope, who is opposed to them. But the bottom line is loyalty. If the leftist leaning clergy and political leaders promise to remain loyal to the Vatican in all their intrigues, then the Pope will overlook their Marxist ideology even as a former Pope overlooked the Nazi ideology of Hitler and his henchmen.

One modern writer commenting on the situation in Nicaragua said:

The major target of the U. S. is the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, which is now considered a Marxist regime. The truth of the matter is that there are more Jesuits and Jesuit controlled individuals in the Sandinista government than there are individuals in the whole of Nicaragua who have gone beyond the first chapter of Marx’s Capital. [12]

The same writer went on to note that it is difficult to tell the difference between Andropov and a Jesuit, especially when the “Jesuit is wearing a red Andropov T shirt.” [13] In other words the “leftist” regime is very definitely and very closely intertwined with Roman Catholicism in general and the Jesuits in particular. The guru of the Sandinista revolution is Ernesto Cardenal, a Trappist Monk; the foreign minister is E’Escoto, a Maryknoll priest; and the brains behind the whole operation, Fernando Cardenal, is a Jesuit. When these three “Marxist” Roman Catholic clergymen join forces with the strongman Daniel Ortego, who preaches about a revolutionary being a Christian and vice-versa, it is indeed difficult to escape the blanket of Jesuit casuistry which seems to cover the revolution in Nicaragua.

If we are to believe the New Solidarity paper, which takes a definite Roman Catholic stance, there is not much hope for the liberation of Nicaragua from the hands of the Vatican-Jesuit connection. For this paper states that the man the U. S. is grooming to replace the Sandinistas, Eden Pastora, who is now building a base of operations in Honduras, is Jesuit-controlled himself. So that even if the Sandinistas were removed tomorrow, another Jesuit-controlled man would be installed, this time with the help of the C. I. A. and the U. S. government.

Where the Jesuits end and the Marxists begin is certainly a difficult question to answer, but one thing is certain as of this writing: the Jesuits are in control of Nicaragua. All the banks of Nicaragua were nationalized when the Sandinistas took over except the Ambrosiano Group. This group mysteriously

escaped nationalization. The reason being, of course, that the Ambrosiano Group is controlled by the Vatican.

The Vatican has kept the people in Central America in ignorance and misery for four centuries. It is in the interest of the Vatican to keep its stranglehold on these nations. They are doing so either by the death squads in El Salvador or the Jesuit Marxists in Nicaragua, but they are maintaining their hold over the people. The U. S. as a Protestant country could bring some pressure to bear, which could really liberate the people from both warring factions, but alas, no such pressure is ever brought to bear on the Vatican. Instead the U. S. seems to become more and more the lackey of the Vatican, and the power that keeps the rotten status quo in place in Latin America.

A classic example of their failure to uphold the one truly free government in Central America was seen in the case of Rios Montt in Guatemala. Rios Montt was a charismatic Protestant. He had his limitations, to be sure, but he was beginning to bring some real liberty to the people of Guatemala. As far as we can ascertain the Roman Catholic Church began to agitate for his removal. We only picked up small items of news here and there, but we did read that some "leaders" in Guatemala were concerned that unless he was removed, he was going to cause a civil war in Guatemala. One item also spoke of the fact that anti Catholic feeling was being generated by his fanatical form of Christianity. (All this is the same old Jesuit line we are seeing in Canada and the U. S. today. That is, no one should say anything against the Pope or Roman Catholicism. As we are typing these pages we read that several people have been arrested in Canada for distributing "Anti-Catholic" literature. Imagine, if you can, getting arrested in a so-called free country for passing out literature of a theological nature. Truly the freedoms of the Protestant Reformation are being seriously abridged right now in North America.) Montt was deposed, and the Vatican returned to power in Guatemala with the tacit approval of the C. I. A. Protestant Americans better wake up!

The Vatican is the center of a never ending web of conspiracy. It is working day and night to bring the world to the feet of the Roman pontiff. The Vatican octopus has tentacles reaching into almost every government circle on earth. When the Red Chinese needed the off-shore oil drilling expertise of the United States (no other country possesses it) a bargain was struck so that the Jesuits were once again allowed into China. Surely such a move is almost incredible when viewed in the light of the fact that America is still an overwhelmingly Protestant nation at least in the numerical make-up of her population.

The Vatican works incessantly at building bridges over which its plans may be put into operation. Pedro Arrupe, then the head of the Jesuits, was the man that Pope Paul VI sent to Moscow in 1971. He met with the communists to try to get the then repressive government of Czechoslovakia to relax her repressive policies. When he returned from Moscow he stated that he saw signs of relaxation of religious persecution in Russia. (Billy Graham came back with the same line.) Arrupe was immediately challenged by the Director of Lithuanian Catholic Aid, Casimir Pugevicus, who said that Arrupe's statement was a "time serving Soviet maneuver used in order to create a false impression." [14] It is obvious that the Vatican wants a soft line taken toward Communist Russia because the ultimate goal of the one world-church envisaged by the Vatican is the total absorption of all into the one true fold of Romanism.

Bible Protestantism is the only faith that can never capitulate to Romanism. Romanism with its ability to absorb false religions into its fold will become the case of every unclean bird. But it can never absorb Bible Protestantism because the difference between the two is of such a nature that union is spiritually and ecclesiastically impossible. This is the reason biblically ignorant newsmen speak of the bigotry of the bible-believing fundamentalists of our times; they do not realize the eternal difference that exists between vital biblical Christianity on the one hand and all false religions on the other. So Bible Protestantism must ultimately be the target of every conspiracy, and the target of the final apostate conglomerate.

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A Financial Empire Second To None

Whenever anyone writes on conspiracy, money is always given a prominent place. In this regard the Vatican certainly does not take a back seat to anyone. The wealth of the Vatican, as we will see, is so vast that in all probability its true worth will never be known.

We are going to examine in some detail what various writers, who have tried to research the wealth of the Vatican, have said. Several of these writers are members of the Roman Catholic Church. It is surely interesting to every Protestant that when Pope Paul brought his entourage from Milan to the Vatican, they were dubbed by Roman Catholic writers as the Milan Mafia. [1]

It is not within the bounds of this study to examine the Mafia in detail. But the Cosa Nostra, the Family, or The. Mafia are a 100% Roman Catholic outfit. They originated in Sicily where Michele Sindona was also born. They control vast holdings in Italy and North America. They have gone what they call "legit" in many enterprises and were able to close down an entire cheese plant in Wisconsin. They did this to establish a monopoly in the Pizza business. This incident made the national news. Businessmen came in and brought the cheese factory.

After they bought it, they closed it down. It was only later that Mafia involvement was discovered. As far as we know, the factory, which employed most of the town's work force, is still closed down as of this writing.

It is interesting to notice the timing of the move by the Mafia to control the cheese and pizza business in the United States. Panatella, a Vatican controlled company dealing mainly in flour and pasta, lost two and a half million dollars just prior to the Mafia takeover and required financing of 4.8 million dollars to keep it afloat.

Martin discloses that by the late sixties both the Institute for Religious Words (whose assets were conservatively put at 3 billion dollars) and the Special Administration of Holy See Property were invested in every sector of Italian industry and commerce. He went on to say, "On the boards of directors of companies in which the Vatican had an interest there always sat a Vatican 'family' man, somebody like Massimo Spada or Luigi Mennini." [2]

Martin also pointed out that the Special Administration of Holy See Property, which was run by competent lay bankers, was advised by J. P. Morgan, Hambros Brothers of London, and the Rothschilds of Paris. Ostling recounts the story of Boys' Town, a Roman Catholic charity.

Boys Town now has a worth of well over \$200 million, including a securities portfolio valued (very conservatively) at \$157 million.

Although the interest on such a nest egg is ample to operate the Town, it still spends millions to send the traditional tearjerker fund appeals to 34 million people and raises nearly \$18 million a year. This means Boys Town has about three times the endowment of Notre Dame University, raises more money than the Greater New York United Fund, and would rank 372nd in assets on the Fortune 500 if it were a business corporation. All this for 700 boys. [3]

All this came to light after much digging by a weekly newspaper in Omaha, Nebraska. According to Lo Belloia Roman Catholic journalist, the Vatican is the only sovereign state that never publishes a budget. He was accused of exaggeration in his estimates of

Vatican wealth, but suffice it to say, the wealth of the Vatican must be immense, for a simple honest disclosure of its holdings, if they do not constitute, great wealth, would lay to rest all the “extravagant” estimates of various writers, but such a disclosure has not been forthcoming.

The Sindona debacle, which the Vatican sought to hide from the general public, resulted in a loss of close to one billion dollars. Yet the Vatican carried on as before, demonstrating its reservoir of financial reserves as nothing else could. Very few companies could sustain such a loss and carry on without so much as a whisper. (Chrysler Corporation lost half a billion and would have gone under but for the U. S. government.)

The financial tentacles of the Vatican reach into numerous banks in different countries. Yallop says that the Rothschilds in Paris have been doing business with the Vatican since early in the 19th century. [4] He goes on to point out that, “Credit Suisse, Hambros, Morgan Guaranty, Bankers Trust, Chase Manhattan, and Continental Illinois among others became Vatican partners.” [5]

This financial empire which finances the Vatican conspiracy is filled with murder and mayhem. Yallop states “The murder of Luciano-Pope John Paul I was to stop him from removing Marcinkus who was the foundation holding up Calvi Sindona, and Celli.” [6] When the dust had cleared from John Paul’s mysterious death, it left in its aftermath -a series of murders, assassinations and “suicides” that only the Mafia could match for cold blooded ness. Of the main players in the scene only Marcinkus and Celli still remain in control. Yallop recounts in detail each one of the murders and “suicides,” and his pages, which are very difficult to refute, make grim reading. His book, “IN GOD’S NAME,” merits close reading by all who are concerned about freedom.

Because of the criticism that no disclosure is ever made of its wealth, the Vatican has in recent years tried to reform some of its monetary policies, but much still remains to be done. No estimation can be given of the immense wealth of the Vatican, but one can get some glimpses of the multi-billion dollar enterprise through various works that have appeared in recent years.

Ostling, in his work, “Secrecy in The Church,” written from the standpoint of one sympathetic to the Church, does give some interesting insights into the wealth of the Papacy.

He recounts that the late Bishop James A. Pike (a convert from Romanism to Episcopalianism) wrote what he calls a sensational article in which he said that the Jesuits had a controlling interest in the Bank of America the nation’s largest and that they earned 250 million dollars a year from their investments (a quarter of a billion). He goes on to say that the Jesuits “sputtered, but the have never made a full accounting of their holdings.” [7] Gollin, a freelance writer who tried to research Papal wealth, figured the securities and commercial properties of the Dioceses of the U. S at almost “one billion dollars.” [8] Nino Lo Bello put “the American Jesuit’s annual income at \$250 million.” He claims that all Catholic units in the U. S. and Canada combined have assets of more than \$80 billion and an annual income of nearly \$12 billion.” [9]

It was none other than Cardinal Vagnozzi who observed concerning the Vatican’s finances:

It would take a combination of the KGB, the C. I. A. and Interpol to obtain just an inkling of how much and where the monies are. [10]

According to this Cardinal three of the most powerful agencies in the world could only obtain an inkling of how much the Vatican is worth.

Yallop points out that the “Vatican bought into General Motors, Shell, Gulf Oil, General Electric, Bethlehem Steel, IBM and TWA.” He went on to say that “the Vicar of Christ had acquired a new unofficial title: Chairman of the Board” [11]

The Vatican also acquired “controlling interest in companies, in fields of insurance, steel, financing, flour and spaghetti, industry, cement and real estate.” [12] It owns sections of downtown Montreal, Canada, sections of Mexico City in Mexico, many of the major hotels in Italy, blocks of real estate on the Champs D’Elysee in Paris, the Watergate area in Washington, D. C. , real estate in New York City, and the entire satellite city of Lomas Verdes in Mexico. This is only the tip of the iceberg, for much of the Vatican’s wealth is hidden in holding companies so that it is difficult to come even close in an estimate of its vast wealth. It is interesting to observe also that Pope John Paul, who was murdered in the Vatican, intended to reform the Vatican’s finances. Yallop in his work claims that this could have been one of a half dozen reasons why he was murdered right in the Vatican. Another very interesting fact is that Pope John Paul confessed to Father Dezza. Even the Pope has a prelate to whom he confesses, and poor Pope John Paul for some reason chose the head of the Jesuits as his “Father Confessor.” If for any reason he chose to confide some of his proposed changes to Dezza, he may have unwittingly sealed his own death warrant.

Malachi Martin, former Jesuit professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, in his new book, “RICH CHURCH POOR CHURCH,” puts the wealth of the “church” at 300 billion dollars. He points out that the Vatican is the largest single stockholder in the world with about \$20 billion dollars traceably invested (but much more untraceably invested) with gold deposits exceeding those of most medium sized countries, and with a worldwide real estate operation. [13]

He goes on to say in another place: “A list of the companies and banks in Italy and abroad in which the Vatican acquired a controlling interest before the outbreak of World War II, when added to the

list of those in which it acquired a minor but substantial interest, would fill some sixty or seventy pages of this book. [14]

Even Martin, who still classes himself as a Roman Catholic, is appalled at the extent of the Vatican’s wealth when contrasted with the impoverished millions of Roman Catholics around the world. The present Pope speaks much about economic justice. Although much has been written about the present Pope in glowing terms, Yallop does not share the international newsmen’s accolade. Yallop states candidly: “The papacy of John Paul II has been a case of business as usual. The business has benefited immeasurably not only from the murder of Albino Luciana, but also from the murders that have followed that strange lonely death in the Vatican. [15]

He goes on to say: “Many millions of words have been written since the election of Karol Wojtyla in attempts to analyze and understand what kind of man he is. As can be seen, he is the kind of man who could allow men like Villot, Cody, Marcinkus, Mennini, De Strobel and Poletto to remain in office. [16]

He adds: “It is a papacy of double standards, one for the Pope and one for the rest of mankind. There can be no defense on the grounds of ignorance. Marcinkus is directly answerable to the Pope.” [17]

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The Conspiracy Of Misdirection

Satan has a plan for this world. His plan is doomed to failure, but that does not mean it is to be taken lightly or that it cannot affect men and nations and do untold harm before it is finally frustrated.

Dr. Stuart McBirnie retraced the steps of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. In those cities where the great Apostle had established churches in the first century, the cause of Christianity has disappeared. McBirnie recounted how not only was he not able to find a church of any kind, but in some instances he could not even find one Christian. So although the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church of the Living Christ, some local churches do fold up and disappear under the onslaught of the devil and this world.

Satan has been at work since the fall of man. So his Satanic conspiracy to dominate this world is of age long duration. Satan's primary area of operation we saw in our first study as the area of religion. Only God's believing remnant can understand this aspect of the conspiracy, and even many of them are at sea at this point. Every unsaved person thinks that religion is a good thing when in fact only vital biblical Christianity is a good thing; every other religion is a satanic counterfeit. Satan is working to deceive the nations. He works through individuals. It should be obvious to every thinking person that there are people working day and night to overthrow vital biblical Christianity and many of these individuals are religious, even posing as "Christians." In other words the battle we face is primarily a spiritual one. It will not be defeated by merely legal efforts or even protests unless the protests are centered on a proper interpretation of the Word of God.

Romanism has made unbelievable advances in the United States in the last one hundred years. As one leading Roman Catholic spokesman said, "We are less than one hundred years from Rum, Romanism and Rebellion, referring to the slogan of American politicians at the close of the nineteenth century. (See our first booklet for further documentation.)"

Gary Allen in his examination of conspiracy fails to come to grips with known historical conspiracies. For one reason or another he obviously ignores the documented religious conspiracies of history. Roman Catholic conspiracies are part of the historical record. Papal plots have been discovered, and the conspirators arrested and brought to trial at various junctures of history. Father Chiniquy portrays Romanists as the main plotters in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. So the Vatican has been working night and day to shift the burden of conspiracy from its shoulders to some other group of conspirators. Since the McCarthy era, extremist groups have painted almost every leader in the United States as Communist, pro-communist, or an insider. NO ONE HAS EVER LOOKED AT THE PAPAL INTRIGUE, which is still going on today as it has for over 1,000 years. While men hunt for shadowy conspirators among America's leaders, who evidence no continuity whatsoever, Romanism, with a continuity in conspiracy unparalleled in the history of man, continues to flourish and to call the shots in the area of religion and politics.

It should be obvious to every Bible-believer that one of the main tasks of the Satanic conspiracy is to direct those who are seeking to discover the conspiracy and alert Christians to it to some other apparent culprit. This we term the conspiracy of misdirection.

Misdirection is written large in the field of conspiracy. We see this conspiracy of misdirection focused in four main areas.

1. Toward the Masons

The Masons have become a favorite whipping boy for conspiratorialists writing on the great global conspiracy. While we do not approve of the Masons, we do not believe the Roman Catholic propaganda put out against the Masons. Yallop postulates a secret Masonic Conspiracy against the Vatican in his work, "INGOD'S NAME." Michele Sindona is also linked to the Masons by Yallop, Martin, and other writers.

Sindona came out of Sicily, the reputed home of the Mafia but is regarded as a Mason by Martin. He is certainly a man of mystery. But to try to link him to the Masonic Lodge and hint at some hidden conspiracy by the Masons to destroy the Roman Catholic Church through financial embezzlement is more fiction than fact. It is true that Sindona was linked to the loss of almost one billion dollars, which the Vatican financial empire sustained, and that he at one time was a close friend of Pope Paul. According to Newsweek he was the brains behind an intricate group of holding companies (and) he controlled a chain of hotels, a giant multinational real-estate operation, several industrial firms in Europe and America, half a dozen banks. Rumor had it that he was the Pope's chief financial adviser, or alternatively, the Mafia's number one banker. [1]

When Pope Paul realized the amount of money involved in the Sindona scandal, he said that Sindona was in the "hands of unknown powers," hinting at some dark super-conspiracy against the Papacy. For it is a belief of many Roman Catholics and even some "Protestant" writers, that the great conspiracy is not directed by Rome but is directed at Rome. At least Malachi Martin seems to indicate as much in his work. He tells that:

"Montini (who later became Pope Paul) had known that over in the Quirinal. . . and within the Vatican behind Pacelli's back, there were men and women who dealt every day in millions of church dollars -the "Patrimony of St. Peter" buying war and selling peace down the river, cynically scandalously. Montini could almost see a Satanic rictus behind the whole affair. [2]

Martin also points out that late in the Sindona scandal, "It is now reported to Paul that Michele Sindona is a member of the Masonic order." [3] Before the whole affair with Sindona was over, Paul was to feel that Sindona was a shadowy figure behind some great conspiracy against the Papacy.

Roman Catholic writers, of course, do not believe in a Roman Catholic conspiracy. So they are constantly proffering Masonry or some other Bilderberger or Tri-Lateralist conspiracy as the real one. Some conservative Protestants, who do not know their Bibles, have taken up the cry of the Roman Catholic conspiratorialists. But to try to link Michele Sindona to some conspiracy against the papacy is a difficult task. For the few things that we do know about his early education show that he was educated by the Jesuits. Also his bank failures, while definitely affecting the Vatican, also affected him. The Vatican not only lost millions, but Michele Sindona lost so much that he was wiped out. So if Sindona was in the hands

of “unknown powers,” they must have been unknown to him too, for they certainly deserted him when he needed a friend. The powers, which seem to be connected with Sindona, were the Mafia. For the main government witness against him, Giorgio Ambroscoli, who had been appointed to liquidate the Sindona controlled banks in Italy, was killed in Milan. No one was ever charged with the crime.

Sindona had to flee to America where after another bank failure he was arrested and brought to trial and sentenced to five years on “65 counts of conspiracy, fraud and perjury.” [4] The truth that must be grasped in this whole Sindona scenario is that Sindona, who drew a lot of attention to the Vatican, is now out of commission and thoroughly discredited. But the Vatican is still there, directing would-be conspiracy hunters away from the Vatican conspiracy to Insider, Bilderberger or other shadowy conspiracies. The enduring nature of the Vatican power base makes it a prime suspect in the field of conspiracy.

Michele Sindona was at one time one of the most powerful men, in Italy. He was also closely identified with Vatican finances. It seems to us that there is much more substance to the assertion that Sindona was probably “done in” by the Vatican instead of vice-versa. Sindona was about to be investigated by the Italian government. The man sent to investigate his bank, who unearthed many things, some of them probably not complimentary to the Vatican, was murdered for his trouble. Yallop believes that he was murdered by the Mafia.

However it appears obvious that Sindona had now become a very possible international embarrassment to the Vatican, and he himself maintained that he fled to the United States to escape being murdered.

After arriving here, even the bank that he owned in the United States went under. Again the only power on earth able to bring banks down in any one of fifty countries is the Vatican. It not only wields great financial clout but has hundreds of dedicated devotees in powerful positions in banks and financial institutions, which it does not even control, to help fulfill its plans. Sindona went down, down, down without a friend to help. His financial fortune for the most part disappeared almost over night. Yallop believes that Sindona is a suspect behind the murder of Pope John Paul I. It seems that Sindona for all his mystery really had little or no clout at all in the end. He just went to jail. As Hammer points out in his book, “THE VATICAN CONNECTION,” the Roman Catholic New York policeman, who linked the Vatican to the Mafia and to a billion dollar counterfeit scam, when nothing was ever done to bring the culprits to justice, said he had finally realized that if you are powerful enough, you are beyond the reach of the law. Sindona was not that powerful!

Hammer says of Coffey, the New York Irish American Roman Catholic policeman, who had tracked the links of the Mafia right into the heart of the Vatican in a billion dollar counterfeit scheme so vast that few would believe it:

“There had been months of plodding along twisted and tangled pathways that seemed to be leading nowhere, and moments of startling breakthrough and discovery. Often during those years as the scope of the hunt and its consequence became clear, he had been convinced that this was what he had been born to do, that this would be the capstone of his career. And now it was over, ended not with the glittering victories he had foreseen but on a sour and cynical note. HE COULD NO LONGER DENY WHAT HE HAD NOT WANTED TO BELIEVE: THERE ARE PEOPLE SO POWERFUL AND SO HIGHLY PLACED THAT THEY ARE IMPERVIOUS TO THE LAW, AND THAT SOCIETY’S RULES AND CODES DO NOT APPLY TO THEM.” [5] (emphasis ours)

The main lesson that Hammer’s book teaches is that it is easier to bring down the President of the United States than a crook in the Vatican. When the investigation ended, Aronwald, who was testifying before a Senate sub-committee in Washington said:

“Because of serious allegations that had been made with respect to someone in the Vatican although the name of the individual was never given, the Department of Justice made contacts with the Vatican and obtained their cooperation. As a result of our visit and a result of the cooperation of the Vatican, we were able to conclude that there was no substance to the allegation that anyone within the Vatican was culpably involved in this scheme.” [6]

In other words, there was a complete whitewash of the whole investigation. So while the real criminals go free, lesser men are prosecuted and sent to jail. Michele Sindona was one of the ones who went to jail. So although a financial wizard, in some ways he proved to be quite vulnerable in the end while the Vatican men roll on without batting an eye, cleared of all culpability.

The charges against Sindona were also the same as those made against Nogara, the financial wizard who put the Vatican on the map financially. Nogara was the brains behind the reorganization of the whole financial structure of the Vatican in 1929. He succeeded in moving the Vatican fortunes from

millions to billions before he retired in 1958. However, he was investigated on the charges that he was a Mason and belonged to a secret Masonic society and was secretly conspiring against the Vatican. The same old story trotted out against Sindona and also written large in modern books dealing with Conspiracy. (See Yallop, Allen, and Bowen for corroboration.)

Not only was Nogara not a Masonic man, nor a conspirator against the “church,” he was one of the most loyal hard working sons of the “church” that Italy ever produced. Not only was he not out to ruin the Vatican, he helped it on to such financial success that it now has become one of the richest organizations on earth. When the investigation was completed by the Vatican loyalists, the taciturn Nogara was completely exonerated of all charges against him, and the record showed that he was completely trustworthy, a loyal son of the Vatican in every respect. Yet these rumors and charges persist in every generation and are still being made today.

We believe that the reason we hear of “secret Masonic conspiracies” is to keep the idea of a mock conspiracy before the people to keep them from seeing the real thing. These writers lack one thing in their writings on conspiracy, and that is an in-depth exegesis of Revelation 17-18. They focus attention on the Masons to draw away attention from the Vatican and to create sympathy for the Pope and Papacy, who are then considered victims of the conspiracy rather than the brains behind it.

2. The Insider Theory

The second theory that we see written large in contemporary works is the Insider theory. That is, that a certain group of financiers are at work to control the world. Gary Allen, of course, postulates this idea as do others like William Bowen. Allen states:

“In the Bolshevik Revolution we have some of the world’s richest and most powerful men financing a movement which claims its very existence is based upon the concept of stripping of their wealth men like the Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Schiffs, Warburgs, Morgans, and Harrimans, and Milners. But obviously those men have no fear of international communism. It is only to assume that if they financed it and do not fear it, it must be because they control it. Remember that for 150 years it has been standard operating procedure of the Rothschilds and their allies to control both sides of every conflict. [7]

It certainly is easy to direct attention toward the Rothschilds because of their great wealth and also because they are Jews. What Allen fails to see is that every accusation that can be made against the Rothschilds and their allies can also be made against the Vatican with much more weight. The Rothschilds’ wealth, although immense, is not in the same league with the Vatican’s. The tentacles of the Rothschilds do not reach into every government on earth with anything approaching the same degree as the Vatican’s. The longevity of the alleged conspiracy of the Rothschilds, according to Allen himself, goes back a mere 150 years-again nothing in comparison to the Papacy whose global ambitions and intrigue go back more than a thousand years.

Again the idea of operating on both sides of every major conflict with which Allen charges the Rothschilds can be seen in the history of Vatican power politics with far greater documentation to support it. It can even be seen right now in Central America at this very moment. The Vatican is on both sides in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and the intrigue of the Jesuits on both sides of the conflicts is causing such an uproar that the Pope traveled there to try to defuse the embarrassing situation.

3 Secular Humanist Theory

The third idea of the conspiracy that faces America is “Secular humanism.” William Bowen in his book, “GLOBALISMAMERICA’S DEMISE,” spends much time and effort trying to pin America’s troubles on the secular humanists. This has become a popular theme with other conservative writers as well. We would be the last to downplay the effect that secular humanism has had on America, but we do not think that secular humanism is the global conspiracy that confronts the world.

In fact we believe that the flurry over secular humanism at the present time is another case of misdirection. The real conspiracy is much more closely knit and has much clearer goals. The drift of America from her Protestant moorings allows the religious men to take over. We get tired of listening to those who speak of America’s Judeo-Christian ethic. America was founded upon historic Bible Protestantism. Anyone who has studied early American history knows that her people were made up of the persecuted Protestants of Europe who fled here for a refuge and built the greatest country the world has ever seen. It was built solidly on English-Puritanism, Scottish Presbyterianism, Scots-Irish Presbyterianism,

German Pietism and Dutch Calvinism. As for Jews and Roman Catholics, they were almost unheard of in the early days of America. And they certainly had little or no influence outside Rhode Island and Maryland. Why do we never hear of this in any of the writings which conservatives write today? You would think that American liberties came from the Jews and Roman Catholics. America is going down because the Protestant Puritan ethic upon which she was founded is being replaced not by a secular humanism but by an effete false religion which will not mention the past but will praise the Roman Anti-Christ. This is the crux of America’s trouble. God judges idolatry whether our half baked modern Protestant Christian writers realize it or not. America is going down not from secular humanism nor a false pietism but from a love affair with idolatry and false religion.

It is indeed very strange that we hear nothing about the Inquisition today. In reading the “STEALING OF AMERICA,” we note that the secular humanists are the ones we have to fear. When illustrations are drawn of persecutions in the past, mention is made of the early Christians, who were thrown to the lions in the Roman arena and of Christians, who were tortured under Communism in Eastern Europe.

Various philosophers are named in recent books as the cause of the downfall of western civilization. In all this plethora of writing about the demise of America because of certain sinister forces, no mention is ever made of the Inquisition which lasted 500 years. Is that not passing strange?

We hear of the Hordes of the French Revolution but not the Massacre of St. Bartholmew’s Day, carried out not by atheists, secular humanists or a totalitarian state, but by those claiming to be religious and belonging to the only true “church.” Secular humanism is made out to be the unstoppable force while Romanism flourishes in America as never before. While misguided Protestants stare at “Secular Humanism,” Romanism controls the White House, the C. I. A. , the F. B. I. , the Congress, and most of the leading posts in the present Reagan Administration.

Manhattan observes: “The existence of such an organically oriented Catholic body would have been a matter of concern itself, but the fact that it enjoyed the patronage of the most eminent individuals of the U. S. political intelligence and military establishment, made their presence one of profound disquiet. The list, although minimal, was impressive: from General Alexander Haig, Secretary of State, (since deposed) to Mr. Casey, head of the Central Intelligence Agency; from D. Regan of the U. S. Treasury to Mr. Allen of the National Security; from Mrs. Kirkpatrick, UNO, to W. Clark, who replaced Allen in 1982, to W. S. Wilson, the U. S. envoy at the Vatican and a convert to Catholicism, and many others in less glamorous but nonetheless very influential posts up and down the administration. [8]

As of this writing President Reagan has appointed an ambassador to the Vatican, and he has pledged that if reelected he would fight for the family in the spirit of Pope John Paul II. So Vatican influence is written large in American politics today. (As for fighting for the family, the papacy has been the greatest enemy of the family in most Roman Catholic countries in the world, grinding the family under its tyrannical heel all over Central America, South America, Southern Europe, Eire, and wherever it has been entrenched for centuries.)

The blackout which has been thrown over the Inquisition and the massacres and persecutions of Romanism apparently is no accident. Conservative writers apparently believe that the United States has nothing to fear from the Vatican, and therefore, they seem to have tacitly agreed not to mention known historical horrors connected with Rome’s global ambitions.

The use of the word “Christian” today by many of these writers, who would alert us to the evils that confront us, is obviously an omnibus term. It obviously includes in its meaning, as used today, the unchristian religion of Romanism.

So in saving America from the secular humanist conspiracy, we are being herded along with Romanism to do the job. Such writing leaves a lot to be desired as far as the Biblical Christian is concerned. One has only to look at a nation where Romanism holds absolute sway to see that the Vatican can match anything any secular state has ever produced in the way of suppression and more.

Biblical Christians, keep to your Bibles! Do not be misled even by sincere men, who have not

done their homework in church history nor apparently in Bible Doctrine. .

4. The Usurper Theory

The fourth idea put forward to misdirect us concerning the Global Conspiracy is the Usurper Theory. This theory links the Vatican to the conspiracy but maintains that the Pope is kidnapped or killed and his place taken by another man who is a Communist or atheist.

The idea is written large in contemporary works although it is not new. The Novel, “THE JANUS POPE,” is a story about the real pope being kidnapped and a Communist put in his place. Although this book has some of the characters saying nasty things about the Vatican, the idea that the Pope is God’s representative or God’s deputy is put forward a number of times. So the author apparently views the pope as Christ’s vicar upon earth.

Malachi Martin in his book, “THE FINAL CONCLAVE,” also alludes to this idea of usurpation. The national news media also gave large coverage to the Bulgarian Connection in their attempts to assassinate the Pope. So that the impression is given to the unthinking that the real conspiracy, even though it does involve the papacy, involves it only as the target of the intrigue and not as the originator of it.

Dean Alford in his “PROLEGOMENA TO THE REVELATION” points out that even Roman Catholic expositors see the papacy in Revelation 17 and 18. From Joachim’s time men’s mind even WITHIN THE ROMISH CHURCH, became accustomed to the idea that the apocalyptic Babylon was in some sense or other not only Pagan but PAPAL ROME; and that Antichrist was to sit, whether as an usurper or not, on the throne of the papacy. [9] (emphasis ours)

Joachim was Abbot of Flores in the 12th Century. He denounced even back then the corruption of the Roman clergy, the issue of indulgences, the deification of the Roman Church and the Crusades. He saw in the Revelation the description of the Papacy as Mystery Babylon the Great and the Mother of Harlot religion.

So with such a crushing weight to dispose of, it is not surprising that the idea of a usurper upon the seat of the papacy is written large in contemporary thought. Something had to be done to offset Protestant suspicions of a secret cabal in the heart of the Vatican. So a massive propaganda effort to educate Protestants in the niceties of the papacy and the evil machinations of some other shadowy conspirators out to destroy this nice institution had to be launched. The sad thing is that apparently millions of Protestants have bought this idea without even a second thought. Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit, may still imagine that there are many Protestants who believe in this secret cabal in the heart of the Vatican, but in actuality their number is very, very small. By far the majority of modern Protestants have swallowed the Vatican line.

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Concluding Remarks

Malachi Martin says: “For too long now those in the higher echelons of the Church have been suspected of quite worldly aims: of secret almost cabalistic-designs on the rights, liberties, and freedoms of ordinary people. Many a sincere modern Protestant is still convinced that this is true.” [1]

Martin was a former Jesuit professor. He seems to write from a very open view point. But in his serious and even severe criticisms of the Vatican in his books, “THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN CHURCH,” and “RICH CHURCH POOR CHURCH,” he never once criticizes the entity itself. Only things about it, bad things to be sure, but not the historical reality-and to him-the true and only church in all of history.

Martin is very shrewd. His open criticism of the church establishes him in the minds of millions as an enemy of the church. He is far from it. But the idea that he is a critical enemy gives much more weight

to his writings in the eyes of Protestants, thus enabling him to still latently push the idea of the Pope as Christ’s Vicar upon earth and the Roman Catholic Church, the only true church that exists.

His contention that many a sincere modern Protestant still is convinced that there is a cabal, an intrigue by a few powerful men to take over the world, and that they are centered in the Vatican, is probably less true now than at any point in Protestant history. We would have to say that VERY FEW modern Protestants even view the Papacy as other than another denomination, and even fewer still see anything even approaching cabalistic designs on the part of its leaders as the foregoing pages demonstrate. The powerful impact of papal propaganda is beginning to show itself together with the almost total apathy and indifference of most modern Protestants to Bible Interpretation. The complete failure of anything even approaching a Protestant solidarity against the obvious encroachments of papal teachings in once Protestant America proves the truth of the foregoing sentences.

The complete ignorance and apathy of most American Protestants to the Vatican designs on America is, to say the least, disturbing. Not only that, but even those, who are supposed to be informed and even write books to warn Americans about the dangers which this nation faces, never even mention Romanism much less examine its goals for America.

We hear much about perversion today and of how America will go down the tubes if the “Gays” have their way. But no one ever mentions doctrinal perversion. Doctrinal perversion is always the forerunner of sexual perversion. The Scriptures are clear at this point. “Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge God gave them “over unto a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient.” The Scriptures teach clearly that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against those who hold back the truth in unrighteousness. Doctrinal perversion leads to idolatry which leads to sexual perversion according to Romans Chapter one.

When the Pope of Rome preaches the perverted doctrines of Romanism, enforced celibacy, purgatory, Mariolatry, etc. , he is as much a threat to a pure America as any sexual pervert who clamors for “Gay” rights. This is the truth that we must see today or perish as a nation. Impure doctrines of demons affect a society more than the impure actions of some of, its members.

The nature of our battle is spiritual. When the Biblical truths of the Word of God with which evil is defeated are replaced by the satanic drivel of false religion, that society which experiences the barrage of satanic drivel is every bit as bad off as any secular humanist society. Secular humanism is not the only evil facing North America! In fact, North America has far more to fear from religious idolatry than it has from secular humanists.

Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, Francis Schaeffer and Ronald Reagan are all working to defeat the secular humanists. But none of them even has one word to say about the religious idolatry which curses America. Apparently, it is all right for that to flourish. In other words as long as a person can say he is religious, he is not considered a threat to the freedoms that many Americans still hold dear.

We would have to say candidly; the judgment of God has a far greater chance of falling upon America because of idolatrous false religion than it does because of secular humanism. We oppose the atheistic humanists without reservation, but we do not believe that this is where the heat of the battle rages in America today.

We believe that America’s love affair with the Great Whore who sits on the Tiber poses a far greater threat to America’s freedoms than any other evil which America faces today.

We recognize the power of Communism. We recognize the power of Islam. We recognize the power of secular humanism. We also recognize the power of Romanism; and we would have to say that a candid look at America today will show that of the four evils mentioned, Romanism constitutes by far the biggest internal threat to America today than any of the others. As America becomes more and more idolatrous, she comes more and more under the indictment of the Second Commandment. God’s wrath is repeatedly poured out in the Scriptures upon his chosen people for their idolatry. (This sin is never mentioned once by most modern writers.) In the second commandment, which is not taught in Roman Catholic schools, God is spoken of as “visiting the iniquity of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,” a fearful judgment which our modern writers never mention and perhaps do not even believe is actual. This judgmental visitation of God upon succeeding generations is because of IDOLATRY, not atheism nor pornography.

It is great to make accusations against the Bilderbergers and the Insiders and the Illuminati because almost everyone in the world can identify against such people. The very capability of being able to identify against them, we believe, points up the weakness in such accusations. According to the Word of God, which is supposed to be the final authority for Bible Protestants, when false Christs and false prophets

arise, the only ones who are not deceived are God’s elect people. In other words, as we pointed out in our first booklet, this world of people will go along with false religion, the rise of Mystery Babylon the Great, and will worship the Anti-Christ.

It is only God’s elect people who will in every generation stand against the encroachments of religious evil. So if the evil is so identified that most of the world can be antagonistic toward it, it is in all probability not the beginning, middle or end of the final apostate conglomerate, which is to rule the earth and be the cage of EVERY UNCLEAN bird.

The Vatican has been the center of evil and uncleanness now for more than a thousand years. It was the Mother of the Inquisition which tortured, persecuted and martyred multiplied millions of precious believers for 500 years. Wilder states in his careful study:

“That the records of historians and martyrologists show that it may be reasonable to estimate that from fifty to sixty-eight millions of human beings died, suffered torture, lost their possessions, or were otherwise devoured by the Roman Catholic Church during the awful years of the Inquisition. [2]

According to Llorente, the official recorder for the Inquisition, until he became absolutely repulsed by it, more than 300,000 victims were immolated on the flaming faggots of the Spanish Inquisition alone. [3] It has been the effort of modern Roman Catholic writers to try to

play down the Inquisition and to deny its holocaust. But there are many reputable historians, who recount its atrocities for those interested in finding out the truth.

We have a two volume set which deals with the Spanish Inquisitors in Holland. The pages are filled with account after account of torture and horror that would make our ears tingle. It tells of one man who opposed the false doctrines of Rome, who was put on a spit and slowly roasted over an open fire. [4]

The Vatican not only has been the center of cruelty and persecution, it has also been the center of a never ending spate of false doctrine and practice, which if the Bible is true, will lead most of its adherents to a lost eternity. So that the true Bible believer, who is interested in the salvation of souls from sin and from eternal death, is impelled to stand against this onslaught and to warn those caught up in it.

The fact that the Vatican is evil is, of course, admitted by some Roman Catholic writers. They go into great detail in highlighting some of its ancient and modern evils. But the bottom line is that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church in spite of the evils of the Inquisition, the persecutions of the past, and even the heinous crimes of some of the popes. Malachi Martin criticizes the church severely. But one must be wary in reading such writings.

When Martin criticizes the Vatican, he is criticizing its financial and secular dealings. He is not criticizing its doctrines and teachings. He points out in his book on the decline of the church that it started to decline when it received all the money and land, etc. from Constantine; from then on a struggle developed between its spiritual mission and mammon. He even has in his latest books ideas on how the church is to rid itself of its financial empire, but what he fails to say is that there is to be no revision of nor ridding itself of, its erroneous dogmas and teachings. This is the crux of the whole matter.

To the Bible believing Protestant even if the Roman Catholic Church divested itself of every dime (something that will never happen if Revelation 17 and 18 are true) it would still be a reservoir of evil and error. Its unscriptural teaching on Purgatory is a producer of great evil in several ways. It makes people believe they can buy their way out of trouble in the hereafter, thus affecting everything they do in this life. It also deceives them as to the true nature of eternity so that those who die expecting to buy their way out of purgatory will instead be lost forever in the lake of fire with no hope of ever being released.

The unscriptural teaching inherent in the Mass is also a producer of great evil. Millions live any old way but believe that by taking a consecrated wafer from the hands of sinful man, they are receiving Christ. The Reformers, Puritans, and early Methodists called the Mass a blasphemous fable. They did not do this to be nasty. They did it because they believed that a proper interpretation of the Scriptures proved that Christ died once for all and his once for all offering never needed to be repeated, for it was final, full, and sufficient to deal with the problem of man's sin. No other offering was needed, and so no other could ever be offered especially by sinful men. The idea that sinful men could offer a sacrifice for sins they rightly believed constituted blasphemy. The reason they called it a fable was also established from Scripture. "This is my body" is obviously a figure of speech and not to be taken literally. Even as the cup, which is the New Testament in my blood, is also a similar figure. No one ever argues for the actual cup being the New Testament although thousands have engaged in the controversy over the elements.

It is a fable to assume that by the magic of a priest the bread actually becomes the actual body of Christ. It is an egregious fable to say the least. Yet this blasphemous fable is foisted upon an unsuspecting Protestant populace almost nightly especially when the Pope goes anywhere in the world today.

The unscriptural teaching of an enforced celibacy is also pushed upon us until we almost vomit. As we write these words, the Pope is visiting Canada. We get his face on every television news program and his speeches in every newspaper. In the Altoona Mirror, September 10, 1984, we were told this about the Pope in Canada.

John Paul began his twelve day tour of Canada on Sunday and followed his custom of getting straight to the point on controversial religious issues by reaffirming the Catholic (the writer obviously means Roman Catholic, and there is an eternal difference) Church's stand that priests and nuns must never marry.

Three things need to be said about this statement.

1. The Bible says that an enforced celibacy is a doctrine of demons. I Timothy 4:1-3.

Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy having their conscience seared with a hot iron; **FORBIDDING TO MARRY. . . .**

So according to the Bible those who forbid others to marry are

a. departed from the faith.

b. heeding seducing spirits c: teaching doctrines of demons

c. speaking lies

d. in hypocrisy (not only lies you see but hypocritical ones) f. having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

What a devastating indictment from God's inspired, infallible, inerrant and authoritative Word!

2. Notice it is all right for the Pope to go right to the point on controversial religious issues. Let any Protestant such as Ian Paisley, do the same thing, and he is immediately called a preacher of sectarianism, an arch-bigot or worse. Nobody calls the Pope an arch bigot, or Preacher of Sectarianism, even though he comes out with some of the most bigoted sectarian statements that ever appear in our modern newspapers.

3. Just a few months ago seven Roman Catholic priests were involved in a sexual scandal with a young woman in California. News about the incident was sketchy as anything detrimental to Rome's good image seldom is considered newsworthy. However, we did learn the following facts. The young woman wanted to be a nun. She met with these priests who seduced her. She finally gave birth to a baby in the Philippines where the priests had sent her on the pretext that she was there studying. They had promised her money. When the money failed to come, she filed a paternity suit against the seven since they all apparently were involved with her. The filing of the suit is what brought the story into the news. We never heard another thing about it except that the Roman Catholic spokesman in Los Angeles intimated that the girl was of low morals and that was why she got the priests involved with her.

This resulted in a second suit filed by the girl for defamation of character. She maintained that she was perfectly innocent of the charges and that she went at the start to be a nun in good faith and that the reason she submitted to all seven was because she was under their authority. So much for enforced celibacy! It is indeed a doctrine of demons and the producer of an immorality in the monastic sphere that has been legendary since the Middle Ages. The Bible does state that a person does not have to marry if he does not want to, but no one has the right to enforce that upon those who cannot bear it, for the Scripture also states categorically that it is better to marry than to be in a burning passion.

At the very time this story of the seven priests was told once and never mentioned again, the three part drama, "CELEBRITY," was bring shown on a major network. We did not see the three parts, but we did see the end of the last part and gathered that the entire piece of fictional propoganda was directed against Bible

Protestantism. The young man who was the center piece of this drama was a former rapist, who later became a Protestant evangelist He was shown going kind of berserk. He shot his friend to death for being a homosexual. (Making out Protestant evangelists to be killers instead of portraying the sexual perverts as those who go around killing people, which would be much closer to the truth). At his trial he

was stabbed to death by the woman he had formerly raped and left for dead, who apparently had not died. So this whole sorry show was a well orchestrated attempt to denigrate Protestant evangelists.

We recognize that there are unsavory characters in Protestant circles, who make money off the unsuspecting, but are they the only circles where unsavory characters reside? To look at the modern Hollywood movie industry the answer is a resounding yes. It is well then that the actual events of life help to counterbalance the bigoted trash of modern Hollywood and the hypocritical remarks of a Polish Pope.

The enduring nature of Romanism is a sign that it is a devil inspired conspiracy in a unique sense. After some of the most cruel atrocities of history, combined with the gross immoralities, which have been part and parcel of the whole system, it has still managed not only to survive but to grow. Cardinal Manning said, "The Catholic Church is either the masterpiece of Satan or the Kingdom of God." Cardinal Newman declared, "Either the Church of Rome is the house of God or the house of Satan." [5] According then to two of its most famous representatives our choices are very limited as to the origin and nature of Romanism. It is either of God or of Satan.

To the Bible-believing Protestant, God is holy and His church is also holy. When the origins of the Roman Catholic Church are examined, they point to Satan rather than to Christ. Martin in his book, "THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN CHURCH," speaks of the method used in electing popes."Vicious enmities were created. Blood was shed. Lives were taken." [6] He goes on to say: "At the election of Pope Damasus I in AD 366, thirty-seven corpses littered the environs of the Liberian Basilica after a fracas between the followers of Damasus and his archrival, Ursinus." [7]

He goes into much greater detail later on and tells about Pope Stephen bringing his archrival before him with his knee caps broken, his body whipped, and his eyes carved out. He further elaborates:

“Within a year, Pope Stephen will have used Duke Desiderius to get Christophorus, Sergius, and Gratosus imprisoned, first their eyes cut out, then their lives ended. He then will turn on Desiderius and by December of 771 will encompass his ruin and death.” [8]

Martin again: “The high point in Marozia’s career came at the end of her very long life when she was visited in her Roman prison by an emperor who had just seized possession of the city-Otto III, a successor of Charlemagne. He had only one reason for visiting Marozia-to lay his eyes on the woman who was the mother of a pope, whom she had conceived by another pope, and who was the aunt of a third pope, the grandmother of a fourth pope, and with the help of her own mother, the creator of nine popes in eight years, of whom two had been strangled, one suffocated with a cushion, and four deposed and disposed of in circumstances that have never come to public light. [9]

So reads the pages of Martin’s book. Martin still believes in the Roman Catholic Church, but we ask the question how could any one believe that the Roman Cult is the kingdom of God after reading his book and after studying church history? It is absolutely inconceivable that the Holy Spirit of Truth has been connected with such atrocities, crimes, errors, and intrigues, for centuries. It is a spiritual and moral impossibility.

Nevertheless the Vatican has always shown great resiliency and adaptability in keeping abreast of national and international changes. It is working tirelessly toward one goal to bring the entire world to the feet of the Roman Pontiff. The methods used to achieve this goal have included and do include (as we have seen above) murder, massacre, Marxism, propaganda, irenic dialogue, revolution, repression, assassination, education, kindness, coercion, brotherhood, charity, monasticism, enforced celibacy, Jesuit casuistry, intrigue, financial threats and chicanery, and last but certainly not least, a global conspiracy with an historical continuity, and loyal henchmen to see that it continues to endure, unsurpassed in the annals of recorded history. The ends justify the means is no empty slogan, but the modus operandi of the global aspirations of the Jesuits and the Vatican.

As the final stages of the great Satanic religious conspiracy break upon the world, Bible believers need to watch their religious affiliation and fellowship. According to Revelation 18:4, some of God’s people are mixed up in the end-time unholy amalgam of Rome’s Harlot religion and the one world church. The Word says, “Come out of her, my people, that you be not partaker of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.” The one World Church, which will be dominated by Rome and ruled over by the Pope, is looming on the horizon. It may be years before we see the full-orbed picture of Mystery Babylon the Great in its final form, but every true Bible-believer in every generation stands against the Roman Catholic institution, for he sees in it all the seeds of the final apostate conglomerate which is described in Revelation chapters 17-19.

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37. The Millennium Of Revelation

The Final Wind-Up of Human History

When Time is Replaced by Eternity.

An Exposition of Revelation 20.

“I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” Revelation 20:1-3.

The fact that this one thousand year period transpires after the Second Advent means that the period must be a literal period of time. This answers the query as to whether the one thousand years are literal years or symbolic. (1)

THE TRADITION OF 7000 YEARS OF HUMAN HISTORY

“The Jewish Rabbis thought, as the world was created in six days and on the seventh God rested, so there would be six millenary periods, followed by a sabbatical millennium. Out of seven years every seventh is the year of remission, so out of the seven thousand years of the world, the seventh millenary shall be the millenary of remission. A tradition in the house of Elias 200 AD states that the world is to endure six thousand years - two thousand years before the law, two thousand years under the law and two thousand years under the Messiah.” (2)

We would agree with this theory IN PRINCIPLE because simple Bible chronology confirms that Adam’s creation was approximately 4000 BC. (3) However, no attempt should be made from the above, to try and date the Second Advent, because the periods are only approximate. If “the little season” after the millennium (Revelation 20:3) is included in the seven thousand years (which it should), then it is impossible to estimate when the six thousand years will end.

THE KEY TO REVELATION 20

The key to Revelation 20 is the term “bottomless pit” or abyss, in which Satan is bound. What is the bottomless pit? In the Old Testament Greek translation this term is used at least nineteen times. It is often translated “the deep”, meaning the ocean or the depths of the earth. Generally it means a place where there is no life. The first time the expression is used is at creation.

“. . . and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Genesis 1:2. (3a)

THE EARTH TO BE EMPTIED OF LIFE

We believe the “bottomless pit” or abyss or “the deep” refers to the earth in a desolate, chaotic, waste condition like it was at the beginning of creation. Does scripture confirm the claim that this earth in the future is to return to an empty, lifeless condition for a certain period of time? Yes; very clearly! The first authority is Jeremiah the prophet, who was given a vision of the future condition of the earth.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; [similar language to Genesis 1:2] and the heavens and they had no light. I beheld the mountains and lo, they trembled and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo there was no man and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger.” Jeremiah 4:23-26.

A SECOND APPLICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS

While this chapter referred initially to the invasion of the Babylonians of the land of Judah, it is obvious that this section of the chapter did not apply to Judah. The prophet, after beholding the local scene of destruction, is then shown how the whole earth will become desolate. Obviously, Jeremiah 4:23-28 applies to the future, for never have all the cities of the earth been broken down by the presence of the Lord. The Lord is present on earth now, by his Spirit, but he does not break down the cities. It must refer to the literal presence of Jesus Christ, when he comes the second time, when the literal cities of earth are broken down by his fierce anger.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES DESTROY CIVILIZATION

In Revelation 15 & 16 the fierce anger of God is brought to view in the seven last plagues. These fall in the year prior to the Second Advent. (4) In the 7th plague, “the cities of the nations” fall in the mighty earthquake that occurs at that time. Thus at the Second Advent, this world will be turned into a wilderness. The earth will become an abyss. The second authority is Isaiah, the gospel prophet who also predicted the future of this earth,

“Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof. The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that

are on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth and they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit [the bottomless pit] and shall be shut up in the prison and after many days shall they be visited.” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19-22.

Who are “the host of the high ones that are on high”? St. Paul in speaking of Satan and his angels, likens them to “wicked spirits in high places”. (Ephesians 6:12) (margin.) Revelation 20 tells us that during the millennium Satan and his hosts are imprisoned in “the bottomless pit”. This is the time of their punishment. Isaiah also declared, “after many days shall they be visited.” (verse 22.) Revelation 20 says that the “many days” will be a thousand years. The scriptures are very clear that the time is coming, in “the Day of the Lord” at the Second Advent of Christ, that this earth is to be emptied of life. See also Zephaniah 1:14-18 where the same scene is portrayed.

Revelation 20 also declares that Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit with a great chain. How can an angel be bound with a literal chain? We believe he will be bound by a figurative chain, a chain of circumstances.

SECOND ADVENT DEPOPULATES THE EARTH

What are the circumstances that will bind Satan in this earth for a thousand years? They will be the apocalyptic events that transpire when Christ returns to this world. The first event will be the mighty resurrection of all God’s sleeping saints, those who have died, faithfully believing in Christ. As St. Paul so beautifully declared:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

This is the great “resurrection of the just” - of true believers in Christ. They are coming back to life in the mighty resurrection at the Second Advent. The second event is the translation of the living believers.

“Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, [the resurrected dead] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

THE SAINTS ARE TAKEN TO HEAVEN

What is the destination of God’s people who are resurrected and translated and rise to meet Christ “IN THE AIR”? They then ascend with Christ to the “many mansions”.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye maybe also.” John 14:1-3.

The Father’s house is in the third heaven. (5) That is where God’s kingdom is located. Christ left this earth at his ascension and went back to the Father’s house. When he returns, he will take his people to the kingdom of heaven. This means then that all of God’s people are to be removed from this old earth.

THE UNSAVED ARE DESTROYED

The third event at the Second Advent is the fate of the unprepared, the unsaved, those who are deliberate enemies of the love of Christ.

“And of the rimes and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, and they shall not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.

Here is revealed the tragic destruction of the unsaved. It is life or death at the Second Advent. Either we are saved or we perish.

“To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

ONLY TWO DESTINIES

Many people do not want to believe what the above verse declares, but let us face the facts. Either we receive eternal life with Jesus Christ or we perish. (John 3:16) At the Second Advent there are only two groups, the righteous and the wicked. If the righteous are translated and the wicked are destroyed at the Second Advent, then this means that the earth will become empty, as the Old Testament prophets declared. This is confirmed by Jeremiah in his terrible picture of Armageddon.

“The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the

earth for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations. He will plead with all flesh; he will give then that are wicked to the sword . . . evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be in that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.” Jeremiah 25:30-33.

Why are they not lamented or buried? Because there is no one there to lament or bury them. Because God’s people have been translated to the kingdom. The earth has been left empty. It is a bottomless pit, an abyss, and in this empty earth, amid the ruins, Satan will be imprisoned for a thousand years. The one and only scene before him will be the devastating evidence of his rebellion. How vain and senseless it will then appear.

REASON FOR A FALSE VIEW OF THE MILLENIUM

Through the years, the majority of Christians have held that the reign of the saints with Christ during the millennium is upon the earth. Their basis for this is found in the Old Testament, where many times the prophets allude to the reign of peace, prosperity and righteousness, when God is supreme in the earth. However, all these predictions refer to the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth. (6) Originally these promises were to Israel who, if faithful, would have seen the above predictions fulfilled in a literal, local manner. Because Israel was not faithful, these predictions will be fulfilled in a worldwide manner, when this earth is made new, after the millennium, not during the millennium. (7)

ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SAINTS IN THE MILLENIUM

But what of God’s people who have been taken to the kingdom? The Revelator declares:

“After these things [events of the Second Advent] I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments.” Revelation 19:1.

After the Second Advent, the saints are seen in heaven, and we read concerning them. . .

“I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them. . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4

They reign not on the earth, but in heaven with Christ.

“Judgment was given to them.”

What does this mean? In the gospels Jesus declared: “Judge not that ye be not judged.” Matthew 7:1.

During the millennium, judgment is given to the saints. In what way? What type of judgment? St. Paul answers,

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? [The unsaved world]. Know you not that we shall judge angels?” [Fallen angels] 1 Corinthians 6:2.

SURPRISES FOR THE SAINTS IN THE KINGDOM

In what way will the unsaved be judged? With Christ the saints will examine the records of the unsaved, especially those that personally concern them. When we get to the kingdom there are going to be tremendous surprises. Jesus said,

“Many that are first shall be last and the last first.” (8)

Many whom we expected to be there will be missing. Others whom we expected not to be there, lo and behold, there they are! There will be questions raised in heaven when we realize who are missing. In heaven we will not lose our enquiring minds or our reason and intelligence, in fact, we will possess it to a far greater degree. Our questions will need to be answered and the answers will be found in the books. There are the records, secret records of every person. We will be able to investigate the records of any who are not there and ascertain the reason. When we read the secret record, then we will understand and be able to fully accept the decisions made.

Another aspect of the saints' work of judgment is that they, with Christ, will share in determining the degree of punishment that should injustice be allotted to the unsaved. When we bear in mind that most of the saints will have loved ones, who will be lost, this takes on real significance. We suggest that in counsel with Christ, the saints, on examining the record of their lost loved ones and understanding their earthly situation, etc. , will decide what degree of punishment is right and just for them. In this way there will be complete compliance concerning the sentence, and total accord, when in the final execution of the judgment, they witness the fate of those who once were their own flesh and blood. There will be no dissenting thought or voice on the part of the saints.

Some naturally ask, "How could anyone possibly be involved in assigning punishment to his or her own flesh and blood?" We need to remember that in the midst of the glories of the kingdom, earthly ties will sink into insignificance. Likewise, after 1000 years in bliss, our feelings toward lost relatives will probably have faded away.

WHY TWO GROUPS ARE SINGLED OUT

Why does the Revelator single out two particular groups in the scene of the investigative judgment of the unsaved? (Verse 4) (9)

1."Them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus."

2."And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands."

The first group appears to be the early Christian martyrs- the first of the saints to suffer for Christ. The apostle James was probably beheaded. (Acts 12:1, 2) Paul was beheaded, as well as many others. This was a form of capital punishment in that age. The claims of Christ clashed with earthly powers. The second group comprises those who are the last to suffer for Christ. By being loyal to Christ they clash with earthly powers who are led by "the beast and his image".

These two groups form the first and the last of the persecuted saints of the Christian era, and as such, they represent the total number of the saints. The fact that the two groups are pictured as having been persecuted, highlights the significance of the judgment in which the saints are involved in heaven. In justice they, with Christ, determine the degree of punishment to be meted out to their persecutors. This is a fulfillment of Revelation 2:26-27, and also of Psalm 149.

"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let then sing aloud upon their beds [couches]. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen [unsaved] and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: This honor have all the saints." Psalm 149:5-9. (10)

The next verse declares,

"But the rest of the dead [those not resurrected at the Second Advent] lived not again, until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

"The rest of the dead did not rise till the end of the thousand years." RSV.

At the end of the thousand years there will be another resurrection, "the resurrection of the unjust". Jesus alluded to this in his tremendous statement,

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. John 5:28, 29.

This means that everyone of us will return from the dead. We are coming back, no matter who or what we are; we are coming back from the dead. There is to be a resurrection of every person. We have no say. What an awe-inspiring truth! No matter whether we have been cremated, buried at sea or what - after death, we are coming back, we will be recreated in a split second of time. We will stand again upon the earth. However, we do have a choice as to when we come back. We come back in the resurrection of life, or in the resurrection of damnation. There are two resurrections. Revelation 20 tells us that the two resurrections are a thousand years apart. At the beginning of the thousand years, at the Second Advent, is the resurrection to life.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death has no Dower, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ for a thousand years." Verse 6.

But the second resurrection, is a resurrection to damnation, meaning condemnation. How vital it is for man to make the right decision. As the Lord reminds us

“Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2.”Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”. Hebrews 3:7, 8.

“He that hath the Son bath life and he that hath not the Son bath not life.” 1 John 5:12.

“Whosoever believeth on him hath everlasting life.” John 3:16.

This is why it is urgent that we make our peace with God and let him have his way in our lives. Eternal life is too precious to lose. The Creator wants no man to be lost.”Why will you die?” he pleads. Everyone chooses his own destiny. Thus, there are the two resurrections, the resurrection to life at the Second Advent and the resurrection to condemnation at the end of the thousand years.

THE PROBLEM OF REVELATION 20:5.

Revelation 20:5 has caused difficulty to some because at first glance, it appears to read that the resurrection of the rest of the dead at the close of the millennium is the first resurrection. The answer to this problem is best solved by checking other translations of verses 4-6.

“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” KJV.

“They cam to life and reigned along with Christ for a thousand years, (as for the rest of the dead, they did not come to life till the thousand years were completed.) This is the first resurrection.” Moffat.

“They were restored to life and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (The rest of the dead were not restored to life till the thousand years were ended.) This is the First Resurrection.” Twentieth Century N. T.

The Good News Bible and Fenton likewise place the sentence in parenthesis, indicating that 10the first resurrection” concerns those who live and reign with Christ of verse 4.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” Verse 6. This means that only the saints of God are involved in the first resurrection.

WHAT IS THE SECOND DEATH?

Notice the marvelous reason why one is “blessed” if he has part in the first resurrection.”On such the second death has no power.”

What is the second death? It is annihilation at the hands of God. It is the death that results from the “fire that comes down from God out of heaven and devours “the unsaved.” (Verse 9.) From the first death there is a return. From the second death there is no return. It is the wages of sin. It is separation from God, it is being blotted out of existence forever.”They shall be as though they had never been.” Obadiah 1:16.

SAINTS GIVEN SPECIAL BODIES AT THE FIRST RESURRECTION

On him who is raised at the Second Advent, the fires of God’s wrath have no effect. At the first resurrection the believer is raised with a body that is vastly different from the body he now possesses. As the apostle declared of the first resurrection:

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It [the body] is sown [buried] in corruption; it is raised in incorruption, [it can no longer decay] it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: [a glorious body] it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” I Corinthians 15:42-44.

The body of the first resurrection is immortal, impervious to age and decay.

“We shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound [at the Second Advent] and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. For this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption and this mortal [subject to death] must put on immortality [power over death].” 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

The spiritual body is still a body of flesh and bones but it is not subject to the power of the natural elements. It is a body that is able to pass through outer space to the kingdom of heaven and dwell in the presence of God who “is as a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29.) What a future awaits him who will rise in the first resurrection!

HOW WILL THE SAINTS BE PRIESTS DURING THE 1000 YEARS?

“They shall be priests of God and of Christ.”

In what way will the saints be priests? Christ’s priestly ministry ceased at the close of probation. Thereafter intercession and mediation will be no more. The saints priestly ministry during the thousand years will involve the investigation of the records of the unsaved and determining their degree of punishment. In the investigative judgment of the saints from 1844 onwards, Christ and the twenty-four elders are involved. (12) But during the millennium the saints and Christ are involved. (13)

HOW DO THE SAINTS REIGN?

“And shall reign with him [Christ] a thousand years.”

Over whom do the saints reign? This is the objection that is raised against the view that the earth, during the millennium, is empty, void and waste. It is claimed that there must be living people on the earth for the saints to reign over them. But the saints are with Christ, “they live and reign with Christ.” (verse 4) “They shall reign with him.” (Verse 6) Seeing Jesus is “King of kings and lord of lords”, wherever he is, he reigns. Therefore the saints, being with Christ, will also reign, as kings and priests.

THE THIRD ADVENT

In the Gospels Jesus declared that in the great resurrections, all the dead rise up “at the voice of the Son of God.” (John 5:28) This means that Christ must return to the earth again at the end of the 1000 years when the great resurrection of the unsaved takes place. This event is often called the Third Advent. It is at , this Third Advent that Christ returns from heaven and brings all his people back with him to the earth.

PLAN OF SALVATION INVOLVES THREE ADVENTS

The great temple of truth is built upon three great advents of Christ: the first at Bethlehem, the second when he comes in the near future, and the third at the end of the 1000 years. Some Christians have become confused in this area. Whole churches have been divided over it. Some believe Christ returns at the beginning of the millennium, others at the end. The truth is that Christ returns at both the beginning and at the end of the thousand years. The prophet Zechariah alluded to the Third Advent,

“Behold the day of the Lord cometh. . . and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst and there shall be a very great valley and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.” Zechariah 14:1, 4-5. (14)

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES IS SPLIT IN TWO

This is the Third Advent, because at the Second Advent, Christ comes only to “the air”. The saints are “caught up, to meet Him in the air,” and return with Him to the Father’s house, to the “many mansions.” At the Third Advent Christ actually lands on the earth, on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem, and a great valley, or plain will be formed. The reason for this plain is that when Christ returns with his people, the great city, the new Jerusalem, also descends to the earth.

“I John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Revelation 21:2. (5)

This great city becomes the capital of the earth made new. It will rest upon the purified plain where the Mount of Olives has split asunder. Now Zechariah declared, “the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.” This cannot be the Second Advent because at the Second Advent, Christ comes FOR his saints. This time he comes WITH them, and as he descends he calls from the dust all whom God has rejected. It is “the resurrection of damnation”. What a tremendous event!

SATAN LOOSED

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the (resurrected) nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.” Verse 7, 8.

How is Satan loosed? What was it that bound him? He was bound by the circumstances that occurred at the Second Advent of Christ. These were the events that depopulated the earth. The translation of the saints to heaven and the destruction of the unsaved, empties the world of life and turns this old earth of ours into a bottomless pit, or abyss. In it Satan will be figuratively bound. The loosing of Satan is the reversal of the

circumstances that bound him. It is the restoration of life to this planet. It is the repopulation of the earth, when God's people return to earth and the unsaved of all the ages are resurrected to life.

The earth will be teeming with multiplied millions of resurrected people. One wonders how the earth could hold them, but it will be for only "a little season". The exact length of this "little season" is not revealed.

After the second resurrection, the scripture declares that Satan will. . .

"Go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle." Verse 8.

GOG AND MAGOG

Why are the resurrected unsaved given the title of "Gog and Magog"? The Revelator, as usual, borrows this term from the Old Testament. In Ezekiel 38 & 39 Gog and Magog is the term used to describe the vast combination of the enemies of ancient Israel who would have been used by Satan to invade and destroy literal Israel. Gog and Magog represent the vast combination of the enemies of God and this expression is significantly used in this chapter as will be revealed below. (15)

". . . goes out to deceive the nations."

This statement reveals that the unsaved will be raised up in the same condition as they died. They will succumb to the temptations of evil. They respond to Satan. On the other hand, God's people, who are raised in the first resurrection, are perfect and immortal. They are impervious to evil. Satan has no influence upon them, but the unsaved are raised up as they die. We will show later that there is a great purpose in this.

"To gather them together to battle."

Is this a battle against each other? No! It is against the holy city, the camp of the saints. When they see the glorious city, somehow Satan deludes them into believing it is rightfully theirs, just as he deluded a third of the angels in the very beginning. He deceives them into believing that they can take possession of it. When one visualizes the multiplied millions who will be marshaled under the great generals of the past who have resisted God, it will appear quite logical that nothing could prevent them from capturing and possessing it.

"The number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city." Verses 8, 9.

WHY RESURRECT THE UNSAVED

Here is a tremendous scene. All the unsaved of all the ages are marshaled, organized, deceived and deluded. Some ask the question,

"Why does God do this? If all these teeming millions are going to be destroyed, why raise them up from the dead just to destroy them? Why not leave them as they were? There are several reasons. Perhaps the greatest reason is that most of us believe that if people were given another chance, they would not commit the same sin again. We know there is good in every person, as well as bad. Most of us believe that if the environment were different it could be quite a different story in regard to a person's life. If the unsaved were given another opportunity, they probably would not make the same fatal choices.

There is another aspect in regard to the unsaved. Among unbelievers there are numbers of very beautiful people with delightful dispositions. Outwardly they do no harm and never become involved in anything questionable. They are excellent citizens, etc. However they have never acknowledged Christ or made a personal decision for Christ. Can such people be saved? No! Only those who really belong to God will be saved in the kingdom. Yet this type of person has never been seen to resist or defy God, but they are not

Christians.

Might not sinless worlds wonder about God's decision to exclude them from the kingdom?

In the second resurrection, God gives the universe and the saints, a demonstration of his wisdom and justice. When all the unsaved rise up - including all the above beautiful people - those who have never publicly resisted Christ, God publicly displays to the universe where these beautiful people really stand. As Jesus said, "He that is not with me, is against me." The on looking universe beholds Satan among them. They see the unsaved succumb to Satan's deceptions and publicly take their stand with Satan against God. What was secretly in their hearts in this life is publicly brought to light in the final judgment.

This assures the universe that when God, at the Second Advent, kept these people out of the kingdom, he decided right. It shows that the decision of God was correct. It confirms the judgment of God; it confirms God's wisdom and justice. God never makes a mistake."Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Imagine the scene! On the earth will stand everyone that has ever lived in the past. This will be the one and only time when all of mankind will exist together. From Adam down, every member of the race will be there. Every one we have seen or heard of in the past, we will see him again. The leading lights of history will be there. Those who are outside the city will be able to see within. There they will see the saints of God. Many will see their very own loved ones who had chosen to serve Christ and whom they ridiculed and despised because of it. They will see them in their glorious eternal state. Imagine how they will, curse themselves with remorse, when they see what they have lost. What a bitter and staggering disappointment. As Jesus declared,

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out." Luke 13:28, 29.

There surely will be weeping and gnashing of teeth on the part of the lost, when they see the glory of the holy city and the bliss of the saved. On the other hand, of those who have been faithful to Christ, imagine their gratitude when they gaze outside the city and see those who opposed, ridiculed and persecuted them for their faith in Christ. They will be overwhelmed with gratitude that God helped them make the right decision and kept them faithful.

The next point to notice is that after the unsaved surround the city to capture it, "Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Verse 10.

This ends the first scene of the final judgment. The Revelator operates on the principle of repetition and enlargement. He now repeats part of the scene and puts in more detail. He enlarges the picture.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

John now portrays the final judgment in all its awe and solemnity.

"I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place for them." Verse 11.

When the vast throng surround the city, suddenly above the city there appears the great white throne of judgment, and Christ is enthroned upon it. Every eye is riveted upon the Judge. Everyone, as it were, is petrified. All humanity stands before God.

"Every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." [margin: subject to the judgment of God] Romans 3:19.

So awe-inspiring, so overwhelming is the scene that it seems as if heaven and earth have disappeared, the unsaved stand under the penetrating gaze of a holy and omnipotent God. All their past flashes before them, they are oblivious to their earthly surroundings.

And I saw the [resurrected] dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and they were judged every man according to their works." Verse 13.

EVERYONE'S RECORD PUBLICLY REVEALED

It seems that across the heavens like a mammoth movie screen, there appears before every person a panorama of his past life. Each one sees himself exactly as he was. All his past life is exposed to the universe. He sees himself especially in the light of the love of God and the sufferings of Christ on the cross for him. Imagine the reaction! The saints are inside the city. Outside are the unsaved. When the life record of the saints is revealed, all that will be displayed will be the righteousness of their lives. The universe will see all the good things - done by the grace of God. Why only their righteousness? Because their sins, their failures, their unrighteousness has all been blotted out. They accepted the blood of Jesus Christ which alone can cleanse from sin. Imagine the depths of gratitude that sweep over the saints. How thankful they will be that on earth they applied the blood of Christ and faithfully followed him. Before the universe in this dramatic, awesome experience, nothing will be witnessed against them. How they will Look up to Christ upon the throne, the one who died for them, and bless him in overwhelming gratitude.

On the other hand, imagine those outside the city - the unsaved. One thing is certain. We will all be there. We will be either inside or outside the city. Everyone of us will be in one place or the other."If we are on the outside of the city, there will be portrayed before the universe our total sin record. All our ugly secrets will be revealed. Only the record of our evil will be displayed. All the good things that we have done will not be mentioned. (16) They will have been blotted out. For unbelievers there will be no record of any righteousness. If

we are outside of Christ, if we refuse to accept him, no record is made of our good deeds. (17) Only our sins are recorded. Imagine our reaction if a movie of our secret evil life were publicly displayed. We would wish that the earth would open up and hide us in our shame.

THE UNSAVED ADMIT THEIR GUILT

This, undoubtedly, is how they will react. When the unsaved see themselves as they really were, the scripture declares:

“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ for it is written, As I live said the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10.

Mark the significance of this scripture! Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. When the unsaved see themselves as they really were, in acknowledgment they will bend the knee and confess to God. In this present life, only a few knees bow to God, only a few lips confess to Christ. But then, everyone will bow and confess. This involves the unsaved in particular; they will bend the knee and confess to God that He is righteous, loving and just. From the very lips of the unsaved before all the universe will come the confession that God is right and they are wrong and that they are deserving of destruction. What a scene!

WHY THE LOST CANNOT BE SAVED

There they stand, facing annihilation. But maybe you ask, why could not God now save them? They have confessed, they have bent the knee. But the unsaved have done it more or less under compulsion. There was no escape. In character they are still the same. If God now saved them they would be a problem. They would be like square pegs in round holes. Heaven would be misery to them. One cannot enjoy spiritual things, one cannot enjoy God, unless he has been born again, unless he has experienced a transformation of

mind and character. Therefore God cannot save them. It would be too big a risk. God is determined that evil shall never rise the second time. This is why God has been so patient over the 6,000 years of the reign of evil. This is why He is so particular. He will only redeem those whom he can trust. He will save only those who love Him, who have supreme confidence in him no matter what.

Therefore, for the sake of the universe the essential and tragic scene now takes place.

“Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. . .”

“. . . and they were judged, [Punished] every man according to their works. And death and hell [grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” Revelation 20:9,13-14.

WHAT IS THE LAKE OF FIRE?

The lake of fire is this burning planet. The fire that comes down from God not only consumes the unsaved, it melts the crust of the whole earth. This planet becomes a blazing mass. The earth is purified.

“The elements shall melt with fervent heat and the works that are therein shall be burned up . . . all these things shall be dissolved . . . the [atmospheric] heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved.” 2 Peter 3:10-12.

This mighty consummation is “the lake of fire”. It is the final death from which there is no recovery. It is annihilation. The fate of the unsaved is not eternal torment. The second death is destruction.

“They shall be as though they had not been.” Obadiah 1:16.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Verse 15 What a tragedy. But all those who will be involved, have chosen it. This is why the Lord pleads. . .”Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart, now is the day of salvation.”

In Proverbs 11:31 it declares that the righteous and the wicked will be recompensed or rewarded in the earth. This will be fulfilled to the righteous when they are rewarded with an inheritance in the earth made new.

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5.

It will be fulfilled to the wicked when they are consumed in the fire that purifies the earth.

“But the [atmospheric] heavens and the earth which are now [in existence] by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment [punishment] and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men.” w Peter 3:7.

But what is the significance of verse 10?

“And the devil that deceived them, [the unsaved] was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Revelation 20:10.

A LAKE OF FIRE AT SECOND ADVENT ALSO

As shown under Revelation 19:20 there is also a lake of fire at the Second Advent in which the beast and the false prophet will be cast. We suggest that the first lake of fire has a spiritual application. However some believe that the lake of fire at the Second Advent is formed by the flaming fire that comprises the glory of Jesus Christ at his return. (18) This fire will then envelope the whole planet.

“Our God shall come and shall not keep silence. A fire shall devour before him and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth that he may judge

his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” Psalm 50:3-5.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

“And then shall that wicked [man of sin] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

In the Greek rendering of Revelation 20:10, the word “are” is missing. It should read,

“The lake of fire where the beast and false prophet, [and the devil] shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

The translators supplied the word “are” to make up the sense but in the light of Revelation 19:20 we believe the supplied word should be “were”. That is, “Where the beast and the false prophet were”, at the Second Advent.

THE PROBLEM OF “FOREVER AND EVER”

Does not verse 10 confirm the doctrine of “eternal torment”? They “shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” The expression “forever and ever” is the problem. This term is a Jewish idiom which denotes continuity, but not necessarily lasting for eternity. (19)

SATAN’S DESTRUCTION WITNESSED BY ALL

Other scriptures reveal that Satan will finally be consumed. This will be enacted in the very sight of the saved. As Isaiah declared:

“How are thou fallen from heaven O Lucifer . . . yet you shall be brought down to hell to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?” Isaiah 14:12-17.

This suggests that finally Lucifer, or Satan, will be compelled to materialize as a man and will become an object of curiosity and astonishment as God’s people gaze upon him. Then before their very eyes the Lord will begin Satan’s annihilation. Under the caption of “the King of Tyre”, its invisible King, the Lord addressed Satan.

“Thou art the anointed cherub [angel] that covers. Thou was upon the holy mountain of God. Thou was perfect in thy ways, till iniquity was found in thee. . . I will destroy thee, O covering cherub. I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shall be a terror and never shall thou be any more.” Ezekiel 28:12-19.

WHY THE SAINTS SEE SATAN CONSUMED

Undoubtedly there is great significance in God’s method of Satan’s destruction. Not only will it be a display of justice, but it could also bring assurance and comfort to the redeemed. They will witness the annihilation - the complete destruction - of the great enemy of God and man. Satan’s dying sufferings will undoubtedly continue for more than a day, for he “shall be tormented day and night”. On the other hand, while many of the unsaved will meet their end in a split second of time, others in justice, will suffer longer,

because all are “judged [punished] according to their works.”(Verse 13) One thing is certain. Sin and sinners will be no more.

“For behold the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea - and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: the day that cometh shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave dim neither root nor branch . . . and ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, said the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 4:1, 3.

Satan is the root of all evil and his followers are the branches.

“And death and hell [grave] were cast into the lake of fire.” Verse 14.

How is this fulfilled? The graves exist in the earth and when the purifying fires of God melt and dissolve the crust of the earth, all the graveyards, the realm of death, will be destroyed forever. Then comes the final scene. Immediately after the “fire has done its work, John records,

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.” Revelation 21:1, 4, 5.

The renewed earth will become the eternal home of God’s people. What a hope! What a future! It is worth living for and it is worth dying for.

APPENDIX I

What of the claim that “the man of sin” is Satan and not the Papacy? The following points show that the description, as given by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, cannot apply to Satan.

1. Before “the man of sin.” is revealed there would be “a falling away” or apostasy. This apostasy was yet future when St. Paul wrote. Satan’s apostasy however, was revealed before the creation of the world when there was war in heaven, etc.

2.”The man of sin” would “sit in the temple of God” [the Christian church] “showing himself” [publicly displaying] “that he is God”. Satan has never sat in the Christian church publicly posing as God. He is the invisible Antichrist, whereas the Papacy is the visible Antichrist whose leader sits in the temple of God.

3.”The man of sin” will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s Second Coming. Satan, however, will not be destroyed at the Second Advent nor at the Third Advent, but after the final judgment. His destruction will be effected by fire beginning to burn within him which will slowly consume him from within. (See under Revelation 20:10.)

4.”The man of sin” is “after the working of Satan” or to according to the working of Satan”. In other words, he is inspired by Satan. He has Satan’s spirit, but he is not Satan in person.

REFERENCES

1. See the author’s, “The Angel of Time”, where the principle that symbolic “time” in prophecy, applies until the Second Advent. After that event time is literal.

2. Jamieson, Faussett and Brown on Revelation 20:3.

3. See Edward Roseodahl’s, “Simple Bible Chronology”.

3a. In the Greek Septuagint translation, the word “deep” is the same word translated “bottomless pit” in the KN version of Revelation.

4 Revelation 18:8.

5 See the author’s “New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem, All Things New.”

6 Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22-23; 11:5-9; 25:6-8; 55:12, 13.

7 See Revelation 21:1-2.

8 Luke 13:30.

9 Many translations of verse 4 read as if there were only one group singled out and that is the end-time group who are involved in the final conflict with the beast, etc. These are described as beheaded. However, Uriah Smith claim that the Greek cannot be understood in that way. See, "Thoughts an Daniel and Revelation!" page 746.

10 'This scripture is also applied to the investigative judgment of the saints by the author of "Early Writings', Pages 52,53.

11 See the author's, "God's Final Ultimatum to Men".

12 Revelation 4:4; 5:8-10.

13 See "Early Writings", pages 290-291.

14 The predictions of Zechariah applied initially to literal Israel after they returned from Babylonian captivity. Because those predictions were not fulfilled to Israel, they now apply in a spiritual sense to spiritual Israel in the end time. Some of the local details drop out when applied to spiritual Israel. The predictions of Zechariah like a number of other Old Testament predictions are conditional in nature. See Zechariah 6:15.

15 See the author's, "Gog and Magog! Must Russia Invade Israel to Fulfill Ezekiel 38, 39?"

16 Ezekiel 18:24; 33:12, 13, 18.

17 John 3:18.

18 Under Revelation 19:20 we showed that the lake of fire into which the beast and the false prophet will be cast, is a spiritual lake of fire. They will be consumed by the burning anger of their supporters who will turn on them when they realize how the beast and the false prophet have deluded and used them.

19 The term "forever and ever" is a Jewish idiomatic expression which denotes continuity, or as long as life exists. However the length of time is dependent upon that to which it is applied. When it is applied to God and the saints' future existence, it means eternity but when it is applied to other items it means as long as life continues. For example:

1. The Hebrew servant's ear lobe was bored through to indicate that he was to be a servant forever, meaning as long as he lived. (Exodus 21:1-6.)

2. King David was king over Israel "forever". (1 Chronicles 28:4.) But that period of time wanted to forty continuous years. (1 Chronicles 29:27.)

3. Jonah was in the whale's belly "forever". (Jonah 2:6.) Actually it was three days and three nights, but it was continuous. (Jonah 1:17.)

38. The New Jerusalem Paradise

New Heaven! New Earth! All Things New!

An Exposition Of Revelation 21 And 22

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."
Revelation 21:1

What heaven is this that passes away and is replaced by another? In scripture three different heavens are brought to view.

1. The aerial or atmospheric heaven

"The fowls that fly in the midst of heaven." Revelation 19:17

Birds fly only in the atmosphere of our earth. In the original account of creation, Moses under inspiration described the atmosphere under the term "firmament"

“And God called the firmament heaven” Genesis 1:6-8

The aerial heaven extends for several hundreds of miles from the surface of the earth. Moses likened it to a blanket, because without it, life would be unbearable on earth.

“When I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness a swaddling band for it.” Job 38:4, 7-9

The atmospheric heaven keeps the earth warm. It is a protection from the killer rays of the sun and is a miracle of design. St. Paul speaks of a “third heaven”

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. Such a one caught up to the third heaven. How that he was caught up into Paradise” 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. If there is a third heaven - Paradise - then there are two other heavens. The first is the aerial.

2 The second is the starry heaven. This involves outer space.

“The heavens declare the glory of God. In them has he set a tabernacle [dwelling place] for the sun” Psalm 19:1-4

This heaven contains the innumerable solar systems, constellations, nebulae or island universes. With the multiplied millions of suns in space, most of which are giants compared with ours, there are also planetary systems, as there is with our sun.

Is it possible that the planets of these other solar systems could be inhabited? Many conservative astronomers are convinced that other planets are filled with life. (1) The scriptures for millenniums have taught that the universe is filled with life. David, Israel’s king, sang under inspiration -

“When I consider the heavens . . . the moon and the stars which You have ordained; What is man that You are mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visits him?” Psalm 8:3,4

In the light of the fact that there are millions of other worlds, David understandably was filled with wonder as to why the Creator could be so concerned with our little planet and to such a degree that in the person of His Son, He should even visit the human race for 33 years.

“The nations are as a drop [of water] in a bucket [of water] and are counted as the small dust of the balance [or scales]” Isaiah 40:15

If the nations of our planet are as one drop of a bucket of water, or as the small dust left over on the scales, after weighing the main materials, what is the remainder of the bucket of water or the main material that was weighed in the scales? The answer is that they represent the vast abundance of life throughout the rest of the universe of God.

“He spreads out the heavens, as a tent to dwell in” Isaiah 40:22

“God himself that created the earth, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” Isaiah 45:18

If this were true of our tiny planet what, then, of planets that are hundreds, of times larger than ours? In our local solar system Jupiter is 1300 times larger than earth and Saturn is 734 times larger, with a magnificent lighting system. Why such remarkable and beautiful design for an empty, lifeless planet? (2)

Finally, John the Revelator clearly states that the heavens contain intelligent dwellers, “Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” Revelation 12:12

This reveals that there is more than one heaven and that in each there are intelligent beings. What are these beings like?

“Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host-and the host of heaven worship thee” Nehemiah 9:6.

This is referring not only to the third heaven - Paradise but also to the second; and the host of these two heavens worship God. Only intelligent, moral creatures are capable of worship, which suggests that the hosts of the second heaven have been created “in the image of God” just as man was originally created. [Genesis 1:26, 27]

What is the state of the inhabitants of other worlds? Are they sinful as this world is? Scripture indicates that our world is the one lost world. All others are sinless. The parable of the one lost sheep of St. Luke tells of how the Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine and sought the one that was lost. (3) This most accurately applies to our lost world because

“All we like sheep have gone astray” Isaiah 53:6

“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” Luke 19:10

Our world is the black sheep of the universe, however it excites more interest and attention than any other. God would not permit the cancer of sin to spread, so He limited sin to this planet and on this planet sin will run its course and burn itself out. This means that man in his contaminated condition will never be permitted by Heaven to reach other inhabited worlds because wherever man goes, whatever he touches, he contaminates.

3. The third heaven as shown above, is called Paradise. This is where the tree of life is located and the throne of God. (4) The third heaven is God’s dwelling place.

“Hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place!” 1Kings 8:30

God has a particular location where He dwells. Though the Deity is omnipresent, yet there is an actual place where the Creator resides. Jesus declared:

“Our Father which art in heaven.” Luke 11:2

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all” Psalm 103:19

We believe that in the vast illimitable universe of God, there is one great final center around which all heavenly bodies revolve. Christian astronomers believe this center is the dwelling place of God, the third heaven. Isabel Lewis of the United States Naval Observatory declared,

“All known objects in the heavens belong to one enormous unit.” (5) Scripture declares that the third heaven is an actual country - a literal place.

Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their Cod for he has prepared for them a city.” Hebrews 11:16.

Jesus said:

“In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go and prepare a place for you” John 14:2

Heaven is a place.”Heaven thy dwelling place” 1 Kings 8:30. If the rest of God’s universe is physically real, why should not the center, the hub of the universe be physically real. The third heaven contains a great city.

“He has prepared for them a city” Hebrews 11:16

“He [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Hebrews 11:10 “In my Father’s house are many mansions” John 14:2

This citydescribed in Revelation 21 and 22 and it is formed of solid materials.

Which heaven is it that passes away? Which heaven is that God makes new? It is the first heaven. As saint Peter penned,

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now [in existence] are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men-the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the-earth also and the works therein shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:7, 10

“And a new earth”

This does not denote a new planet but a planet whose surface or crust is renewed. The word “new” in this chapter is used three times. In the Greek there are two words for new.

The word for “new” here denotes that which is fresh and renewed. There is to be a restoration of this planet to its original pristine condition.

“He shall send Jesus Christ whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:20, 21

At the time of the universal flood as recorded in Genesis 7 and 8, the earth’s surface was torn up and relayed by the action of water, down to a depth of at least twenty miles according to geological evidence. We suggest that in the great restoration when the earth melts with fervent heat [2 Peter 3:10,12] that the crust of the earth will be purified and relayed as in the original Edenic state.

“The first heaven and the first earth were passed away”

When the consuming fire comes down “from God out of heaven¹ and envelopes our planet and turns it into a Lake of fire, then this atmospheric heaven and this present earth as we know it, will pass away. But out of the holocaust will emerge the planet, purified, renewed and restored.

“Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:12,13

When the purifying fires of God have done their work we suggest that there could be a re-enactment of the original creation week. If so, what a fascinating series of events await the saints of God. What we have accepted in faith contrary to so-called scientific opinion, we may see enacted before our very eyes. Stupendous events of creation as God performed them 7000 years ago, we may actually witness.

We may see the re-making of earth’s atmosphere as it was in its Edenic state. Originally “there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” Genesis 2:5, 6.

The watering system of the planet was completely different from the present, which began with the universal flood. [Genesis 7:4, 12; 8:2] We may witness the reforming of the earth’s surface, the emergence of the land masses. Instead of vast masses of water there will be smaller areas of seas and lakes perfectly located around the earth.

“Neither shall there be any more sea” Verse 1

No vast oceans will cover the globe. Currently 70% of the earth’s surface is water. In the renewed earth we believe it will be reversed.

Originally according to fossil evidence, there was a universal subtropical climate. There were no frozen polar regions nor hot equatorial areas.

This event will be the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions, that God will create a new heavens and a new earth. Many Christians have applied these predictions to the coming millennium but, as Revelation 21 shows, their fulfillment will be after the millennium, [See Appendix 1]

“Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth and former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. . . and they shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them-and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, the wolf and the lamb shall feed together and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [or kingdom] said the Lord” Isaiah 65:17, 21, 22, 25.

“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” Revelation 21:2

Because this sounds impossible from a human viewpoint, this verse has generally been given a symbolic application. But after the Second Advent, things have a literal application, according to one principle of prophetic interpretation. Therefore this must mean that the literal holy city - “the many mansions” which Christ says he “is preparing” for his people, will, after the millennium, descend by the power of God to this planet. Today in the light of man’s ability to overcome the force of gravity, it is easy to understand how such a vast city could be lowered from heaven to earth. Surely our great Creator who upholds the mighty objects of outer space, is able to transport a city through space.

According to Revelation 22:1, 2 the tree of life is in the midst of the holy city. Originally the tree of life was in Eden. Is this the same tree?

Undoubtedly. How, then, does it descend from heaven within the city, when originally it was upon the earth? The Garden of Eden remained on earth after Adam’s fall, until the coming of the universal flood. At Eden’s gate, the people of God of the pre-flood world, gathered to worship. There were the visible tokens of the presence of the Deity. [Genesis 3:24] Seeing at the time of the flood the entire

surface of the Earth was turned up, it is believed that at that time the Garden of Eden - Paradise - was transported to heaven. It is where that Christ is building the many mansions.

At the close of the millennium when the earth has been purified, the Garden of Eden [now within the city] is restored to earth. Why is the city described as it coming down from God out of heaven when it had already descended to earth at the Third Advent before the final judgment? [Revelation 20:9] This leads to another query. What became of the holy city when the whole earth was consumed with eternal fire?

It is generally believed that what befell Noah's ark in the destruction of "the world that then was" will also befall the holy city in the final destruction. In the flood the ark containing God's people rode upon the waves of water. Likewise, the holy city, we suggest, will ride upon the waves of flame when the world is on fire.

Seeing the cleansing of the planet involves also the first heaven, or atmosphere, which extends for hundreds of miles from the earth's surface, the city riding the flames could be hundreds of miles above the earth. Thus, when the fire has accomplished its work, John could have seen the city descending out of heaven.

But there is also an important truth wrapped up in the above expression. The only way that the human race will ultimately find the ideal state - the golden age - is by it coming down from heaven. It will never evolve, it must come from above. And only those who first of all are spiritually "born from above" will finally share in earth's golden age which will never end.

"Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Does this suggest some kind of marriage? Not necessarily. The marriage of Christ to the holy city was consummated at the Close of Probation at the conclusion of the judgment of the saints. (6) The marriage supper was celebrated after the Second Advent when God's people had been translated to heaven. (7) We suggest that the above description denotes the glory and unsurpassed beauty of the New Jerusalem. It is "prepared as a bride" not as "the bride."

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God." Verse 3.

This promise is so tremendous, it is difficult to comprehend it. God is to dwell among us. He dwells among us spiritually now but then it will be literal. The Father himself, not only God the Son, will dwell among us.

"For the throne of God and of the Lamb" are there.

Whether this means that God the Father dwells continuously upon this planet is doubtful, but at least we suggest, at designated times He will visit His earthborn people. The human race was created for God's pleasure.

"For thy pleasure they are and were created" Revelation 4:11

God enjoys his children and we in turn will enjoy Him. What a prospect (8)

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" verse 4

Is this a literal description of the compassionate nature of our heavenly Father? He certainly is the great Comforter. On earth now we have the invisible Spiritual Comforter - God, the Holy Spirit. In the kingdom we will have the visible, literal Comforter - our Heavenly Father. Will there be tears after the final

judgment, after sin and sinners are no more? It seems that this expression as usual is culled from the Old Testament.

"The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" Isaiah 25:8

We suggest that it is a figurative expression denoting that sorrow will never again afflict the race. But is it not possible that some may grieve over the loss of loved ones? We need to recall that the saints will have spent one thousand years in heaven and surely in that period, all human ties with our unsaved loved ones will be severed?

Will the saints be able to recall events in this life after they reside in the kingdom of God? Some conclude that there will be no remembrance.

“Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind’ or “came upon the heart” [margin] Isaiah 65:17

The saints will not remember some things. That which would cause sorrow they will not recall. Their sins they may not recall [Hebrews 8:12] but without doubt we will recall the awful results of sin. We will recall God’s wondrous grace and how we were delivered from sin’s guilt and power. Otherwise, how will we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb? That is a song of experience, a testimony of Christ’s saving power. The saints could not fully appreciate the kingdom if they did not recall the terrible contrast of this sin-cursed earth.

“And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be anymore pain, for the former things are passed away.” Verse 4

What a thrilling array of negatives. Four of them, denoting they are universally no more. What a different world awaits the saints. How much of man’s time is now involved with the above four conditions. This world is a vale of tears. But what a contrast! So many of the current occupations of men will never be engaged in again. Medical services will never be required. Hospitals, chemists, doctors, nurses, etc. , will be no more. Undertakers, gravediggers, embalmers, crematoriums, cemeteries, etc. , will not exist. All that is now involved in food production and distribution will not be needed. There will be no accidents, no stress, no pressure, no competition, no failures.

Imagine family life in such an existence. Will families be united there? Those of God’s people who have lost children before the age of responsibility will have them restored. They will “grow up” in the kingdom [Malachi 4:2]

Will children be born in the hereafter? According to Jesus’ instruction, the answer is no.

“The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage.” Luke 20:27-36

There will be no marriage nor childbirth. The human race will have been fully made up. Originally when Adam and Eve were instructed to multiply they were “to fill the earth”. Undoubtedly multiplication would then have ceased. Before sin entered conception must have been much rarer than after sin’s entrance because God decreed of the woman,

“I will greatly multiply thy conception” Genesis 3:16

This was essential in order to preserve the race because with the entrance of sin, death came upon all men.”And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.” Verse 5

God will not make all new things, but all the things that man originally had, God will renew them. It will be Eden restored. So vastly different is the prospect before us and so incredibly glorious that many retort, “It is too good to be true!” The Lord knew that men would react that way, so he gave John a divine guarantee.

“And he said unto me, Write: [it down] for these words are faithful and true.”

The kingdom of glory is not a fairy story, nor pie in the sky, it is restoring to the race what God originally gave it - Paradise. And to confirm God’s guarantee, He declared,

“And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” verse 6

What an assurance! “It is done”. God has decreed it, it cannot fail.”It is impossible for God to lie” Hebrews 6:18

“I am Alpha and Omega.”

What God commences he concludes. What he promises, he fulfils. Once he declares it, it is counted as done.

“I will give him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

Millions thirst for the water of life but they do not realize it. How many are seeking spiritual satisfaction? The human race is deprived, and the only way of true and lasting contentment is in Jesus Christ. Christ offers every man the water of life now, in this life. It represents the Holy Spirit which is received by believing on Christ.

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me-out of his belly [from within him] shall flow rivers of living water. This spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37-39

If we receive the spiritual water of life now, we will receive of the literal water of life in the kingdom. But notice that we will be given “the fountain” or the spring of the water of life, meaning that we will have a permanent or everlasting supply.

“He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son.” Verse 7

While eternal life is a gift from God [Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8] nevertheless, the reward we receive after eternal life is bestowed, is based upon definite conditions. These conditions are summed up in the word “overcomer”, which is mentioned eight times in Revelation . Eight often denotes regeneration and resurrection and it will be in the great resurrection that the saints will receive their full reward.

“All things”

All that God has promised his people will be fulfilled in the earth made new. However, the greatest reward will be when God the Father publicly and privately receives each one of us as his own son or daughter. Perhaps there is more involved in this than meets the eye. When the beloved Son ascended to heaven after his sojourn upon the earth, he was received by heaven with celebration and triumph. When the Son approached the Father it declares,

“The Father’s arms encircle His Son and the word is given, Let all the angels of God worship Him.” (9) What a beautiful glimpse of the affectionate nature of the Godhead.

“But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death!” verse 8

God lists eight types of sinners -

1. The fearful: The cowardly. Those who are afraid of public opinion, who will not serve God because of criticism from their friends, etc.
2. The unbelieving: Those that lack faith - who cannot trust God. This is a basic sin, “without faith it is impossible to please him.” Hebrews 11:6
3. The abominable: Those who are disgusting and detestable in their person and behavior. Also those who have drunk of Babylon’s cup of abominations. [Revelation 17:4, 5] and thereby have been debased in character.
4. Murderers: Those filled with hate as well as those who have no respect for life.
5. Whoremongers: Those who commit fornication or engage in any form of illicit sexual behavior.
6. Sorcerers: Those who are involved in the occult especially mediums, etc.
7. Idolaters: Deliberate transgressors of the second commandment whether their idols be literal or spiritual.
8. All liars, This includes those who knowingly teach false doctrines as well as those who engage in deliberate deceit.

“Shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” verse 8

This alludes to the burning earth after the final judgment of Revelation 20:12-15. When fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours the unsaved, the same fire envelopes the globe and it becomes a lake of fire. This is the final fate of the unsaved. This is the “hell” [Greek “Gehenna”] of Mark 9:43-48. But it is not eternal torment, for John declares,

“Which is the second death” verse 8

Death is a state of lifelessness. It is the exact opposite of life. How, then, could the unsaved live on endlessly in torment when the final punishment is in the lake of fire which is death. If a man or the soul or spirit of a man, exists in torment, he is still alive, he is not dead.

But it is the second death. All men die the first death. That death is the result of Adam’s sin. The second death is the result of one’s own sins. Every person who rejects the death of Christ on his behalf - as his substitute, must pay the penalty for his own sins. But not only that. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Not only does Christ save the sinner from the guilt of his sin, but also from the

power of sin."He shall save his people from their sins" [Matthew 1:21] In the gospel there is overcoming power. But if the professed believer does not overcome, his end will be with all other sinners in the lake of fire.

New Jerusalem Described. Revelation 21:9-27

Most scholars conclude that this is a symbolic portrayal of the Christian church. Undoubtedly there are valuable spiritual lessons to be derived from this description for God's people, but is this scripture literal or symbolic? The key to this question is whether it applies before the Second Advent or after. Symbols cease at the Second Advent. After that the literal applies. On what grounds? In the kingdom of grace things are spiritual and symbolic. In the kingdom of glory things are natural and literal. The dividing line between the two kingdoms is the Second Advent. (10) Therefore, the description in Revelation 21, being after the Second Advent, must be a description of the 'Literal New Jerusalem. But many Christians cannot accept the premise that the kingdom of glory is literal.

Heaven is held-to be totally of the realm of the spirit. But the scripture when taken as it reads is clear that the Hereafter is also literal and physical, as outlined under the third heaven above.

How is it then that the professedly Christian world generally believes that the Hereafter is immaterial and solely of the realm of the spirit? This is the result of pagan concepts being received into the church in the early Christian centuries. This philosophy came from Manicheanism or Gnosticism. They believed that matter was inherently evil and that harmony in the universe would only be achieved by the destruction of matter. (11)

This concept is still with us today as held by the cults of the east. The outcome of this pagan concept was that the eternal realm was considered to be purely spiritual. On this ground, biblical descriptions of a literal, physical Hereafter were interpreted as having a spiritual or symbolic application.

The detailed description of the kingdom as presented in Revelation 21, 22 demands a literal application.

"There came to me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues and talked with me, saying, come hither and I will show thee the bride, the lamb's wife!" verse 9

Why is the same angel delegated to show the city, New Jerusalem, to John. This same angel showed to John:

"The judgment [or punishment] of the great whore that sits on many waters." Revelation 17:1 It is apparent that angels are delegated particular tasks and responsibilities.

"The angel of the waters" Revelation 16:5

"The angel of the altar" Revelation 16:7

"The angel with power over fire!" Revelation 14:18

"The angels-of the winds" Revelation 7:1

"The angels of the vials!" Revelation 15:7

The same angel is employed no doubt in order to reveal the contrast between the bride and the harlot. One receives the plagues of judgment, the other the glory of God. Here it is plainly spelt out that the bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem. But other scriptures declare that the Church is the bride of Christ (12). There are two brides in scripture. The spiritual bride of the church and the literal bride of the New Jerusalem.

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Verse 10

John is drawing his imagery from the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who also was taken to a high mountain and shown the promised city that God was to build for ancient Israel.

"In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south" Ezekiel 40:2

These predictions of the latter chapters of Ezekiel were not fulfilled to Israel. They were conditional prophecies [43:10, 11] based on an "if". Israel failed to fulfill the conditions, therefore according to a law of prophetic interpretation, the Old Testament prophecies

concerning Israel now apply to the Christian church - spiritual Israel. Revelation 21, 22 will be the fulfillment of the final predictions of Ezekiel. Altogether there are at least thirty parallels between Ezekiel 34-48 and Revelation. (13)

“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Verse 11.

This is the magnificent external appearance of the holy city.

“And had a wall great and high and had twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels and names written thereon which are of the tribes of the children of Israel.” Verse 12

It is an Israelite city indicating that only true Israelites enter it. An Israelite is one who is “God-ruled” “a prince of God,” an overcomer. Why walls and gates in the city? Undoubtedly for beauty. For design and order. Heaven is perfectly organized. There is no confusion. With the millions of spiritual Israelites who will belong to the city, there will need to be order and organization, but never will it impinge on the perfect freedom of any individual,

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” verse 14

Altogether there are twelve twelves in this portrayal. Twelve denotes divine organization. There is perfect order in God’s kingdom. The names of the apostles indicate that the city is a Christian city. What a reward for those twelve brave humble men who pioneered the gospel. It is a memorial that will speak its message throughout eternity.

“And he had a golden reed to measure the city.” Verse 15

Why measure it? To acquaint the saints with the reality of it all. To help us to believe.

“The city lies foursquare, twelve thousand furlongs!” [or stadia]

This means that its size would be approximately 350 miles square or about 550 kilometers each side.

“The length and breadth and height are equal”

The word “equal” may also be translated proportionate. This appears to be confirmed by the following verse,

“And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel” verse 17

Surely this could only refer to the height of the wall which means that it is 288 feet in height, if the cubit of Ezekiel is used. John’s description is based on Ezekiel’s vision [Ezekiel 40:5; 43:13]

“And the building of the wall of it was of jasper and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass.” verse 18

The jasper is a bright flashing translucent stone and the buildings of the city including the streets [verse 21] were of transparent gold. What beauty amidst the abundant greenery that would undoubtedly adorn the city.”The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones” verse 19, 20.

John lists the twelve foundations with their distinctive stones and colors.

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.” verse 21 What magnificent gates! Each one a solid pearl!

TEMPLE’S CHANGE OF LOCATION

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” verse 22

Does not mean that there will be no temple. It means that the location of the temple has been altered. Originally it was within the city. However, in Ezekiel’s vision the temple is shown as being outside the city. Apparently it is the same when the reign of sin ceases, because John reveals that the saints, represented by the number 144,000, “They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.” Revelation 7:15

Undoubtedly, the temple will serve a different function in the Hereafter because sin is no more, and priestly services are no more. Christ will be, not the priest-king, but King of kings.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” verse 23

In this present kingdom of grace Christ is the spiritual light of the world, the sun of righteousness. In the kingdom of glory, Christ is the literal light of the world as is also the Father. That vast city of approximately 350 miles square will have no need of artificial lighting. The light of God’s glory will diffuse throughout the whole city and in every dwelling.

“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Verse 24

There will be no earthly nations saved as such, except the one “holy nation” of spiritual Israel which is comprised of saints from every nation. However, when one contemplates the number of the saved, he can understand why they are designated as nations.

“And I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations . . . stood before the throne.” Revelation 7:9

Even today we may number the peoples alive on earth, but the number saved in the kingdom will be so vast that it will be humanly impossible to count them. Because God’s kingdom is a place of perfect order, undoubtedly the saved will be organized into appropriate groups - “the nations of the-saved”.

“And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Verse 24

What kings are these? This description is borrowed from Isaiah 60 where the prophet foretold how ancient Israel would have become the center of the kingdom of God on earth, were she faithful. However, the prediction will be fulfilled to spiritual Israel in the last days in a spiritual sense. It will also have a literal fulfillment in the earth made new. Much of the imagery used by Isaiah is borrowed by the Revelator in Revelation 21 and 22.

PARALLELS BETWEEN

Isaiah 60

“Thy gates shall be open continually they shall not be shut day nor night” Verse 12.

“That men may bring to thee the forces [wealth margin] of the Gentiles” [or nations]

“That their kings may be brought” Verse 11.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting or destruction within thy borders” Verse 18

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for righteousness shall the moon give Light to thee.”

“The days of thy mourning shall be ended.” Verse 20

“Thy people shall be all righteous.” Verse 21

They shall inherit the land forever.” Verse 21

Revelation 21, 22.

“The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there.” Verse 25.

“They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.” Verse 26.

“The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” Verse 24

“And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither pain.” Verse 4.

“There shall be no more curse” verse 22:3

“The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it.” Verse 23

“The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God the glory.” Verse 19

“The glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof” verse 23; 22:5

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” verse 4

“There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither abomination or makes a lie” verse 27

“They [the saints] shall reign forever and ever.” 22:5

While there may be kings in this world who will be saved in the kingdom, nevertheless they are not saved as kings, but as born again children of God. Earthly kings will not resume their kingly positions in the Hereafter. Who, then, are the kings that bring their glory and honor to the New Jerusalem in acknowledgment of the worthiness of the Lamb, etc.

The twelve apostles will be kings.

“Jesus said to them, you which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel!” Matthew 19:28

The twelve tribes of Israel we suggest, represent spiritual Israel. The twenty-four elders will be kings.

“The four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb saying You have made us kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:8-10

“There shall be no night there” v. 25

This is referring to the holy city. Does this mean that there will be no days as such and no weekly and monthly cycles: In the restored earth, while time is replaced by eternity, there will still be days and nights but no darkness. The day will still be divided. As Isaiah declared, speaking of the restoration of his people,

“Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the breach of his people and heals the stroke of their wound.” Isaiah 30:26

This does not mean that the sun will be seven times hotter but brighter. Thus, while there will be a difference in the renewed earth between day and night, so-called, there will be no darkness. Because man in his glorified body will experience no weariness or fatigue, there will be no need of sleep.

“They shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

That weeks and months will be observed by the redeemed is revealed by Isaiah who declared of the new earth state:

“It shall come to pass that from one new moon to another [monthly] and from one Sabbath to another [weekly] shall all flesh come to worship before me said the Lord” Isaiah 66:22,23

This means that from around the renewed earth, the multitudes of the saints, each Sabbath and each month, will come to the holy city firstly for worship and secondly to partake of the tree of life.

“Which yielded her fruit every month!” [22:2]

“And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it” [the New Jerusalem] verse 26

What glory and honor? The redeemed will not exist in a state of inactivity in the better land. As the author of the Great Controversy has so beautifully described it,

“Immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of red love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed.” (14)

No doubt the honor and glory of the achievements of the redeemed, will be acknowledged and displayed before the hosts of the saved in the New Jerusalem; but instead of man being exalted, the credit and praise will rightly be rendered to God.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” verse 27

This reveals why the Deity has gone to such pains to prepare a people for the kingdom of God. The well-being, happiness and security of the universe is based upon obedience to God’s eternal law. Originally it was disobedience to that law that brought disharmony and war in heaven. For 6,000 years God has permitted the reign of evil in order to convince all, of the secret of real happiness; and now when the reign of sin is over, the standard of entrance is emphasized. But not only that, only those whose guilt has been atoned for by the Lamb of God and who have retained their names in the Book of Life by successfully overcoming evil by the power of the Lamb, [3:5] will abide in that better land.

REVELATION 22

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb” verse 1

This is a literal description of the throne of God that will be established in the New Jerusalem. It is the antitype of the healing waters of Ezekiel 47:1-9. Revelation 21 describes the New Jerusalem from the external view. Revelation 22 now describes the city from within. The first and central object is the throne. Secondly, the sparkling waters that emerge from beneath the throne. What an impressive demonstration of the creative power of God. Thirdly, the tree of life.

“In the midst of the street of it [the city] and on either side of the river was the tree of life which bare twelve manner [or kinds] of fruit and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing [or service] of the nations” verse 2

Every month [Isaiah 66:23] the redeemed come to the tree of life to eat of its fruit. When one considers the innumerable multitude of God’s people, what an abundance of fruit must be produced by this tree. Why is it essential for the redeemed to eat of this tree? According to the original conditions of Eden it appears that it was essential for Adam and Eve to continually eat of the tree. This was to perpetuate immortality.

“And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” Genesis 3:22

But is not immortality bestowed upon the saints at the resurrection and translation at the Second Advent? Yes: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [or die] but we shall all be changed, in a moment-at the last trump. This mortal must put on immortality. Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

But man is not naturally immortal. Nor does he possess an immortal soul. Therefore it is necessary to perpetuate immortality. The chosen source is the tree of life. This is a continual reminder to the redeemed that even in their sinless, immortal state they are still dependent upon God for life.

“And there shall be no more curse!” verse 3

The curse that Heaven placed upon the world in the beginning was threefold.

1. The curse upon the ground as a result of Adam’s sin. This prevented the soil from giving forth of its fullness in regard to production. [Genesis 3:17]

2. The curse upon Cain because of the murder of his brother [Genesis 4:11] The Hebrew may read, “Thou art more cursed than the earth.”

3. The curse upon the earth at the Flood because of the moral corruption of the race by which “the world that then was” became “the heavens and the earth which are now.” [Genesis 8:11; 6:1-7; 2 Peter 3:6, 7]

“The curse did not come all at once. Since the Flood, as the human family have forgotten God the curse has rested heavier and heavier upon men and upon the beasts. The trees and all vegetation also have felt the effects of the curse.” (15)

Little do we realize the sad effects of the curse upon the earth, but in the great restoration when the earth and all in it exhibit their pristine freshness and beauty, we will then comprehend.

“The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and his servants shall serve him.” verse 3

Does this mean that the Father takes up permanent residence in the renewed earth? Or could it mean that at various times the Father will visit this earth and enter into fellowship with his earthborn children? Originally in Eden, God visited his children and communed with them.

“And they [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and God called unto them.” Genesis 3:8, 9

“And his servants shall serve him” v. 3

What delight and satisfaction for the saints in being able to visibly serve God. What marvelous meaning to our existence could be involved in this simple statement.

“And they shall see his face” verse 4

Face exhibits character. Our heavenly Father is absolute perfection. What, then, must the Father’s face be like? Beautiful faces have a magnetic attraction. How then, will the saints be affected when they “see his face.” We suggest that “so awe-inspiring, so impressive, so moving, so overwhelming” is God’s face that the saints will be unable to contain themselves. They will burst forth into uninhibited praise. Maybe this is the basis for the unceasing praise of the cherubim as revealed in Revelation 4. (16)

“And his name shall be in their foreheads” verse 4

This reminds us of the 144,000.

“An hundred and forty-four thousand having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” Revelation 14:1

Does this mean that all the redeemed will have God’s name in their foreheads? Name denotes character so undoubtedly it does, for no one enters heaven who is lacking in character.

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God” Matthew 5:8

Will God’s name be in their foreheads in a spiritual sense, as with the 144,000 or will it be a visible sign of identification. We suggest the latter. Among the multiplied millions of sinless beings of other worlds as well as the millions of the angels of God, the redeemed will possess the visible name of God, indicating their special experience in having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Verse 5 See under Revelation 21:25

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” Verse 6

Once more through his angel spokesman [21:9] God confirms the certainty of the kingdom. This promise is repeated three times [19:9; 21:5; 22:6] “In the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established.” How our Father helps us to believe! He longs for the salvation of his lost children.

“Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book!” verse 7

Six times in Revelation the expression “I come quickly” is used. The first three it seems refer to Christ coming to three of the seven churches in judgment, but the three in chapter 22 all refer to his Second Coming. Number three, recall, denotes the certainty of the promise. [Matthew 18:16]. In this verse it is emphasized to show the importance of keeping the sayings in Revelation. Special instruction and special preparation are essential for the Second Advent.

“And I John saw these things and heard then. And I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then said he to me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” Verses 8, 9.

It appears that as in 19:10, John again was so overwhelmed at the marvelous Revelation from the angel, that he involuntarily fell at the feet of the heavenly being. Once again the angel gently reminds John that angels are fellow creatures, and that God alone is to be worshipped.

“And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.” Verse 10

The fulfilling of the prophecies of Revelation commenced in John's day. Therefore nothing in Revelation is to be sealed or kept secret as far as God's people are concerned.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he which is holy let him be holy still." Verse 11.

Some Greek scholars prefer,

"Let him that is unjust, do injustice still; and let the foul pollute himself still; and let the righteous do righteousness still; and let the holy sanctify himself still."

These represent all classes of the godly and ungodly. It seems that the significance of this verse is in the word "still".

"The word seems to denote development and crystallization of character immediately preceding the caning of the great Judge of all." Verse 12 (17)

This verse is a declaration or decree concerning the destiny of all, prior to the Second Advent. Jesus in the parable of the wheat and tares explained that in the period of the end of the world, there will be a separation of the just and unjust. [Matthew 13:37-41] This means that at a particular time, a decision must be made as to where every individual stands. This is one of the purposes of the pre-advent judgment.

It determines, after investigation, who has overcome and who has failed. The above decree announces the close of human probation and soon afterwards,

"Behold, a came quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Verse 12

What is the reward? Not eternal life. That is repeatedly declared to be a gift. (18). The reward of the saints is what they receive after they reach the kingdom - after they receive the gift of eternal life. This reveals that the Lord takes note of the works of the saints. Though we cannot earn our way to heaven, nevertheless God will reward us for every effort put forth for his cause. The reward of the unsaved will also be according to their works. The degrees of punishment will be according to his wicked works.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Verse 13

This is a repetition of Revelation 1:8, 17. The term "Alpha and Omega" represents Christ as the great Revelator. He knows and reveals all. The term "the first and the last" represents Jesus as the complete victor over all His enemies and the enemies of his people. (19)

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Verse 14

The antinomians dislike this verse and press for the translations from the Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus manuscripts, but these manuscripts are notorious for their many corruptions. (20)

The entrance of the saints into the city and to the tree of life is after the Second Advent. Eternal life is given at the Resurrection and Translation of the saints. We suggest that the privilege of entry into the city and eating of the tree of life, is part of the saints' reward and therefore the word 'commandments' would be more fitting, for the reward according to works.

The word 'commandments' also agrees with verse 7 and "Blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book." verse 7

"And them that keep the sayings of this book." Verse 9

What are the saints instructed to keep in the book of Revelation? Without dispute, the commandments of God.

"The dragon was wroth with the woman [church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17

"Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12

The following verse confirms that verse 14 refers to commandment keeping because it shows that those outside the city are commandment breakers.

“For without [the city] are dogs and sorcerers and whore mongers and murderers and idolaters and who so ever loves and makes a lie.” Verse 15

The dogs represent humans who are backbiters and hateful toward others -

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers” Philippians 3:2

“If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” Galatians 5:15

This verse repeats what was stated in 21:27, thus emphasizing the high standard of heaven. No one has a hope of heaven who rebels against its standards.

“I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star.” verse 16

The messages of Revelation are the messages of Christ. This makes the book of great importance. The neglect of it creates difficulties for the believer.

“The root [origin] and offspring of David”

This alludes to the deity and the humanity of Jesus. He is the God-man, connected with the Godhead and connected with man. (21)

“The bright and morning star”

Jesus is the one who heralds the end of the night of sin and the coming of the everlasting day.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is [spiritually] athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” verse 17

This is God’s final appeal to man to respond to the gospel and be fitted for the kingdom. How sadly shortsighted is the man who rejects or neglects it.

“For I testify to every one that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life [margin “tree of life”] and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book.” Verse 18, 19.

This is a dire warning from God that if man tampers with Revelation, no matter who or what he is, he will suffer eternal consequences. How important, then, must Revelation be in God’s sight.

“He which testifies these things said, Surely I come quickly. Amen.”

This is the final word of Christ to his people. He is returning to our world. He will keep his promise made on earth that he “will come again.” The blessed hope one day soon, will be realized.

“Even so come Lord Jesus!”

This prayer of John’s should also be the prayer of every true believer to.”The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Verse 21

APPENDIX 1

Parallels Between Ezekiel 40-48 And Revelation 21, 22

Shown city from a high mountain. Ezekiel 40:2 Shown city from high mountain. Revelation 21:10

City measured with a reed measuring stick. Ezekiel 40:3-5 City measured with a reed measuring stick. Revelation 21:15

The temple was separate from the city. Ezekiel 42:1, 20

No temple in city - situated elsewhere. Revelation 21:22; 7:14, 15

Names of 12 tribes on gates. Ezekiel 48:31 Names of 12 tribes on gates. Revelation 21:16

Three gates on each side of city. Ezekiel 48:30-34 Three gates on each side of city. Revelation 21:13

The city was four-square. Ezekiel 48:30-34 The city was four-square Revelation 21:16

God's glory came from the east. Ezekiel 43:2, 4

God's glory also comes from the east. Matthew 24:2?

God's throne in midst of city. Ezekiel 43:5, 7 God throne in midst of city. Revelation 22:3

Waters issue from the throne forming a river of life. Ezekiel 47:1-3 The river of the water of life issues from the throne. Revelation 22:1

Trees on both sides of the river. Ezekiel 47:12

Tree of life on both sides of the river. Revelation 22:2

New fruit produced every month. New fruit every month.

Leaves of tree for medicine. Leaves of tree for healing.

Name of city- "The Lord is there" Ezekiel 48:35

"He shall dwell with them and God himself shall be with them" Revelation 21:3

The land divided by lot according to the tribes 47:21, 22

The saints shall stand in their lot (Daniel 12:13) or inheritance in the renewed earth. Isaiah 65:17, 21-25

No stranger or uncircumcised in heart or flesh shall enter. Ezekiel 44:9 i. e. only purified people.

No one who "defiles or works abomination or makes a lie" shall enter, Revelation 21:27, i. e. , only purified people.

Saints assemble for worship on Sabbath. Ezekiel 46:1, 3 Saints assemble for worship every Sabbath. Isaiah 66:22, 23

APPENDIX 2

Revelation 21 and 22 is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to ancient Israel that God would finally restore them to a kingdom of glory upon the earth. Altogether there are ten passages in the writings of Isaiah that embrace the above promise. These are Isaiah 11:5-9; 24; 23; 25:7, 8; 33:20-24; 35:1-10; 40:31; 55:12, 13; 60:18, 19; 65:17-25; 66:22, 23. Some have mistakenly applied these to the millennium but Revelation 21, 22 show that they will be literally fulfilled in the renewed earth after the millennium.

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O. M. Mitchel, W. W. Campbell, R. T. Crawford, G. P. Serviss, E. L. Larkins, Spenser Jones, James Jeans, Thomas Paine.

2 We do not infer that at this stage the planets of our local solar system are inhabited.

3 Luke 15:3-7

4 Revelation 2:7; 22:1, 2

5 Isabel Lewis "Splendors of the Sky" page 30

6 Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 21, 22, 26, 27

7 See the Author's "2 Armies! 2 Suppers! 2 Destinies Await Our Generation"

8 See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"

9 Ellen G. White "The Desire of Ages" page 834

10 See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"

11 Dr. L. E. Froom "Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers" Volume I, pages 222-225

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14 Ellen G. White "The Great Controversy" page 677

15 Ellen G. White "Spiritual Gifts" Volume 4, page 192 15. See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"

17. Dr. R. D. Weymouth "The New Testament in Modern Speech" Footnote to Revelation 22:11

18. Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8

19. See the Author's "Jesus Christ! The Alpha and Omega"

20. The Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus manuscripts render Revelation 22:14 "Blessed are they that wash their robes"

21. See the Author's "The Sealed Scroll and the Scarred Lamb"

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