

# Hear What the Spirit Saith to the Ecclesias

*A Study of the Book of Revelation*

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Section 1

Rev. 1-3 • Pages 1-38





# Introduction

The Book of Revelation is the last of the inspired writings and contains a personal message from the Lord Jesus Christ to his friends. It is written in a style that only his friends can understand, because it expresses “spiritual things in spiritual words” and therefore requires a spiritual mind to interpret its message. Very often the “Lord’s friends” also experience difficulty in comprehending certain features of the book and whilst acknowledging that it is right that the message should be written in such a fashion that “the wicked will not understand” (Dan. 12:10) they are frequently perplexed at the structure and arrangement of the message. It could be true to say that such people come to view the Apocalypse as a series of difficult visions to be explained and reconciled with what they know to be the Truth of the Gospel but without a clear understanding of why the Book was structured in this fashion.

Acknowledging, therefore, that the Lord carefully chose every symbol as the best possible illustration by which to convey his “spiritual message”, it is incumbent upon his friends to study the book with a view to understanding its theme. This theme is expressed in the title Revelation, or, to transpose the Greek word, Apocalypse. It is a confidential message from the Lord explaining to his friends how the Father has manifested His Glory in the past, is manifesting it at the present and will assuredly reveal it in a multitude of glorified ones in His future Kingdom. The message is set out in the most beautiful and orderly fashion that the mind of the Spirit could devise and it is “our Glory to search it out” (Prov. 25:2).

These notes endeavour to concentrate attention on the thematic message of the Apocalypse but at the same time give a reasonably detailed analysis of each individual symbol and verse as an essential basis for understanding the message as a whole.

This has been done by drawing attention to key words and phrases which indicate certain features of the theme and where necessary presenting them in tabular or chart form. One chart, for example, suggests an overall analysis of the Apocalypse based upon John’s own divisions found in the key expression: “After this, I looked . . .” etc. This is a most important statement in books like Revelation, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc. where the writer is mentally and physically involved in the message he is receiving and thus indicates by the words “after this”, that there is now a break in the message. It is equally

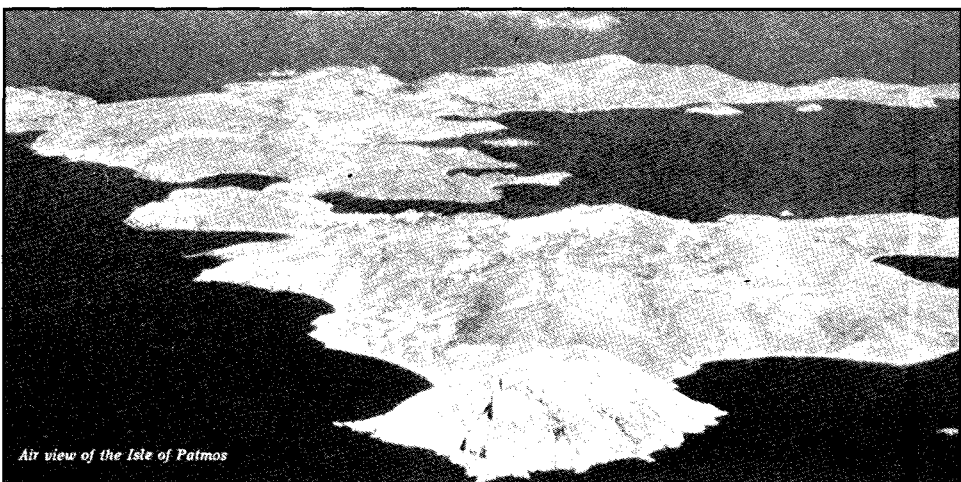
important to distinguish between whether John “saw” a particular vision or only “heard” the voice, or whether on the other hand he specifically states that he was “taken away in Spirit”.

These are only a very few of the key words and phrases which must be looked for when reading the Apocalypse, and whilst these notes on many occasions will only draw attention to the use of a phrase in a certain place, it is up to the individual reader to draw the necessary inference and conclusion from it.

The first part contains notes on the first section of the Apocalypse based on John’s own divisions as explained previously. The main vision of chapter 1 describes the Son of Man who walks in the midst of the ecclesias and the symbolic representations of “the Man’s” characteristics etc., become the basis of the titles by which the Lord introduces himself to the seven ecclesias in chapters 2 and 3. Another chart draws attention to the structure of each of these seven letters and there are many important similarities and trends which can be readily seen when the letters are considered in this way. Here again, there is considerable scope for each individual student to extract the obvious lessons and warnings which he may feel applies to himself or the ecclesia with which he meets.

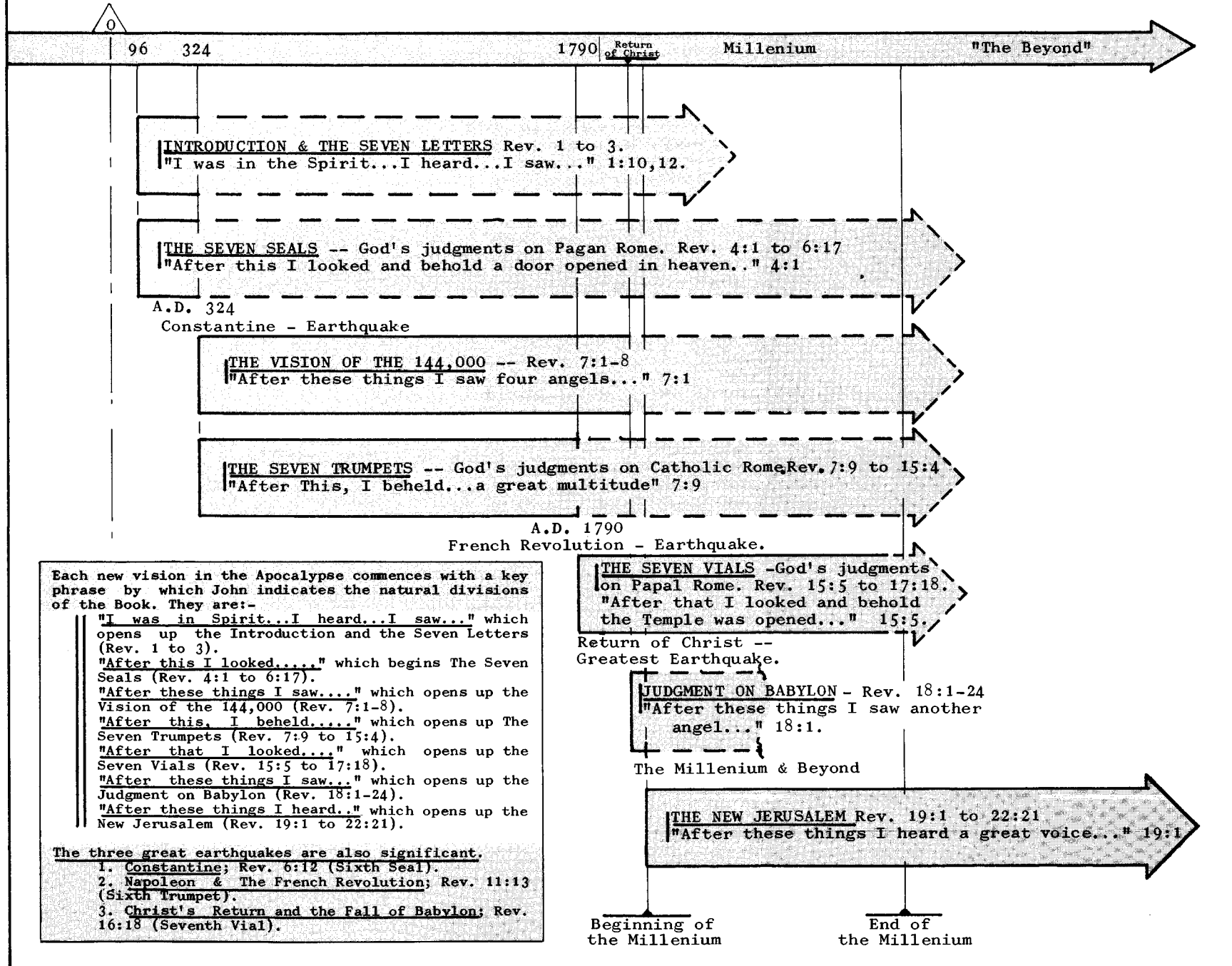
In reading the following notes, you may occasionally be puzzled by an obvious change in style of writing even in the middle of a sentence. In most cases this is because it was felt that the best way to describe the particular aspect under consideration was to quote directly from *Eureka*, Bro. Thomas’ exposition of the Apocalypse. Sometimes such quotes may seem to break up the general flow of the notes, but it has been done deliberately to encourage the student to read the whole of the relevant section in *Eureka* which will then make the quotation more meaningful and reveal the beautiful thematic continuity of the Lord’s message. Quotations of scripture which vary from the A.V. rendering and are not otherwise indicated, are Bro. Thomas’ translation given in *Eureka*.

May the blessings of Rev. 1:3 be upon each one who approaches this study with a desire to understand it and thereby redound Glory to our Heavenly Father.



Air view of the Isle of Patmos

# A THEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE APOCALYPSE





## CHAPTER 1

# The Son of Man Walking in the Midst of the Lampstands

### Verses 1 and 2: THE TITLE AND INTRODUCTION

#### Verse 1: “The Revelation”

Greek *Apocalupsis* means “an uncovering”. The word occurs 19 times in the New Testament and has been translated as “lighten” in Luke 2:32, “manifestation” in Rom. 8:19, “coming” in 1 Cor. 1:7, “appearing” in 1 Peter 1:7 as well as “revelation” in the majority of cases. The related verb *apokalupto*, “to reveal”, occurs 26 times (e.g.: Rom. 8:18, 1 Pet. 1:5). The definite article does not occur in the text; it is simply “A Revelation of Jesus Christ . . .”

#### “Which God gave unto him”

When Jesus was on the earth, he did not have this knowledge of the “times and seasons” (Mark. 13:32; Acts 1:7), but now that he is in heaven, the Father has revealed such unto him.

#### “His Servants”

Greek: *doulon*, a bond servant or slave, is a key word in the Apocalypse, occurring 14 times in the book. Even the beloved disciple John is called a servant (cp John. 15:15).

#### “Things which must shortly come to pass”

Rotherham translates this as: “the things which must needs come to pass with speed”. A footnote comments that this is exactly the same as the Septuagint of Daniel 2:28 (omitting “with speed”). It is significant that the Apocalypse is the sequel to the Book of Daniel.

#### “Signified it”

Lit. “he showed them by signs”. The principle is declared in Prov. 25:2.

#### “By His angel”

i.e.: his messenger (cp Rev. 22:6-10).

#### “His servant John”

John’s other writings (the Gospel and epistles) reveal him as a man of deep spiritual insight particularly conscious of the manifestation (apocalypse) of the Father in His

Son. This message from the Lord Jesus Christ completes John's vision of God Manifestation, as he is shown the ultimate glory reserved not only for the Lord, but for all who are one in him. (Rev. 1:13-16).

**Verse 2: "Who bare record . . ."**

Rotherham translates: ". . . who bare witness (*martureo*) as to the Word of God and the witness (*marturia*) of Jesus Christ". The word "witness" is a characteristic word in John's writings. *Martureo* occurs 33 times in John's Gospel but only once in Matthew and twice in Luke. *Marturia* occurs 14 times in John but only three times in Mark and once in Luke. It is likewise a key word in his epistles and in the Apocalypse. John relates his "personal experiences" of his association with the Lord during his ministry, with this later vision received in Patmos. He is witnessing to the truth of God Manifestation (1 Tim. 3:16) in the past, at the present and in the future, hence his opening greetings in verses 4 and 5.

**Verse 3: "Blessed is he that reads . . . hears . . . keeps . . ."**

Bro. Thomas translates "Blessed is he that knows accurately, and they who give heed to the words of the prophecy, and observe narrowly the things which have been written in it".

"Read" (*ana-ginosko*): to know accurately.

"Hear" (*akouo*): "used transitively the verb means to hear the sound; it indicates the meaning or message of what is heard" (Vine).

"Keep" (*tereo*): to watch over, preserve, keep strictly.

These words constitute the greatest encouragement to those who would be true servants of God and seek to understand this vision (cp Dan. 12:10). The Apocalypse is the history of the followers of Christ in their relation to the political and religious authorities of the age in which they live, and signs by which they might understand their significance in regard to God's fulfilling purpose in the Earth.

**Verses 4-6: JOHN'S GREETING TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS.**

**Verse 4: "The Seven Churches"**

Better rendered "ecclesias" (*ek*: "out of"; *klesis*: "a call") indicating a community of people called out of the nations to be a people for God's Name (Acts 15:14). The word "church" is used for ecclesia in all places in the A.V. except in Acts 19:37 where the word "churches" means temples. Read *Eureka*, Volume I, pages 119-123 for a more detailed exposition on the words "church:" and "ecclesia".

"Seven" signifies the complete ecclesia. Seven first occurs in Gen. 2:2: "On the seventh day Elohim ended his work which he had made and he rested (or ceased) on the seventh day from all his work which he had made". Seven ecclesias, therefore, represent the One Body and correspond to the seven-branched lampstand in the Holy Place illustrative of the means through which God will dispel the darkness of the world. (cp vs. 20).

**"In Asia"**

The Roman Province of Asia comprising what is now known as Turkey or Asia Minor and having Ephesus for its capital.





### **“Him which is and which was and which is to come”**

The theme of manifestation (or apocalypse) stands out prominently in this introductory section. Whilst Jesus is the one referred to, he is depicted in terms descriptive of God Manifestation. “He who is” is equivalent to declaring that he is not dead, but risen; “He who was” is the same as He who was before Abraham and before the crucifixion and “He that is coming” is Deity manifest in Spirit power and great glory.

### **“The Seven Spirits which ‘is’ before the throne”**

“Seven spirits does not indicate a plurality of spirits but perfection in wisdom, knowledge and power of one and the same spirit by the verb in the singular. The phrase, “the seven spirits which is” is therefore a Hebraism like that in Genesis 1:1: “Mighty ones he created”. These are cases in which the rules of English grammarians are ignored for the convenience of the Truth” (*Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 125).

In relation to Jesus Anointed as he is now, these Seven spirits are his seven eyes (5:6). The seven spirits are symbolical of the “one Spirit” in perfect manifestation; the seven eyes, of omniscience and perfection of power. Hence, he who was slain is now a perfect manifestation of Deity, omniscient, all seeing, and all powerful. This title is used of the Lord in his letter to Sardis (3:1).

### **Verse 5: “Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness”**

See note on verse 2 concerning the “faithful witness”. This title is used of the Lord in his letter to Laodicea (3:14).

### **“The firstborn of the dead”**

Lit. “the chief born from among dead ones”. This title is not to be confused with “first fruits from the dead” (1 Cor. 15:23), referring to the order of resurrection. This is a title which the Lord Jesus inherited on the basis of the law of the Firstborn.

#### **THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN**

1. The firstborn son was consecrated to God (Ex. 13:2; 22:29) and held the position of priest in the family (Num. 3:12,13; 8:14-18).
2. He received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17; Ezek. 47:13).
3. He was held next in honour to his parents (Gen. 49:3).
4. He succeeded in control of the family (or Kingdom) on the death of his father (2 Chron. 21:3).
5. He could forfeit his position through misconduct or incompetency (1 Chron. 5:1, 26:10; Gen. 25:31, 48:5,13,14).
6. A younger son could assume the position (1 Sam. 16:12).
7. Israel was a national firstborn (Ex. 4:21-23), elevated above other nations who existed before them.

**CHRIST THE FIRSTBORN** (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).

Adam was a son of God (Luke 3:38) but he forfeited his right through misconduct. Consider the following quotations in line with the foregoing points.

1. Luke 1:32,33; 2:22; Heb. 4:15.
2. Rom. 8:17-29; Heb. 1:3,4; Phil. 2:9-11
- 3,4. Rev. 3:21; Heb. 3:17.
5. 1 Cor. 15:45.
6. Psalm 89:24-27.
7. Hosea 11:1; Isa. 49:3.

The Lord can justly be called the beginning of the creation of God and this title is used of him in his letter to Loadicea (3:14).

### **“The Prince of the Kings of the Earth”**

This position is part of his responsibility and inheritance as the “firstborn of all creation”. He represents his Father who is King over all the Earth.

### **“Unto him that loved us . . .”**

The manifestation of Deity in spirit did not terminate in the perfecting of Jesus on the third day. He was the free will offering of the Eternal Spirit made perfect for acceptance (Lev. 22:21; Heb. 9:14); but he was only one of “the flock of the Deity which he had purchased with his own blood” (Acts. 20:28).

### **Verse 6: “To him be glory and dominion”**

As God manifest in flesh and now in Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of praise and honour (John 5:20-23) and God has vested in him the authority to execute judgment “because he is the Son of Man”. This title is descriptive of the Lord as the one

who has had the dominion over the flesh (Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8; 1 Cor. 15:22-28) and therefore all things will be subject to him in the Kingdom age. (cp Rev. 1:13).

### **Forever and ever”**

Lit. “For the ages of the ages”. This does not signify eternity but for the Kingdom age (*aión*). *Eureka*, Vol. I, pages 124-134 and chart.

### **Verse 7: “He is coming with clouds”**

“‘Clouds’ are opaque congeries of aqueous particles, exhaled from the waters of the earth into the air by the electricity of the expanse” (*Eureka*). John describes the inhabitants of the earth as “many waters” (Rev. 17:1,15). From these waters small particles have been exhaled by the Spirit (which is the truth), from the generations of the past, which, when viewed in mass, constitute as Paul terms them, “A great cloud of witnesses”, but this cloud is only seen as a matter of testimony. The subjects of it are in the earth; and perceived only as particles to be exhaled or drawn out, by the power of those beams, soon to irradiate from the Sun of righteousness. When he shall “arise with healing in his rays” (Mal. 4:2) they will come forth from the womb of the dawn as dew (Palm 110:3; Isa. 26:19). The saints in the resurrection state are thus likened to sparkling dew drops. The Clouds of the Millennial Expanse are the sparkling dew drops of Yahweh exalted by his energy to place and power; and gathered together about him as glorious and towering masses, pregnant with “lightnings, and thunderings, and voices and great hail” (Rev. 4:5; 11:19; 16:18-21). Consider Psalm 36:5; 68:33-35; 104:3; Deut. 32:2. The apocalyptic “coming with clouds” is the same as that described in Dan. 7:13. Read *Eureka*, Vol. I, pages 139-145.

### **Verse 8: “The Alpha and Omega . . . The Almighty”**

These words announce that He who is coming is “The Almighty”; and that this almighty one pertains to the past, the present and the future; that he has a “beginning” and also “an ending” as symbolised by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is the manifestation (*apocalypse*) that had its beginning. It began in Jesus, Son of David and son of God. When the “great mystery” (Eph. 5:22-32) shall be consummated in the resurrection and the subsequent anointing of the One Body; “the Omega”, “the ending” and the “who is coming” will be manifested (cp Isa. 41:4): “I, Yahweh the First One and the Last Ones.” The First One is the Alpha manifestation but in the Last Ones are “the Omega” and “the ending” and the “He who is coming” of the Apocalypse. The symbol in the text is very expressive. The Greek alphabet is one alphabet of 24 letters and answers to the 24 elders of Rev. 4:4.

### **Verses 9-20: THE SON OF MAN IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS**

#### **Verse 9: “I John who also am your brother and companion in tribulation . . .”**

The Apocalyptic vision commences in this verse where John gives more details of his personal situation, pointing out that he was a fellow sufferer with his brethren in Asia having been banished to the Isle of Patmos by the emperor Domitian who in A.D. 95 renewed the horrors of Nero’s persecution of A.D. 64. John was in fellowship with his brethren (1 John 1) for their common suffering came as a result of their common

testimony to the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ. The use of the word testimony (*marturia*) is a link with the theme previously introduced in verse 2.

### **“In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ”**

Having been made kings and priests (verse 6) it is to be expected that such people will manifest in their lives now the “royal dignity” (*basileia*) of a king and the patience as revealed by the Lord himself (Luke 8:15; 21:19). Compare the occurrence of patience in this book (2:2,3,19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12). It is in this sense that we manifest God in our daily living and as such can be the “he who is” of the Apocalypse (see notes on verse 8).

### **Verse 10: “I was in the spirit”**

Better rendered “I was in spirit”. By reference to Ezekiel we find that when he was simply about to deliver a prophetic discourse, he introduced it by saying, “the Word of Yahweh came unto me,” but when he was about to relate a prophetic vision he had seen, he prefaces his description by informing us that “there was upon me the hand of Yahweh, and he carried me out in spirit of Yahweh”. When “in spirit”, then, he both sees visions and hears, and then proceeds to narrate. This was the case with John. He was “in the spirit” and then he beheld, or was caused to see, what was invisible to men in their normal state. When the vision disappeared, he was again as usual, and proceeded to write whatever might be communicated (cp. 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). For similar uses of the phrase read *Eureka*, Vol. I, pages 157-158.

### **“In the Lord’s day”**

Having been informed that he was “in spirit” John next tells his readers where he was conveyed. He was “in the Lord’s day”, i.e.: the day of Yahweh’s apocalypse. It is the day which Abraham rejoiced to see (John 8:56), the day which Paul said would not come until the apostacy had fully developed (2 Thess. 2:3-8), the day of resurrection and judgment (Acts 17:31). See also Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:1-3; Psalm 118:24. John was conveyed into this day in vision; bodily he was in Patmos; but mentally, he was beyond the resurrection of the dead, by which the great and terrible day of Yahweh is introduced.

### **“Heard behind me”**

Compare Paul’s use of this expression (Phil. 3:13). All that John was about to see would be “behind” when the “day of the Lord” had really come. John first heard the voice and then (vs. 12) turned to see who it was that spoke with him. He was (in vision) contemporary with “the things which are to come”; hence, when he looked behind him he saw “the things which are”: ref. vs. 19. John was to both hear and see the Apocalypse of the Almighty in its complete unfolding of the “Him who was, and is and is to come”. Hence he is shown in subsequent visions the decline of the Truth, the development of the apostacy and finally the “day of the Lord” when the apocalypse will be consummated.

### **“A great voice as of a trumpet”**

The great voice is the apocalyptic antitype of the Mosaic ordinance of the memorial of the blowing of two silver trumpets. The first (Lev. 23:24) represents a summons to gather before Christ, and the second (Lev. 25:9) proclaims liberty throughout the land

and represents the work of Christ and the saints in their righteous judgments on the nations. John is about to witness a vision depicting the resurrection and glorification of the "Christ body", thus the trumpet voice is a fitting introduction to this vision (1 Thess. 4:16). Further development of the message of the trumpet voice is recorded in Rev. 4:1.

**Verse 11: "I am Alpha and Omega".** (see note vs. 8)

**"What thou seest, write for a scroll"**

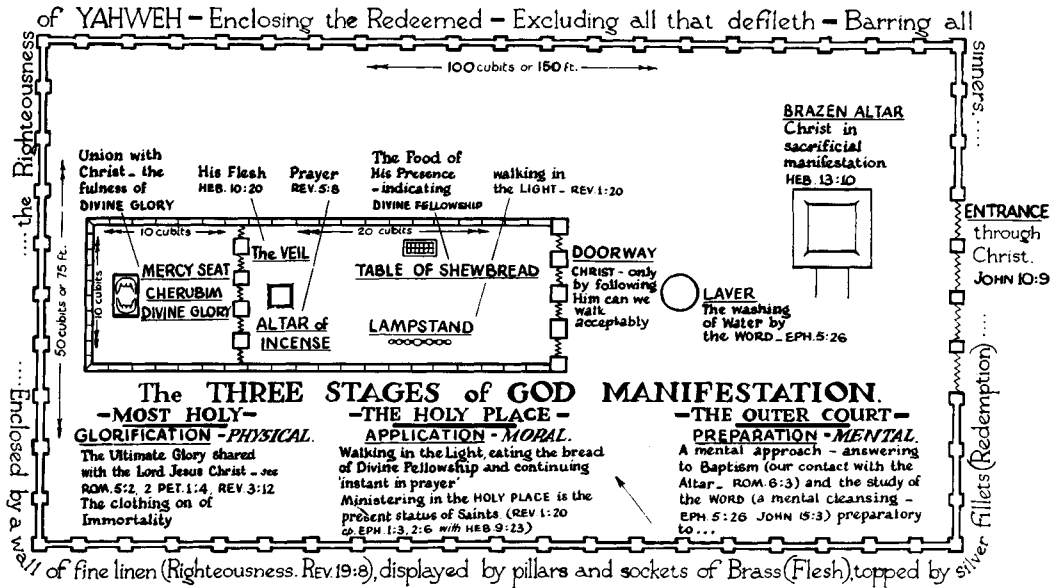
John was "in Spirit"; the trumpet-voice was the voice of the Spirit; therefore when John wrote to the seven ecclesias it was fitting that he should proclaim "... let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias" (2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

What John beheld, then, (vs. 12) and what he has described as the subject of his first vision, is a representation of the Eternal Spirit manifested first in the "things behind", the Alpha or First One, and afterwards in the "things before", i.e.: the Omega

## The TABERNACLE - CENTRE of DIVINE WORSHIP in ISRAEL

"A figure for the time then present..."(HEB 9:9) - foreshadowing GOD-MANIFESTATION.

PLANS DIVINELY REVEALED - WORKMEN SPECIALLY ENDOWED - MATERIALS TAKEN "OUT OF" EGYPT.



or Last Ones. In this turning point between the Alpha things and the Omega things of the Spirit Manifestation, the one having the keys of death and *hades* sets the prisoners free from the bonds of death (Luk. 20:35). The trumpet-voice of the Spirit is about to reveal to John a glorious insight into the resurrection and immortalization of the multitudinous Christ Body (vs. 13-18).

**Verse 12: “And I turned to see . . .”**

John now sees as well as hears the Voice as of a trumpet. See note on verse 10. Having turned, he sees as part of the “things that are” (vs. 19).

**“Seven golden Lampstands”**

These represent seven ecclesias (vs. 20). Many of the apocalyptic visions are based upon the temple and its courts, altars and furniture. The three areas of the temple and tabernacle represent the three stages of God Manifestation answering to the “He who was” (Outer Court), “He who is” (Holy Place), and the “He who is coming” (Most Holy Place). The Lampstand was located in the Holy Place signifying the present area of ministration of Yahweh’s saints. Besides the Lampstand there was the Table of Shewbread and the Altar of Incense. These represent various aspects of the life of a believer.

The Lampstand - “a light shining in a dark place” fittingly depicts the ecclesia as the present day means of God Manifestation to a dark world; the Table of Shewbread - fellowship with the Father through the Hope of Israel; the Altar of Incense - the means of access to God through prayer offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mosaic lampstand was of one stem, with a lamp on the top and three branches projecting from each side, with their several lamps, making in all seven lamps or burners. Thus, the stock, stem or shaft was “in the midst of the seven lampstands”, altogether, stem, branches, bowls, knobs and flowers constituting one illuminator of the holy place. The area of the vision is that state of being between the resurrection and the entire exhaustion of the wrath of Deity, contained in the Seventh Vial; for until the wrath of Deity is filled up, no man can enter into the Most Holy Place of the Apocalyptic Temple which is the Millennial Aion (Rev. 15:1,8). In this post-resurrectional and pre-millennial holy state of being, the saints of previous generations are gathered together in Seven Ecclesias or in complete assembly, as typified by the seven ecclesias of the pro-consular Asia.

**Verse 13: “One like unto the Son of Man”**

Son of Man is a title applied in a primary sense to the Lord Jesus, not so much to indicate his humanity, but rather that as a member of the Adamic race he is worthy to bear the title as descriptive of one who has “had the dominion” over the flesh (see notes vs. 6). It is a title which applies in an apocalyptic sense (i.e.: God Manifestation) to the Lord Jesus and those who are imitators of him. It was used by Ezekiel approximately 100 times because he was a “man of sign” (Ezek. 24:24) who was “strengthened by El” (Hebr: - Ezekiel) through visions of Elohim which he saw by the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:1-3). He was a type of Christ and an example to all who desire to manifest Godliness. The same title was appropriated by the Lord to himself in such places as Mth. 25:31; 26:64. (cp Son. of God, vs. 63); John 5:27, etc. (Note: it is just as important to distinguish the various titles used of the Lord Jesus Christ as it is to study the Name and Titles of Deity). The “one like unto the Son of Man” (similar to the Man of the One,

Dan. 10:5) is representative of a multitude. (cp vs. 16), i.e.: the multitudinous body of Christ who manifest his characteristics “in the midst of the ecclesias” (Eph. 4:13, 1 Cor. 12:12).

### **“Clothed with a garment down to the foot”**

Like Daniel’s vision in chapter 10:5,6, the first feature of the Man is his covering. This is significant, for there can be no manifestation of Godliness unless sin has been atoned for (or covered) in the way which God has appointed; as also were the priests and Levites under the Law of Moses, who were given the specific instructions regarding their garments. Likewise the servants of Christ “put on Christ” as a garment (Gal. 3:27), a robe of righteousness (Rev. 19:8,14), and in the Day of Glory, they will be clothed upon with immortality (2 Cor. 5:2,4), and be like him at his appearing (1 John 3:2).

### **“Girded about the breasts with a golden girdle”**

The girdle is not about the loins as in Dan. 10:5. The normal attire in ancient times included a girdle worn about the loins when performing work or going on a journey and this led to the expression “gird up your loins” (Jer. 1:17, etc.). Peter extends the idea and says “gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Pet. 1:13) when exhorting brethren to diligence and soberness in the Truth.

The golden girdle of this verse would answer more to a breast band than a girdle. According to Josephus (Antiquities 3.7.2) the priests wore such a girdle, made of linen, upon their breasts. Thus the golden girdle signifies a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), and when associated with the linen garment is expressive of the Righteousness of Faith and in the context of this vision depicts “the Body Corporate of God’s Kings and Priests, the inhabitation of Eternal Wisdom and Power, clothed in the linen garment of righteousness, honour, majesty and salvation. A glorious body of people prepared to execute righteous judgment upon the nations, and to govern them in righteousness when subdued . . . the Son of Man in glory and great power” (*Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 170).

### **Verse 14: “His head and the hairs white like wool”**

Paul says that Christ is the head of the ecclesia and he is the saviour of the Body (Eph. 5:23). The apocalyptic son of man is “the Body” and Jesus Anointed occupies the position of head to that Body. The hair is a further representation of a multitude who are one with the head. The lamb of God has washed them from their sins and made them white (Isa. 1:16-18; Dan. 7:9). The snow white wool becomes the emblem of the purity of the whole body in Christ when “presented to himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

### **“His eyes as a flame of fire”**

The eye is the symbol of intelligence for “the light of the body is the eye” . The flame of fire indicates intelligence in wrathful activity (Isa. 30:27; cp also Psa. 106:18). The first work of the saints will be to pour out God’s judgment on the nations.

### **Verse 15: “His feet like to incandescent brass”**

Feet symbolise the ideas of treading upon, and an advancing towards, anything. “Beautiful feet” walk through the earth with the gospel of peace, Rom. 10:15; Isa. 52:7. “Wrathful feet” tread the wine press of the wrath of God, tread down the wicked, and

break in pieces the nations (Rev. 19:15; Isa. 63:3; Mal. 4:3; Micah 4:13). The saints are represented as having passed through the fire of affliction and been purged and purified. This is symbolised by the incandecent brass, based upon the significance of brass in the Tabernacle. (Read *Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 174-181).

**“His voice as the sound of many waters”**

“Many waters” is defined to be “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues” (Rev. 17:15). The voice of the Son of Man is therefore the voice of a multitude (cp Dan. 10:6; Ezek. 1:24; Rev. 14:2,3).

**Verse 16: “In his right hand seven stars”** (cp verse 20).

**“Out of his mouth a sharp two edged sword”**

A sword proceeding out of the mouth indicates that the community is prepared for military operations. The sword is symbolical of what Paul styles “the Spirit of his Mouth” (2 Thess. 2:8) which is the Lord Jesus in the personal sense (the Alpha manifestation) and the Son of Man in the corporate sense (the Omega manifestation); (cp. Isa. 11:4; Habb. 2:14; Isa. 49:2; Hosea 6:5. See further note 2:12).

**“His countenance was as the sun”**

Better rendered “His aspect as the sun shines in his power”. Not his face, but his whole appearance. This was typified in the Alpha manifestation on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16) and will yet be revealed in the Omega, the Last Ones (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2; Math. 13:43).

**Verse 17: “I fell at his feet as dead”**

Like Ezekiel 1:28 and Dan. 8:17,18; 10:8,9, John was the subject of a figurative death and resurrection. They were all representative men and reveal the process by which the ultimate glorification shall be achieved.

**“Fear not”**

These words have been addressed to men and women in times past on the occasions of angelic visitation and will likewise be addressed to the worthy in the day of judgment.

**“The first and the last”** (see note verse 8).

**Verse 18: “Amen”**

This is from the Hebrew *ahmain* (faithfulness). In the letter to Laodicea the Spirit styles himself “The amen, the faithful and true Witness” (Rev. 3:14). In Isa. 65:16 the phrase “god of truth” is literally, “elohim of amen” or “mighty ones of faithfulness” (cp also 2 Cor. 1:20).

**“The keys of hell and death”**

A key has the power to unlock something, and in this case it is the grave and death that will be unlocked, speaking of resurrection (Mth. 16:18; 1 Cor. 15:51-55. cp also Rev. 3:7).

**Verse 19:**

The Diaglott translates this verse as “Write therefore the things thou sawest, even those



which are, and the things which are about to transpire after these". The "things which are" constitute the existing condition of the ecclesias as written in the seven epistles. The other things "which are about to transpire" are introduced with the vision of the throne in heaven (4:1,2).

### Verse 20: "The mystery"

Bro. Thomas states that "the presbytery (eldership) anointed with Holy Spirit was the particular star of the ecclesia and consequently the Angel of the body (*Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 190). The word angel has been applied in Scripture to both immortal and mortal beings, the latter referring to men in the ecclesia appointed to positions of authority, especially teaching (cp Dan. 12:3). These were the mouthpiece of the Spirit in apostolic times - their direct counterpart does not exist in the present dispensation.

"The seven lampstands are the seven ecclesias" (see note verse 12).

The Son of Man then, seen by John when he turned to see the source of the voice, was not the actual Jesus, but a symbolic representation of him in certain relations which become apparent in the messages sent to the ecclesias of Asia. It is well to realise that though sent to seven congregations contemporary with John, the messages were really intended to be of world-wide application so far as the saints are concerned. It was not only for them, it was for all the friends of Christ. We learn this from the addition of this clause to every message. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear". The seven golden lampstands in the midst of which the figure of the Son of Man was seen, represent the entire community of the saints as a light-bearing community. They did this in representing the seven ecclesias in Asia which stood for all the ecclesias everywhere, as shown by the intimation appended to each message, that what was said was intended for everyone having ears. Seven were chosen whose states differed, and who therefore called for seven different messages, applicable to all the states in which professedly Christian communities could be found.

Bro. R. Roberts, *Thirteen Lectures*



EPHESUS The theatre seating 25,000

## CHAPTER 2

# The Divine Message to Four Ecclesias

The seven messages contained in these chapters are not haphazard and formless, but are carefully constructed upon a principle of symmetry and appropriateness. They are as applicable in a general sense to ecclesias in all ages as they were in a specific sense to the seven ecclesias who originally received them.

Each epistle is introduced by reference to a certain attribute of the Speaker, which bore directly on the circumstances of the ecclesia addressed. The epistles are intimately linked with the vision of Chapter 1 and as such, provide a comprehensive description of what the Father desires to see in his children (Chapter 1) and compares this with what he does see in them (Chapters 2 and 3). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

### **Verses 1-7: THE EXHORTATION TO EPHEBUS:**

#### **“Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent”**

The City of Ephesus was the Capital of Lydian Asia. According to Strabo, it was one of the best and most glorious of cities and the greatest emporium of the proper Asia. It is called by Pliny one of the eyes of Asia, Smyrna being the other: but now it is venerable for nothing but the ruins of palaces, temples and amphitheatres. It was renowned for the Temple of Diana (or Artemis) one of the Wonders of the Ancient World. Today the whole town is nothing but a habitation for herdsmen and farmers, living in low and humble cottages of dirt, sheltered from the extremities of weather by the mighty masses of ruinous walls, the pride and ostentation of former days, and the emblem in these of the frailty of the world and the transient vanity of human glory. The light has gone out and darkness is complete.

**“These things saith . . .”**

**Verse 1: “. . . He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands”**

This title is drawn from 1:13,16. It represents the Son of Man (the Lord Jesus Christ in the first instance) as the one who guided these Spirit-endowed elders of the Ephesian ecclesia. It is nevertheless remarkable, that even though these men were in a most privileged position and able to draw on the power of the Spirit which the Lord had

TABULAR ANALYSIS OF THE SEVEN LETTERS

EPHESUS	SMYRNA	PERGAMOS	THYATIRA	SARDIS	PHILADELPHIA	LAODICEA
<p><u>TITLE:-</u> "These Things Saith....."</p> <p>He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.</p>	<p>The First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive.</p>	<p>He which has the sharp sword with two edges.</p>	<p>The Son of God who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.</p>	<p>He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.</p>	<p>He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.</p>	<p>The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.</p>
<p><u>APPROVAL:-</u> "I Know thy Works....."</p> <p>...and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. Borne .. laboured .. not fainted. Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.</p>	<p>... and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich).</p>	<p>..... and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.</p>	<p>...and thy charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.</p>	<p>Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.</p>	<p>... Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.</p>	
<p><u>DISAPPROVAL:-</u></p> <p>Nevertheless I have some-what against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.</p>	<p>I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.</p>	<p>Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam ... to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which thing I hate.</p>	<p>Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.</p>	<p>Thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead.</p>	<p>Thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, therefore I will spue thee out of my mouth. Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.</p>	
<p><u>WARNING:-</u></p> <p>Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place.</p>	<p>The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.</p>	<p>Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.</p>	<p>I will cast her into a bed ... I will kill her children with death. To the rest who have not known this doctrine ... hold fast till I come.</p>	<p>If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.</p>	<p>Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.</p>	<p>I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, ... white raiment, ... and eye salve. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.</p>
<p><u>ENCOURAGING PROMISE:-</u></p> <p>...will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.</p>	<p>... shall not be hurt of the second death.</p>	<p>... 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 knoweth saving he that receiveth it.</p>	<p>... will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall be broken ... and I will give him the morning star.</p>	<p>... shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels.</p>	<p>... 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.</p>	<p>... will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.</p>



promised them (John 14:16-18, 26), they still left their first love. This teaches us that the Lord is ever willing to help (whether then or now) but he does not force anyone to act “like a robot”. Even Spirit-endowed elders could be carnally-minded if they did not draw on the power which God was ever ready to grant them through his Son. Consider Paul’s messages to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-35, especially vs. 28-31 and also Ephesians 4:1-16.

The Lord, who walketh in the midst of the ecclesias, is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart and through the Spirit Word is able to discern between that which is soulish (of the flesh) and that which spiritual (Heb. 4:12,13).

It must not be overlooked, however, that the title “Son of Man” is representative of one who has overcome the flesh through the Word of God and is equally applicable to those “in Christ” who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4). It is the Spirit of Christ which must be seen guiding the eldership (or teachers) and walking in the midst of ecclesias everywhere and at all times.

The implied lesson found in this title is that the Living Word must be operative in the minds and hearts of the saints, to guide and control all their thoughts and actions that the Spirit mind might be developed and the flesh crucified. Such a spirit walking in the midst of the ecclesias will cause the lampstand to burn brightly as the oil of the word by the process of combustion shines forth the light of the Truth (Mth. 25:1-13).

**“I know thy works . . .”**

**Verses 2 and 3: “ . . . And thy labour and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and hast found them liars: And hast borne and hast patience and for my name’s sake hast laboured and hast not fainted.”**

Ephesus was not an indolent ecclesia and they were very conscious of the importance of upholding the Truth and combatting false doctrine. They were doubtless conscious of Paul’s warnings (Acts 20:29,30) that false teachers would arise in their midst and they were therefore continually on the watch for such men. They worked hard (“laboriously toiled”), they patiently endured in face of trials (or “tested” - Greek: *peirazo*) those who claimed to be apostles but who were in fact liars.

They were indefatigable and were not deterred on account of their sufferings for The Name. Altogether, a vigorous, active and consistent group of workers upholding the doctrines of the Word of God. **But . . .**

**Verse 4: “ . . . I have this against thee, that thou hast relaxed thy First Love”**

The real problem at Ephesus (as with each of the seven ecclesias) is implicit in the introductory title used by the Lord. The Spirit Word and power was not causing them to grow in love (Eph. 4:15,16) because they were not allowing it to operate in their lives. Whilst they were very busy “working in the Truth”, the Truth was not “working in them” (Eph. 2:8-10) and the real answer for them was to allow the Son of Man to guide them in all wisdom and spiritual understanding “unto a perfect man . . . making increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in LOVE”. Judaism is an ever present problem and the seeds of it were well and truly planted in Ephesus. An ecclesia can be

vigorous in work, sound in doctrine and active in the denunciation of errorists, but the individual members may have ceased to be emotionally stimulated by the Word due to their lack of application to it and therefore true sacrificial love (*agape*) is lacking in their lives.

**Verse 5: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent”**

At this crisis, when the Spirit addressed them through John, the Star Angel of Ephesus was in a fallen state. They had forsaken their “first love”. Grievous wolves had secured a foothold and were ready for every evil work. The opponents of Paul’s teaching were among the presbyters and from them nothing but perversion of the Truth could be expected. The abandoning of their first love was the effect of their influence; still there was scope for recovery. They had not gone to the extent of denying the faith or of holding principles subversive of it. Hence, the Spirit exhorted them to “remember from whence they had fallen” - to recollect the spiritual health they enjoyed when Paul went in and out among them for three years, declaring to them “all the counsel of the Deity”. They were exhorted to retrace their steps; to put themselves in their original mode of thought and disposition when in their first love and to do the first works, lest the Spirit should come and remove from them the gifts he had bestowed; and so leave them in outer darkness, a prey to all the wiles and ravening of the grievous wolves.” (*Eureka* Vol. 1 Pp. 196,197).

The “first works” they were called upon to perform were not the works outlined in verses 2 and 3 but the works described in John 6:28,29; Eph. 2:9,10; James 2:14-26 etc. Without faith (which comes by hearing the Spirit Word) it is impossible to cause the Lampstand to shine forth the Light of the Truth. The oil must be prepared and ignited; all labour apart from this is futile. Such an ecclesia, is not fit to continue in existence and therefore in line with the symbolism of verse 1, the Lord threatens to remove the Lampstand out of his place. Historically, the ecclesia in Ephesus eventually suffered this fate.

**Verse 6 : “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate”**

Although the Ephesians had left their “first love” and needed to repent and do the “first works” they still had sufficient understanding of the Truth to recognize the works of the Nicolaitanes for what they were and to hate such works. The word Nicolaitane is thought to be compounded of the Greek “*nikos*” meaning to vanquish or overcome (same word as “overcometh” v. 7,11,17,26 etc.) and “*laos*” people. Thus it means “vanquishers of the people.”

It would seem likely that the grievous wolves of which Paul warned them in Acts 20 brought in the twin problems of Judaism and Gentile Philosophy. Paul dealt with both of these issues in his letter to Ephesus and pointed out that they would destroy the “unity of the spirit” if allowed to develop. (See also 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18).

Judaism taught “justification by works” (Cp. v. 2 and 3) and that righteousness was attained by “abstaining from evil” (Col. 2:20-23). These symptoms could well be

the basis of the problems the Lord refers to in this epistle. On the other hand Ephesus was a centre of Greek culture and pagan worship and Paul's letter to them indicates that there was the problem of Gentiles advocating a way of life that was vain and licentious. A philosophy akin to that of the Epicureans (Acts 17:18) which condoned indulgence in fleshly desires and was calculated to "vanquish the people" and destroy the ecclesia.



Whatever the real nature of the Nicolaitanes' works might be, one thing is clear. The ecclesia in Ephesus could recognize erroneous doctrines and practices and were prepared to act against them, but they had lost the spirit and love of the Truth in a positive sense and were not therefore a Lampstand shining forth to the glory of God.

**"To him that overcometh"**

**Verse 7: "... I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God"**

This is an allusion to Gen. 2:9 but with a significant difference. In Genesis the phrase is literally "the tree of the lives" - one tree capable of imparting life to many. (See *Elpis Israel*, pp. 70,71). In Rev. 2:7; 22:2,14, it is literally "trees of life" or "wood of life": many trees possessing the one life. (See *Eureka*, Vol. I, pgs. 207-209). The word translated "tree" in these instances is *xulon* and is the same as the word "wood" in Rev. 18:12. It is a different word from that translated tree in Rev. 7:1,3; 8:7; 9:4. This word is *dendron* and is correctly rendered as "tree".

This understanding of the word *xulon* explains how, in Rev. 22:2, a "tree" can be on both sides of a river and is therefore better rendered as "wood".

"The inworking by which the nature of the resurrected body is changed so that it

becomes spirit-body, or spirit, is the giving to eat of the wood of life. When the victor has thus eaten he becomes an element of the wood, whose leaf shall never fade and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (cp Psa. 1:3; Isa. 6:13, Song 2:3).

“Paradise” signifies “a garden” and occurs in Neh. 2:8 (“forest”), Song 4:13; Eccl. 2:5 (“orchard”), Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7 (“paradise”). Read *Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 209-219.

To “eat of the wood of life in the midst of the Paradise of the Deity” is to be an unfading leaf - an immortal possessor of the glory, honour and incorruptibility of the Kingdom, which the God of Heaven shall set up in the Holy Land. It is to be one of the priests of the Most Holy Portion of the Holy Oblation to whom it shall be said by the King: “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the state” (Mth. 25:34).

### Verses 8-11: THE EXHORTATION TO SMYRNA:

**“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life”**

Smyrna, situated forty-five miles north of Ephesus, is still a prominent city and important sea port in Asia Minor.

There are no references to Smyrna in the Bible apart from these verses, but it might be assumed that the gospel was introduced there during Paul’s three years in Ephesus. Polycarp, a member of its Star Angel in the second century, was burnt at the stake, because he would not call Caesar “Lord” and sacrifice to his divinity. Many of the brethren suffered persecution and martyrdom at the hands of the authorities spurred on particularly by the Jews.



SMYRNA The ancient Agora

**“These Things saith . . .”**

**Verse 8: “. . . The first and the last which was dead and is alive”**

This title is drawn from 1:8,17,18. It is particularly expressive of the principles of God Manifestation revealed in Jesus the First One and His Brethren the Last Ones. Jesus as the firstfruits of them that sleep (1 Cor. 15:23) is the guarantee of the resurrection of



those who are Christ's at his coming. The hope of resurrection has always been a comfort to the saints of God (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 11:35-40), but particularly in times of persecution and suffering as experienced by the believers in Smyrna.

Compare this title with the exhortation and promise of verses 10,11. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" and "He shall not be hurt of the second death".

**"I know thy works . . ."**

**Verse 9: "... Thy tribulation and poverty, (but that thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan"**

Whilst they were physically impoverished on account of their loyalty to Christ, they were spiritually rich in faith (James. 2:5). Contrast Laodicea (Rev. 3:17,18). There were others, however, who claimed to be part of the ecclesia but were enemies of the true brethren. These people spoke blasphemy (Greek *blasphemia* from *blapto* - "to injure" and *pheme* - "speech") against the truth. They claimed to be Jews but were not. In this book of symbol it is not to be supposed that the Lord is necessarily referring to "he who is a Jew outwardly" but "he who is one inwardly" (Rom. 2:28,29; 9:6-8). The true Hope of Israel (Acts. 28:20) is a hope centred in the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return and one which does not seek for present power or wealth (Acts 23:6; 24:14,15; 26:6-8). There was constant endeavour on the part of some to impose the Law of Moses on Gentile converts (Gal. 3:2,3), attempting to establish justification by works of Law. Such were blasphemers and perverters of the Gospel, enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).

Whatever was the exact nature of the doctrine that they were promulgating in Smyrna, one thing is certain: they were opposed to the true brethren, whose hope was in future glory at the resurrection, and compromised the Truth by not practising the things for which they claimed to stand.

The term "Synagogue of Satan" is strongly suggestive of the fact that they were a "judaising" element, although in the symbology of the Apocalypse it may not necessarily imply that they were advocating a return to the Law of Moses, but rather that they were having the same divisive effect as Judaisers had in places like Galatia, Ephesus, etc. which prompted Paul to write to them.

They were a synagogue in the midst of an ecclesia. Bro. Thomas says: "This was 'the church' in Smyrna as opposed to 'the ecclesia of the Smyrnians'."

Such a group would undoubtedly place emphasis on present things (Judaism had this tendency to concentrate attention on the flesh, Col. 2:23) and consequently the theme of the Lord's message to Smyrna is implied in the title "the First and Last which was dead and is alive".

The faithful in Smyrna are therefore encouraged by this title as it reminds them that present suffering is not to be compared with the future glory (Rom. 8:18,19,28).

**Verse 10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten**

**days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”.**

Whilst the Satan class of verse 9 were a group “within the ecclesia”, the devil (Greek *diabolos*) was the Roman authorities who “falsely accused” the true brethren and tempted them to abandon the faith. Bro. Thomas refers to the martyrdom of Polycarp in about AD 155 as an example of such a case and quotes in part from a letter of one Marcion writing on behalf of the “church at Smyrna”. Because of the interesting (though uninspired) nature of the document the entire letter is included as a means of illustrating the conditions which prevailed in Smyrna shortly after John received the Apocalypse.

The ten days tribulation would doubtless refer to the ten years’ persecution of the brethren of Christ in the reign of Trajan. A.D. 98-117. The condition of the ecclesia at this time is clearly depicted in the well-known correspondence between Pliny, the pro-consul in Bithynia, and the Emperor Trajan. The letters have been included in *Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 254-257.

The Lord promises a crown (Greek “Stephanos” - “a victor’s wreath”) to those who faithfully endure. The word for crown is “stephanos” in Rev. 2:10; 3:11; 4:4,10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14, but “Diadema” (“a royal crown”) in Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 19:12.

**“He that overcometh . . .”**

**Verse 11: “. . . Shall not be hurt of the second death”**

Some may die at the hands of the Roman *Diabolos* but if they “died in faith” (vs. 10) they will be raised to life and need not fear the second death (1 John 4:16-18). The theme of this epistle might well be summarised in Christ’s words to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth (hath faith) in me though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25,26).

**Verses 12-17: THE EXHORTATION TO PERGAMOS**

**“REPENT, or else I will come unto thee quickly”**

Pergamos was the name of a kingdom as well as of a city. The seat of government was in the city, to whose “angel” the Spirit wrote by John and is situated about sixty-four miles to the north of Smyrna.

From 231-133 B.C. Pergamos had been capital of the kingdom of Attalus, which was one of the parts into which the empire of Alexander the Great was broken up. In 133 B.C. its dying king willed it into the possession of the Roman Empire. The Romans made Pergamos the capital of the province of Asia, and that honour was retained until 130 A.D., so that when John wrote his letter, Pergamos had been a capital for nearly 300 years. Pergamos never attained the commercial importance of Ephesus or Smyrna because its geographical position forbade it, but though it was inferior in trade, it was far superior to them in historical greatness. It had all the atmosphere of an ancient capital city and all the pride of centuries of greatness behind it.

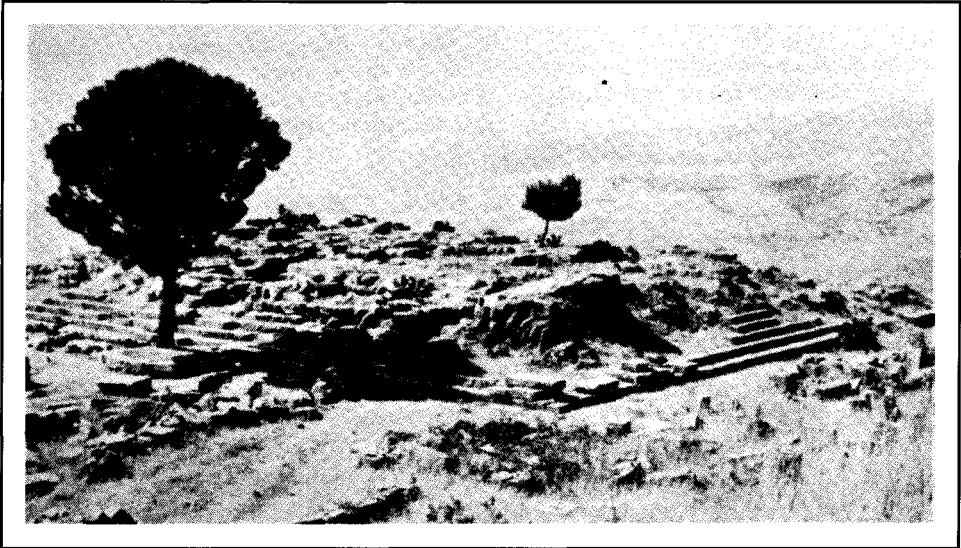
**“These things saith . . .”**

**Verse 12: “. . . He which hath the sharp two-edged long sword”**

There are two different Greek words used for “sword” in the New Testament. *Rhomphaia*

(Vine states) is a word of somewhat doubtful origin and denotes a Thracian weapon of large size, hence a long-sword. It occurs only in Luke 2:35; Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15,21.

The other word is *machaira* and means a short sword or a dagger and is used metaphorically in such well-known passages as Eph. 6:17 and Heb. 4:12. It occurs 29 times in the New Testament including the following places in the Apocalypse: 6:4; 13:10 (twice); 13:14.



PERGAMOS Great altar of Zeus

The use of the word *rhomphaia* in this place indicates the judgments that the Son of Man will execute upon the nations (cp 19:15) and because the sword proceeds out of the mouth it is symbolical of what Paul styles “the Spirit of his mouth”.

**“I know thy works”**

**Verse 13: “. . . and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is”**

The Satan in Pergamos, as elsewhere, was the “Church Hierarchy” claiming to be apostles and ambassadors of Jesus Christ, leading away disciples after them and teaching perverse things, by which the gospel of the Kingdom and its obedience as inculcated by Jesus and his apostle, were abolished. They were Balaamites and Nikolaitanes; teaching idolatrous practices, committing spiritual abomination and Judaisers and Gnostics (cp 2 Cor. 11:14). The miniature kingdom of Pergamos in its connection with Christianity had become the “Kingdom of the Clergy”, whose power in the days of John was enthroned in the city of Pergamos, being opposed both to State-Paganism and to Apostolic Christianity. It was the headquarters of the Synagogue of Satan” (vs. 9) found in Smyrna, thus it could be styled the throne (“seat” A.V.) of Satan, (*Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 267).

The true brethren, however, held fast the Name. The same word “to hold fast” (Greek *krateo*) occurs in 2:1,14,15,25; 3:11; 7:1; 20:2 and means “to be strong, mighty,

to prevail". God's name is expressive of His character and purpose (Ex. 34:6,7; John 17:26) hence to think, speak and act consistently with Divine purpose is to hold fast and manifest the Name. It involves both a putting off (the old man) and a putting on (the new man, Eph. 4:22-24). One without the other is incomplete as in the case of Ephesus who contended against error but had "left their first love".

The Star-Angel of Pergamos was still faithful and had been so in former days of trial, characterised as days in which Antipas was put to death in Pergamos. Antipas is styled "my faithful witness", hence the name is identical with him or them, who held fast the name and denied not the faith of Christ, whether in Pergamos or elsewhere, in the midst of persecution. The name is typical of a class at that time related to "the things that are". The word *antipas* signifies "against all" and is doubtless introduced here as the apocalyptic designation of those who were the faithful in opposition to all pretenders to Christianity. (*Eureka*, Vol. I, pg. 286-287).

**"I have a few things against thee . . ."**

**Verses 14 and 15: "The doctrine of Balaam"**

Balaam, like Nicolaitanes, Antipas, etc. is a typical name and means "waster of the people". It is also the name of a prophet who prophesied for hire in the days of Moses (Num. 22-25, 31). Under contract to Balak, King of Moab, to curse Israel, he was unable to do this for God interceded and turned his curse into a blessing. Nevertheless, Balaam suggested to Balak that the blessing might be circumvented by capitalising on the weakness of the children of Israel. Instead, therefore, of advising him to war, he suggested the policy of seducing them from their allegiance to Yahweh and His Law, by sending in the daughters of Moab among them and enticing them to impurity and idolatry. Balak followed his advice and by the same means proposed, caused Israel to be joined to Baalpeor, which caused the anger of Yahweh to smoke against them. The characteristics of Balaamites in the time of the apostles are described in 2 Peter 2:15,16 and Jude 11. These were false-teachers whose motives, teaching and practices were analogous to Balaam's. They included Jews who taught disciples to seek justification by Mosaic observances and Gentiles who induced them to conform to practices and customs of idolatry.

The effect of Balaam's teaching was a "wasting of the people", for Yahweh commanded their chiefs to be hung and all who had offended to be slain to the number of 24,000. Likewise in the Apocalypse the Lord declares He will fight against those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, with the sharp two-edged long-sword of His mouth. The only weapon granted to Antipas against Satan was the two-edged sword (*machaira*) of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). He was to be earnest and indefatigable in the use of this, that he might perpetuate the faith in the heart of a remnant till the apocalypse of Christ.

**Verse 15: "The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate"**

See previous note 2:6. There are seven things that Yahweh hates (Prov. 6:16-19) and the Nicolaitanes' doctrine and work incorporated all seven.

**Verse 16: "Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against**

**them with the sword of my mouth”**

Because they rejected the opportunity to use the “sword of the Spirit” and divide asunder that which is “of the flesh” from that which is “of the Spirit” the Lord would come against them and use the “Sword of His Mouth” to judge them as he did that generation in the wilderness.

**“To him that overcometh . . .”****Verse 17: “. . . Will I give to eat of the hidden manna”**

The record in Exodus 16 reveals four main stages in the giving of the manna in the wilderness:

1. Israel saw the glory of Yahweh appear in a cloud as they looked toward the wilderness, vs. 10.
2. In the evening they received flesh to eat, vs. 12,13.
3. In the morning, after the dew had gone up, the bread from heaven appeared on the ground and the Israelites said “What is it?” (Heb. *mannah*, vs. 13-15).
4. They beheld the glory and received the bread for forty years until they came to the land of promise, vs. 35.

These events were types recorded for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:1-11). They saw their fulfillment when the “true bread from heaven” appeared in the personage of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:32).

1. Israel looked towards the wilderness and there they saw the fore-runner of the “true bread” declaring that the Glory of God was about to be revealed (John 1:23; Isa. 40:3-8).
2. In the “evening time” of the Mosaic Aion the “lamb of God” or the “Word made Flesh” appeared to take away the sin of the world (John 1:14,29).
3. On the resurrection morn (“after the dew had gone up” Isa. 26:19) the true bread was revealed as that which giveth life unto the world (John 6:30-35). The one who was styled the “Word made Flesh” was now spirit-nature and has showed the way that others should follow. The hidden manna is that life which is now hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3) but will be revealed after the resurrection.
4. A life-time of probation (40 years) partaking of the Living Word will bring a believer to “the promised land”, i.e.: an end to the pilgrimage in the wilderness of life and an entry into the glories of the Kingdom.

The doctrine of Balaam caused many to fall in the wilderness as it did also in Pergamos but he that overcometh will be permitted to eat of the hidden manna. Those, in the wilderness, who saw the significance of the bread from heaven, would have resisted the Balaamites because the Word of God enabled them to discern the corrupting influence of the doctrine of Balaam. They did not perish by the Sword of Yahweh but were permitted to enter the land. The anti-type of these events is seen in the letter to Pergamos.

**“. . . and will give him a white stone”**

Greek *psephos*, “a smooth stone, a pebble worn smooth as by water or polished”; denotes:

- (a) by metonymy, a vote (from the use of pebbles for this purpose; cp *psephizo*, to count) see Acts 26:10, RV: “my vote” (A.V. “voice”).
- (b) a white stone was often used in the social life and judicial customs of the ancients; festal days were noted by a white stone, days of calamity by a black; in the courts a white stone indicated acquittal, a black, condemnation. A host’s appreciation of a special guest was indicated by a white stone with the name or a message written on it. (Compiled from *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).

For the Spirit, then, to pay over a white pebble to a resurrected saint is for him to give a verdict in his favour from the judicial throne. This figure of speech would doubtless be quite familiar to people living in a city like Pergamos.

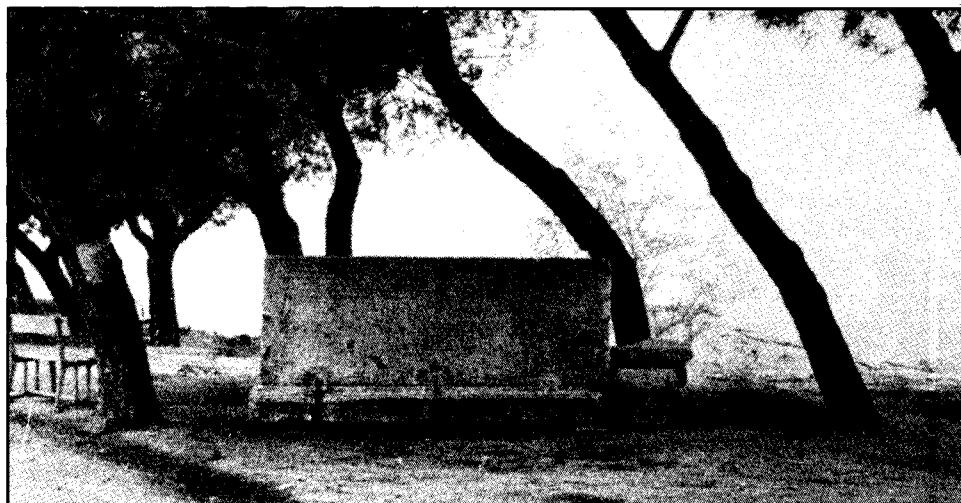
**“ . . . a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”**

This does not imply that the name cannot be verbally defined. For a man to know the name, he must be a subject of the verdict; the new name will then declare what he is and he will know it in the fullest sense.

### **Verses 18-29: THE EXHORTATION TO THYATIRA**

**“Hold fast till I come”**

Thyatira was situated forty eight miles east of Pergamos. The Truth was doubtless introduced into Thyatira by Lydia, whom Paul and his companions first became acquainted with at Philippi (Acts 16). She was apparently a wealthy person and had visited Philippi on business in company with “her household” who were also taught the Truth by Paul. These people would then have formed the nucleus of the ecclesia in Thyatira. No other information is available in the Bible concerning this city apart from what is stated in this epistle. Thirty-five years had passed since the ecclesia’s formation



**THYATIRA** An ancient Sarcophagus

during which time there had developed a gaudy, power-drunk Jezebel class who were confronting the faithful in Thyatira. Historians claim there is evidence to show that in the city there was a great amalgamation of races. Latin and Greek inscriptions abound and relics of Chaldean, Jewish and Persian religious practices are to be found. Amalgamation of different races, in pagan nations, always went together with a syncretism of different religions, every relation of life having its religious sanction. This could well lay the basis for the development of a class of worshippers resembling the characteristics of Jezebel, the Zidonian princess who married Ahab and corrupted many in Israel.

**“These things saith . . .”**

**Verse 18: “ . . . the son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame, and his feet are like fine brass”**

The title is again significant and is drawn largely from Rev. 1:14,15 with the addition of the phrase “Son of God”. It has been seen in these previous verses that the title is expressive of the multitudinous Christ in militant manifestation. In the vision of Chapter 1 he is styled the Son of Man because this describes the qualities which fitted the man to partake of Divine nature. He had “overcome” or “obtained the dominion” over the flesh (Psalm 8; John 5:27, etc.) because having “overcome” he is vested with power from on high by which he will rule the nations (Rev. 2:26,27). “Son of God”, therefore, is expressive of the power and authority vested in Jesus Christ and his redeemed brethren, whereas “Son of Man” is descriptive of the same group, but drawing attention to their fitness to act as kings and priests. Consider the following comparisons of these two titles: Mth. 16:13 with verse 16; 26:63 with verse 64; John 1:49 with verse 51; 5:25 with verse 27.

**“I know thy works . . .”**

**Verse 19: “ . . . and charity and service and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first”**

The eldership of the ecclesia must have been in a spiritually healthy state. They were working well and not neglecting the important attribute of love (contrast Ephesus, Rev. 2:4); but unlike Ephesus they were not contending sufficiently with the false teachers.

**“I have a few things against thee . . .”**

**Verse 20: “thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols”**

Two classes of women figure prominently in the Apocalypse. The chaste virgin espoused to the Lord Jesus Christ represents the true ecclesia and their relationship is consummated in the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). The other class is represented by a gaudy, adulterous woman advocating unfaithfulness and apostacy and signifying a false religious system opposed to Christ but nominally bearing his name (Rev. 12:1,2; 17:1-5). The latter class of worshipper is aptly described as having the characteristics of Jezebel whose name in Hebrew means “she dwells not” as if the Spirit had said, “she dwells not with me”. The fate of Jezebel is that of the class typified later in this book by “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters” (17:10). A study of 1 Kings 16 and

onwards gives an insight into the characteristics of Jezebel of old and shows how she was responsible for Israel's departure from the worship of Yahweh by the inculcation of idolatry and related practices. Her anti-type in the ecclesia at Thyatira was the pseudo-church of false teachers in which the abettors of Balaam's teaching (cp Pergamos, verse 14) were embodied. What the Balaamites taught as doctrine in Pergamos, Jezebel taught and practised in Thyatira.

**Verse 21: "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication and she repented not"**

This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab showed a token repentance and so Yahweh deferred the punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also deferred. Thus God gave her time to repent, which she did not, but instead of that seduced her sons to the same sins (1 Kings 21).

In *Eureka* (Vol. 1, pg. 329) Bro. Thomas states: "Jezebel still lives and she lives in sin. In the days of John she was without political sovereignty; she was the daughter of Ethbaal the idolater; but she had not been married to the Greco-Latin Ahab. The Judaizing and Gnostic Clergy were actively working the Mystery of Iniquity into authority; they had organized it into a synagogue and were privately insinuating it into the elderships, but they had not yet succeeded in allying themselves to the State . . . Instead of slaying every deceiver in communion with her, as he had Ananias and Sapphira, he gave her time. That time has not yet expired; for Jezebel lives, but has not repented; but instead thereof, 'sits as a woman drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus'" (Rev. 17:6).

**Verses 22 and 23: "I will cast her into a bed . . . I will kill her children with death . . ."**

The site of the sins shall be the scene of punishment (1 Kings 21:19). This bed is the "great tribulation, or sorrow" in which the antichristian apostasy is to be destroyed at the apocalypse of Jesus Christ in the "hour of Judgment", when Babylon the great City is destroyed by the Son of God who hath "His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass". Compare the death of Jezebel of old as a type of coming judgment on her anti-type (2 Kings. 9:30-37) and the fate of the sons of Ahab (2 Kings 10).

**"I search the reins and heart"**

Compare with Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10 and 20:12.

**"Hold fast till I come"**

**Verses 24 and 25: "As many as have not this doctrine"**

In the days of Elijah and Jezebel there were "7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal". Thyatira likewise had its faithful minority, who the Spirit calls "the rest which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak". The Satan is shown to be a group (styled "they"), not just an individual. In Smyrna they had formed a synagogue, in Pergamos they were enthroned and in Thyatira they had a voice in the ecclesia by which they expounded "deep things" contrary to the "Name", "Faith" and "Works" of



the Spirit. Their doctrine is described in previous verses as being associated with the teachings of the prophetess Jezebel. The depths of Satan as they spoke in apostolic times were the speculations of Hymenaeus and Philetus, and of the many other false prophets that had gone out into the world (2 Tim. 2:17; 1 John 4:1) whose word (or teaching) Paul said would “eat as doth a greengrass”.

**Jezebel** (jezebel; perhaps, *non-cohabited, unhusbanded*), the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon, and queen of Ahab. Her father had formerly been a priest of Astarte, but had violently dispossessed his brother Phelles of the throne.

**1. Personal History.** The first mention of Jezebel in the sacred narrative is her marriage with Ahab (1 Kings 16:31), B.C. about 871. (i) **Introduces idolatry.** The first effect of her influence was the immediate establishment of the Phoenician worship on a grand scale at the court of Ahab. At her table were supported no less than four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred of Astarte (1 Kings 16:31,32; 18:19), while the prophets of Jehovah were slain by her orders (1 Kings 18:13; 2 Kings 9:7). (ii) **Opposes Elijah.** When at last the people, at the instigation of *Elijah* (*q.v.*), rose against her ministers and slaughtered them at the foot of Carmel, and when Ahab was terrified into submission, she alone retained her presence of mind; and when she received, at the palace of Jezreel, the tidings that her religion was all but destroyed (1 Kings 19:1), she vowed to take the life of the prophet. (iii) **Secures the death of Naboth.** When she found her husband cast down by his disappointment at being thwarted by Naboth, she took the matter into her own hands (1 Kings 21:7). She wrote a warrant in Ahab's name, which was to secure the death of *Naboth* (*q.v.*). To her, and not Ahab, was sent the announcement that the royal wishes were accomplished (21:14) and she bade her husband go and take the vacant property. On her, accordingly, fell the prophet's curse as well as on her husband (21:23). (iv) **Influence.** Her policy was so triumphant that there were at last but seven thousand people who had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed the hand of his image. Through her daughter, Athaliah, queen of Judah, the same policy prevailed for a time in that kingdom. She survived Ahab fourteen years, and maintained considerable ascendancy over her son, Jehoram. (v) **Death.** When Jehu entered Jezreel Jezebel was in the palace, which stood by the gate of the city overlooking the approach from the east. She determined to face the destroyer of her family whom she saw rapidly advancing in his chariot. She painted her eyelids in the Eastern fashion with antimony, so as to give a darker border to the eyes and make them look larger and brighter, possibly in order to induce Jehu, after the manner of Eastern usurpers, to take her, the widow of his predecessor, for his wife; but more probably as the last act of regal splendour. She tired her head (i.e.: adorned her head and hair with a queenly headdress). and, looking down upon him from the high latticed window in the tower, she met him by an allusion to a former act of treason in the history of her adopted country. Jehu looked up from his chariot. Two or three eunuchs of the royal harem showed their faces at the windows, and, at his command, dashed the ancient princess down from the chamber. She fell immediately in front of the conqueror's chariot. When, afterward, he wished to show respect to her corpse as that of “a king's daughter”, nothing was found of her but the skull, the palms of her hands, and the soles of her feet (2 Kings 9:7,30, sq.), B.C. about 841.

**2. Character.** Jezebel was a woman in whom, with the reckless and licentious habits of an oriental queen, were united the sternest and fiercest qualities inherent in the Phoenician people. The wild license of her life, the magical fascination of her arts or of her character, became a proverb in the nation (2 Kings 9:22). Long afterward her name lived as the byword for all that was execrable. In the Revelation (2:20) she is used as a type of false teachers who, as the Church of Rome developed, wedded Christian doctrine to pagan ceremonies, as Jezebel engulfed Israel in idolatry.

**“to him that overcometh . . .”**

**Verses 26-29: “. . . will I give power over the nations”**

The promised reward is couched in the words of Psalm 2:9, which depicts the Son of God (verse 7) “dashing them in pieces like a potter’s vessel”. Compare the manner in which Jezebel was cast down from the wall and trodden under the hoofs of Jehu’s horses. Thus, in writing to Thyatira the Spirit sees the Sons of God with “feet like fine brass”. (See note Rev. 1:15).

Subsequent to treading them under foot, the Son will rule (literally, “to feed, tend or direct”) them with a rod of iron. This is to be the work of that faithful remnant of whom “the rest in Thyatira” are an example.

The symbol of the potter’s vessel is a graphic illustration of a lesson outlined in greater detail in such passages as Jer. 18 and 19, Rom. 9:20-23, etc.

**“I will give him the morning star”**

The planet Venus is often referred to as the “morning star”. With the exception of the Sun and Moon, it is the brightest object in the sky and appears as a morning or evening star according as it is east or west of the Sun, returning to the same position about every nineteen months. As the morning star it is the harbinger of daylight. The prophet Isaiah (14:12) likened the King of Babylon to the morning star and the same term is likewise used of Jesus (Rev. 22:16. cp 2 Peter 1:19).

Of all the stars of the New Heavens, Jesus will be the brightest; for in all things it is the Father’s will and pleasure, not only that all the fullness shall dwell in him, but that he also shall have the pre-eminence. “There is one glory of the sun” and that is his; and “there is another glory of the moon” and that is the glory of his companions collectively, and “there is another glory of the stars” and that is the glory of his brethren individually. (1 Cor. 15:41. cp also Dan. 12:3).

The message to Thyatira is introduced with a title descriptive of the Son of God’s authority to rule the nations and concludes with a promise that each individual who “holds fast till he come” will shine like the morning star in the Kingdom of their Father.

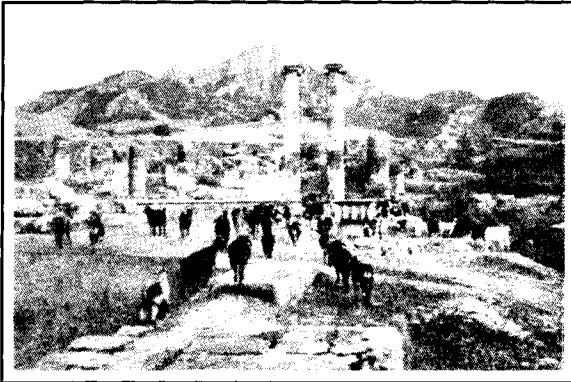
## CHAPTER 3

# The Divine Message to Three Ecclesias

### Verses 1-6: THE EXHORTATION TO SARDIS.

#### “BE WATCHFUL AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN”

Sardis, situated 33 miles to the south of Thyatira was once the capital of the old Lydian monarchy and associated with the names of Croesus, Cyrus and Alexander. The art of dyeing is said to have been invented here, and many coloured carpets or mats found in the houses of the wealthy were manufactured here. The metal known as electrum (a kind of bronze) was the produce of the Pactolus, the little stream which passed through the Agora of Sardis, and washed the walls of the Temple of Cybele. It is said that gold and silver coins were first minted at Sardis and that resident merchants first became a class there. An earthquake laid it waste in the reign of Tiberius, followed by a pestilence, but the city seems to have recovered its prosperity before the date of this epistle.



SARDIS Temple of Artemis

“These things saith . . .”

**Verse 1: “. . . He that hath the Seven Spirits of God and the seven stars”**

This title is based on Rev. 1:4,16 and draws particular attention to the “all seeing” power of the Son of man whose “seven eyes are the seven spirits of God” (Rev. 5:6)

and who had authority over the seven star-angels the mouthpiece of Spirit Manifestation in the first century ecclesia. The discerning eyes of the Son can detect the strengths and weaknesses in each ecclesia and each individual member (Heb. 4:12) and in the case of Sardis he was anxious to point out to the elders that they needed to look past external appearances of strength in their ecclesia and closely discern the thoughts and intents of each individual heart. His discerning eyes had detected a disastrous situation. Despite all the appearances of vigour and vitality, the real state was that they were spiritually dead.

The fact that the Son of Man was watching them becomes the basis of his message that the elders themselves must . . .

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

Whilst the elders were warned that they were spiritually dead, there were some who were not yet dead but “about to die”, hence he warns “become vigilant and strengthen the remaining things” (Diaglott).

The duties of such elders and shepherds has been clearly set down by the Lord in Mth. 24:42-51 and should be considered in conjunction with the two subsequent parables in Mth. 25.

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh (Mth. 25:13). Watchfulness engendered by having lamps filled with the oil of the Word and shining forth the light of the Truth is the means of ensuring spiritual life in any ecclesia (cp Rev. 16:15).

Whilst the ecclesia was working hard (for they had a name that they lived) their works were not perfect (i.e. “fulfilled”, “pleero”, “to fill”). Their works were not “works of faith” (Jm. 2) hence their ecclesial lampstand was not shining forth the light of the Spirit Word.

**Verse 3: “Be mindful therefore what thou hast received and heard and strictly keep it and be changed.”**

The eldership had “received” the Spirit and “heard” the Word of God. They failed to draw on the Spirit power and consequently the Word no longer “lived” in them. They were to be held responsible for their “dead” ecclesia but the Lord still extended the offer to them to return to their earlier condition and he would not blot out their name from the book of life (verse 5). The title of the Lord used in verse 1 was to remind them that he had the seven spirits and seven stars and was therefore ever willing and able to assist them to return and fulfil their works before God.

**“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief . . .”**

This “watching” is not merely a study of the Signs of the Times but a vigilance with which the individual “keeps his garments unspotted from the world” (Rev. 16:15) and administers nourishment to the household in due season (Mth. 24:42-46). If the Spirit of Christ does not dwell in an individual then he is incapable of discerning either his own or his brother’s spiritual needs and is therefore not watchful and is unprepared for the advent of Christ which to such a one will be like the coming of a “thief in the night”.

**Verse 4: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments . . .”**

See previous comment on the garment of the Son of Man (Rev. 1:13). Believers put on Christ as a white robe of righteousness in baptism by which they are purged from their sins (Rom. 4:7; Gal. 3:26-29). A patient continuance in well doing is necessary to ensure that the garment is kept “unspotted from the world”. Such a way of life is described as “walking with me in white” or in similar language: “. . . these were not *defiled* with women . . . they follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth” (Rev. 14:4). These had “walked *worthy* of the Lord” (Col. 1:10; Eph. 4:1) and are therefore *worthy* to attain to the resurrection of the dead (Lk. 20:35).

**“He that overcometh . . .”**

**Verse 5: “. . . the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels”**

The clothing in white is the change in nature itself at the Judgment seat of Christ (cp. 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Rev. 19:8). “The Scroll of Life” is an expression occurring in Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15 and 21:27. (Rev. 22:19 has been variously rendered as “Book of life” and “Wood of life” in different manuscripts). The “life” is “the life of the lamb slain” which is to be bestowed upon the worthy (cp. *Eureka*, Vol. I, pgs. 360 to 368).

**“Confess his name”**

(Cp. Mth. 10:32; Lk. 12:8). The believer who has been baptised “into the name” (Mth. 28:19) has put on Christ. This must be followed by a change in one’s way of life by which the character of Christ is revealed in his life. Such a one declares “the Name” (John 17:6,26) and it is this name that will be confessed by the Lord.

The Spirit’s message to Sardis commenced with a warning that in the eyes of man they had a *name* that they lived but the eyes of the Spirit discerned that they were in fact dead. If they were to have their *name* confessed before the Father then they must repent and hold fast the *name* (cp. 2:13).

**Verses 7-13: THE EXHORTATION TO PHILADELPHIA**

**“Hold fast . . . that no man take thy crown”**

Philadelphia was a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, about 27 miles south-east of Sardis in the plain of Hermus. It was built by Attalus Philadelphus, on a part of Mount Tmolus. In A.D. 17 it was destroyed by an earthquake, but was soon rebuilt. It is now called Allah Shehr, and continues to be inhabited. The walls of the ancient city which are still standing, enclose several hills, with the remains of a temple and other buildings.

**“These things saith . . .”**

**Verse 7: “He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth”**

This title is taken from Rev. 1:18 and Isa. 22:22. It draws attention to the Son of Man as the “Holy One” (Greek, *hagion*) the same word translated as “saint” in Rev. 5:8; 8:3,4 etc. It is that one word which expresses in particular the *separateness* that must



**PHILADELPHIA** A standing section of the ancient wall

exist between “that which is of the flesh and that which is of Spirit”. It is the embodiment of everything expressed in the principles of God Manifestation for it is a title of Yahweh Himself (cp. Isa. 1:4; 43:3, 11).

He is also styled the “True One”; an expression which depicts the Son of Man as the fulfilment of all the types and shadows found in the Old Testament. He is the “True Bread” (John 6:32) the True Tabernacle (Heb. 8:2; 9:24) and here he draws attention to himself as the antitypical Eliakim of Isa. 22:20-25. The prophet prefigures two states of the Kingdom of David by the names of two of Hezekiah’s officers: Shebna and Eliakim. Shebna means “to lead captive” and represents the kingdom in a dispersed and ruined condition while Eliakim means “El shall set up” and indicates the restoration of power through David’s son, the Christ.

The Key of David (or the key of the *House of David*, Isa. 22:22), is possessed by the Son of Man and no man can shut or open the door except him.

**“I know thy works . . .”**

**Verses 8 and 9: “. . . Behold I have set thee before an open door and no man can shut it . . .”**

The faithful in Philadelphia were troubled by that Synagogue of Satan which also existed in Smyrna (Rev. 2:9). A group of Judaisers who were trying to enslave the ecclesia into the doctrine of Salvation by works of Law with all its attendant ramifications: This class was typified by Shebna (Isa. 22:15-19) who had hewed him out a sepulchre on high, confident that he was secure in his position and resting in his own strength. Yahweh told him, however, that he would be removed from his station and that he would be superseded by Eliakim. The history of the times testifies to the fact that the Jewish nation were taken captive as Shebna’s name implies. The Spirit’s message to Philadelphia is to learn the lessons found in Isa. 22, that the faithful Eliakim class will be exalted in due time (contrast Isa. 22:15 with 2 Kings 18:18) and the Judaisers will be forced to recognize their elevation “and worship before their feet.”

**Verse 10: “I will keep thee from the hour of temptation”**

Historically the ecclesias were to suffer considerable persecution at the hands of many of the Roman Emperors but as far as the faithful remnant in Philadelphia were concerned they were assured that “he that hath the key of David” would not let anyone shut them out of their inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Their encouragement was to come from the times of Hezekiah when the nation was under seige from the Assyrian general Rabshekah. Shebna and Eliakim are presented to the ecclesia as examples from whom they can learn lessons and receive encouragement. A close study of this period of history is necessary to appreciate the Spirit’s message to Philadelphia.

**Verse 11: “Behold I come quickly”**

This is not the “coming in clouds” (Rev. 1:7) but the coming to execute the judgments of the previous verse (cp. also 2:5,16). The word quickly also means speedily or suddenly and indicates the nature of the Lord’s intervention rather than the time which should elapse before it is performed. It should be remembered that the Father is not bounded by time as is mortal man. The Spirit is infinite and eternal, thus “a thousand years are as one day” with the Lord (2 Peter 3:8) and the whole period of his absence from the earth is but “a little while” (John 16:16).

**“Hold fast that no man take thy crown”**

See previous note (Rev. 2:10). The crown (coronal wreath; Greek, *stephanos*) was the prize for endurance and was in the first instance associated with the public games. The “stephanos” was a very appropriate device for association with life; honour, glory, rejoicing and righteousness (read *Eureka*, Vol. I, pgs. 286 to 389).

**“Him that overcometh . . .”**

**Verse 12: “. . . 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”**

A pillar is representative of a saved person; therefore to make such an one a pillar in the temple of God is to make him an integral part thereof; and for a saint to be part of the temple, indicates that the temple itself is composed of persons. Compare Jacob’s vision of the ladder reaching to Heaven, of the pillar he erected and the place being called Bethel (House of God) with the Lord’s words in John 1:51. Refer also to 1 Tim. 3:15 and Ephesians 2:20,21 to see the spiritual significance of a temple composed of living stones.

In line with the theme of this letter to Philadelphia it is important to again see the connection with Isa. 22. Shebna (a type of the Synagogue of Satan) had been entrusted with the position of steward over the house (verse 15) but all his energies had been directed into “hewing out a sepulchre for himself” (verse 16) and therefore he was thrust out from his office (verse 19). He was concerned with building a house for the *dead* instead of a temple composed of *living* stones. He was replaced by Eliakim who is destined to be “a Father to the *house* of Judah” (verse 21), to have the key of the *house* of David laid upon his shoulder (verse 22), to become a throne of Glory to the

*house* of his father (verse 23) and to have hung upon him all the weight of his father's *house*. Such a one is a true pillar in the temple of God with all the characteristics of the Name of God engraved upon him.

A more detailed description of the New Jerusalem (the Spiritual Temple City of the Bride of Christ) is found in Rev. 21,22.

### **“My new name”**

The glory of God is intellectual, moral, and physical, all of which is covered by His Name, which expresses what He really is. Thus “His name is jealous” that is “He is jealous”; (Ex. 34:14) “His name is Holy”, that is “He is holy”; (Luke 1:49 etc). When Moses asked to see the Glory of God he received the reply “I will proclaim the Name of Yahweh before thee” (Ex. 34:6). All who accept the Gospel are baptised into this Name and anxiously look forward to the time when the “New name of the Deity” will be written upon them by the resurrection-power of the Father. What Jesus is now, they will become. He is Deity manifest in Spirit and so will they be when the “New Name of Glory, honour, incorruptibility, life and power is written, or engraved into their new nature.

### **Verses 14-22: THE EXHORTATION TO LAODICEA**

#### **“Behold I stand at the door and knock”**

Laodicea lay south of Philadelphia on the way returning to Ephesus, so that it will be found that the seven ecclesias lay in a kind of circular form so that the natural progress was from Ephesus through Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea round to Ephesus again. There was a flourishing ecclesia at Laodicea in the First Century as is evident from Colossians 4:15.



**LAODICEA A Roman aqueduct**



The ruins of the city show it to have been very large, situated in a volcanic region upon seven hills. The fertility of the soil and the prosperous circumstances of some of its citizens, raised it to greatness. Laodicea was often damaged by earthquakes, and restored by its own opulence, or by the magnificence of the Roman emperors. The site is now desolated and has the habitation of wild animals.

**“These things saith . . .”**

**Verse 14: “. . . the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God”**

This title is drawn from Rev. 1:5,18 (see notes on these verses). There could be no more fitting or effective introduction by way of example and rebuke to the lukewarm Laodiceans who were neither cold nor hot. It was said of the Lord Jesus Christ: “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (Psa. 69:9; John 2:17) and Isa. 65:16 he is styled “God of Truth” which literally is “elohim of amen” (faithfulness). The title used in this verse is based on such passages as these and served as a reminder to the Laodiceans that they needed to show zeal and return to the ways of faithfulness and Truth (cp. verse 19. See also 2 Cor. 1:19,20).

**“The beginning of the creation of God”**

See notes on Rev. 1:15. He is the beginning of the new creation and is the “first one” of the elohim of the future age. The ecclesia in Laodicea is invited to follow him and be among the “Last ones” in that day when he shall be revealed in glory. “Beginning” (Greek, *arche*) means “a commencement” or “chief” (cp. Col. 1:15-18) (“Principalities”, verse 16, is the same word as “beginning” verse 18).

**“I know thy works . . .”**

**Verses 15 and 16: “. . . that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot, so then because thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth”**

All the preceding ecclesias had something to work upon by which the evils among them might be corrected, for even Sardis is exhorted to “strengthen the things that remain,” but the Laodicean eldership appears to have been in such a perfectly self-satisfied condition - in so thoroughly lukewarm a condition - that there was no possibility apparent of restoring it to health. It was in an “anti-amen” state; unfaithful and untrue; and without zeal for the manifestation of the new creation. They had therefore become as the “incompatible ingesta of an irritable and nauseated stomach”. If they had been *cold* they would have been refreshing for “as the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger (angel) to them that sent him; for he refresheth the soul of his masters”. (Prov. 25:13). They had also ceased to be *hot*; their meditation upon the Word ceasing, the fire also ceased to burn; and they no longer spoke with their tongue the glorious and wonderful works of the Deity (Psa. 39:3).

**Verse 17: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing . . .”**

They were rich in worldly goods, but their wealth led them into a quiet, unaggressive

kind of religion; they were proud of their intellectual wealth and learned to be satisfied with their spiritual state, possibly believing that their riches were due to their goodness. They thought themselves to be good and this self deception was their danger, for “why should a man repent of his goodness?” He who has lived a life of self indulgence, licentiousness and every acknowledged form of godlessness may well be converted, but who can convert the hypocrite? He does not know he is a hypocrite; he is self deceived; he thinks himself to be sincere and blessed by God for his very sincerity. His problem is that “he knows not that he is the wretched and the pitiable one - even poor and blind and naked” (Diaglott).

The Laodicean ecclesia’s wretched and pitiable condition was due to their spiritual poverty, blindness and nakedness. The Lord refers to these three features of their spiritual condition in his words of counsel in the following verse.

**Verse 18: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire . . . white raiment . . . and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve . . .”**

The amazing forbearance and patience of the Lord is revealed in that he waits to restore such an ecclesia from the lowest conceivable ebb of faith. Gold refined by fire is the symbol of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7). A tried faith comes forth of tribulation, not of worldly prosperity which is only calculated to pervert, weaken and corrupt. To become subject to the tribulation, they had only to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, which would put them into antagonism with the world without, and the lusts of the flesh within. To buy a tried faith, would be the fruit of zeal, and of a change of mind and the cause of their justification, or investment with the “white garments” of righteousness. To arrive at this state it was necessary that the eyes of their understanding be anointed with the unction of the Spirit, that they might perceive what with all their piety and wealth, they were perfectly blind too (Jas. 2:5).

The Son of Man, the faithful and true witness, was the example set before them to follow (verse 14).

**Verse 19: “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent”**

Chastening is a sign of the Father’s love and that he recognizes the individual as a son (*huios*). Lack of chastening reveals that one is not a son (Heb. 12:5-11). In order that they might experience the Father’s loving, chastening hand, it was needful for them to be zealous (Greek, *zeloo*, “to have warmth of feeling”, from *zeo*, “to be hot”. Cp. verses 15 and 16, hot, *zestos*, is from the same root *zeo*) and to change or repent. In such a case the Father would change toward them (Jer. 18:7-10).

**Verse 20: “Behold I have stood at the door and I knock, if anyone may have heard my voice and opened the door, I will enter into him and feast with him and he with me”**

This promise is reminiscent of the Lord’s words in Luke 12:34-40. It stands in stark contrast to his words in this letter that he will spue them out of his mouth (verse 16). To those who will allow the Lord to enter the door of their hearts, he will come in to them and feast with them (John 14:21-23).

**“To him that overcometh . . .”**

**Verse 21: “. . . will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His Throne”**

When Jesus ascended to Heaven “he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in high places” (Heb. 1:3) which in Heb. 10:12 is styled “The right hand of the Deity” and Heb. 8:1 is extended to “he sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens” (cp. also Paul’s comments in Eph. 1:20 and Col. 3:1). The theme of this message is taken from Psalm 110, the most frequently quoted Old Testament passage.

It is interesting to observe the progressive deterioration through the seven ecclesias.

**Ephesus** - Hated the philosophical Judaistic Nicolaitanes and contended with false teachers, but left their first love.

**Smyrna** - Suffered at the hands of these false Jews who were styled the Synagogue of Satan.

**Pergamos** - had the Satan enthroned in that city and consequently the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes had crept in and its logical extension, the doctrine of Balaam.

**Thyatira** - had in their midst a Jezebel class advocating and practising the Doctrine of Balaam, destined to corrupt and eventually destroy the Truth.

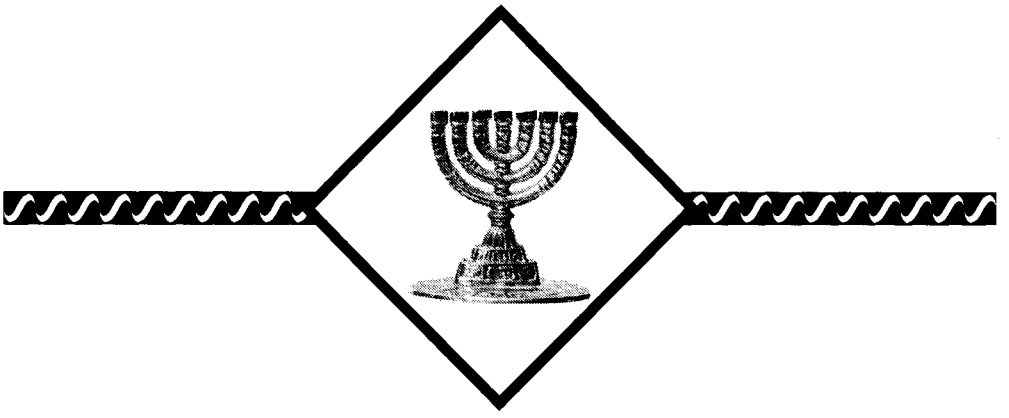
**Sardis** - found that Jezebel had been so effective that the Spirit could find only “a few names which had not defiled their garments”

**Philadelphia** - tried to stand apart, had “a little strength”, was persecuted by the Synagogue of Satan and was told that nothing short of the coming of Christ could remedy the deteriorating situation.

**Laodicea** - reveals the final result of apostasy and failure to contend for Truth against error. They were fit only to be spewed out of the Spirit’s mouth.

These letters are of immense value to the friends of Christ in all ages. They were of value doubtless to the individual communities to which, in the first instance, these messages were sent, but they have been of more consequence to the ages coming after, at least to that class in the ages described in the messages as "having ears". For this service they were intended, and we cannot suppose they have failed of their purpose. There is an idea entertained by some that besides being a faithful description of the condition of the seven Asian ecclesias contemporary with John, these messages also shadowed forth in prophetic outline the history of the ecclesias of Christ in general, from its Ephesian loving, labouring, zealous state developed by the labours of the Apostles in the first century, to the Laodicean state reached at last as the result of the triumph of the apostasy foretold - a state in which it was cast out and rejected of Christ (spued out of the Spirit's mouth) as a nauseous and disowned thing. Whether the messages had this prophetic scope in the intention of the Spirit of God cannot be determined from any information to be derived from the messages themselves: but certain it is that the history of the community established by the groove of these messages, and that for a long time (so far as the reputed Ecclesia of Christ of the world is concerned - the various state-endowed denominations of Christendom), the spued-out and rejected state has obtained in the world. The professing Christian Church rejects the faith and disobeys the commandments of Christ while professing submission to him. Lukewarmness is the universal order of the day. An earnest and practical interest in the things of God is regarded as something phenomenal and calling for pity. What can we do but take Peter's advice and "save ourselves from this untoward generation"? Fortunately for our good cheer, it is revealed that Christ at his coming will find some waking and ready. That we may be assisted in our endeavours to be of this number is one of the objects contemplated in this course of *Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse*. God grant His blessing on the effort and give us edification and peace.

R. Roberts, *Thirteen Lectures on The Apocalypse*.



# Come and See . . . Things Which Shall be Hereafter

*A Study of the Book of Revelation*

Section 2

Rev. 4-6 • Pages 39-77





## Introduction to Section Two

This set of notes is a continuation of the study of Revelation commenced in Section 1 entitled “Hear What the Spirit Saith to the Ecclesias”.

The previous notes covered Revelation chapters 1 to 3 where John had presented before him details of the existing conditions in the Seven Ecclesias of Asia when the “Trumpet-Voice” at its first sounding revealed to him the Lord’s view of “the things which are” (1:10,19). This section opens with the same “Trumpet-Voice” calling to John to “Come and see . . . the things which must be hereafter” (4:1).

Emphasis is once again laid on the apocalyptic theme of God Manifestation and in chapters 4 and 5 we are presented with an inspiring vision of the redeemed saints rejoicing in the triumph of the Lamb and extolling his virtues to the assembled multitudes.

It speaks of the time when “Yahweh shall be King over all the Earth: in that day there shall be One Yahweh and His Name One” (Zech. 14:9).

In keeping with this theme, therefore, it is fitting that the Lord Jesus Christ is described by various symbols appropriate to the particular aspect of God Manifestation being dealt with. Thus he is the “One Sitting on the Throne” (5:1), the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (5:5) and also the “Lamb” (5:6). The saints are likewise depicted in various facets of their work of God Manifestation as the “Four Living Ones” (4:6) the “Twenty Four Elders” (4:4,10) and also the “Redeemed” (5:9). It is vitally important to recognize this principle in order to appreciate the message of the book as a whole. One individual or group of individuals may be described by several different symbols appropriate to the feature of work being considered.

The sixth chapter contains a description of the opening of the first six seals of the Scroll referred to in chapter 5. It depicts the Judgments of God being poured out on the Pagan Roman Empire and the way being prepared for Constantine to establish Christianity as the officially endorsed state religion.





“The first three chapters deal with the affairs of the friends of Christ, as organised in separate communities in various parts of the world. Christ in these gives his opinion or judgment of the condition and deportment of these various communities, and advice according to their needs, in such a way as to be beneficial to all his friends afterwards. He now turns John’s attention to the future. ‘I will show thee things which must be hereafter’. John thus addressed finds himself ‘in the spirit’ and a spectator of the scene which becomes visible to him as a result of being in that state. The picture is a very gorgeous one. It is a picture of overpowering glory and loveliness, symbolic though it be. Nothing more sublime and beautiful could be conceived than the brilliant scene that burst upon his view. A human figure, of dazzling brightness sits on a shining throne, over-arched by a rainbow of glowing colours. Before the throne, stretching away on all sides, an outspread ocean of glassy splendour, and crystalline translucency, on which are grouped before the throne strange but glorious objects; four curiously formed living creatures glistening all over with eyes, and twenty-four venerable men wearing crowns. Surrounding them on all sides is a countless multitude of the angelic host, forming an outer fringe of glory. John watches and listens. He sees movements and hears voices among the living symbols. The elders do homage to the central figure, casting down their crowns: the four beasts are instinct with life and give forth sounds of praise. The angelic environment take up the anthem, and the vault of heaven rings with the joyous and melodious outpouring of glorious myriads.

The most superficial consideration of the picture would suggest that the Kingdom of God is here symbolised. This view becomes certain when we look at certain details.”

*“Thirteen Lectures” - R. Roberts.*

### THE MEN WHO RULED THE EMPIRE

THE ROLL OF EMPERORS spans more than 500 years of Roman history. All those listed below bore the title; twelve of the most famous are portrayed in the borders of the chart. The list has been simplified by excluding certain usurpers, claimants and co-emperors of relatively little importance. The length of the emperors' reigns varied enormously. The Golden Age of Augustus lasted 41 years, and Theodosius II served for 42 years; but in the troubled year 68-69, Galba, Otho and Vitellius averaged less than six months on the throne. By the end of the fourth century, during the reign of Honorius, the Empire had been permanently divided, with separate rulers for the West, in Rome, and for the East (E), in Constantinople.



AUGUSTUS



TIBERIUS



CALIGULA



CLAUDIUS



NERO



DOMITIAN



TRAJAN



JULIAN  
THE APOSTATE



DIOCLETIAN



CARACALLA



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS



HADRIAN

Augustus	27 B.C.-A.D. 14	Aurelian	270-275
Tiberius	14-37	Tacitus	275-276
Caligula	37-41	Florian	276
Claudius	41-54	Probus	276-282
Nero	54-68	Carus	282-283
Galba	68-69	Carinus	283-285
Otho	69	Diocletian	284-305
Vitellius	69	Maximian	286-305
Vespasian	69-79	Constantine, Licinius	307-324
Titus	79-81	Constantine	324-337
Domitian	81-96	Julian the Apostate	360-363
Nerva	96-98	Valentinian I	364-375
Trajan	98-117	Valens	364-378
Hadrian	117-138	Theodosius I	378-395
Antoninus Pius	138-161	Honorius	395-423
Marcus Aurelius	161-180	Arcadius (E)	395-408
Lucius Verus	161-169	Theodosius II (E)	408-450
Commodus	180-192	Valentinian III	425-455
Pertinax	193	Marcian (E)	450-457
Didius Julianus	193	Maximus	455
Septimius Severus	193-211	Avitus	455-456
Caracalla	211-217	Leo I (E)	457-474
Geta	211-212	Majorian	457-461
Macrinus	217-218	Severus	461-465
Elagabalus	218-222	Anthemius	467-472
Severus Alexander	222-235	Olybrius	472
Maximinus	235-238	Glycerius	473-474
Gordians I, II, III	238-244	Nepos	474-475
Philip the Arab	244-249	Zeno (E)	474-491
Decius	249-251	Romulus Augustulus	475-476
Valerian	253-260	Anastatius (E)	491-518
Gallienus	253-268	Justin I (E)	518-527
Claudius Gothicus	268-270	Justinian (E)	527-565

## CHAPTER 4

## The Throne of David Established in The Hour of Judgment

### Verse 1: “After these things I looked”

This is one of those key phrases which John uses to indicate a new phase of the Apocalyptic vision. The A.V. uses the words “after this” but it should be more correctly rendered “after these things” i.e. after those things seen in the first vision, chapters 1 to 3. John had previously witnessed “the things which are” constituting the existing condition of the Ecclesias prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. He is now about to witness “the things which shall be hereafter” (Chapter 1:19).

### “Behold a door openeth in the heaven”

John, in vision, saw a door opened in the heaven, symbolical of the place of political power. Our attention is restricted to “a door”, that is, to one door. Understandig that the Apocalyptic heaven is that constitution of things expanded over all peoples, nations and languages, as the government by which they are regulated and controlled, the door therefore represents a means of entrance by which a new power will “ascend into the political heavens”. Their period of probation having been accomplished, the saints are now prepared to manifest the glory of God as rulers in the Kingdom Age. Christ is “the door” (John 10:9). He has entered into his rest, and “has the keys of hell and of death”, he will raise the dead and open the door into the Kingdom. Compare other uses of the word “door”, as “door of faith” in Acts 14:27; and “a great door” in 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12.

“Heaven” is frequently used as a symbol of ruling powers - e.g. the heavens of old (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2); Idumean heavens (Isa. 34:4-10); Egyptian heavens (Ezek. 32:7,8); Babylonian heavens (Isa. 14:4,12); and the New Heavens (Isa. 65:17,18; Jer. 3:17). The Lord Jesus Christ as “the stone cut out of the mountain without hands”, will crush the nations and thereby open a door by which Yahweh Elohim (the saints) may “come in” (Zech. 14:5). It is by this means that the “he who is” becomes the “he who is to come” (cp. 1:4).

### “That first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me”

John tells us that the voice was identical with “that first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me”. This first voice was heard previously in chapter 1:10. (See

note on this verse). John heard this loud, trumpet like voice when he was “in spirit”, and since John was enacting the part of a “representative person”, it is equivalent to saying that when he shall behold the reality of the similitude he saw in spirit, he will also be “in spirit”; which likewise intimates by implication that he will have previously risen from the dead and be spirit. John, having referred us to the first voice of chapter 1:10 is indicating that the first and second hearing of the same voice related to the same epoch or point of time. They both relate to the Seventh Trumpet period, and as John “turned to see” in the first instance, and “looked” and “ascended” in the other, the vision of the Son of Man, and the vision of the thrones, the elders and the living ones are both representative of those things destined to come to pass after the advent of Christ and the resurrection of the saints. The beginning of the first voice awoke him to life and action; and afterwards the same voice invited him to ascend to the heaven and to inherit the kingdom established there.

The trumpet to which this loud “first voice” belongs is that represented in the “memorial of the blowing of trumpets” on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. 23,24). It is that sounding by which the princes, heads of the thousands of Israel, are summoned to gather themselves together unto Christ, the King of Israel (Num. 10:4). It precedes the sounding on the tenth of the seventh month, which proclaims liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof (Lev. 25:9). The saints are first raised and exalted to the heavens; in other words they “meet the lord in the air”, as symbolised in this chapter; and then afterward “the great trumpet” of the jubilee is blown by Yahweh Elohim, who, in the lightning and thunders which proceed out of the throne (verse 5), goes forth “with the whirlwind of the south” (Zech. 9:14). The “first voice”, then, is the apocalyptic anti-type of the Mosaic ordinance of the memorial of the blowing of the two silver trumpets, which were blown for the calling of the assembly, a holy convocation and for the journeying of the camps. It is heard by the class of which John is the apocalyptic representative and who are invited to “ascend hither”.

**“Ascend hither, and I will exhibit to thee things which must come to pass after these”**

The resurrection of the saints will be followed by their “ascension” - i.e. they will be “raised” from mortality to immortality (1 Cor. 15:52,53). This is illustrated in the case of the Lord Jesus who first came out of the sepulchre, and then, after a certain interval, “ascended to the Father” (John 20:17) - an ascent not to be confused with that event which took place 40 days later, described in Acts 1:10,11. He ascended to the Father before he was “taken up”. It was necessary that he should be “in spirit”, and so become spirit, that he might be with the Father. Although John “looked” and “heard”, he saw nothing until after the invitation to ascend, with the promise that subsequent to his ascension he should see an exhibition of things which should come to pass when “the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:22), which implies their resurrection and ascent after the similitude of the resurrection and ascension dramatized by John in type. The invitation to John to ascend into the heaven was equivalent to inviting him to “meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17); and by implication an invitation to all whom he represented to do so likewise at the appointed time.

**Verse 2: “And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne”**

As soon as the invitation was given to John to ascend to the heaven, he was “in Spirit”. Immediately he saw a throne in the heaven, which had not been seen before in such glorious manifestation. Many years prior to this time it had occupied a place in the heavens, contemporary with the thrones of Tyre and Egypt and Sheba and Babylon; but while John was in Patmos, and for many ages before and since, there is no such throne in the heavens. David and Solomon reigned as kings of Yahweh over Israel: thus Danid’s throne was styled, “The throne of Yahweh”, and “the throne of the Kingdom of Yahweh over Israel” (1 Chron. 28:5; 29:23). Being “in Spirit” John both hears and sees the glorious time when David’s throne, which was cast down, will be raised up (Acts 15:16). The word “throne” in this verse stands for the dominion, glory, and kingdom which, as Daniel says, was given to the Son of Man, “that all peoples and nations and languages might serve him” (Dan. 7:14).

The scene which John now proceeds to depict is built upon Isaiah’s vision in chapter 6 and will see its fulfilment when the Lord Jesus Christ sits on this throne (Mtt. 25:31) and those who “overcome” will sit with him in that throne (Rev. 3:21).

**Verse 3: “And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone”**

Jesus Christ has been styled “the stone of Israel” (Gen. 49:24). He is a “stone of stumbling” (Isa. 8:14) to the wicked, but a “precious corner stone” (Isa. 28:16) to the righteous. The two stones - jasper and sardine - serve to re-emphasise the apocalyptic theme of God-manifestation. The reason why two stones are indicated rather than one is because the king is Spirit and Flesh in combination. Had he been mere flesh, or spirit, one stone would have been sufficient; but being Deity manifested in flesh, two precious stones were necessary - one to symbolise the Spirit and the other to represent the Flesh. The jasper is the Spirit symbol. It is a hard stone of various hues, including purple, blue and green. The glory and light of the new Jerusalem community are likened to “a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:11) and in verse 23 this glory and light are styled the “glory of God and the Lamb”. The wall of the city is also a jasper (verse 18) and the first foundation is a jasper (verse 19). This beautiful gem is therefore a symbol of the Deity’s Spirit condensed into substance; and it is the primary principle of the city whose builder and maker is God.

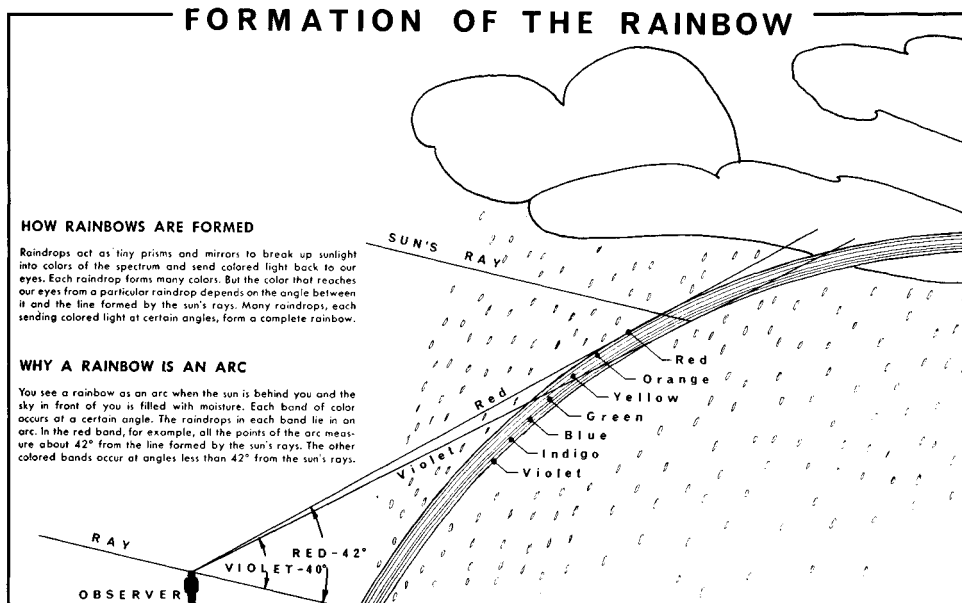
The sardine stone is named in Hebrew “*odem*”, the Hebrew consonants being the same as in the name “Adam”. It is a carnelian, and so called from its colour, having a resemblance to that flesh - a gem fitly symbolical of the Adam-element of the One sitting on the throne.

**“There was a rainbow round the throne, in sight like unto an emerald”**

The rainbow is referred to four times in the Scripture (Gen. 9:13-16; Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3; 10:1). A rainbow is seen only when the sun is shining and when the rain is falling between the spectator and the part of the horizon where the bow is seen. Sun, light, rain and cloud are elements necessary to the production of the natural rainbow; so are they also in the spiritual sense. The rainbow cannot appear until the Sun of Righteousness is enthroned “in the heavens” and the light of life, glory, honour and power will radiate

from him. The light irradiating from him will be reflected to the spectator world from the clouds of immortals about the throne, when the rain showers of the heavens shall descend upon the mown grass to fertilise the earth. (See previous notes on chapter 1:7).

The rainbow is the token or symbol of the covenant. The bow in the natural heavens has been so designated by God from the days of Noah and those whose minds have been enlightened by the Truth from his day to this have viewed it as the memorial of Yahweh's Covenant.



### The Order of the Rainbow's Development

- (1) The opening of the heaven by the Stone-Power smiting Nebuchadnezzar's image upon the feet.
  - (2) The establishment of the throne in the heaven by mowing the earth at harvest-time (chapter 14:15); in the storm period of "the lightnings, thunders, and voices proceeding from the throne" (chapter 4:5); by which the kingdoms of the world are taken possession of by the saints.
  - (3) The grass of the earth being thus mown, its harvest reaped, and its vintage trodden out, the rain of the heaven descends in the blessing of Abraham upon the nations; which, being subdued, are blessed in Abraham and his Seed, or in Jesus and the saints.
  - (4) "As brightness of morning, the Ruler rises, the Sun of an unclouded dawn, shining forth after rain upon the tender grass of the earth." The effect of this shining is that the Rainbow-Throne covenanted to David is beheld through the descending rain, which diffuses the knowledge of its glory to the bounds of the habitable world.
- "Eureka" Vol. II, page 22.*

In his “visions of Elohim”, Ezekiel beheld the same scene as that presented to John in Patmos respecting the Rainbow-Throne, in which he describes the brightness as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain (Ezek. 1:26-28). John saw the symbol of all this blessedness and the glory in the day of rain as the “rainbow circling about the throne in appearance like to an emerald”. The light green, the predominant colour, typifies the fertilising effect of the rain that forms the bow. The grass of the earth has become tender; it is no longer tough, withered and parched. The old grass has perished and emerald fertility obtains on every side, for the covenanted glory of Yahweh covers the earth “as the waters cover the sea” (cp. Isa. 40:6; Psa. 72:6; Deut. 32:2).

**Verse 4: “And circling about the throne were twenty four thrones and upon the thrones I saw twenty and four elders sitting, having been invested with white garments; and they had upon their heads golden coronal wreaths”**

The twenty-four thrones are the anti-type of the thrones of the house of David (Psa. 122:5), inasmuch as David’s reign was typical of the future (Amos 9:11). David divided the priests and Levites into twenty-four divisions (1 Chron. 24:4 and 25:31), for the purpose of ministering to the people and also to “prophesy with harps and cymbals and psalteries” (1 Chron. 25:1). In this passage it types the singers of the future age (Rev. 5:8,9; 14:3) who will act as Yahweh’s ministers to the nations.

The immortality bestowed upon them on account of righteousness is represented by the white raiment (Rev. 7:9,13,14; 19:8). They will be clothed with salvation (Psa. 132:9).

Each is wearing a coronal wreath (*stephanos*) signifying the symbol of victory to those who have “overcome” (chapter 2:10; 3:11,21). The gold represents a tried faith, “this is the victory that overcometh the world” (1 Pet. 1:7; 1 John 5:4).

“The symbolisation presented in this verse is representative of the fulfilment of the promise contained in chapter 3:21, saying to the victor, “I will give to him to sit with me on my throne”. To represent this, twenty-four thrones are circled about one throne; so that, in occupying representatively - that is, by a representative in the vision - one of the thrones, the individual victor sits with Jesus on his throne; in other words, shares with him in his kingly and priestly administration of human affairs in the Millennial aion. The twenty-four elders, then, are the victors or conquerors who have overcome in the sense indicated in the writing to the seven ecclesias. Hence, being victors - enthroned and wreathed, and invested with white or priestly garments - we behold them in the vision as kings and priests for the Deity. We see them as those who have eaten of the “wood of the life”, and who are collectively that living arboretum. We see them also in a position not to be injured by the second death; in possession of the morning star; clothed with white garments; pillars in the temple of the Spirit’s Deity to go out no more; with the name of the Deity written upon them - the name of the New Jerusalem, even the New Name; for they are the manifestations of Deity, the New Jerusalem, and the New Name.”

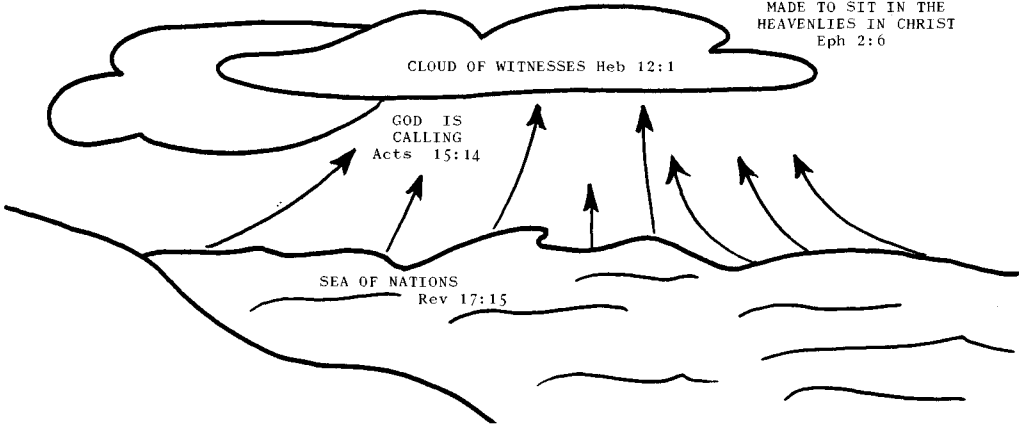
**Verse 5: “And out of the throne proceed lightnings and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of the Deity”**

# BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS

## PHASE 1

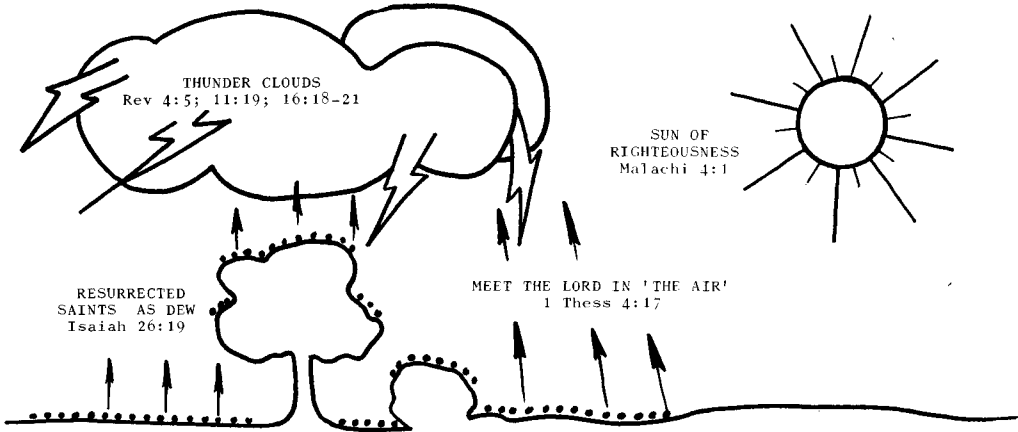
A CLOUD OF WITNESSES FORMED BY THE SPIRIT EXHALING (DRAWING OUT) THE CONSTITUENTS FROM THE SEA OF NATIONS.

MADE TO SIT IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST Eph 2:6



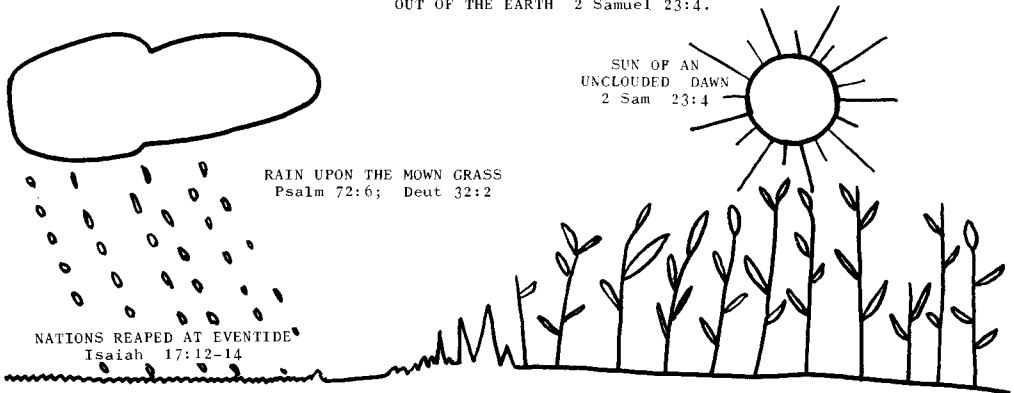
## PHASE 2

THE RESURRECTED SAINTS CONSTITUTE THE LIGHTNINGS, THUNDERS AND VOICES OF THE ONE SPIRIT SUBDUING THE NATIONS.



## PHASE 3

AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF MORNING HE SHALL ARISE, THE SUN OF AN UNCLOUDED DAWN, SHINING FORTH AFTER RAIN UPON TENDER GRASS OUT OF THE EARTH 2 Samuel 23:4.





The throne established in heaven in its inauguration is a throne of judgment, so that when the throne is set “the judgment is set and the books are opened” (Dan. 7:10). The judgments of God upon the nations, by means of which their thrones are cast down and the throne of David established are symbolised by lightnings and thunders (cp. Psa. 18:13-15; 144:6; Zech. 9:13-14). The lightnings, thunders and voices, are those of the one Spirit in seven-fold perfection sent forth unto all the earth for the subjugation of the world (cp. Dan 10:6; Ezek. 1:24). The Spirit, however, does not go forth as free, uncombined or naked Spirit as seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder of the material expanse; but it goes forth incarnated in the saints - in the Lord Jesus and his brethren, who are symbolised by the One sitting upon the throne, and the twenty-four elders and the four living ones (cp. chapter 5:6; Zech. 4:2,6). See also notes on chapter 1:4.

### **Verse 6: “A sea of glass like unto crystal”**

In Bible symbology, “sea” is representative of nations (cp. Ezek, 26:3; Jer. 51:42). There are essentially three stages of the “sea” as outlined in God’s purpose.

#### **The Troubled Sea**

The nations in the past and at the present are “like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, there is no peace for the wicked, saith my God”, (Isa. 57:20,21).

#### **The Sea of Glass**

In the millennial age the nations will be permitted to exist under Christ’s righteous rule. The sea of glass in this verse are the nations of the millennial age experiencing the righteous rule of Jesus Christ; they will have been purged by the fires of Armageddon as expressed in Rev. 15:2 where John says “I saw as it were a translucent sea that had been mingled with fire”.

#### **No more Sea**

At the end of the Millennium God will be all in all; mortal nations will cease to exist, hence “there will be no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

#### **“Four beasts”**

This is better rendered in the R.V. as “Four living creatures”.

The Greek *zoa* (living one) is a different word from that used later in the book where wild beasts are used to describe the nations antagonistic to God’s purpose (Greek *therion*). When Israel was delivered out of Egypt, the congregation was Divinely organised into four camps, each camp having a standard on which was displayed a beast as the heraldic symbol of the camp (Num. 2).

Each camp had a principal tribe: Judah (verse 3), Reuben (verse 10), Ephraim (verse 18), Dan (verse 25), and the ensigns of the four camps were the four living creatures incorporated in the symbolic cherubim - the lion, ox, man and eagle (cp. Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:7).

The four beasts are therefore another symbol of the saints but whereas the twenty-four elders represent the saints in their priestly capacity the four living creatures depict them as the vehicle of Divine manifestation in respect to the judgments which they will

execute upon the nations. The symbols of the twenty-four elders and four living creatures are frequently used together because they reveal the two facets of God Manifestation - mercy and severity (Rom. 11:22). Thus we have a picture of the true Israel of God as kings and priests in the Future Age (cp. Rev. 5:8-10).

**“Full of eyes before and behind”**

At the present time the angels act as the eyes of Yahweh (Heb. 1:14), but in the Kingdom Age it will be under the jurisdiction of Christ and the saints, (Heb. 2:5,6). See note chapter 1:14.

**Verse 7: “The lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle”**

Each of the creatures might be regarded as the chief representative of its class. The lion among the wild beasts, the ox among the tame beasts, the eagle, the birds of the air and man the chief of all God’s creation. The four creatures in the cherubic symbol speak of the time when all creation shall reflect the glory due to its great creator (cp. verse 11). The four creatures also teach symbolic lessons and it has been suggested that this can be seen in the inter-relation of the four major Prophets and the four gospels. Consider the following chart:

SYMBOL	PROPHETS	GOSPELS	SIGNIFICANCE
Lion	Isaiah	Matthew	Kingship
Ox	Jeremiah	Mark	Service
Man	Ezekiel	Luke	Humanity
Eagle	Daniel	John	Spirit

**CHERUBIM**

Cherubim is the plural of Cherub which is a Hebrew word found in Psa. 18:10. This verse also gives a clue to its meaning, which, Bro. Thomas suggests, is derived from the verb *rachav*, meaning “to ride, whether on an animal or in a vehicle”. Thus the noun *Cherub* signifies “that which is ridden”. Both the noun and the verb occur in this verse.

The same idea is expressed also in 1 Chron. 28:18 where cherubim is linked with the word chariot and in Psa. 99:1 where Yahweh is depicted seated (or enthroned) on the Cherubim.

The most detailed description of the Cherubim is found in Ezek. Chapters 1 & 10 where the wheels form a prominent part of the symbology with the idea of giving mobility to the vision.

In general terms, therefore, the Cherubim represents the vehicle of Divine manifestation, e.g. Isa. 66:15; Hab. 3:8.

## SERAPHIM

The vision of the Seraphim was revealed to Isaiah in the year that king Uzziah died (Isa. 6:1,2). The death of Uzziah was a matter of particular sadness, for the king was a leper, and not only so, but a leper because of transgression. The early part of his reign was pleasing before Yahweh (2 Chron. 26:1-5), but later, his heart was lifted up and he transgressed in attempting to usurp the priest's duty of offering incense (verse 16-21). As a punishment he was smitten with leprosy.

Under the circumstances it is significant that Isaiah saw a vision of the reign of David's greater son when a king will combine the offices of king and priest. The Lord himself confirmed this when he quoted this chapter in John 12:39-41.

The Seraphim in Isaiah 6:2 correspond to the Cherubim of Ezek. 10 and the living creatures of Rev. 4:6-8 and are representative of the Saints when made equal to the angels and commissioned to execute the judgments written. Seraphim is derived from the verb *saraph* meaning "to burn or consume" and refers to the militant manifestation of Christ and the Saints in the preliminary stages of subduing the nations, (Dan. 7:9,10,26).

### Verse 8: "The four beasts had each of them six wings"

This vision is based upon Isaiah chapter 6 in which Isaiah saw a very similar vision to that of this chapter, thus linking together the symbols of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

### "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come"

This statement is based on Isa. 6:3 which states "Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of Hosts, the fulness of the whole earth is His glory" (Roth). Jesus is telling us that the expression, "He which was and is and is to come", is equivalent to the words of Isaiah: "The fulness of the whole earth is his glory". Both renderings speak of God Manifestation and in Eph. 1:18,22,23 Paul tells us that the ecclesia as the body of Christ is the "fulness of him that filleth all in all". This is a further indication that these visions speak of the time when the purpose of God will be revealed in that Family that He is presently calling out of the nations to be a people for his Name. Consider the following references (Psa. 24; John 1:16; Rom. 11:12,25; 1 Cor. 10:26,28; Eph. 3:19; 4:13).

### Verses 9, 10 and 11:

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders unite together in praise and worship of the one sitting on the throne. This is a further indication that they are but different symbols of the same group of people.

Bro. Roberts states: "Surveying the things as a whole - the first scene witnessed by John in the exhibition of things which were to be in John's 'here-after' - it is plain, that as the seven lampstands represent the seven ecclesias so this more complete and more glorious symbolism represented the commonwealth of Israel in its glorified and perfected state".



## CHAPTER 5

# The glory of Yahweh fills the earth as the result of the scroll being unrolled and the seals loosed.

**Verse 1: “And I saw at the right of him seated upon the throne a scroll that had been written within and on the outside, sealed up with seven seals”**

The one sitting on the throne is Yahweh, for the throne of David is the throne of Yahweh (1 Chron. 29:23). But, it has been observed, that the occupant of the throne is likened in 4:3 to a Jasper and Sardine stone, emblematic of Spirit manifested in Flesh. It thus represents the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the Throne of Yahweh. At his right hand there was a scroll which was, doubtless the same document as that referred to in Dan. 12:4,9. The scroll at his right hand occupies the place of power (cp. Christ’s present position, Psa. 110:1). The scroll contains prophecies setting out the history of the ecclesia (those “within”) and the world at large (those “without”) detailing the conflicts between the Spirit and the Flesh, down through the ages leading up to the manifestation of Yahweh’s glory when he shall be enthroned in Zion (cp. Ezekiel’s experience, Ezek. 2:9,10).

The books of the ancients were not like our books in form or material. They were rolls of papyrus parchment, or other flexible substance, of various lengths. Zechariah’s roll was 20 cubits long by 10 broad and was written, “on this side” and “on that side”, with the curse of consuming judgment (Zech. 5:1-4). While rolled up they were sometimes fastened by sticking the edges of certain turns of the roll together, or by tying the same, and appending a seal, or seals to the ligatures. Hence, to read such a scroll it would be necessary to unloose the seals in their order when so much only of the scroll could be read as extended from the first to the second tying or sticking: then from the second to the third; and so on to the seventh. When this was untied, the whole scroll, could be fully extended and read from beginning to end. The written spaces or intervals, from one fastening of the scroll to another, were called seals of closures. To read them the closures must be loosed, otherwise the contents of the scroll would be forever concealed, hence, the unsealing of them will consist in their actual development.

The sealing of the scroll is a reminder of the fact that none of the wicked shall understand (cp. Dan. 12:10; Isa. 29:10-12). The existence of seven seals signifies perfect secrecy, and the sealed scroll at his right hand, a perfect symbol of the fact that the knowledge and control of the future was entirely in the power of the Father, but was now imparted in measure to His son and those who are one in him. It was written “within and on the outside”. This refers to those “within the temple”, and to those of “the court without” (11:2). Paul says “we were troubled on every side without were fightings, within were fears” (2 Cor. 7:5; cp. Rev. 22:15; Phil. 3:2).

**Verse 2: “And I saw a powerful messenger heralding with a loud voice ‘who is worthy to unroll the scroll, and to loose its seals?’”**

It is important to note that the opening of the seals required worthiness on the part of the opener. This implies that the person to whom should be confided the knowledge of the Divine plan, would also be granted the power to carry it out. Although the angel was himself strong or powerful, he was not powerful enough to unloose the seals. The following verses proceed to describe the worthiness of the one who shall open the scroll and the praises that will be sung to him by those who will be blessed as a result of that work which he has accomplished. The purpose of the Apocalypse is that the friends of Christ might even now be enlightened in measure concerning the outworking of God’s glory and so prepare themselves to be among the number who shall join themselves in the songs of rejoicing.

**Verses 3 and 4: “But no one was able in the heaven, nor upon the earth, nor under the earth to unroll the scroll, nor to see it. And I shed many tears, because no one was found worthy to unroll and to read the scroll, nor to see it.”**

There was no one either among the angels (in heaven) nor those living (upon the earth) nor those dead (under the earth) who were worthy to unloose the scroll. Daniel had been given some information, but was informed that the book was sealed (Dan. 12:4,9). John having been taken in vision to the Day of Glory saw in retrospect the unrolling of the scroll and the outpouring of God’s judgments leading up to the establishment of His Kingdom on the Earth. Like Daniel, John wept much when he thought that no-one was able to read the scroll, nor to see it. How few among man-kind or even professed believers, show such concern as these men at their inability to understand the Word of God (cp. Dan. 10:12). John’s worry and distress was short lived for he was soon introduced to the one who was to open the seals.

**Verse 5: “But one of the elders said unto me ‘Weep not, behold the lion who is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to unroll the scroll, and to unloose its seven seals.’”**

It is fundamental to the understanding of the Apocalypse to appreciate that in keeping with the theme of manifestation, the writer is more concerned with describing the aspect of manifestation rather than specific details of who performs the work or even how it is done. Thus we find in this chapter several different symbols all relating to different aspects of work to be performed by the same personage.

It is therefore quite in keeping with this theme that Christ as the representative of his Father, is the one sitting on the throne (verse 1), he is also the lion of the tribe of Judah (verse 5) and he is the Slain Lamb (verse 6).

The symbol of the Lion of Judah is taken from Jacob's blessing on his sons (Gen. 49:9-10). It depicts his work as a law giver and king and when this is connected with the expression, "the root of David", it confirms this fact, for, "he shall sit upon the throne of his father David". Whilst being son of David he is also "David's Lord" (Psa. 110:1; Mtt. 22:41-46) and therefore as God manifest in the flesh he is both root and offspring of David (Rev. 22:16).

The Lord's worthiness to open the book is described in the phrase "he hath prevailed". The word "prevail" is the same Greek word rendered "overcome" in 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21. It is the one word which was addressed to each of the seven ecclesias in Asia as being the characteristic or entitlement of being called "Son of Man" (see previous note 1:13). Jesus therefore has obtained a right to the title because he has "overcome" (or had the dominion over the flesh) and therefore the Father has given him the authority to execute judgment also (John 5:27).

**Verse 6: "And I saw and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, a lamb stood as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, the which are the Seven Spirits of the Deity having been sent forth into all the earth."**

The worthiness of Jesus to open the scroll was proved and manifested in the "lamb" stage of his mission when he appeared as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Unless the Lord had first been revealed as the sacrificial lamb, there could have been no beasts nor elders (glorified redeemed ones) and therefore it is significant that it is a slain lamb and not a lion seen in the midst of the throne in this part of the vision.

The seven horns and seven eyes connect Jesus with the power and penetration of God. "Horns" stand for the symbol of power and "eyes" for sight and intelligence. Seven horns and seven eyes therefore symbolise omnipotence and omniscience. They are said to be "the seven spirits of God". Seven is the characteristic number of the Apocalypse which numerically symbolises completeness; and therefore reveals the Lord and his associates as being all powerful and all seeing and possessing the one spirit of Deity (1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:4; Zech. 4:6).

**Verse 7: "And he went and received the scroll from the right of him seated upon the throne."**

This verse is a further illustration of the way in which one person can be described by several symbols. The lord is both the one sitting on the throne, that is as king and also the lamb who receives the scroll, that is the redeemer. As a result of having overcome, he was granted that knowledge of the Divine Purpose which had previously been hidden from him and will shortly return to complete the work the Father has assigned to him and unite in one both the duties of a king and a priest (cp. verses 9 and 10).

**Verse 8: “And when he received the scroll, four living ones, and the twenty four elders prostrated themselves before the Lamb, having everyone harps, and golden bowls full of perfumes, the which are the prayers of the saints”**

The act of taking the scroll from the right of him that sits upon the throne indicates the moment he receives from the Father the knowledge and power to execute the program represented by the seals. There follows an expression of homage on the part of the redeemed and rejoicing, (symbolised by the harps cp. Rev. 14:2; 15:2; Psa. 137:2; 87:7) in answer to their prayers (symbolised by the golden vials full of incense cp. Psa. 141:2).

**Verses 9 and 10: “And they sing a new song, saying - Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain and didst redeem unto God by thy blood (men) out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and didst make them unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign on the earth” (Roth.).**

This is a song of deliverance by the immortal saints (cp. Rev. 14:3) which can only be learned and sung by the redeemed. Whilst the singing is symbolical of joy and thanksgiving, there is no doubt that there will be literal celebration associated with the opening of the Temple and the gathering of representatives of the Redeemed, of Israel and the mortal nations when songs of praise will ascend to the one sitting upon the throne. Such praise will come from the angels (Heb. 1:6) the saints (Psa. 45:9-11), the Jewish people (Psa. 118:21-25) and from the Gentiles (Psa. 45:12).

#### **Verses 11-14:**

These verses present a picture of the universal exaltation that awaits the Lord when his whole seal opening work is completed. It is one of several instances in the apocalypse where the end of a matter is introduced along with its initiation as if it came immediately after. It is to be remembered that this is still part of the vision introduced in chapter 4:1 when John saw heaven open and the trumpet voice outlined to him the things which shall be here-after. The whole work of the seals will bring the earth into a state of praise - the state depicted in the prophets as a filling of the Earth with the Glory of Yahweh when the Lion of the tribe of Judah is enthroned on Mt. Zion. The number of those gathered around the throne is ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, better rendered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands. This is a Hebraism for countless number (cp. Dan. 7:10).



## CHAPTER 6

# The First Six Seals

### THE SEALS - GOD'S JUDGMENT ON PAGAN ROME

It must strike the reflecting mind that although the history of past ages appears confused and without method - a mere jumble of facts, of which the generality of people can make neither one thing nor another - yet every thing has been marked out in the mind of God with the definiteness of a plan. All things have been developed in orderly manner. The great thing in looking back, is to distinguish the gold from the quartz - to identify the prophetic vein in the mass of historic materials with which the reader of history has to deal. Goldfinders can trace the vein if they once strike it in the rock, no matter where it leads to. The great thing is to be able to strike the vein of God in history. When you get on God's vein there, you will be able, in the light of the Apocalypse, to follow it in all its windings and turnings among the mountains of rubbish that constitute human history. The Apocalypse is history revealed by the Deity to John, in the isle of Patmos, before a single event of it has transpired.

There are seven letters, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, and seven thunders; and the Apocalypse is so curiously and beautifully arranged, that the seventh seal, contains the seven trumpets, the seven vials, and the seven thunders.

The first seal represents a condition of the Roman Empire in relation to the Truth. Under this seal, John saw a white horse. The Romans represented their power among other things by a horse. The Roman horse was just as symbolical of the Roman power as a dragon or an eagle. In the first four seals, the Roman body politic is represented by a horse, in different colours, corresponding to the condition intended to be represented. Under the first seal, the Roman horse was in a very peaceful state, therefore, the colour of the horse is white, representative of peace. This state was favourable to the development of the Truth among the citizens of the empire. The "one body" (a multitudinous unity, made up of individual saints) is, in this symbol, represented as an archer riding the horse, with a bow, but without any death-dealing weapon. His words were his weapon: they were "sharp arrows in the hearts of the king's enemies". It was with their testimony the Christians fought the Roman Empire, and in 280 years they gained the victory, completely upsetting the Roman Government, which was Pagan to begin with, and establishing a new form of government, which recognised the religion of Christ as the true religion, though it did not understand that religion.

Under the second seal the horse was red, because in the period answering to this seal, the empire was agitated by civil wars, commencing A.D. 183.

Under the third seal, the Roman horse was black with great woe, commencing A.D. 212.

Under the fourth seal, the horse, as the result of the previous judgments, had become pale and bloodless. Civil strife, famine, pestilence, and barbarian invasion, combined, A.D. 235, to exhaust the vigour of the empire.

The fifth seal was characterised by the terrible persecution which lasted ten years, in the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 303-13. Then arose that champion of the Catholic Apostasy, Constantine, who was half Pagan, half Catholic, worshipping Apollo, his favourite god, and Jesus Christ.

During all the period covered by these seals, the archer of the first seal fought Paganism with the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives to the death. Under the fifth seal, we have the altar victims of the ten days' tribulation, crying out, "O despot, the righteous and true, wilt thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" They were told to wait a little while, till the rest of their brethren should be slain, and then there would be a general settling of accounts.

The sixth seal exhibits the Constantinian rocking and shaking of the Roman world, in 312, in the great day of the Lamb's wrath on Paganism, resulting in the expulsion of Paganism from the seat of authority, and the enthronement of Constantine, the hero of the Catholic party, as the sole emperor of the Roman world.

*The Book Unsealed*, John Thomas, pages 20-22.

*Aramaic papyrus of fifth century B.C., tied with string and sealed with clay*

Brooklyn Museum



*Papyrus with seal of 116 B.C., written in Greek at Pathyris in Upper Egypt*

British Museum





### **Historical Background to the period of the First Seal and the White Horse.**

The historical fulfilment of this prophetic portion of the Apocalypse commences in the year A.D. 96, with the death of the tyrant and persecutor, Domitian. From the accession of Nerva in the last year, the Roman Empire enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity "unparallel in the history of the human race" - a period which continued until the death of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180. This idyllic portion of Roman history is therefore typified by the White Horse.

The Emperor Nerva replaced the misrule of cruelty which Rome had suffered for fifteen years under the hand of Domitian, with a mild and beneficent administration which allowed toleration and freedom from persecution to both Jew and Christadelphian and peace and prosperity to the Empire in all its domains.

After two years Trajan succeeded as Emperor and although the Empire continued to prosper under this wise and virtuous heathen, he nevertheless ordered his subjects to be executed if convicted of the crime of Christianity and the enmity between the government and the rider of the white horse continued until the death of Trajan in A.D. 117.

Upon the accession of Hadrian the environment in which our fellow-servants laboured improved somewhat, in that this Emperor decreed that "these people were not to be officially sought after"; nevertheless such as were accused and convicted of an obstinate adherence to the faith were to be put to death as criminals - a sentence never revoked, but by worshipping the gods and abjuring Christ. Hadrian is, however, recorded by Gibbon as having been a wise and virtuous prince who encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, visited all his provinces in person and under whom the Empire flourished.

When Hadrian died in A.D. 138, the first of the Antonines - Titus Antoninus Pius, a senator of about 50 years of age - became Emperor. He caused order and tranquility to be maintained throughout the Empire and although in some remote provinces of Asia the Christians were cruelly treated, he was never personally guilty of wantonly shedding their blood. Christians had been charged with the crime of atheism, from the Pagan point of view, but Titus decided that this was not necessarily the case and directed that the accusation of Christians was to be discouraged, even to the extent of punishing those who persisted in accusing them. After a reign of 23 years, this ruler died in A.D. 161.

His successor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the second Antonine, was a philosopher of the sect of the Stoics, the old opponents of Paul in Athens. Consequently, his justice, wisdom and virtue were directed in all areas of his Empire, except upon the persons of the believers. Upon those he poured out a cruel and blood-thirsty policy of extermination, quite opposite to that of his noble predecessor. In fact, the ecclesiastical historian, Mosheim, remarks, ". . . if we except Nero, there was no reign under which the Christians were more injuriously and cruelly treated". His death in A.D. 180 put an end to this period of persecution which had continued almost unabated for 18 years but which had still seen peace and prosperity in all other realms of the Empire.



THE FIRST SEAL

A.D. 96

The Roman power, symbolically expressed by a white horse denoting a peaceful period in the empire and "he that sat upon him!" descriptive of a bloodless victory of Truth over Paganism.  
Emperors:-  
Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and the first three years of the reign of Commodus.



THE SECOND SEAL

A.D. 183

"And there went out another horse that was red" symbolizing the intestine troubles in the Roman Empire, resulting in much bloodshed.  
Emperors:-  
Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, and Septimius Severus.



THE THIRD SEAL

A.D. 212

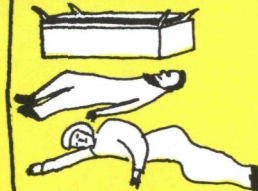
"And lo, a black horse" representing a period of oppression and mourning in the Greco-Latin society.  
Emperors:-  
Geta, Caracalla, Macrinus, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus.



THE FOURTH SEAL

A.D. 235

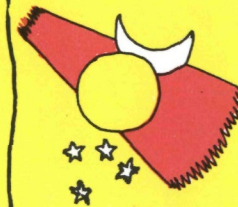
"And behold, a pale horse, with its rider named Death" symbolizes a period of war, pestilence and famine which greatly decimated the Roman world.  
Emperors:-  
From Maximin to Diocletian.



THE FIFTH SEAL

A.D. 303

The fierce persecution of the Christians by Diocletian and the abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire.



THE SIXTH SEAL

A.D. 311

The great political earthquake in the reign of Constantine.

# THE SEALED SCROLL

## God's Judgments on Pagan Rome



**THE FIRST SEAL - THE ARROWLESS BOWMAN - CONQUEST OF CHRISTIANITY.****A.D. 96 - 183****Verse 1: "And I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four living ones saying as a voice of thunder: 'Come and see'"**

John says, that the first cause of all events represented in the seals was the Lamb; he opens all the seal periods and by that omnipotence given to him in heaven and in earth, he gives such a shape and colour to the world's affairs, civil, ecclesiastical and social, as accords with the prefigurations of the Spirit in this prophecy. He is that popularly styled "Providence", who, for the past 19 centuries, has been engaged in preparing a situation of affairs favourable to the establishment of His Throne and Kingdom upon Earth. Beside the symbolic Lamb we find the four Living Ones acting a part in connection with the first four seal periods. In these seals they are emblematic of the ecclesia in opposition to the persecutor of their brethren enthroned in the Pagan Roman power. The Lamb and the four Living Ones were one body, a power too strong for the dragon power of Rome.

Their weapon was the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. It was not the Living Ones who opened the seal periods, but the Spirit Lamb; and when He opened them in order, the voice of that same Spirit, which derived their intelligence from him, invited John as a member of the body and as the representative of his class to "come and see".

The voice of thunder implies a storm in the political heavens that would bring about changes in government in preparation for the work of the arrowless bowman (verse 2).

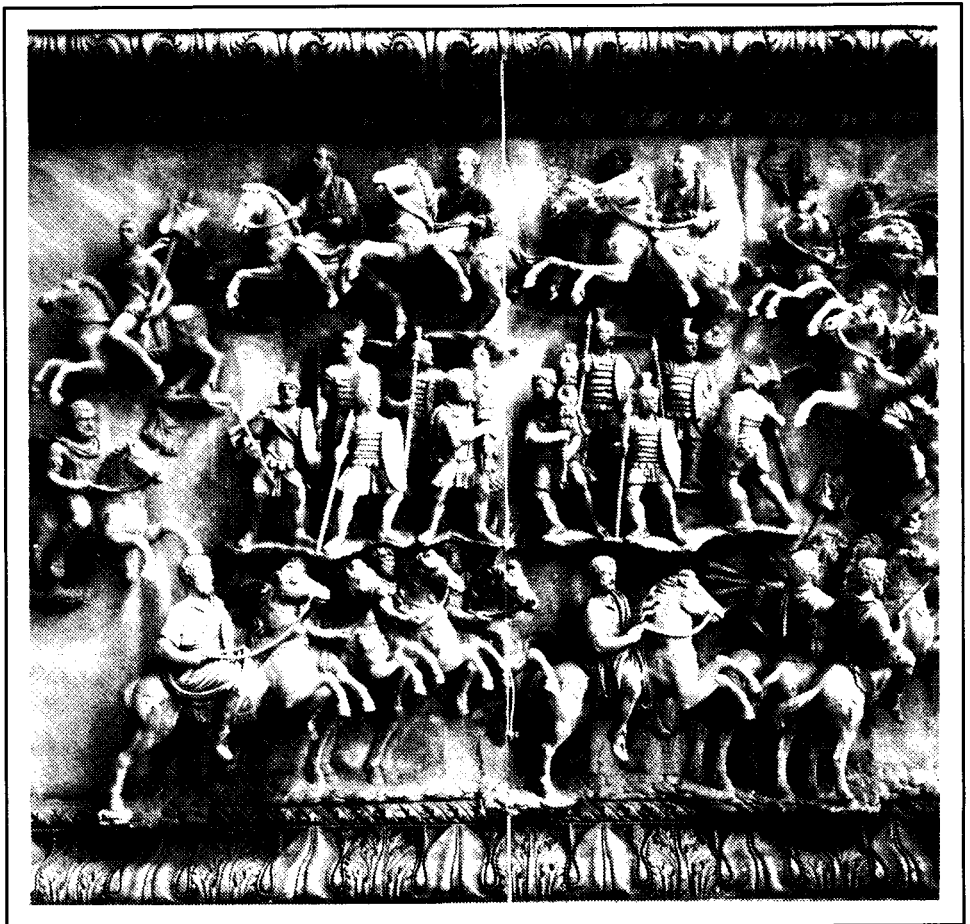
**Verse 2: "And I saw, and behold a white horse, and one sitting upon him having a bow; and there was given to him a coronal wreath; and he went forth conquering, and that he might conquer."**

The rider of the horse is the one who governs, controls and influences it in all its movements. The Roman horse, or people, in this first seal period, were to be ridden by, or subjected to, certain activities which would result in such a consummation as was indicated by other elements of the figure. The rider was "the Spirit of the Heaven" whose mission was conquest.

The white horse upon which he rode symbolised a period of peace and the arrowless bow, (the weapon of his warfare), killed without shedding blood, or piercing the bodies of his enemies. It was the weapon with which "he went forth conquering that the might conquer" (cp. Zech. 9:13; Hab. 3:9; Psa. 64:3:4). Thus a multitude imbued with the Word is an agency which might be fitly represented by a bow in the hand of the Spirit of the Heaven riding a white horse. This great company of obedient believers had been gathered together "into one body" by the labours of the apostles and this was the Spirit-man who fought for conquest against Caesar (cp. Eph. 3:10-12; 6:13-17).

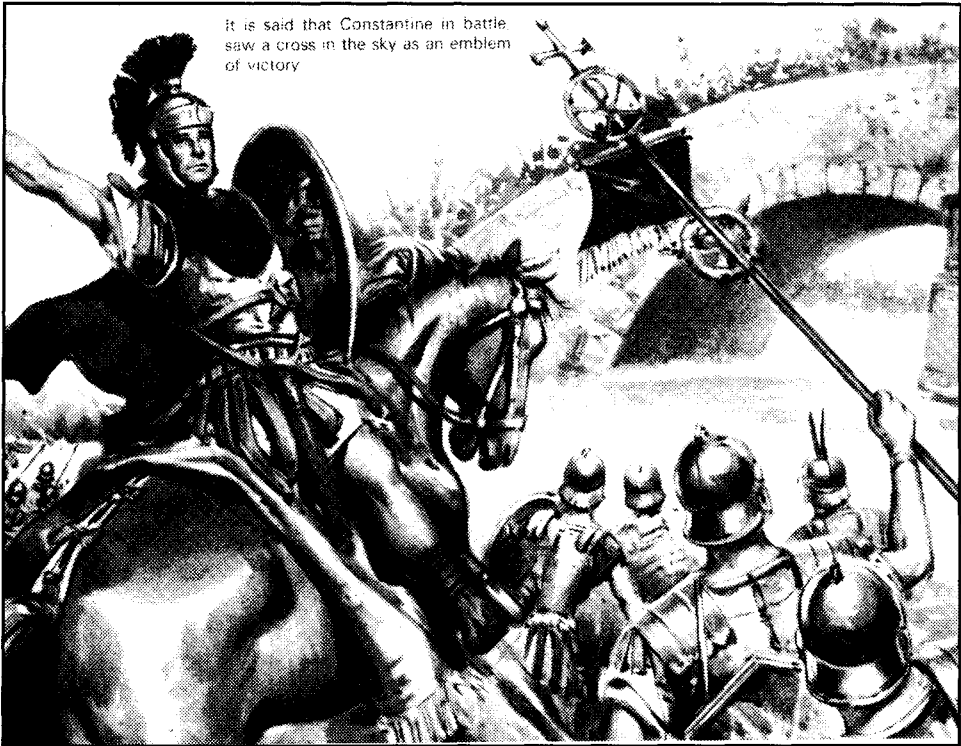
There are two different words for crown in the N.T. One word is *diadema* (English diadem) and the other *stephanos*. The *diadem* is the fillet of the tiara or turban worn by kings and is a symbol of sovereignty (e.g. Rev. 19:12). The *stephanos*, however, was the wreath of evergreen which was offered as a prize of honour and glory to the victor

in the ancient games. It is, therefore, the symbol not of rulership but of victory. A diadem was not given to the Bowman of the first seal because he was not a reigning sovereign. The destiny of the rider on the white horse was not to wear the diadem but to win the *stephanos* when the limit of his conquering should be reached. The symbol was intended to strengthen and encourage the believers in John's time in their conflict with paganism.

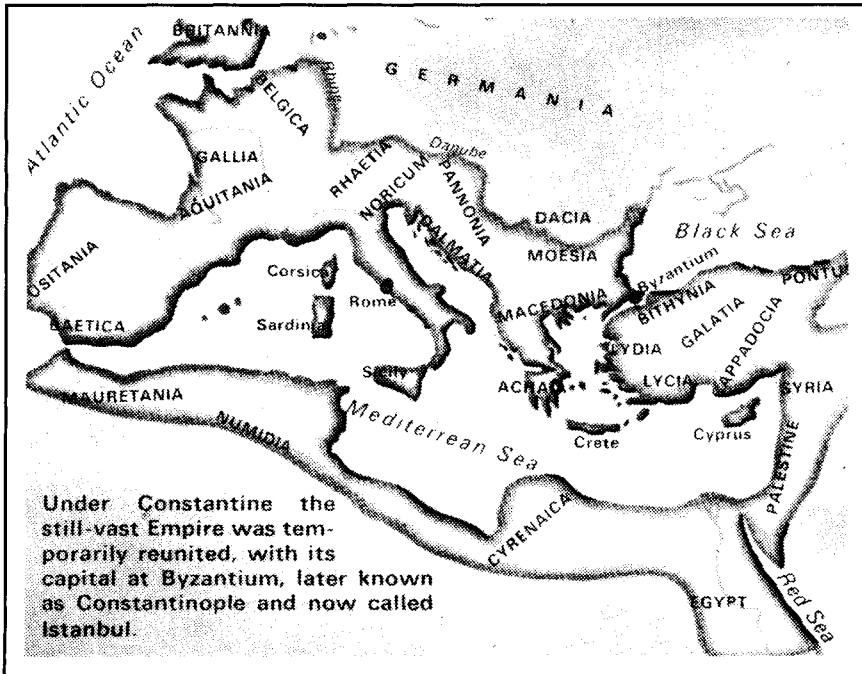


Base of Column of Antoninus Pius in the Cortille della Pigna, the Vatican.





It is said that Constantine in battle saw a cross in the sky as an emblem of victory



### **Historical Background to the period of the Second Seal and the Red Horse**

The second seal period opened in A.D. 183 during the reign of Commodus, when the Roman Empire was filled with would-be assassins and the blood of men was thoughtlessly spilled. Commodus himself, after a cruel and tyrannical reign, was strangled to death by his own servants: that was in A.D. 192 and upon his sudden decease Pertinax, the Prefect of Rome, was chosen by the Praetorian Guard as Emperor, the election being ratified by the Senate.

For almost three months he endeavoured to stem the flow of blood throughout the Empire, but as this policy proved unacceptable to the Guard, he was violently removed, his head being borne aloft to the Praetorian Camp just outside the walls of Rome.

The Praetorian Guard, numbering about 15,000, had originally been instituted by Augustus for the protection of his dominions and were established by Tiberius in a permanent fortified Camp outside the walls of Rome. They enjoyed completely disproportionate privileges and salary and because of the Emperor's need of their services, exerted their political influence in Palace and Senate to such an extent that they became personally familiar with their rulers' vices and weaknesses in a way which removed from their masters that reverential awe, respect and mystery which distance lends. Thus by force and weight of arms they asserted a fierce power as the 'machaira-wielding' rider of the red horse.

Following their atrocious assassination of Pertinax, they offered the Roman world for sale to the highest bidder. Two bidders, Sulpicianus, the father-in-law to Pertinax and a wealthy senator named Didius Julianus both offered: Julian won the election with a promise of 25,000 Sesterces to each guard.

However, the armies of the Empire in Britain, Syria and Illyricum immediately revolted, each general ambitious to have himself upon the throne. Septimius Severus, the chief of the army in Illyricum, was quicker than the rest: he assembled his legions, who saluted him as Emperor and marched to Rome. There he persuaded the Praetorians in his favour and the unfortunate opportunist, Julian, was beheaded as a common criminal after a reign of only 66 days.

Then followed a brief war between the rival generals and their armies in Syria and Britain which Severus satisfactorily resolved to his advantage. He then consolidated his power by much slaughter of senators and nobles and in the tenth year of his violent reign, he turned his attention to the community of believers. These he severely persecuted for nine years. His reign, which was one of military conquest and bloodshed, came to an end in A.D. 211 after a campaign in Britain which proved too much for the ageing Emperor and from that time the brethren and fellow-servants found peace and tranquility for the space of 38 years.

## SECOND SEAL - THE RED HORSE - PEACE TAKEN FROM THE EARTH AD 183 - 211

Verses 3 and 4: “And when he had opened the second seal, I heard from the second living one, saying: ‘Come and see’. And there went forth another, a fiery red horse and to him sitting upon him, to him it was given to take the peace from the earth, and that they might slay one another; and there was given to him a great dagger”.

The second seal period was one in which blood-shed was the order of the day, as typified by the colour of the horse. The rider upon the horse is again a symbolical personage, not representative of an individual man, but of a class of agents endued with the power of the sword, and who would wield it in the cause of war or peace.



Caracalla, National Museum, Naples.

“It was given him to take the peace from the earth.” This shows, first, that the white period of the first seal was a period in which peace ruled that situation: and, secondly, that it was given to him to destroy public tranquility - to abolish the “Peace”, and to substitute tumult and confusion where it had previously reigned.

“There was given to him a great dagger”. In the English version, (Greek, *machaira megalea*), is rendered “a great sword”. In Liddel and Scott’s *Lexicon*, *machaira* is defined as “a large knife or dirk; a sword or dagger; but still rather an assassin’s, than a soldier’s weapon”. It was worn by the emperors as a symbol of their power, as magistrates-in-chief over life and death. It was also worn by the prefects of the Imperial guard. It was a weapon, in the hands of Imperial and military assassins, of murder by wholesale in cold blood and of bloodshedding in civil war to avenge assassination or to retain sovereign power which had been acquired by the dagger’s use.

### **Historical Background to the Period of the Third Seal and the Black Horse.**

It had been part of the policy of Septimius Severus, in order to capture the affection of the Roman people, to distribute liberal quantities of grain and provisions: consequently, upon his death, he left extraordinary supplies in the public granaries and coffers - enough to provide an abundant daily allowance for seven years. The policy of his son and successor, the fierce Caracalla, was not tempered with the authority, firmness and prudence of his father, however, and the period of the third seal, which commences during the reign of Caracalla, was a disastrous time of mourning and famine for the Empire.

Whereas Severus was careful to be temperate and discreet in his liberality to the troops, the careless profusion of Caracalla's reign brought about, as Gibbon says, "the inevitable ruin, both of the army and the Empire".

Caracalla ascended to the throne in A.D. 211 and his first tyrannical deed was to assassinate his brother and rival for the throne, Geta, and to also destroy any who had been associated with him - a slaughter amounting to somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 persons. However, whilst he poured out such wickedness upon the Roman world and by his ridiculous indulgence of the army, burdened his people with impossible taxation, he was remarkably tolerant of the Christians. Historians suggest that this was due to his childhood contact with Proculus, his father's physician and a nurse, both of whom professed The Faith. In A.D. 213 he left Rome and spent the remainder of his reign roaming through the provinces and by his extravagance and extortion, brought most wealthy families to ruin and reduced the general populace to a condition of poverty, misery and oppression.

In A.D. 217, after the death of Caracalla, at the hands of a group of discontented soldiers under the direction of one, Opellius Macrinus, the latter secured a brief hold on the Imperial position. It was, however, a very brief and embarrassed reign which he relinquished after a short struggle, to Elagabalus, a pretended son of Caracalla.

Elagabalus allowed the administration of the Empire to go to rack and ruin and concentrated his energies upon his purpose to spread the worship of the Oriental sun-god, (whose name "Elagabalus" he had adopted). But he only succeeded in angering his subjects by his Oriental pomp and caprices and so he nominated his cousin, Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, as his successor in an attempt to appease the rising anger of the capital.

Unfortunately, he had second thoughts about this arrangement, but when he attempted to change his mind, the household troops decided the matter finally, by lynching him.

Alexander Severus was not yet fourteen at his accession and his mother Julia Mamaea and a Council of State controlled the throne in actual fact. Although for about 12 years the reign of Alexander Severus brought about an alleviation of Rome's troubles, it was still perpetually disturbed by mutiny among the troops, murder of the officers, insults to the Emperor's authority and at last, the life of the Emperor and his mother was sacrificed to the fierce discontent of the army (A.D. 235).

So Rome was left black with distress and misery and every cause prepared her for the long period of calamities which pertain to the period of the next seal.

## THE THIRD SEAL - A BLACK HORSE - OPPRESSION AND MOURNING AD 212 - 235

**Verses 5 and 6: “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard from the third living one, saying ‘Come and see’. And I saw and behold a black horse, and one sitting upon him holding a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice from in the midst of the four living ones, saying, a measure of wheat a penny; and three measures of barley a penny; but the oil and the wine thou mayest not act unjustly by”.**

The black horse indicates mourning, distress, intense depression of mind from any calamity that may befall (cp. Job 30:26-31). The black horse represents the same community as the white horse of the first seal and the fiery red one of the second, namely, the peoples subject to Pagan Rome; the different colours signifying their different condition in different periods.

The rider of the black horse may be known by his badge - the balance. He represents a class of agents who, in relation to the Roman peoples, held the balance as their badge of office, the duties which they performed so oppressively that they became a public evil. A balance is the symbol of justice and in this seal it is the symbol of agents whose office it was to execute laws - the imperial functionaries of the Empire - both the emperors and their subordinates. Some Roman coins of the period have inscribed on the reverse side a female personification *Aequitas* meaning “equity or fair dealing”, depicted as a woman holding scales and either a cornucopiae or a sceptre.

The “voice” that John heard (verse 6) was edicts, decrees, or laws proclaimed by authority and to be executed by the class of agents who exercised the power symbolised by the balance - the praetors at Rome and the governors of the provinces. John heard the voice “In the midst of the four living ones”. These are emblematic of the brethren and their fellow servants in all the Roman empire, therefore an imperial decree addressed to the balance holders would be “a voice in the midst of the four living ones”.

Taxation was brought to such a pitch during this period that vast tracts of country went out of cultivation; the result of this was public distress on a large scale. Such taxation made the cost of the necessities of life so enormous that it prepared the way for the famine which came upon the people as one of the miseries of the next period described under the fourth seal.

### **Historical Background to the Period of the Fourth Seal and the Pale Horse**

The fifty years that followed the death of Alexander Severus, constitute a dark age in a double sense. They were a period of disaster and crisis for the Roman Empire and the record which they have left of themselves is scanty and broken: but during that first fifty years of the fourth seal period there were thirty-nine claiming to be emperors and nearly all of them died by violence. Most of them were made and un-made at the whim of the Roman soldiers who proclaimed and assassinated emperors mainly for their own profit.

After the army had removed Severus from the princely seat, they proclaimed in his place a crude, towering Thracian soldier, Maximinus, who had risen from a shepherd, through the ranks of the troops to command a powerful following: but he had never even visited Rome.

The reign of Maximinus ushered in a half century of civil wars, compounded by barbarian incursion on every border, financial collapse, spreading famine and recurring plague. Of this period Herodian says: "after reducing most of the notable houses to poverty and finding the income obtained thereby small and insufficient for his purpose, Maximinus began to lay hands on the public treasures". Inflation gripped the money market and a peck of wheat which sold for half a denarius in the second century was fixed at 100 denarii by the end of the third.

The Roman Senate, over-awed at first, soon withdrew its recognition of the "camp-made" emperor and after three years of veiled antagonism towards Maximinus, it proclaimed Marcus Antonius Gordianus, the 80 year old pro-consul of Africa, as ruler, anticipating that he would be content to be a figure-head and that a committee of 20 senators would exercise actual control. However, Gordianus nominated his son, Gordianus III as co-agent. The whole matter was brought to a head again when both Gordians perished in a local war, whereupon the Senate set up two of its members, Pupienus and Balbinus as joint emperors. Maximinus, who had hitherto ignored the Senate, now marched upon Italy from an outlying province. Here he suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of the Praetorian Guard and was murdered by his troops to purchase their own safety. The Guards then turned on the Senate and slew Pupienus and Balbinus and forced upon them a grandson of Gordianus I, (A.D. 238). Being only 15 years of age, Gordianus III chose a capable regent to serve him, but his sudden death (by disease) in A.D. 243, delivered the young emperor into the hands of treachery and he died in the now familiar manner, killed by an Arab (Philip the Arabian).

In the endless chain of imperial murders that followed, "he that slew the slayer's slayer had the shortest respite before he himself was slain". The complete disorganization of the Roman frontier defences and the anarchy and insurrection among the troops, led to the inevitable flood of marauding "beasts of the earth" to further increase the empire's agonies. On top of all this, famine and pestilence so afflicted the Roman horse that its palor gave warning of its death-like condition. Of this terrible period, Gibbon says: "the animating health and vigour of the Empire were fled".

The civil wars which made emperors of common soldiers ended when Diocletian took the sceptre in A.D. 284. Philip the Arabian, Decius, Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus, Aurelian, Tacitus, Florian, Probus, Carus, Carinus, had all passed in quick succession and although Diocletian himself was also an army man - a Dalmatian general - he did restore to the empire some sense of political order. In A.D. 286 Diocletian appointed a co-emperor to rule the western provinces, a fellow officer named Maximian and two heirs-apparent with the title of Caesar to succeed to the throne. Whilst under this system Diocletian still retained the supremacy. His reign, however, was not free from attempted usurpations and the first eighteen years of his imperial power belong to the fourth seal. Those years until A.D. 303 are filled with incidents of slaughter and disintegration, preparing for a new system of government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Constantine.

## THE FOURTH SEAL - THE PALE HORSE - THE RIDER NAMED DEATH AD 235 - 303

**Verses 7 and 8: “And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard a voice of the fourth living one, saying: ‘Come and see’. And I saw and behold a pale horse and he who sits upon him: the name for him is Death; and Hades follows with him; and there was given unto them authority to kill upon the fourth of the earth with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and under the beasts of the earth”.**

When the seal was opened John saw a horse, the colour of which is described by the greek word *chloros*, from which comes our medical term “chlorotic”.

It is translated pale, but the word indicates green as the basis of the pallor. The colour of the facial skin fading into green and black has long been recognized as among the symptoms of approaching death. The horse symbolises the period commencing A.D. 235, when the calm that had pervaded the Roman world for thirteen years came to an abrupt termination by the assassination of Alexander Severus and the massacre of his most faithful friends by the fury of the soldiers. “Nothing”, says Bro. Thomas, “could be more appropriate than the colour which accompanies putrefaction as representative of the Italian body politic at this crisis of its dreadful history. It had suffered severely under the second and third seal: but what were these in comparison to the death strokes by sword, famine, pestilence and beasts, speedily and of long continuance, to fall upon the Pagan horse. A deadly paleness and livor would come over it - a hue, emblematic of approaching dissolution.”

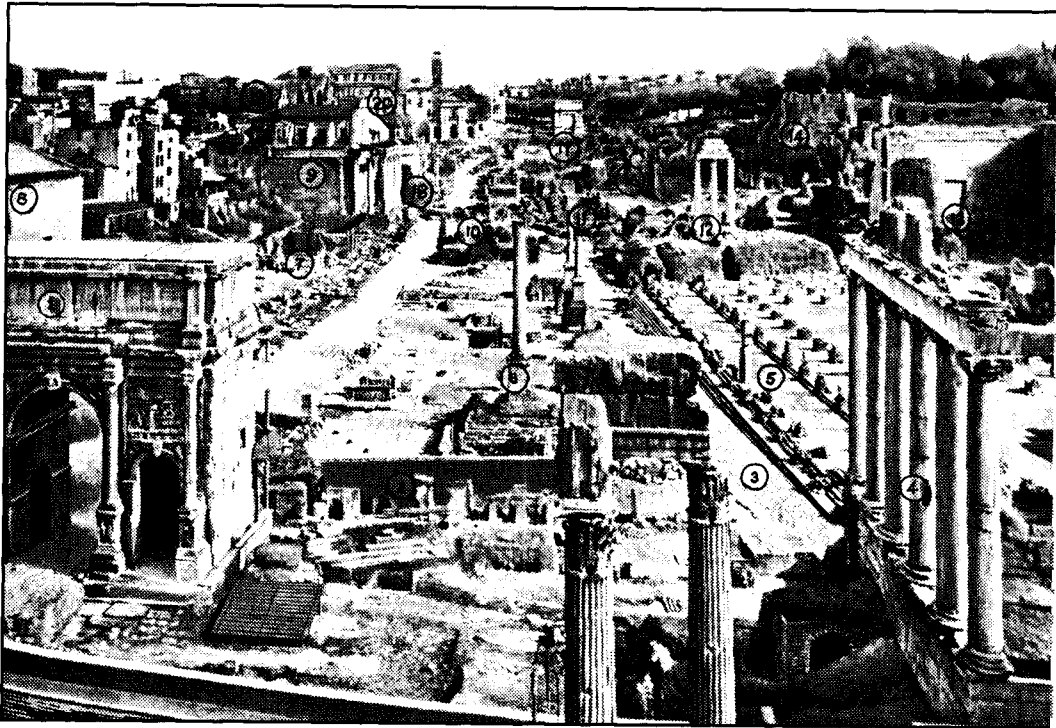
John says that the name of the representative personage he saw sitting upon the pale horse was “Death”. Bro. Thomas states that this does not indicate death in the abstract, which might very well be used in relation to the second seal period, when they were engaged in slaying one another, but human functionaries and men of power, so victimizing and victimized, as to become, as it were, sons of death and therefore as a class fitly represented by the symbolical name “Death”, indicate the destroyer of political existence; for the agents as a class and the state still survived the fourth seal. The name “Death” was bestowed upon the class of agents riding upon, or affecting the dying horse, or heathen people and empire because few of them in this period died a natural death. In the first fifty years of the period of this seal there were thirty-nine claiming to be emperors and nearly all of them died by violence.

The word “hell” used in this verse is the greek *hades* and refers to the grave. Death and hades are companions in nature and are made symbolical associates in the fourth seal.

Authority was given them to kill upon “the fourth of the earth”. For practical purposes the Roman Empire was divided into four parts or provinces. According to the plan instituted by Diocletian, (A.D. 292), the four provinces had each their Praetorian Prefect and even after the monarchy was once more united in the person of Constantine he still continued to create the same number of four prefects and trusted to their care the same provinces which they already administered. Whilst the first three seals had more particularly affected the Prefectures of the East, Illyricum and the Gauls, the fourth seal indicates that the time had come to bring judgment home to the very heart of the Roman

body politic and therefore the judgment was poured out on the “fourth of the earth”, viz, the prefecture of Italy.

The sword to be used was not the *machaira*, the dagger used in the second seal; but *rhomphaia*, which described the large Thracian sword (see note chapter 2:12). John next informs us, that authority was given to “Death and Hades” to kill by wild beast upon the fourth of the earth. Paul in Titus 1:12 styles the Cretians evil wild beasts. Apocalyptically, this term is used for the “wild savage men” who should invade the empire and carry death and destruction into the area of Italy itself. The wild beasts of the earth are described by Gibbon as the Franks, the Alemanni, the Goths and the Persians.







### FORUM ROMANUM

Artist's Reconstruction Compared with Present Day Ruins

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Arch of Septimius Severus        | 11. Temple of Vesta               |
| 2. The Rostra                       | 12. Temple of Castor and Pollux   |
| 3. The Sacred Way                   | 13. Church of Santa Maria Antiqua |
| 4. Temple of Saturn                 | 14. Temple of Augustus            |
| 5. Basilica of Julia                | 15. Palatine Hill                 |
| 6. Column of Phocas                 | 16. House of the Vestal Virgins   |
| 7. Basilica of Aemilia              | 17. Arch of Titus                 |
| 8. Curia or Senate House            | 18. Temple of Romulus             |
| 9. Temple of Antoninus and Faustina | 19. Basilica of Maxentius         |
| 10. Temple of Julius Ceasar         | 20. Colosseum                     |

### Historical Background to the Period of the Fifth Seals and the Souls under the Altar.

In the early part of the reign of Diocletian, the followers of Christ had quietly flourished whilst the Emperor devoted his attention to the reorganization of the establishment and the containing of the barbarian hordes along the frontiers. Ever since the reign of Nero, Christians had endured sporadic persecution, but in spite of this congregations throughout the Empire had held their ground numerically and had even made some converts among Rome's influential families. This period of comparative peace, however, was disastrous for the believers. Eusebius, who was contemporary with what he describes, says: "Through too much liberty the Christians grew negligent and slothful, envying and reproaching one another - waging, as it were, civil war among themselves . . ."; and the Ecclesiastical historian, Milner, writes: "The era of its (Christianity's) actual declension must be dated in the pacific part of Diocletian's reign". Fifty years before this fifth seal, the ecclesial world had been divided into two camps - one group followed the Bishop of Rome, Cornelius, and having a name that they lived, yet they were dead: the second group was led by Novatius and consisted of the "few names in Sardis which had not defiled their garments". Novatius was put to death for the Faith during the reign of Valerian, but the two groups nevertheless remained. Many in the Roman Empire had united with Novationists in protesting against the prevailing corruption and they thus became known as Novationists or Puritans or in the Greek *Chathari* - a name bestowed upon them by their adversaries because of what they termed an excessive severity of discipline and exclusiveness. Novatius and his followers were excommunicated by Cornelius and his council and they afterward completely disavowed any connection with the "mother" church or her effeminate, abandoned ministers.

In A.D. 293, as part of his plan for a new administration, Diocletian had appointed two young officers Galerius and Constantius, as heirs-apparent with the title of Caesar, in addition to Maximian who ruled as joint emperor. At the instigation of Galerius, Diocletian determined to destroy the Christian community as being to blame for crippling the Empire and with great violence and vigour, Galerius began to put into effect this edict in the year A.D. 303.

Some of our fellow-servants faithfully resisted to death - often by the most inhuman and abhorrant means - and this only served to further incite the hatred of the Emperor. It became an obsession with him to wipe out the name of Christ from his entire domain, and he pursued this course with unrestrained fury and dedication. He erected monuments commemorating his victories over the Christians and inscribed them: "Diocletian Jovian, Maximian Herculeus, Caesares Augusti, for having extended the Roman Empire in the East and West, and for having extinguished the name of Christians who brought the Republic to ruin", and "Diocletian . . . etc, for having adopted Galerius in the east, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ, for having extended the worship of the gods".

In A.D. 305, Diocletian abdicated and obliged Maximian to accompany him into retirement; at the same time he promoted Constantius and Galerius to the rank of Augusti and appointed two new Caesars, Maximin and Licinus. In 306, Constantius died and in due course Maximian again assumed his imperial position, appointing his son, Maxentius, to power also. In Gaul and Britain the troops of Constantius proclaimed his son, Constantine, to the seat of imperial power, Maxentius seized Italy and Africa for himself and held them against Galerius and his own father and an edict of toleration towards Christians was made by Constantine, Galerius and Licinius. Eventually, Constantine killed Maximian in battle and in A.D. 311 Galerius died. His territory was added to that of Maximin, who shortly afterward commenced the most violent persecution against the believers, so that even pagans who witnessed the atrocities, were disgusted at the wanton bloodshedding.

In A.D. 312 these terrible persecutions were put to an end by the deposition of Maxentius and of Maximin. It was during the battle that deposed Maxentius, that Constantine is said to have seen the vision of a cross in the sky and the inscription *hoc signo vince* - "By this sign win your victory".

## THE FIFTH SEAL - THE SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR

AD 303 - 311

**Verses 9 - 11: “And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them who had been slain on account of the word of God, and on account of the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘until when, Oh thou who art the despot, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them who dwell upon the earth?’ And to them each were given white robes, and it was answered to them that they should repose yet a short time while both their fellow servants and their brethren should be filled up who are about to be killed even as they.”**

In each of the four preceding seals there is a clause recording that one of the “living ones” utters an invitation to “come and see”. This does not occur in the case of the fifth, sixth and seventh seals. Bro. Thomas has this to say in *Eureka*, vol. II, pages 210-222.

“This fifth seal comes in between the expired political judgments of the fourth and the renewed judgments of the sixth. While, in the previous four seals, the Roman heathen were the subject acted upon in their visions; in this, the fifth, it is those who profess the faith of Christ who are the object against which the seal-judgment is directed. The horses and their riders have disappeared from view, and, what is more remarkable, the four living ones also. John no more hears a voice from them inviting him to “come and see”. He is not called upon to see or contemplate the judgments of the lamb upon the heathen people. In the fifth seal those “brethren” and “fellow servants”, of which John was a representative were the subject of its judgments and therefore an object to be beheld, and not spectators of the scene. But why is this heavenly camp not symbolised in the fifth seal? First, I conceive, because its work was done at the expiration of the fourth seal; secondly, because its unity had been destroyed under that seal; and thirdly, because in default of that unity the Deity no longer resided in it by His Spirit.”

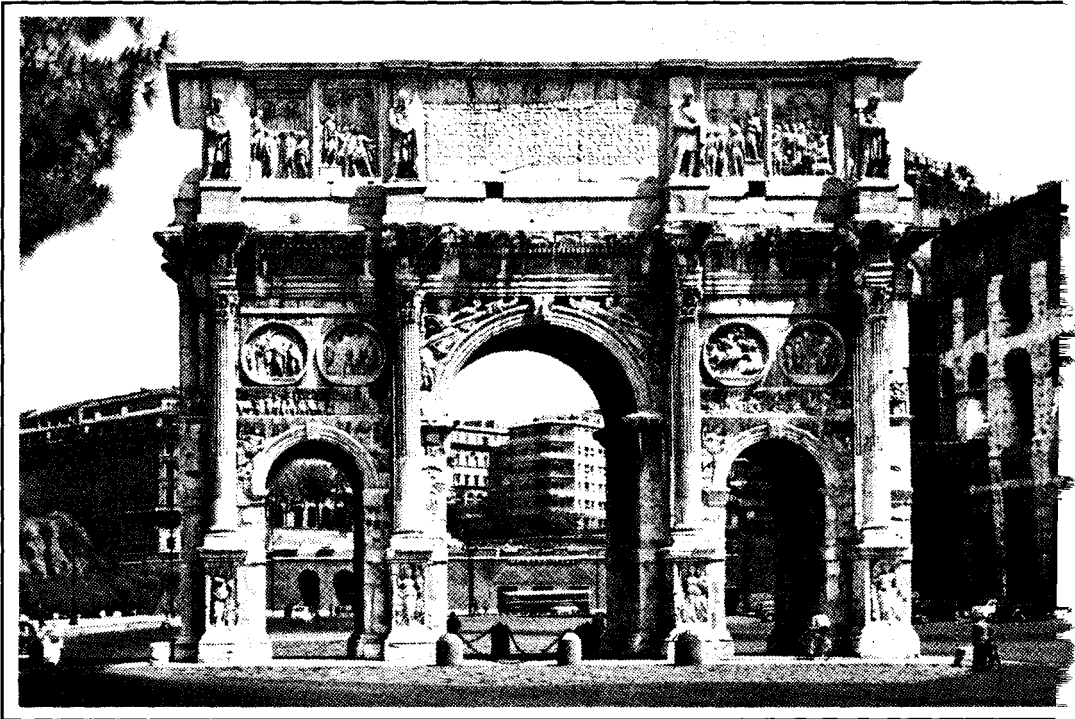
The altar is a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Heb. 13:10-12). Under the Law of Moses the altar of burnt sacrifice was a structure of earth, unhewn stone or brass elevated in an area, upon which the bodies of slain animals were burnt. The burned bodies, consumed into smoke, were whole burnt offerings, and typified or represented the utter destruction of sin's flesh, which sin had been condemned in the flesh of the victim by the abstraction therefrom or the pouring out of the soul of the flesh in the slaughter of the victim. Lev. 17:14 states that the soul of the flesh is in the blood, therefore, in pouring out the blood, the soul or life of the animal was poured out unto death, and the blood being poured at the base of the altar, the soul was there, and the altar was considered as covering it; hence the phrase “underneath the altar the souls of the slain”. Jesus was the altar of earth, or unhewn stone and in his making or generation he was begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the Deity, In Gen. 4:10 Abel's blood is described as crying unto God from the ground. This was a cry for vengeance upon Cain, and so it is in this symbolic prophecy that those who had been slain on account of the testimony which they held are symbolically represented as awaiting the time of God's judgment upon Pagan Rome.

In answer to the question, how long? John was instructed that they should repose yet a short time until their fellow servants also and their brethren which should be killed even as they were should have fulfilled their course. History shows that this short time

reached to A.D. 312, when this severest of all persecutions was put to an end by the deposition and death of Maxentius and Maximin and by the victorious Constantine and Licinius. The further gift of white robes is emblematical of victory and acceptance in keeping with the promise. They shall walk with me in white for they are worthy (3:4).

In A.D. 305, Diocletian abdicated and obliged Maximian to accompany him into retirement; at the same time he promoted Constantius and Galerius to the rank of Augusti and appointed two new Caesars, Maximin and Licinius. In 306, Constantius died, and in due course Maximian again assumed his imperial position, appointing his son, Maxentius, to power also. In Gaul and Britain the troops of Constantius proclaimed his son, Constantine, to the seat of imperial power, Maxentius seized Italy and Africa for himself and held them against Galerius and his own father, and an edict of toleration towards Christians was made by Constantine, Galerius and Licinius. Eventually, Constantine killed Maximian in battle and in A.D. 311 Galerius died. His territory was added to that of Maximin, who shortly afterwards commenced the most violent persecution against the believers, so that even pagans who witnessed the atrocities, were disgusted at the wanton bloodshedding.

In A.D. 312 these terrible persecutions were put to an end by the deposition of Maxentius and of Maximin. It was during the battle that deposed Maxentius, that Constantine is said to have seen the vision of a cross in the sky and the inscription "hoc signo vince" – "By this sign win your victory".



Arch of Constantine

Built in 315 by the Senate and the population of Rome to commemorate the Emperor's victory over Maxentius (312), at the bridge of Milvio. Composed of three archways, it is the largest and best preserved arch of Rome. Part of the frieze of bas-reliefs adorning this arch do not refer to the deeds of Constantine, but to his predecessors: Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, these reliefs having been taken from other monuments. The upper reliefs of the arch (facing the Colosseum) represent Marcus Aurelius in his battle with the Dacians; on the opposite side, episode of the battles of Marcus Aurelius and of Constantine.

### **Historical Background to the Period of the Sixth Seal and the great Earthquake.**

Constantius, who ruled the Western provinces of the Roman Empire jointly with Maxentius, had shown tolerance to his Christian subjects and had always opposed the murderous policy of his fellows, Dicoletian and Galerius and had used his authority successfully to shield the Christians wherever possible. Constantine, who was appointed to the throne in the West upon the death of his father, Constantius, had early taken their part and proclaimed himself as their benefactor and protector. Following on the fearful persecutions of the Fifth Seal, Constantine plunged the Pagan Roman world into a turmoil that overthrew the thousand year old system of national idolatry and replaced it with a pseudo-Christian administration with Constantine himself as sole ruler and "Christian" dictator of a united Empire. So complete were his judgments upon Paganism and its priests and people, that many saw in the calamities the retribution of the Christian's God upon them.

When the Sixth Seal opened, Maximin and Licinius ruled in the East and Maxentius and Constantine in the West. Maxentius was removed in a brilliant victory for Constantine in A.D. 312, and by A.D. 313 Maximin was dead, leaving Licinius as sole ruler in the East and Constantine as Emperor in the West. In 314, the first round in the final duel between east and west was fought, with Constantine the victor and nine years later Licinius returned to the charge, but again lost a battle at Adrianople. Historians tell us that in this defeat "the greater part of the fugitives retired to the mountains". This they did, of course, to conceal themselves from the conqueror who had won the wreath as predicted in the seal.

The victor pursued his opponent across the Bosphorus and in 323 Licinius surrendered to the superior might of Constantine at the battle of Chrysopolis, leaving Constantine supreme and the Pagan imperial heavens of Rome - sun, moon and all the stars included - rolled away like a scroll.

Because Constantine proclaimed a policy of freedom, power and protection to Christians, the vast majority forgot their allegiance to Christ and his command that we stand aside from any association with political and military matters and they joined the victorious numbers who marched under the Emperor's triumphant banner. In addition, many in Constantine's day - pagan as well as "Christian" - saw in his revolution the fulfilment of the work of "the Lamb" and the new order as the Kingdom of God on earth. The "mother" church has dogmatized that doctrine over the ensuing years, so that Catholics today would see the Roman Church as the kingdom of God on earth. Whilst a great number throughout Rome's provinces had not embraced Christianity, the Church had planted her propaganda groups in every province: her clergy constituted a powerful aristocracy and she had captured a high proportion of the more thoughtful inhabitants of the empire. Hereby the stage was set for the manifestation of the Papal apostasy in time to come.

From contemporary historians, however, it appears that in the far-flung western provinces of the empire, around the African seaboard of the Mediterranean, there remained a sizeable community who were strongly anti-Catholic and although little is known of them apart from the testimony of their enemies, they seem to have at least professed "the faithful and apostolic element" of true Christian doctrine. They were known as the Donatists and refused any fellowship in any form with the corrupt body of the Catholic Church in her political or ecclesiastical functions.

**SIXTH SEAL**  
**THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE -**  
**PAGAN ROME BECOMES CHRISTIAN ROME**

**AD 311 - 324**

**Verses 12 - 17: “And I saw when he opened the sixth seal; and behold a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth and the moon became as blood and the stars of the heaven fell into the earth as a fig tree casts its unripe figs, being shaken by a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll rolled up and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich and the military chieftains, and the mighty ones and every bond man and every free man, concealed themselves in the caverns and among the rocks of the mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who is able to stand”;**

The symbolism of this seal represents a universe convulsed by earthquake, bloodshedding and tempest, indicative of the wrath of the Deity, in a great day of wrath, upon the panic stricken enemies of the Lamb. The prophecy, however, is not of a convulsion in what we call the natural or material universe, but is a symbol of a convulsion in the political universe. “A great earthquake” is foretold in three places in the Apocalypse. The first great earthquake is predicted in this seal; the second in 11:13 and the third in 16:18. The first revolutionized the whole Greek - Latin world, dethroned the worship of Jupiter, cast all his official adherents out of their places and installed the “holy catholic church” in the government of the Roman world. The effects of this great earthquake are felt in every part of the globe to this day. The second great earthquake overthrew the tenth part of the city (that is the French Monarchical system) and developed the reign of terror and all its consequences (11:13).

The third great earthquake is yet in the future and will be the greatest of all when the Lord Jesus Christ takes to himself his power and reigns (16:18). As the sun is the great source of light, glory and power of the solar system, it is said in scripture to “rule the day”. The moon and the stars become visible to us by the reflection of its beams. Their light or glory is borrowed and when the sun is darkened, they also are in eclipse. The sun is, therefore, a very appropriate symbol of the supreme or sovereign power of a political universe, cp. Joseph’s dream in Gen. 37 and the going down of Zion’s sun (Isa. 60:20; Jer. 15:9 and Joel 2:10).

In the sixth seal the symbol indicates great wrath upon the orders of the state and a great change in the manifestation of their heavens. The sixth seal is a prophetic summary of what is related in more detail in chapter 12 concerning the woman, her man child, the dragon and the war in heaven between the symbolical Michael and his Angels on the one side and the Great Red Dragon and his Angels on the other. The first three verses of this seal predict an exceedingly tempestuous period, which, in a special manner affected the ruling orders of the Roman world. The earthquake, the darkness, the falling of stars, the hurricane, the curling up departure of the firmament and the removal of the mountains and islands from their places - all these phenomena in

*The First Six Seals*

*7th Seal*

In which "there was silence in the heaven about the space of half an hour" (about 15 years) in the government of Imperial Rome under Constantine.

*Rev. 8:1*

*1st Trumpet*



*A.D. 395*

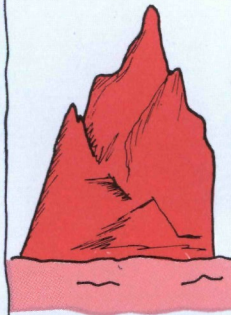
"Hail and Fire mingled with blood".

The Huns and Goths afflicted the third part of the Roman Empire, under Alaric, who ravaged Rome and its provinces.

"The trees" (mighty men) "and all the green grass", (the Catholic multitude) were destroyed by these barbarians.

*Rev. 8:7*

*2nd Trumpet*



*A.D. 429*

"A great mountain cast into the sea."

The Vandals under Genseric, called "the Tyrant of the sea," destroyed "the third part" of the Roman fleet in the Mediterranean.

*Rev. 8:8*

*3rd Trumpet*



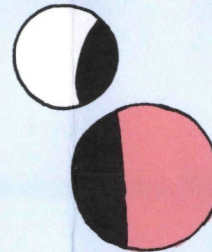
*A.D. 450*

"There fell a great star from heaven named Wormwood."

Called in Greek Apsinthos, a river in the Illyrian "third" of the Roman earth; from which came Attila of the Huns, as "the great star", with his destructive armies. He devastated the "Western Third" of the Roman Heavens, rendering "the rivers and waters" symbolically "bitter".

*Rev. 8:10,11*

*4th Trumpet*



*A.D. 476*

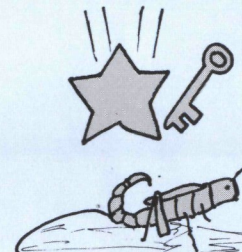
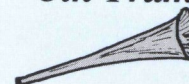
"The third part of the sun, moon and stars were smitten."

Romulus Augustus the last emperor of the Western Empire was banished by Odoacer of the Heruli, the first foreign prince who reigned in Italy under the title of Patrician, as the representative of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Thus was the "Western Third" of the Roman heavens "smitten and darkened".

*Rev. 8:12*

*5th Trumpet*



**THE FIRST WOE**

*A.D. 632*

"A star fell from heaven unto the earth and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

This symbolised the Mohammedan power descending upon the Catholic idolaters dwelling in the Eastern Third of the Roman Empire.

This power came out of the "bottomless pit", or abyss (the region of Arabia) and its king was called Abaddon (the destroyer).

It represented Mahomet and his successors symbolically letting loose the Arabian "locusts" or armies, who tormented and injured for two distinct periods of 150 years and the Scorpion power of the Saracens.

*Rev. 9:1-12*

*6th Trumpet*



**THE SECOND WOE**

*A.D. 1062*

"Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates".

Their mission was to "slay the third part of men" in the Eastern portion of the Roman inhabitable world and was limited for a symbolic period of time (391 years and 30 days), when Constantinople was captured and became afterwards the seat of the Euphratean or Turkish power until the time of its "drying up".

*Rev. 9:13-21*

*7th Trumpet*



**THE THIRD WOE**

This comprehends the Seven Vials of the Wrath of God poured out upon Papal Rome.

**THE SEVEN TRUMPETS**  
**God's Judgments on Catholic Rome**

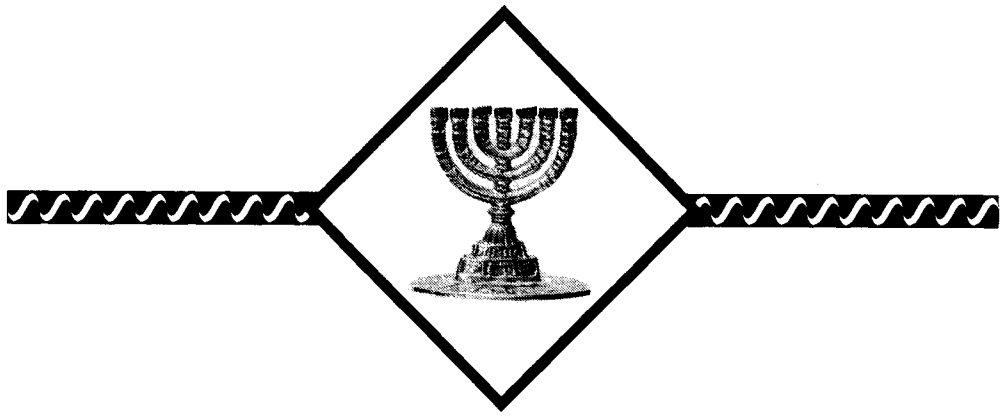






combined operation show a political universe in a state of awful and terrific tumult. It opened with the Roman Empire subject to four emperors (Licinius, Maximin, Maxentius and Constantine) and Paganism, the religion of the state. It closed with the battle of Chrysopolis, (or Skutari as it is now called), the result of which was the reunion of the empire under Constantine as the sole emperor and the establishment of the Catholic apostacy as the lunar bride of the Roman sun. The triumph of Constantine was seen by the pagans as victory for Christianity and as such it was typical of the coming victory of the Lord Jesus Christ at his return.





# Fear God And Give Glory To Him . . .

*A Study of the Book of Revelation*

Section 3

Rev. 7-15:4 • Pages 78-154



## Introduction to Section Three

This is a companion to the two previous sections; “Hear What the Spirit Saith to the Ecclesias” (Rev. chapters 1 to 3) and “Come and See . . . Things Which Shall be Hereafter” (Rev. chapters 4 to 6).

As in the previous sections, an attempt has been made to follow the thematic outline of the Apocalypse, demonstrating the various phases of God Manifestation. Whilst it is necessary to consider certain details of history in order to clarify the setting of the respective prophecies and exhortations, the historical backgrounds have generally been separated from the main text to avoid breaking up the flow of the exposition. History should not be treated as something dry and boring, but must be seen in the light of a vindication of the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible. We trust, therefore, that the reader will not gloss over the historical sections, but will in fact seek out even more information than is contained in this publication.

Once again, you will find in the text, many references to *Eureka*, by John Thomas, and *Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse* by Robert Roberts. This has been done in the hope that you will turn to these writings and read in greater detail, matter which has been merely condensed and summarized in this publication. Because of this condensation, you may find in places that it is necessary to read some paragraphs several times and perhaps even refer to a dictionary for the meanings of some words (usually these have come from the writings of Bro. Thomas). We make no apology for this fact. The Apocalypse was not designed to be understood by the casual, superficial student. It is written in “spiritual language” to be understood by “spiritually minded” individuals whose minds have been exercised in Divine Things. Bro. Thomas wrote in *Phanerosis*: “The Deity delights in stimulating the intellect of His creatures. In revealing Himself, therefore, to them, He manifests Himself mysteriously. ‘It is the glory of Elohim,’ says Solomon, ‘to conceal a word, but it is the glory of kings to search out the word.’ A word is concealed when it is enigmatically expressed; and it is the glory of those whom God has chosen for His kings in the future government of the world, to search out the wisdom He hath hidden from the wise in their own conceit.” (Page 39 - 1968 Edition).

A study of the Apocalypse, should therefore be undertaken prayerfully, carefully and with considerable meditation. We feel sure that anyone who approaches the Book

in this fashion will find the words of Daniel applicable to themselves - “the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).

This section contains notes on Rev. 7:1 to 15:4. The reason for this division will be seen by referring to the chart opposite page one in the first section. It covers the two sections, “The Vision of the 144,000 (7:1-8) and “The Seven Trumpets-God’s Judgments on Catholic Rome” (7:9 to 15:4). It commences in the time of Constantine when “Pagan Rome” became “Christian Rome” and then traces the development of “Catholic Rome” (Catholic used in the literal meaning of the word viz. Universal), or the Holy Roman Empire, as it was known to history. The period concludes generally at the time of the French Revolution, but like all the vision in the Apocalypse will not see the final consummation until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Historically, therefore, the events described cover a period of about 1500 years, during which time Catholic Rome spread its influence over Europe and persecuted the true believers, until the French Revolution changed the whole fabric of society and ushered in a new era for the world. Thematically, however, God’s final judgments will be poured out by the Rainbow Angel (chapters 10 and 14) and for this reason, such visions as these are included in this section of the Apocalypse.

May it be the privilege of each one of us to be among that number who will be with the Lamb in that day when he is enthroned in Zion.

## CHAPTER 7

# The Sealing of the 144,000

The previous chapter concluded with the opening of the Sixth Seal symbolically representing the revolution of Constantine by which “Pagan Rome” became “Christian Rome”. Whilst the Christianity of Constantine bore little resemblance to the truth, it nevertheless wrought a wonderful change in the position of the friends of Christ. From being proscribed and hated and hunted down and destroyed they became the favourites of the authorities upon whom were lavished the revenues and the favours formerly bestowed on the pagan priest-hood. Such a change naturally gave enlarged scope for their development and consolidation. This appears to have been one of the providential purposes served by the overthrow of the pagan adversary, as may be seen from the symbolism immediately following the Sixth Seal and preceding the opening of the Seventh Seal described in Rev. 8.

Before this is opened, we have in Rev. 7 the representation of four angels restraining the four winds from blowing destructively upon the earth and sea, until an angel with the seal of the living God has sealed the servants of God in their foreheads. This angel seals 12,000 persons of each of the twelve tribes of Israel making one hundred and forty four thousand in all. Then there appears the vision of an innumerable multitude of all nations before the throne of God and the Lamb. They are clothed in white robes, carry palms in their hands and are described as those who came out of great tribulation, who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and are now the subjects of Divine blessing.

**Verse 1: “And AFTER THESE THINGS, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds of the earth, that a wind blow not against the earth, nor against the sea, nor against any tree.”**

The phrase “after these things” is a significant expression used in The Apocalypse to indicate a new facet of the vision. Up till now, John had seen a symbolic representation of the things “written on the outside” (see note on 5:1). The scene of the vision now

changes to consider things written on “the inside of the scroll” i.e. a description of the effects of these events on the believers (those within) as opposed to the empire at large (those outside).

Wind used as a symbol signifies war (cp. Jer. 4:11-13). “The four winds” stand for all winds, or war from whatever quarter; and “angels holding the four winds” intimate that the events leading to war are subject to Divine control. Consequently, in the picture before us, we have human turbulence all over the earth in Divine restraint, causing peace, that there might be a situation favourable to the performance of the work of sealing the servants of God.

The terms earth, sea and trees are used symbolically to represent people collectively, nationally and individually.

**Verses 2 and 3: “And I saw another angel having ascended from sun’s rising having a seal of the living Deity: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given for them to injure the earth and the sea: Saying, Injure ye not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, while that we may seal the servants of our Deity upon their foreheads.”**

In the Authorized Version rendering, it describes the angel as “ascending from the east”, but this ought to read “having ascended from the east”. This multitudinous angel (members of the true ecclesia) had brought the gospel from the east (viz. the land of Israel) into the western regions of the Roman Empire. The word “east” is literally the “sun rising” and is so translated in the Revised Version, and by Bro. Thomas. The gospel came “out of the sun rising” in the sense of being promulgated by the risen Christ - The Sun of Righteousness.

The effect of the preaching of the gospel by this angel is likened to the impress made by a seal. A seal is an implement for making an official mark of identification or authentication on a prepared surface and wherever the seal is impressed it makes the same mark. If the material to be sealed is not suitable, the seal does not make a mark or else makes a defective and therefore useless one. The spiritual lesson can be readily seen in the work of preaching the gospel. Bro. Thomas states: “The seal of the Deity, is Divine teaching. This may be sealed or impressed upon the brains of ‘foreheads’ of men directly or indirectly: Jesus was sealed directly. He heard what no one heard but himself. This was inspiration. The Father could have sealed or taught all men in this way; there can be no question of His ability so to do, but it did not so please Him. The Father requires men to use ‘their foreheads’ upon what He causes to be presented to them. For faith - He requires them to listen and to understand what the Spirit saith”. The seal mark is therefore the state of mind caused by the knowledge of the gospel and for such a work to proceed on a large scale requires a time of peace. This is the reason for the peace that followed the Constantinian Revolution - a peace Divinely provided and preserved - that the sealing work might be effectually done. Consider the following references, Job 33:16; John 6:27; Eph. 1:13; 4:30. The sealing of the servants of God can be contrasted with the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16,17).

**Verse 4: “And I heard the number of them who had been sealed - a hundred and forty-four thousand having been sealed out of every tribe of Israel’s sons.”**

The work was to result in an Israelitish development. The significance has already been seen in the consideration of Christ's allusion to "those who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie" (Rev. 2:9). The hope of the gospel is the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20) based on promises made to the fathers of the house of Israel (Rom. 15:8). The number one hundred and forty four thousand is symbolic of the great multitude of the redeemed, being twelve squared multiplied a thousand fold. Twelve is the number of Divine government, cp. the 12 tribes, 12 apostles and the 12 gates and 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem etc. 144,000 therefore indicates a multitude of redeemed, constituting the true Israel of God prepared to rule with the Lamb when he is enthroned on Mt. Zion (cp. Rev. 14:1).

Bro. Roberts states:

"Why then was the scene of the saints in glory introduced in connection with the process of the sealing to be accomplished in the Constantinian Era? Doubtless, to show the real result contemplated in the sealing. The two things - the work of the gospel and the end to which God purposes it shall lead - must always be taken together. The one cannot be understood without the other. No reasonable explanation can be given of the process through which those who are called in Christ are put in the present life, apart from the life for which it is intended as a preparation . . . The spectacle of the sealed class in the victory over death to which their sealing leads, is a natural companion picture to the representation of the sealing work. The two things are divided in time but connected in reason. Therefore, John saw them in connection, yet as separate scenes.

It remains to ask if the Constantinian Era was characterized by the sealing work shadowed forth in the hieroglyph? The answer is in harmony with what would seem natural under the circumstances. What more than that the testimony of Christ should become more extensive and effectual under the protection and encouragement of the authorities, than when the authorities were arrayed against it for its suppression? We have not much reliable information of what went on: but so much as we know from writers of the Constantinian Era, is in favour of the conclusion hinted at. The people answering to the sealed were not to be found in the eastern section of the Roman Empire.

In the African portion of the Roman Empire, there appeared in the early part of the 4th Century (the time required by the symbol) a people apparently answering to the work of the ancient sealer . . . They were known as Donatists, and though much connected with them is unsatisfactory and obscure, it is evident that this large community of people contained, in their bosom at least, the faithful and apostolic element of the professing Christian body of the age.

They claimed their faith to be apostolic, as distinct from the Catholic, and declared that the true Church had ceased to exist in all parts of the world where they were not."

- R.Roberts - *13 Lectures*, pages 53-55

**Verse 9: "AFTER THESE THINGS, I saw, and behold, a great multitude, (which, that it be numbered, no one was competent to do) out of every nation, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, who had been standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"**

Once again the significant phrase "after these things" occurs, indicating a new aspect of the Divine revelation. It is not so much the time lapse between the two vision which is important, as the different characteristics of the great multitude. Bro. Thomas states: "The word 'clothed' is in the perfect participle passive, showing that when they shall be



seen - in fact, in the palm bearing attitude - they will have been raised to the Divine nature, as Christ now is. This is the pure, incorruptible and spotless white robe which they receive who, in a doctrinal and moral sense, have in the present state washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The scene is after the advent and after the resurrection and furthermore, it belongs to the epoch when the resurrected shall celebrate their first Feast of Tabernacles. This is indicated by their having 'palms in their hands', for palm bearing belongs to the celebration of that festival in type and antitype".

The Feast of Tabernacles had a wider signification than a mere memorial to the past; it was emblematical of things to come in relation to Israel and the nations of the earth. It is connected with the ingathering of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, to their land, where alone the feast can be lawfully celebrated (Hos. 12:9). It also depicts the time when all nations shall come up yearly to Jerusalem to keep the feast and to honour the king enthroned there (Zech. 14:16). This great national celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles occurs after the judgment and when the saints are "resting from their labours". It is significant to note, that there will be no festive rejoicings while the events symbolised in Rev. 14 are in progress and therefore, significantly, the redeemed multitude are still revealed as the one hundred and forty four thousand (Rev. 14:1), being the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb (verse 4).

From these considerations, it is possible to see that this seventh chapter of the Apocalypse presents two great epochs, with a long intervening period of tribulation extending from the one to the other. The first is the epoch of the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb; and the last, the epoch of the festive celebration of the ingathering of the world's fruit unto Yahweh Elohim answering to the joyful observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. The interval between the sealing epoch in the 4th century and the festive celebration just described is long. The sealing had continued in all subsequent generations and will continue until the Ancient of Days comes; when "the door will be shut" and entrance into his presence as a glorified constituent of the Royal Name, will be denied to other applicants (Matt. 25:1-13). In this chapter, John exhibits only the initial and terminal epochs; the sealing and palm bearing are two piers, from which spring an "aional arch", which bridges over the times of the trumpets, vials and seven thunders and consequently spans the aion of the woman in the wilderness, the partly contemporary aions of the two witnessess, the beast of the sea, the beast of the earth, the imperial image and the aion of the judgment of the scarlet coloured beast and its drunken ecclesiastical rider.

**Verse 10: "And vociferating with a loud voice, saying, 'The salvation *be ascribed* to him who sits upon the throne of our Deity, and to the Lamb!'"**

The Feast of Tabernacles follows closely upon the great Day of Atonement and therefore, it is fitting in the context of their rejoicing, that they are mindful of the salvation which has been achieved for them by the Lamb which "taketh away the sin of the world". In keeping with the theme of God manifestation, it is fitting that the Lord Jesus Christ is depicted in both aspects of his work, namely, that of God manifest in the flesh (and now in Spirit) sitting upon the throne and also as the Lamb indicating the

means by which the great multitude were enabled to assemble with him as a glorified community.

**Verses 11 and 12: “And all the angels stood in the circle of the throne and of the elders, and of the four living ones; and they fell before the throne upon their face, and did homage to the Deity; Saying, ‘So let it be! The blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the majesty, be to our Deity for the cycles of the cycles! So let it be!’”**

Bro. Thomas says: “These palm bearing Elohim are the goodly trees, the palm trees, the fig trees and the willows of the brook, the trees of righteousness, whose leaves are unfading, the planting of Yahweh, on either side of the pure river of water of life clear as crystal; the great forest of evergreens filling the earth with their perfume to the glory of His Name (Isa. 61:3; Psa. 1:3; Rev. 22:1,2).”

**Verses 13 - 17: “And one from among the elders was speaking, saying to me, ‘These who have been clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence came they!’ And I answered him, ‘Sire, thou hast known’, and he said to me, ‘These are they who came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. On account of this, they are before the throne of the Deity, and they shall minister to him day and night in his temple; and he that is sitting upon the throne shall pitch his tent over them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, neither shall the sun smite them down, nor any heat. Because the Lamb in the very midst of the throne shall tend them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and the Deity shall wipe away ever tear from their eyes.’”**

During the sealing period, the saints suffered persecution whether as a result of the treatment they received from the authorities or the tribulation they suffered in the “perilous times of prosperity” (2 Tim. 3:1-7; Rev. 3:14-22). They had heeded the Lord’s message to the Ecclesias and because they had “overcome”, had been granted to sit with Him in His Throne. This is indicated by the symbol that they had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, or as expressed in the letter to Sardis, they had not defiled their garments, for they are worthy.

The final verses of this chapter are very reminiscent of the Feast of Tabernacles inasmuch as we have a picture of the Lord sitting on the Throne and dwelling among them. This glorious vision is considered by John in greater detail in Rev. 21 and 22.

## CHAPTER 8

# The Seven Trumpets - God's Judgments on Catholic Rome

“The things exhibited as the result of the opening of this seal are more numerous and complex than the events of any of the other seals. It would have been clumsy and confusing to have exhibited them simply as the elements of the Seventh Seal. They are therefore divided and subdivided under several heads, so to speak, but all these separate heads forming part of the Seventh Seal. There is also a striking appropriateness in the introduction of a new set of symbols: They were to mark a new system and relations between God and the people of the Roman Empire. Up to this time, Europe had been the avowed adversary of Christ under the leadership of paganism. But now, those people organized under the leadership of Constantine, were professedly subject to him. The name of Christ and the law of obedience to him, were adopted as the basis of the state religion. This was a great change. It was natural therefore that the change should be recognized. The seals merely exhibited the experience of Pagan Rome during her conflict with Christianity; with a profession of Christianity, there was a more direct political responsibility to Christ, so to speak. It was therefore seemly that the prophetic seals should now be succeeded by other symbols, intimating a more direct causation of the evils that were to be inflicted upon the European body politic. This we find in the seven trumpets.”

- R. Roberts - *13 Lectures.*

**Verse 1: “And when he opened the Seventh Seal, silence ensued in the heaven about half an hour.”**

Peace in the ruling realm is here foreshadowed as the result of Constantine's triumph over paganism. This interval of peace lasted close on fifteen years and is indicated in apocalyptic symbology as about half an hour. If 15 years equals half an hour then 30 years would be one hour and 12 hours (or one day) would equal 360 years. 360 days was the length of the ordinary ancient years and as a day was prophetically used to represent one such ordinary year, we have here one such years treated as a day by the clock, but each day of it taken to represent a year. The record states about half an hour (i.e. about 15 years). The actual period was 14 years dating from 324 A.D. until 337 A.D.

While there was silence in the Government, there was uproar in the “church”, characterized by every evil work, which at length became the cause of the providentially retributive voices and thunders and lightnings and earthquakes which preceded

the preparation of the angels to whom the sounding of the Seven Trumpets was assigned (verse 6).

**Verses 2 - 5: “And I saw the seven angels, who stood in the sight of the Deity, and seven trumpets had been given to them. And another angel came, and stood by the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him many odors, that he might cast for the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is in sight of the throne. And the smoke of the perfumes for the prayers of the saints ascended from the hand of the angel in the presence of the Deity. And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices and thunders and lightnings, and an earthquake.”**

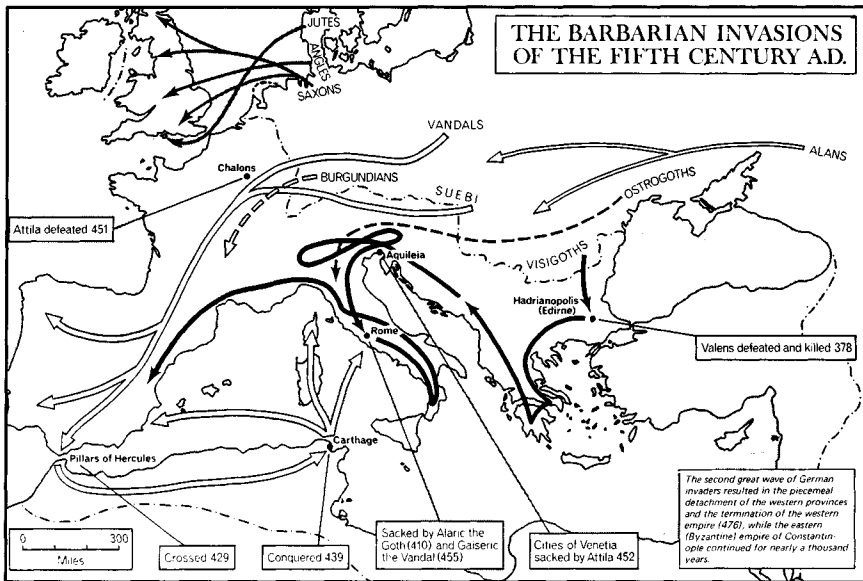
Bro. Roberts states: “At the end of the fifteen years, judgments were casting their coming shadows over the scene. The church triumphant under Constantine became as great a persecutor of the true and faithful disciples of Christ as ever the pagan emperors had been; and God was about to bring a series of scourges on the persecuting church in retribution. They were scourges to come directly at the Divine call. Therefore, seven angels are seen to receive seven trumpets, with which they were successively to summon these judgments on the scene. Before they begin to sound another angel comes to the altar with a golden censer with which he offers incense with the prayers of all the saints. The golden altar is Christ: the angel with the censer is the representative of the saints in the attitude of prayer. There was special need for prayer at this time. The true saints were being oppressed and afflicted greatly by the dominant church, which could not tolerate their dissent from its authority, and their protest against its unchristian ways. Prayer to God was the only weapon of defence left them against their enemies. The answer to their prayers is here symbolized. Having offered the incense with the prayers of all the saints, the angel took the censer and filed it with fire off the altar and cast it unto the earth: and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake. The history of the thirty years succeeding the death of Constantine (A.D. 337) is the best illustration of the import of this symbolism. Faction and strife and bloodshed among his sons, and civil war consequent upon the revolt of a military officer (Magentius) aiming at, and for a time wearing, the imperial purple, ended in the elevation of Julian, a votary of paganism, to the throne of the empire. This political earthquake was a terrible calamity to the Catholic Church, at whose instigation the persecutions were conducted, for which these were retributive public disasters. The elevation of Julian led to an attempt to restore paganism to the position it held before the victories of Constantine. This attempt, though not finally successful, was sufficiently formidable to subject the Bishops and adherents of the Catholic church to great tribulation. The voices and the lightnings and the thunder and the earthquake, having expended themselves in the accomplishment of their mission, the seven angels prepared themselves to sound.”

**Verse 6: “And the seven angels having the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might sound.”**

Each of the trumpets brought invaders upon some part of the Roman Empire, but there was also a providential period of preparation for these judgment events which opened up the way for the invading barbarians who occupied the northern parts of Euopre. The

way had to be paved for their incursion and for their ultimate triumph over the military discipline of Rome; this is implied in the statement “prepared themselves that they might sound”.

Bro. Roberts describes this period: “This occurred during the reign of Jovian, successor to Julian, who came first after Constantine. The Roman Empire was confined to the south of the river Danube. The territory to the north of that river was as little known to the Romans than as central Africa is to us. The most that was known was that it was occupied by fierce and warlike tribes, whose barbarism and want of discipline, however, rendered them somewhat harmless. From these causes, they were for centuries easily kept at bay. But a change came when the time arrived to prepare for the judicial trumpets. This change occurred in its most marked form during the reign of Jovian, just before the commencement of the trumpets. It originated in a struggle that took place between two of the barbarian races - the Goths and the Huns. In this struggle, the Huns obtained the advantage, and the Goths being hard pressed, asked permission of the Roman generals to cross to the southern side of the Danube to escape from the molestations of their successful enemies. The Roman generals consented and the Gothic nation came over and settled in Illyricum. The Romans no longer had the Danube as a barrier between them and the barbarians. The barbarians were in their midst so to speak. The Goths grew numerous and formidable. To avert the danger of their presence, the Romans decided to take them into their pay as military auxiliaries. They gave them arms and money and taught them the art of war and used them as an addition to the Roman army. The measure, which was intended to make them harmless and allies, had the opposite effect. It converted them into a formidable foe. The Goths gradually woke to a sense of their power and as the hour was approaching for the blast of the first trumpet, the Goths were getting into position for the work they had to do, in obedience to its summons”.



## THE FIRST TRUMPET - ALARIC AND THE GOTHS

**Verse 7: “And the first angel sounded, and there was hail and fire which had been mingled with blood, and it was cast into the earth: and the third of the earth and the third of the trees was consumed, and every green blade was burned up.”**

Hail and fire are symbolic of devastating judgment about to be poured out on Catholic Rome (cp. Isa. 28:2; 30:30). Trees are symbolic of the great men among a people (Jud. 9:8) and grass is figurative of the multitude (Isa. 40:6). Before the blast of this trumpet is blown, the grass is green, but when the trumpet ceases to sound it is burnt up and consequently black.

In connection with the expression “the third of the earth” it should be recalled that Constantine had divided his rule over the Empire with his rivals, Licinius (who possessed the Illyrian Prefecture); and Maximin, (who possessed that composed of the Asiatic Provinces and Egypt). The judgments of the trumpets were ordered with reference to this three-fold division of the Catholic world. The first four trumpets were to be blown against the western third, that its inhabitants might be plagued until their power was broken and their sovereignty blotted out for a season. This western third consisted of Gaul (or France), Spain, Britain, Italy and the province of Africa. This was the third referred to in this verse because it comprised the seat of government. Hence the symbolism of this trumpet is representative of the Spirit of Yahweh blowing upon the great men and people of the Catholic apostasy of the west. He did it by destroying agents already in a state of preparation, represented by hail and fire.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST TRUMPET

The period of the first trumpet blast commenced about A.D. 395 and related to the Western Third of the Empire, comprising Gaul (or France), Spain, Britain, Italy and the Province of Africa. The first four trumpets were blown against this Western Third. It was in this third of the Empire that the Ten Powers seen by Daniel and John as “Ten Horns upon the head of the Fourth Beast” arose.

For many years now, Rome had been troubled by the hordes of barbarians along her borders awaiting the right moment to strike. With the Empire disintegrating from within, the apostasy flourishing and recurring crises in government circles, it became expedient to enter into a political agreement with these barbarians and to supply them with arms and settle many of them in the areas of Thrace, Phrygia and Illyricum. Ostensibly, they now became Rome’s allies, but they were still, in fact, her enemies and a threat to the Empire.

Chief among the Barbarian “strong men” was Alaric, king of the Visigoths, a loose and wandering confederation numbering about 100,000 people. They became prime beneficiaries and admirers of the civilization of the Roman Empire, but their proximity and great numbers made them also the clearest threat to her peace. The Emperor Honorius mistrusted and feared Alaric but lacked the power to withstand him. It fell to the lot of the Vandal-born Stilicho, Consul of Rome and Master of Soldiers, to defend Rome and maintain the empire in the West.

Meanwhile, in A.D. 406 the confederate Germanic tribes, under Rhadagaisus, burst like a flood from the coast of the Baltic across the upper Danube and advanced without resistance across the Alps, the Po and the Appenine. Again it was Stilicho who drove back the enemy from the capital and more than a third of the various multitude of Sueves, Vandals and Burgundians perished with Rhadagaisus on the fields of Tuscany. But one hundred thousand Germans still remained and never retreated, so that this, according to the historian Gibbon, “may be considered

as the fall of the Roman Empire in the countries beyond the Alps; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and civilized nations of the earth from that fatal moment levelled with the ground".

Upon the death of Stilicho in 408 A.D. at the hands of the Emperor's men, Alaric set out again for Rome and starved her people into submission in a bitter siege. Then he exacted an enormous ransom as his price for withdrawal and an agreement to enter upon peace negotiations. These failed and a second and third siege of Rome ensued - in A.D. 409, when he was again paid off - and in A.D. 410 when sympathizers inside the city opened to Alaric the Salarian Gate and for three days Rome was turned over to the barbarian warriors for three days of plunder.

Alaric's historic "sack of Rome" caused intangible damage to the Empire that was immense and irreparable. To Romans in every part of the Empire, the impossible had occurred: the "Eternal City", which had remained inviolate for eight centuries, lay at the feet of an uncivilized conqueror. No other event could have so dramatized the terrible imminence of the demise of a once-mighty Empire.

### **THE SECOND TRUMPET - GENSERIC AND THE VANDALS - A.D. 429**

**Verses 8 and 9: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third of the sea became blood. And the third of the creatures in the sea having souls, died; and the third of the ships was destroyed."**

A mountain burning with fire is in direct contrast to "mountains that bring peace to the people". The power of Babylon in the days of Jeremiah was described as a "destroying mountain" (Jer. 51:25).

"Waters" symbolize peoples (Rev. 17:15) and being a collection of waters, the sea becomes the symbol of people gathered together into one body politic, kingdom, or jurisdiction. The four great beasts of Dan. 7 were seen by the prophet to come up out of the sea, in consequence of the four winds striving upon the Great Sea. In this trumpet prophecy, the sea has a two-fold signification symbolical and literal. The destroying power was to descend literally upon the maritime region washed by the waters of the Mediterranean and symbolically upon the peoples inhabiting these coasts. "The third of the sea" refers to the same third part of the Roman Empire as that styled "the third of the earth" in verse 7 and was that region subject to the Emperor of the Catholic west. It included the coasts of Spain, Gaul, Italy and Roman Africa, with the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Majorca and Minorca. This sea became blood as a result of its peoples being put to the sword at the hands of the Vandals.

"The creatures of the sea" were the "fish" of the symbolic sea and therefore "fish" in the symbolic sense. A sea being thus considered as a kingdom or empire, the living fishes in it must be typical fishes or men. The introduction of ships into the prophecy, indicates that the judgments of the second trumpet have especial regard to the naval and commercial interests of the western third's dominion.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND TRUMPET

After the death of Alaric in A.D. 410, the Visigoths had no chance of achieving their ambition to conquer the whole of Italy: they had to be content with a section of Gaul, eventually enlarging their borders until they held all of Spain as well.

Meanwhile, another barbarian tribe, the Vandals, had emerged from the German forests and crossed Gaul, reaching Spain in A.D. 409. On the way, they had pillaged and plundered until their treasure chests were filled with ill-gotten gain. They were universally regarded as first-class thieves and second-class fighters and even in Spain they had generally come off worst in their encounters with the Visigoths. However, in A.D. 429 Genseric, the crippled son of a slave, became their king; and the situation for the Vandals changed from that time.

Cunning and cruel, Genseric was a ruthless king, a subtle conspirator and a genius at political manouvre. For 50 years he contrived to entangle the plans of Roman diplomats and Germanic kings alike - but always to the Vandal's advantage. Gibbon styles him "the terrible Genseric" and he was well-equipped to carry out the fearful judgments of Yahweh upon the guilty Catholic population of the western "third" of the Empire. He was brought into the arena of the West by Boniface, Governor of Africa, who had a quarrel with the Emperor and sought Genseric as an ally. He provided ships for the Vandals and Genseric ferried his whole people across the Straits of Gibraltar. He proved anything but an ally to Boniface, who found it expedient to quickly bury his differences with Rome and call for help. But he was no match for the fierce Vandal hosts, who laid waste cities, churches, fields and granaries in a barbarous orgy of wilful destruction. Genseric, who was an Arian Christian (one who does not acknowledge the divinity of Christ), carried out a merciless campaign against the Catholic



VANDAL-BORN STILICHO, portrayed in an ivory plaque, rose to Consul of Rome and Master of Soldiers in its army. His dual role is suggested here by his weapons and patrician robes.



population, whilst at the same time bringing a measure of deliverance to the Donatists who had suffered rigorous persecution at the hands of the Catholics for so long.

By the close of his first year in Africa (A.D. 430) Genseric controlled all the Roman cities in the provinces except Carthage, Cirta and Hippo. In A.D. 432, Boniface returned to Italy and 3 years later peace terms were arranged between the Vandals and Rome, by which the Vandals would have everything in the six African provinces, except the luxurious stronghold of Carthage. In typical fashion, Genseric broke the pact and in A.D. 439 captured Carthage. Thereafter he used it as a pirate base: and for thirty years Genseric's ships greedily roamed the water of the Mediterranean, disrupting trade, destroying by fire ships sent against him and establishing himself in a lucrative career of piracy.

In A.D. 435, however, Genseric found himself facing a formidable new adversary in Aetius, a Roman aristocrat who took firm hold of the reins of government on behalf of the worthless Emperor Valentinian III. Like Stilicho before him, Aetius was lavishly admired by the people, but constantly under suspicion. He was, at last, murdered by Valentinian, who in turn was murdered in reprisal by one, Maximus. This provided a golden opportunity for Genseric, when the aggrieved widow of Valentinian, in revenge, invited Genseric and his Vandal warriors to Rome. Despite a desperate plea from Pope Leo I, the Vandal fleet reached the mouth of the Tiber in June 455 and there followed fourteen days of pillaging in which the barbarians removed all they could carry that was of value from Rome's treasure stores. He also carried with him the Empress and her two daughters, one of whom became the wife of Genseric's son. Twice the Empire endeavoured to avenge the indignities it had suffered, but to no avail. When Genseric died in A.D. 477 he remained in possession of all his conquests and left behind a people who, because of their wilful and wanton destructiveness, have given their name "vandal" to anyone who wilfully destroys.

### THE THIRD TRUMPET - ATTLA AND THE HUNS - A.D. 433

**Verses 10 and 11: "And the third angel sounded, and a great star blazing as it were a torch fell out of the heaven; and it fell upon the third of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star was called Apsinthian; and the third of the water became undrinkable; and many of the men died out of the waters, because they were made bitter."**

In the Apocalypse "sun, moon, and stars" are used as symbols of rulers. Jesus styles himself the "bright and the morning star" (Rev. 22:16), and Num. 24:17 declares, "there shall come forth a star out of Jacob that shall smite the princes of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth". A star, therefore, sometimes signifies a destroying power. What was seen in this case was not a fixed star, but a meteor. The falling of a blazing meteor is an appropriate symbol of a great destroying power progressing with rapid and intense but brief motion and coming suddenly to the end of its career and leaving nothing but a smoking desolation as the memorial of its presence.

The star was to fall upon a third of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. We have here a blending both of the literal and the symbolical. "The rivers" pertaining to "the third", represent symbolically its populations and literally the geographical mountain, valley and river regions of the Catholic west. Bro. Thomas states: "These populations had not, previously to the period of the third trumpet, done much in the way of shedding the blood of saints and prophets. They were beginning to approve of this remedy for what they styled 'heresy', but they had, nevertheless, shown themselves bitter persecu-

tors of the sealed servants of God during the 125 years their rulers, who were all 'Pious Catholics', exercised dominion over Italy, Gaul, Spain and Britain. The third trumpet was an especial element of the judgment upon them."

The name of the star is "the Absinthos", or "the Absinthian", thus indicating the region out of whose heaven he fell blazing upon the "third of the rivers". "Absinthos" is the name of a river in the Illyrian third of the Roman Empire. This river was doubtless selected as an appropriate to the nature of the destruction executed by the new Illyrian power, which had been developed in the preparation of the angels of the trumpets for sounding. The word literally means "undrinkable" and is usually associated with the idea of "bitterness". In the French language the word "absinthe" is the term used for the bitter herb "wormwood" (as it had been translated in the Authorized Version).

#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE THIRD TRUMPET**

The blazing-star symbol of this trumpet is identifiable with the meteoric reign of Attila, king of the Huns, who ravaged the Western third of the Empire with his wild illiterate band of nomads.

They swept into the Empire from Central Europe and when his uncle died, in A.D. 434, Attila and his brother Bleda, ascended the Hunish throne as co-rulers. In A.D. 445, Attila murdered his brother and as sole ruler he proved his right to the title "Scourge of God".

History paints for us an incredible and frightening picture of this wild nomadic people. They were more like fierce two-legged beasts than civilized men, illiterate, skinny, with drawfish foul-smelling bodies. Their faces were flat and their cheeks scarred from cuts made in childhood to stunt the growth of beards in later life. Under rat-skin helmets, their hair was filthy, black and bristly. They were, however, highly skilled horsemen who could virtually eat and sleep in the saddle. By all accounts the sight of the approaching band of Huns on horseback was enough to strike terror in the stoutest heart. Small wonder, then, that Yahweh saw Attila as the scourge who brought bitterness and death upon the peoples of the "third of the Rivers" during the third trumpet blast.

He gathered under his banner many of the Vandals, Ostrogoths, Gepidae and Franks. For a time, Aetius found it convenient to use Attila's unlimited store of military manpower and for Roman gold the Huns crushed a slave revolt in western Gaul, inflicted a severe defeat on the Burgundians along the western bank of the Rhine and constantly harrassed the Visigoths. Theodosius, the Eastern Catholic Emperor, was forced to relinquish a portion of territory south of the Danube and to pay tribute to Attila.

In A.D. 451, the fierce Hunnish horsemen marched westward into Gaul, piercing the Roman fortifications and devastating the rich countryside until their passage was halted by the allied forces of the Romans and some barbarian tribes. Attila then withdrew to reorganize his army and await the enemy. Eventually the forces of the western third under Aetius and Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, encountered the forces of the Huns on 21st September 451, near Troyes. There followed a ferocious and costly struggle, known in history as the Battle of Chalons, in which some contemporaries estimate that between 165,000 and 250,000 were slain (including Theodoric) and left in heaps on the field. Attila, apparently judging the cost too high, executed an orderly retreat back across the Rhine, but one year later he revenged himself against the staggering Empire with a devastating attack on northern Italy. The Emperor was powerless to resist and the city of Rome was only saved from destruction by the intervention, once again, of Pope Leo I who visited Attila and is said to have "subdued his ferocity into awe by the apostolic majesty of his men".

In A.D. 453, whilst making preparations for another conquest into Italy, the barbarian ruler's life was extinguished, apparently by a broken blood vessel. Following his death the Hunnish realm quickly disintegrated and the West was left free to resume its own domestic hostilities.

### **THE FOURTH TRUMPET - THE FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE - A.D. 476**

**Verses 12 and 13: “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third of the sun, and the third of the moon, and the third of the stars, was smitten; so that the third of them was darkened, and the day shone not the third of it, and the night likewise. And I saw, and I heard from one, an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying in a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe, to the dwellers upon the earth, from the remaining voices of the trumpet-call of the three angels hereafter to sound’.”**

The events of the first three trumpets had reduced the power of Rome to nothing more than the semblance of an Empire, but with none of the vigour that had for centuries controlled the world. There was still an Emperor in Rome but the barbarians, whom the first three trumpets had called into the Empire, were the virtual masters of the state and soon became its nominal and actual masters. It has been seen previously that the symbols used are representative of the ruling powers and the “third”, as before, was the Western Catholic third of the Roman Empire.

Before the narrative passes on to the sounding of the fifth trumpet, an eagle flying in mid-heaven proclaims “woe, woe, woe, to the dwellers upon the earth”. The eagle is representative of the community of the Saints (Rev. 4:7) and the message which was declared was that the calamities endured at the hands of the barbarian leaders were not complete. The eagle is depicted as a bird which searches for and destroys the flesh (cp. Rev. 6:7-9, Mtt. 24:28).

#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE FOURTH TRUMPET**

Upon the death of the all-powerful Hunnish king, Attila, in 453, the Ostrogoths, who for nearly eighty years had been subservient to the Huns, seized the chance for freedom. Led by King Walamer and helped by the other captive German tribes, the Ostrogoths defeated Attila's sons at the battle of Nedao in A.D. 454. Although free from bondage, King Walamer found it necessary to make an agreement with the Emperor in Constantinople in order to secure land for his people to farm and a supply of gold. As a seal to the agreement, he sent a young nephew, Theodoric, to Constantinople as hostage. Theodoric won favour with Emperor Leo I and was educated as a high-ranking Roman and appointed a senator, consul and captain of the imperial bodyguard. However, his loyalties remained with his own people to whom he eventually returned.

Meanwhile, a barbarian of uncertain origin named Odoacer, had gained the leadership of several tribes formerly under Hunnish rule, following the Battle of Nedao. In A.D. 476 Odoacer moved into Italy and deposed the puppet Emperor in Rome, Romulus Augustulus, a mere slip of a boy. He removed him to a quiet villa and then neglected to enthrone a successor; so bringing about the fall of the Western Roman Empire. At the instigation of Odoacer, the Senate in Rome sent to Zeno, the Emperor ruling in Constantinople, solemnly protesting that there was no longer any necessity for an Emperor in Rome, but that “the throne of universal Empire shall be

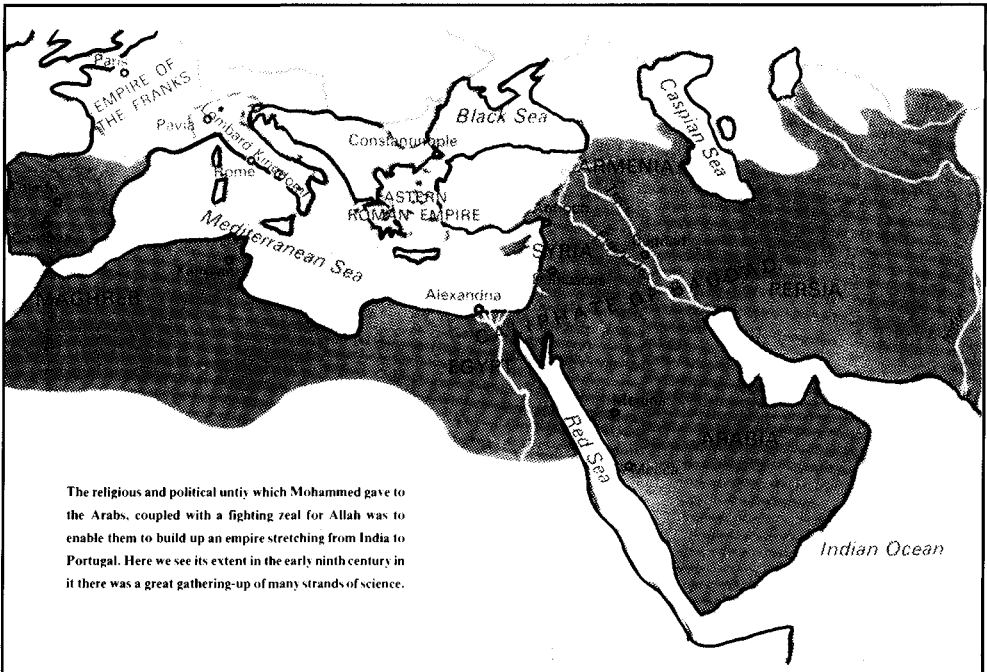
transferred from Rome, to Constantinople". They stated that the Republic might safely confide in the civil and military virtues of Odoacer: and they humbly suggested that Zeno appoint Odoacer Commander-in-chief or Roman "patricius" of Italy. The Emperor's reply was a carefully hedged affirmation: but clearly Odoacer was an illegal ruler and as such had to be removed. Obviously this also removed the authority of the Bishop of Rome, for of what use was his administration when governed by a barbarian usurper.

Things continued much in this state for fourteen years, until Theodoric, who by this time was "Theodoric, the Great", King of the Ostrogoths, (a title and position won through successful petty warfare, sometimes as ally and sometimes as enemy of the Emperor), was given permission by Zeno to wrest the territory of Italy from Odoacer. After a pitched battle, lasting five years, Odoacer made the mistake of admitting Theodoric to the besieged city of Ravenna under a truce. The two antagonists agreed to rule Italy jointly. However, the arrangement was only short-lived, for on 15th March, 493 at a grand banquet held to celebrate the peace, Theodoric drew his sword and took the life of his rival with his own hand. Now Theodoric was left as sole ruler and Zeno was left without a representative to administer Italy. However Theodoric the Great maintained law and order, granted religious freedom to Orthodox Catholics and Jews, preserved the noblest buildings of Rome and encouraged the arts and during thirty-three years, reigned as first King of the Seventh Head of the Beast.

## CHAPTER 9

# The Fifth Trumpet and the First Woe - The Rise of Mohammedanism - A.D. 632

At the close of the series of judgments represented by the first four trumpets and culminating in the extinction of the Roman Empire in the West, we enter upon another phase of events affecting, more particularly, the Eastern section of the Empire, though also bearing vitally upon all parts of the civilized world. It is a phase so well marked in history as to constitute an epoch and the starting point of a new order of things in many countries. The Roman world was about to be visited by a scourge far transcending the inroads of the northern barbarians, who at least professed the same religion and assimilated with the populations of the countries they overthrew. Because of the



appalling nature of this visitation, attention was called in a special manner to the trumpets heralding its approach.

**Verse 1: “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star which had fallen out of the heaven into the earth, and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss.”**

The “star” represents one who had acquired power and become a king. It refers to Mohammed, who commenced his preaching career in A.D. 609 and who thirteen years later assumed regal functions at Medina with rapidly increasing power and reigned without a rival until 632.

The “earth” in this vision, speaks of those who dwell upon the earth, - that is, the Roman “earth” or “habitable”. It was his mission to “torment” the unsealed idolators of the Eastern Roman Empire. Bro. Thomas states: “The eagle-angel community, constituted of servants of the Deity sealed in their foreheads, was not to be tormented by this woe. The sealed servants of the Deity - the enlightened believers who had obeyed the Truth - are nowhere in the Apocalypse styled “the earth”. They are a holy nation. But “the earth” in the Apocalypse is the very reverse. “The earth” is an unholy generation that “wonders after the beast”; and that “worships the dragon and worships the beast”; and represents the “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations”, subject to the dragon and beast forms of government (Rev. 13:3,4,7). The earth in the prophecy of the fifth and sixth trumpets, is symbolical of the secular and ecclesiastical orders and people of the Catholic apostasy which, by the fifth trumpet were to be “tormented and injured” and by the sixth trumpet, to be “killed” or deprived of all power, authority and rule, over the Eastern third of the Roman Empire.”

Mohammed was given a key or power to establish a royal dynasty out of the undistinguished multitudes of Arabs. Compare the use of the word “key” in Isa. 22:22 and Rev. 3:7.

The phrase “bottomless pit” is better rendered “pit of the abyss” (R.V.). The word “abyss” in the Greek language is frequently used as synonymous with the sea (cp. Job 38:30; 41:31; Isa, 63:13; Rom 10:7). The Apocalyptic abyss is the troubled sea of nations out of which Daniel’s four beasts arose (Dan. 7). Arabia is both physically and politically “the pit” of this abyss - physically, it is identified with the geographically depressed region of Arabia where the power of Mohammed was matured and politically, because its tribes may be regarded as the lowest, or worst, of the peoples of the east. (A more detailed description of these terms is found in *Eureka* Vol. II, pages 450 to 456).

**Verse 2: “And he opened the pit of the abyss: and smoke ascended out of the pit as it were smoke of a great furnace; and the sun was darkened, and the air from the smoke of the pit.”**

Until the power of this Prophet-King, or Star, was matured in the “pit of the abyss”, the pit was shut; so that neither “smoke” nor “locusts” could “issue forth upon the earth” to torment and destroy the unsealed. Nothing could come forth from the pit until the Star had acquired undisputed authority and power. This he at length acquired; for it is testified that “he opened the pit of the abyss”. When the pit was open, smoke poured out in columns vast enough to darken the sun and the air. This took the form of the armies



Moslems believed they had Divine support in battle. The angel Gabriel is shown here encouraging Mohammed during the siege of Bam Nadir.

of Mohammed, united under the yellow banner of the Star, who marched forth to invade the world at large.

“Smoke” signified God’s punishments upon the unsealed resulting from the wars that ensued. Compare Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen. 19; also Deut. 29:20; Ps. 74:1; Rev. 14:11.

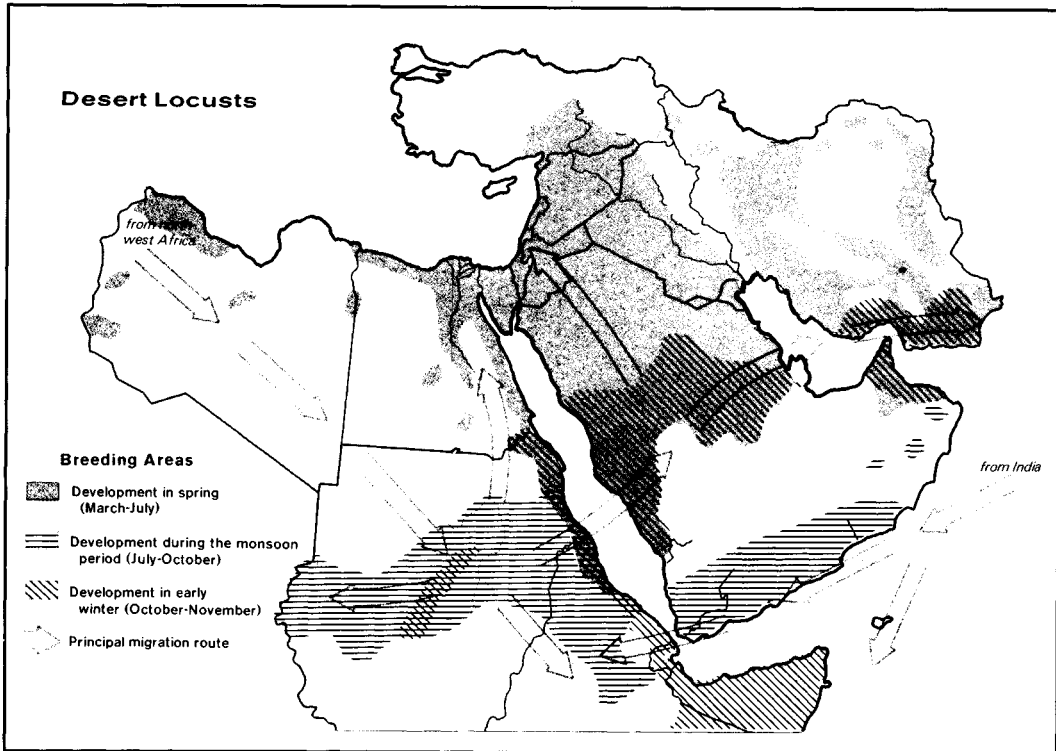
The sun is here the symbol of that same Imperial majesty as that which was darkened by the judgments of the fourth trumpet. The darkened “third” had recovered its light in the process of re-annexing Italy and Africa to the Byzantine, (Greek, or Constantinopolitan) Empire in the reign of Justinian. When the sun was darkened by the smoke of the pit, its light or power was quenched in the countries of “the earth” where the locusts of the smoke established themselves (cp. verse 3). Not only was the sun darkened, but the “air” likewise. In the darkening of the Roman luminaries by the fourth trumpet “the air” remained unaffected. In symbolic language, the air denotes the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the world, which constitution was not changed when the Gothic Kingdom established its power in Rome; it still continued Catholic. When, however, the smoke of the pit darkened “the air” all this was changed where its locusts tormented the unsealed. The aerial constitution became Arabian. Place and

power, in the conquered countries, were only for the locusts of the smoke; so that if a Catholic idolator would retain office he must become a convert to the new superstition, which so darkened the air politically, that the rays of the spirituals of wickedness in the Byzantine heaven, could not pass through it for the illumination of their coreligionists in scorpion-like torment (*Eureka*, Vol. II, page 456, 457).

**Verse 3: “And out of the smoke came forth locusts into the earth, and there was given to them power as the scorpions of the earth have power.”**

The locust is a fitting symbol for the Arab hordes. In the natural sense locusts are generated in the pits of the earth, out of which the new progeny arises in the Spring. The desert area of Arabia is a favourite breeding ground for these creatures. One writer claims, “It is a remarkable co-incidence that Mohammedan tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Mohammed bearing on their wings this inscription, ‘we are the army of the great God’”. The locusts of this first woe represent armies of men, whose main force consisted of cavalry, invincible, licentious and tormenting; analogous in their destructive operations to clouds of locusts.

The scorpion is also a symbol of the Arab powers as well as representing their weapons of war. The bite or sting of the scorpion is generally fatal, hence, the power of the locusts was a fatal power. They had scorpion-like tails and in these tails was their power for destruction. The Saracen Fire was used in instruments of war called “scorpions” and this was the precursor of guns and gun powder.





**The hardships of Middle Eastern life are aggravated by....**

Life for those living in the Middle East has always been a battle against the "forces of nature". They must contend with the vagaries of weather and the recurrence of chronic diseases, such as Malaria. Over shadowing all this, however, are two perils which create an even greater dread - earthquake and the swarms of desert locusts which strike with a fearful combination of suddenness and destruction. Six major invasions of desert locusts have occurred in just the last 80 years. When the locusts strip the countryside of vegetation, the villager is destitute of subsistence for his daily living. A swarm of locusts, one mile square, may eat 400 tons of grain each day. In one invasion, swarms of locusts covering hundreds of square miles, destroyed enough food to feed 1 million people for one year. International boundaries are of no consequence, insecticides have very little effect, and the swarms can easily cross difficult terrain.

Little wonder then, that the Saracen Warriors, swarming across the countryside devouring and destroying without concern for national boundaries, rigorous conditions, or those who thought to oppose them, are symbolised by the dreadful Middle Eastern locust.



Locusts

**Verse 4: "And it was commanded them that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, except the men who have not the seal of the Deity upon their foreheads."**

The instructions given by Abu Beker, the first Caliph, to the bands of Saracens who followed him, was significant. He said: "Remember that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment 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 fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, 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

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET

Mohammed was born in Mecca in A.D. 570: when he died in A.D. 632, most of Arabia had fallen to Islam. The gentle, faithful and prematurely old Abu Bakr was appointed his successor and gave his blessing to the "jihad" (holy war) against Syria. Syria fell to the Mohammedan armies by 635: Abu Bakr died after reigning only two years and the vast conquests of Palestine and Mesopotamia (640), Egypt (642), Persia (643), Tripolitania (647) and Cyprus (649) were continued under the leadership of the Caliphs Omar (reigned 634 to 644) and Othman (reigned 644 to 656). Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall . . ." states: "In the ten years of the Caliph Omar, the Saracens reduced to his obedience thirty-six thousand cities or castles, destroyed four thousand churches or temples of the unbelievers, and erected fourteen hundred mosques for the exercise of the religion of Mohammed. One hundred years after his flight from Mecca, the arms and reign of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean over the various and distant provinces which may be comprised under the names of Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain."

Under the unifying banner of the Prophet, the sinewy Arab warriors burst out of their hot dry homeland in the "abyss". Behind them lay a peninsula one-third buried in sand-dunes: ahead was an irresistible lure — booty for those who lived, "paradise" for those who died fighting the unbeliever. One Arab historian says: "The Believers smote and slaughtered till the going down of the sun . . . and the fear of the Arabs fell upon all kings." The Catholic either renounced his religion and became Mohammedan or fell victim to the torments of "the locusts".

The elected Caliphs came to an end in 661 and the Omayyad Dynasty commenced. The converted population of non-Arabs were required to pay high taxes: this caused conflict within the Empire and this, together with internal unrest and conflicts between the Omayyads and the Abbasids, brought about the downfall of the Omayyad Dynasty of Caliphs in A.D. 750.

The first Caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty died in 754 and was succeeded by Al-Mansur, the real founder of the Abbasids, who created the power base for the new state and built the city of Baghdad as its capital. Gradually the Caliph became an inaccessible figurehead and lost his political power, until after the death of the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid the Empire experienced a speedy decline. Finally, in A.D. 936, the Caliph lost his political power altogether and confined himself to the role of spiritual head of the faithful, whilst the government of the State was left to the powerful "Emir".



At Badr in 624, Mohammed and his followers fought and defeated the Quraysh. An armistice secured Mohammed's return to Mecca in 630.



A Scorpion

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 Mohammedans or pay tribute.”

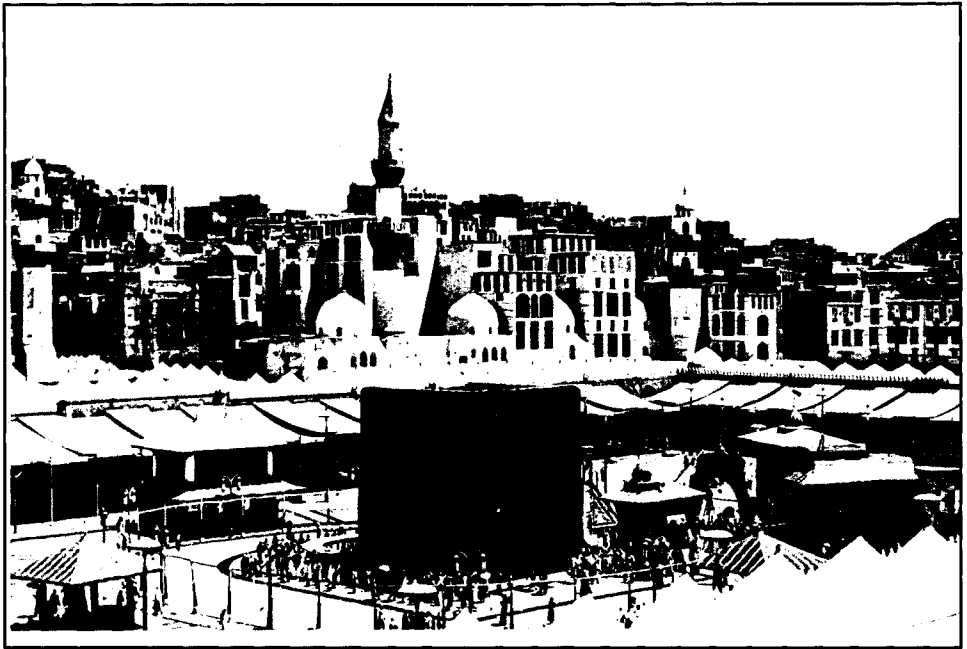
The grass, green things and trees of this verse refer to people in general. God’s judgments were to be poured out only on that class who are styled as “having not the seal of Deity upon their foreheads”.

**Verse 5: “And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they should torment them five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man.”**

Bro. Roberts comments, “The Saracens employed in their military operations formidable missiles which they styled “scorpions”. An Arab writer speaks of them in 1249: “the scorpions surrounded and ignited by nitrated power, glide along like serpents with a humming noise and when exploded, they blaze brightly and burn. Now, to behold the matter expelled was as a cloud extended through the air, which gave forth a dreadful crash like thunder, vomiting fire on every side and breaking down, burning and reducing all things to ashes.” Armed with this power known as “Saracen Fire” and afterwards as “Greek Fire”, because finally adopted by the Greeks, the Saracens had power to injure with scorpion-power; but their mission did not extend beyond the infliction of torment. They were not to kill the Eastern Roman Empire in the way the Western had been killed by the Goths. They were only to injure. The men of the Eastern or Greek third of the Roman Empire were to retain political life in the midst of their torment, but against the will of the majority; the bulk of the people were desirous for the sake of peace to submit to political death and accept the Saracen yoke. But death fled from them: because it was not in the Divine purpose that the locusts should kill in the symbolic sense of the term, but only injure five months twice over, (cp. verses 5 and 10). Why not ten months instead of twice five? Because locusts only appear five months in the year; and it would not have been in harmony with the natural history of the symbol to express it in any other way.”

Constantinople was twice besieged by the Saracens, but not taken. This occurred in the years 668 to 675 and 716 to 718. The locusts are described as “tormenting” the men of the Catholic Apostasy in church and state for five months (verse 5) and were also to injure them for five months (verse 10). Five months is 150 days and upon the principle of a day for a year, which is the basis of the symbolic times of the Apocalypse, represents 150 years. Hence, the locusts were to torment with scorpion torment the “men” of the Apostasy until the end of 150 years; and they were to injure “the rest of the Men” not included in the Eastern or Byzantine third, which was politically “killed by the plagues” of the first and second woes, until another 150 years should have expired, so that the sounding of the fifth trumpet would continue to harass the men destitute of intelligence in the Truth, for not less than 300 years. This period dates from A.D. 632, the year of the death of Mohammed and of the accession of Abu Beker, the first Caliph, to A.D. 932, the fall of the secular power of the Caliph in Baghdad.

**Verse 6: “And in those days the men shall seek the death, and shall not find it: and they shall earnestly desire to die, and the death shall flee from them.”**



The Kaaba in Mecca, the most holy place in Islam.

Whilst the bulk of the people would have been happy to accept the Saracen yoke and thus bring about the death of the Empire, such was not to be the case; they were to continue to experience the torments for 150 years.

**Verse 7: “And the resemblances of the locusts were like to horses which had been prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were chaplets like to gold, and their faces as faces of men.”**

The Moslem victories were largely dependant on the splendored cavalry and the horses were used in conjunction with the artillery to produce the tormenting Saracen fire which resembled scorpion-tailed locusts. They also had “chaplets like to gold”; this was only a resemblance and not literal golden circlets. They would be yellow so as to bear a resemblance to gold and signified the yellow head-gear worn by the Saracens.

Another resemblance of the locusts was that “they had faces as the faces of men”. This distinguished them from the Goths and other kindred barbarian hordes; the faces of these being shaven and smooth, like women’s faces. The Imperial Roman custom was to have the beard shaven, but the locusts did not shave. They wore beards and so indicated their relationship to the bearded race and their antagonism to all shaven crowns.

**Verse 8: “And they had hair as the tresses of women; and their teeth were as lions.”**

The long flowing tresses of the Arabs was like the hair of women and their ferocity likened to the teeth of lions.

**Verse 9: “And they had breasts as it were breasts of iron: and the sound of their wings as the sound of many chariots of horses rushing into battle.”**

The Arab warriors are frequently described as “immersed in steel armour”, for they were clothed in iron armour and brilliant cuirasses. The breastplate of iron, as symbolised by their iron breasts, was a descriptive feature answering literally to the Arab warriors of the sixth and seventh centuries.

**Verses 10 - 12: “And they have tails like to scorpions, and stings were in their tails; and their power to injure the men was five months. And they have over them a king, the Angel of the Abyss: the name for him in Hebrew is *Abaddon*; and in the Greek, he hath the name *Apollyon*. The first woe hath passed away; behold there come yet two woes after these things.”**

The king which they have over them is not the “star” of verse 1 which opened the pit, but is rather to be taken as the official or head under which the Saracenic locusts were organized after their issue from the pit. He was Apocalyptically named “the angel of the abyss”, not “the angel of the pit of the abyss”, but of the abyss at large. The historical parallel is found in the Caliphs of the Mohammedan system who were styled “commanders of the faithful”. The destroying power is called “Abaddon” in Hebrew and “Apollyon” in Greek, both of which signify “the destroyer”. It was given in these two languages because it was commissioned primarily and chiefly against the countries to which the Hebrew and Greek belonged. It was not sent against Italy to torment the Italians, it was the Greek Empire, which included Palestine and Syria upon which the locusts were to fall with their most destructive energy. The “death” which the men of the Apostacy so earnestly desired (Verse 6), at length came in after time; and when it came, it reduced the men of the Empire to the condition of mere dogs and slaves in the estimation of their Ottoman superiors.

### THE SIXTH TRUMPET AND THE SECOND WOE

The Rise of the Turkish Empire A.D. 1062

**Verses 13 and 14: “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard one voice out of the four horns of the altar of gold which is in the sight of the Deity, saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet, “Loose the four angels, which have been bound by the great river Euphrates.”**

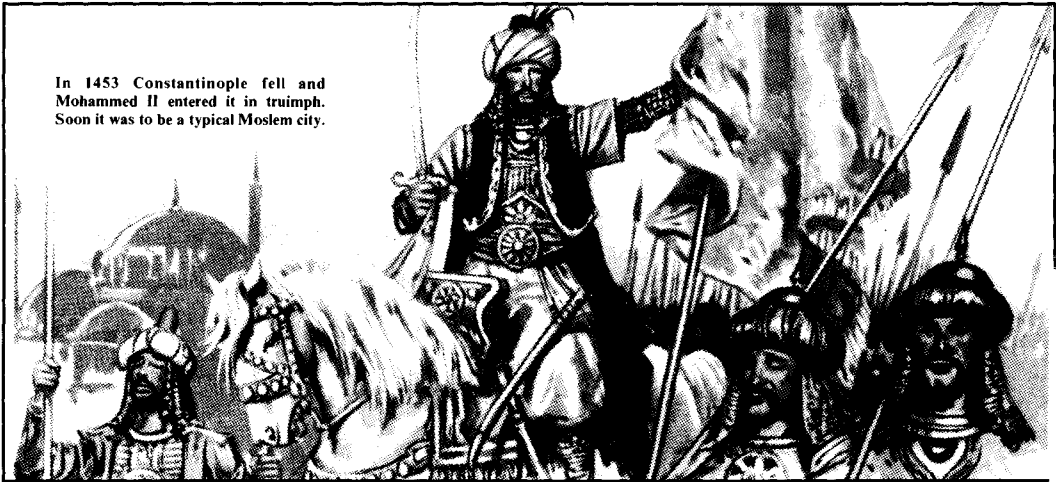
The visitation of the Fifth Trumpet, or First Woe, has been seen to answer to the work of the Saracen followers of Mohammed. The messengers of judgment forming the second woe are explained as applicable to the invasion of Europe by the Turks - also Mohammedans. The voice from the altar associates the heralding of the judgment, with the prayer for vengeance of the persecuted saints of God. Each trumpet develops its judgments retributively upon the enemies of the saints in response to their prayers. The successive soundings of the first five trumpets have brought us down to A.D. 933; and we have seen how the safety of the saints was guaranteed by the command of the angel of the abyss, to his destroying agents, to torment only the unsealed. The saints were not to be harmed by the special plagues, for they were “nourished” while the unsealed, who were their enemies, were being scourged.

The prayers of the saints represented as “one voice” proceeded from the four horns of the altar and commanded to loose the four angels. The unanimous voice of prayer ascended from hearts whose faith was more precious than “gold which perishes” and

addressed to the sixth angel. The altar referred to here is the same altar as that in scene pictured in chapter 8:3.

Bro. Thomas states: "With one voice this emanation of spirit cried day and night, through the angel of the altar, to be avenged. This cry ascends from spirit, through spirit, to the Eternal Spirit - from the Truth incarnate in the satins; through the Lord the Spirit, who makes intercession for them; to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The answer to this cry sets in motion the whole machinery of judgment exhibited in the scenery of the Apocalypse, which ultimates in the consummation which completely and thoroughly avenges His elect."

"Bound by the River Euphrates" signifies that up to the appointed time the Euphrates was the limit of the advance of the powers who were now to be permitted to burst forth westward. The countries east of the Euphrates were the area of their preparation for the work they had to do. The powers or angels were not all prepared and loosed at the same time, but one after another. There were four distinct division of the Turkish Empire: Seljukians, Moguls, Tartars and Ottomans. The fourth of these angels (the remnant of the Ottoman Empire) still retains control of Constantinople, where the throne of the extinct eastern third of the Roman Empire flourished for one thousand years.



In 1453 Constantinople fell and Mohammed II entered it in triumph. Soon it was to be a typical Moslem city.

In 1453 Constantinople fell and Mohammed II entered it in triumph. Soon it was to be a typical Moslem city.

**Verse 15: "And the Four Angels having been prepared were loosed for the hour and day and month and year, that they might kill the third of the men."**

These four Angel-powers of the Euphratean region of the globe, were loosed for the execution of a mission to be completed in a specific period. On the scale of a year for a day the time period is equal to 391 years and 30 days made up as follows:

an hour		30 days
a day	1 year	0 days
a month	30 years	0 days
a year	360 years	0 days
Total	391 years	30 days

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET

The Turkomans or Turks were converts to Mohammedanism, so that when, in 1055, Togrul Beg, commanding the Seljuks, marched on Baghdad, the seat of the Caliphate and the city surrendered without a struggle, the Caliph gave the title of Sultan and temporal control over his domains to the Seljuk chieftain, while he himself retained religious control.

Meanwhile, other Turkish warriors had been raiding Byzantine territories and eventually, led by Togrul's successor, Alp Arslan, the Turkish army confronted the armies of the Emperor, Romanus IV Diogenes at Manzikert in August 1071 A.D. In a battle of far-reaching consequences, the Asiatic provinces of the Empire were irretrievably lost and the Emperor himself was taken prisoner. However, he was treated leniently by Alp Arslan and eventually released on easy terms. After Alp Arslan's assassination, he was succeeded by his son, Malek Shah, who reigned for twenty years and was the first Turk to appropriate to himself the title "Commander of the Faithful".

In 1902, after the death of Malek Shah, civil war divided the Empire into four - the Persian, Syrian, Kerman and Roum dynasties. The capital of this latter dynasty was Bythinia, only 100 miles from Constantinople, which was still seen as the vital key to papal dominion over Eastern Europe, Russia and the Near East.

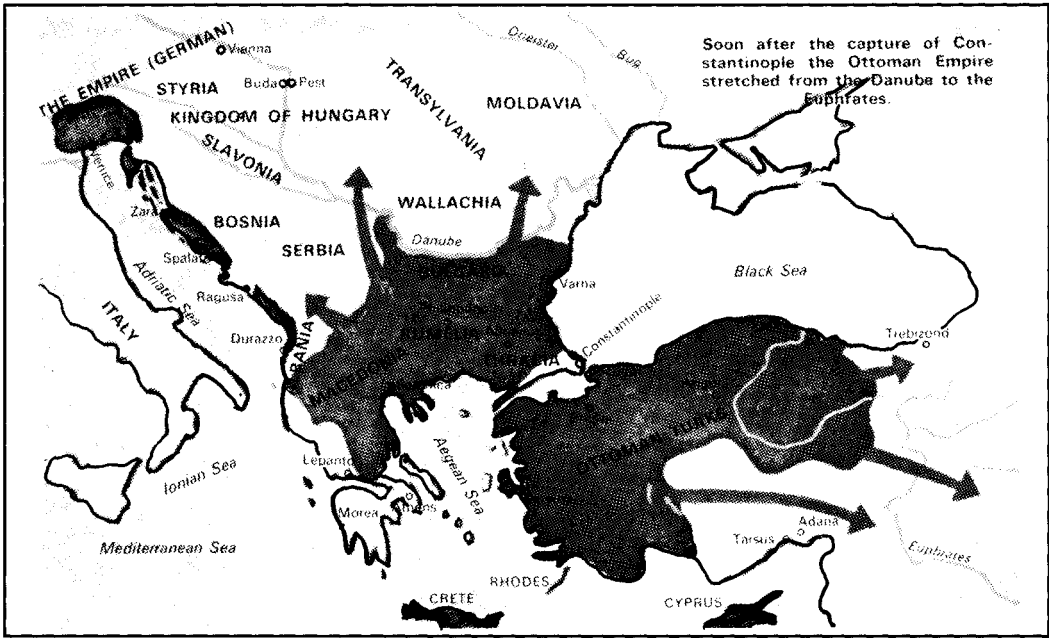
In 1906 a disorganised rabble of Crusaders, led by Peter the Hermit, set out to liberate the Holy Land from the hands of the Turks. Eventually, Jerusalem was recovered by an army of Latin Christians and the Turks were driven back beyond Antioch.

Then, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a new power arose in Central Asia, in the area of Mongolia. This was a Mongol chieftain named Temujin, who contrived a plan to fuse his warring nomad tribes into an invincible army and set about the conquest of the world. In anticipation of this latter objective he took the title of "Genghis Khan" "lord of the earth". Death came before he could fully realise his ambition but his sons carried on his policy and between 1234 and 1241, they invaded Russia, Poland and Hungary and their incomparable pagan armies posed a threat to Christendom and Islam alike. By 1243 the Seljuk Turks had been defeated and forced into vassaldom and the Abbasid Caliphate was savagely destroyed altogether in 1258 - an event which rocked the Moslem world. With the battle of Goliath's Spring in 1260, the Mongol expansion halted for a time.

Now a new power had built up in north western Anatolia, ready to break into Europe. This was the Ottoman power: although initially subjects of the Seljuk empire, the Ottoman Turks had won their independence as the Seljuk empire disintegrated under the impact of the Mongol invasions. In 1301 they gained their first victory over the Byzantines; in 1356 they crossed the Dardanelles and invaded Europe; and in 1397, with Constantinople almost all that was left to the Byzantines, the Ottomans surrounded the city and demanded its surrender. However, the city was saved by the advance of the Mongols under Tamerlane, who met and defeated the Ottoman forces at Ankara in July of 1402.



In 1422, the Turks were again at the walls of Constantinople and this time the city was only saved by revolt in Anatolia which drew away the Turkish forces. In 1453, however, under Mohammed II, Constantinople was captured after a siege which lasted forty days. Firearms, both muskets and cannons, were used in this battle and from that day when it fell into the hands of the Ottoman Empire, Constantinople remained the Turkish capital.



This period was the time appointed of the Spirit for the work of killing the third of the men and dates from April the 27th, 1062 when Togrul Beg, being married to the daughter of the Caliph of Baghdad, became the head of the Mohammedan Faith and ends on May the 29th, 1453 when the Roman Empire in the East was extinguished as a result of Constantinople falling into the hands of Mohammed the Second.

**Verse 16: “And the number of the hosts of the cavalry was two myriads of myriads; and I heard the number of them.”**

A myriad is 10,000, therefore, two myriads of myriads is two times 10,000 times 10,000, equalling 200 million. This is the symbolical number of the four Angel-powers of cavalry. The number is not to be taken literally, but to indicate a large unnumbered multitude. The number of horsemen used by the Turks (whose soldiers were nearly all horsemen), during 400 years would not be likely to run far short of the immense figures of the trumpet.

**Verses 17 - 19: “And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat upon them having breasts fiery and hyacinthine and sulphurous; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths there burst forth fire and**





**MOHAMMED II** History records him as a ruthless Sultan with a dedication to “destroy the Empire of the Romans and bring all the Christian Empires to nought.”

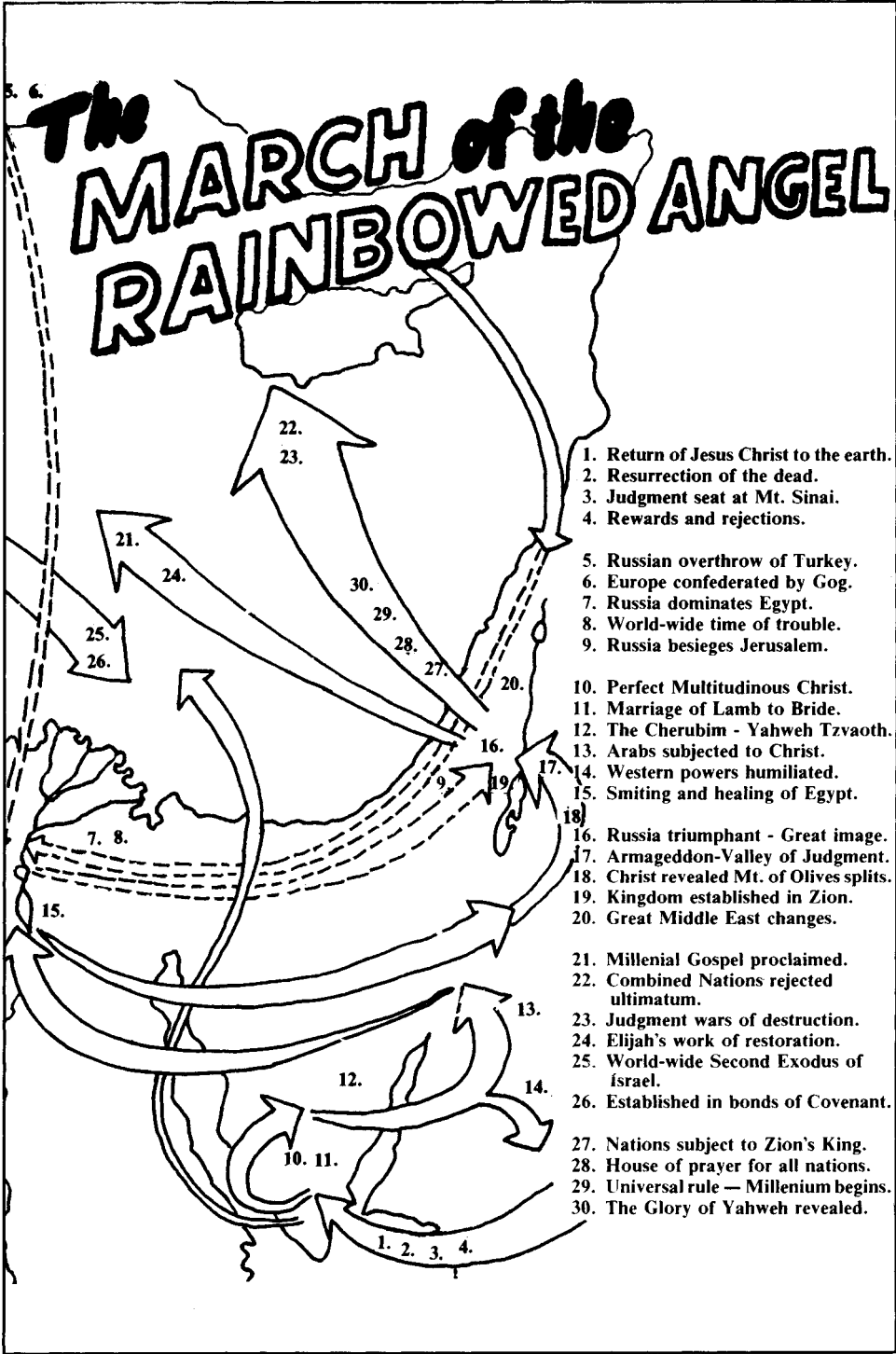
**smoke and sulphur. By these three were killed the third of the men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the sulphur, bursting forth out of their mouths. For their powers are in their mouth and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents, having heads, and with these do they injure.”**

The whole Turkish career during centuries is condensed into one immense army of cavalry, which John sees and hears enumerated. The means by which this army prevailed to the extinction of Eastern Rome, are illustrated - gun powder. The Turks prevailed over the Romans by the use of gun powder at a time when it had been recently invented. The Turks were the first to use cannons. It was by this they killed “the third”. The principle thing that would strike anyone witnessing an army of cavalry, using field guns, would be the three things mentioned by John, “fire, smoke, and brimstone”, and a description of the new weapons dragged after the horses at a time when they had no name would be a tail with a head to it in which lay the power to hurt. These same tails would, however, when the artillery came into action, become the mouths of the formidable horsemen of the vision; for, when the artillery vomited fire and smoke and brimstone, the horsemen would be in the rear of their pieces, which accounts for their power being said to be both in their mouth and in their tails. The roaring of the guns would also account for their mouths being said to be like lions’ mouths and their breastplates or protection behind which they would fight being of fire and brimstone.

**Verses 20 and 21: “And the rest of men who were not killed by these plagues changed not from the works of their hands, that they might not worship the daemonials and idols of gold and silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which can neither see nor hear, nor walk. And changed not from their murders, nor from their sorceries, nor from their fornication, nor from their thefts.”**

This refers to the Latin nations of Europe not included in the Ottoman Empire, or fourth Euphratean Angel dominion. These still continued their worship of “demons” and idols, notwithstanding the overthrow of their image worshipping brethren in the East. Notwithstanding the terrible affliction and over-throw of eastern Rome by the Turks, as the instruments of God’s vengeance, the populations of Western Europe continued addicted to the doctrines and practices of the Mother Church, which God has stamped with His execration. The eastern section of Christendom was given over to the desolating Turk, because of its long standing and patiently born but increasing abominations after the example of the seven nations of Caanan who for a similar reason were given over to the sword of Joshua. The horsemen of the sixth trumpet summoned by the trumpet blast of Divine providence, swept over “the third”, to its extermination and the consequent desolation of the lands over which they threw the blighting shadow of their subsequently established government.

# The MARCH of the RAINBOWED ANGEL



1. Return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
2. Resurrection of the dead.
3. Judgment seat at Mt. Sinai.
4. Rewards and rejections.
5. Russian overthrow of Turkey.
6. Europe confederated by Gog.
7. Russia dominates Egypt.
8. World-wide time of trouble.
9. Russia besieges Jerusalem.
10. Perfect Multitudinous Christ.
11. Marriage of Lamb to Bride.
12. The Cherubim - Yahweh Tzvaoth.
13. Arabs subjected to Christ.
14. Western powers humiliated.
15. Smiting and healing of Egypt.
16. Russia triumphant - Great image.
17. Armageddon-Valley of Judgment.
18. Christ revealed Mt. of Olives splits.
19. Kingdom established in Zion.
20. Great Middle East changes.
21. Millenial Gospel proclaimed.
22. Combined Nations rejected ultimatum.
23. Judgment wars of destruction.
24. Elijah's work of restoration.
25. World-wide Second Exodus of Israel.
26. Established in bonds of Covenant.
27. Nations subject to Zion's King.
28. House of prayer for all nations.
29. Universal rule — Millenium begins.
30. The Glory of Yahweh revealed.



## CHAPTER 10

# The Mighty Angel with the Open Scroll

Chapter nine covered the entire period occupied by the rise and fall of the Saracens and Turks. Chapter 10 takes up the thread where Turkish history closes and exhibits a symbol which shows that at that juncture, the promised Divine inter-position which overthrows the Kingdom of men, takes place. The sounding of the seventh Angel in which the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ is recorded by John in chapter 11:15, but prior to introducing this seventh trumpet the Lord reveals some important matters to John in chapter 10 and the first part of chapter 11.

Chapter 9 brings us down to the end of the second woe and chapter 10 announces that there shall be delay no longer in the finishing of the mystery of God. Chapter 11 describes events which are taking place in the western section of the Empire concurrent with the second woe and form part of it in point of time, as evidenced by the remark on their accomplishment: "The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (chapter 11:14).

If one were to view the Apocalypse as merely an historical outline of events set out in chronological order then the events of chapter 10 and the first part of chapter 11 would appear as a break in the narrative. It should be remembered however, that in the Apocalypse the Lord is not merely outlining a sequence of events, but more importantly revealing to His servants the principles upon which God will manifest His Glory in the Earth in the pouring out of His judgments upon the nations. In the section under consideration, each trumpet reveals a phase of God's judgments upon Catholic Rome and therefore it is fitting that chapter 10 should conclude the theme commenced in chapters 8 and 9 and then chapter 11 verses 1 to 14 reveals the contemporary events taking place in the other section of the Empire. In as much as the Apocalypse is built on a thematic structure, it would not be suitable to include the events of chapter 11 in chapters 8 or 9 because whilst they might be contemporary in point of time they constitute in fact a different phase of the pouring out of God's judgment on Catholic Rome.

- Refer *Eureka*, Vol. II, pages 534-538

**Verse 1: “And I saw another powerful angel descending out of the heaven, having been clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow upon the head, and his face as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.”**

This Angel is not one of the seven Angels already introduced to John, but “another Angel”, standing for a multitude sent by God to pour out His judgments. This multitude consists of the Lord Jesus Christ who will have returned from Heaven where, says Paul, our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3-4). The Saints have been begotten from above (John 3:3) by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, (1 Pet. 1:23) and in this sense it can be said that they come down from Heaven with him.

The clothing with a cloud not only symbolises a multitude, but also defines the period of the fulfilment of the prophecy, viz. the day when “the Lord cometh with clouds” (cp. chapter 1:7). This is further substantiated by reference to the rainbow, which as the token of the covenant, draws attention to the sun shining through the rain and so forming the rainbow. (For further details see notes on chapter 1:7 and chapter 4:3 with chart).

His face being as the sun presents a picture of glowing brightness symbolical of the Spirit in intense and destroying activity (cp. Mtt. 13:43; Mal. 4:2). Feet as pillars of fire are symbols of progress and of advance into the arena of conflict. Feet may be beautiful as in Isa. 52:7 when they bring good tidings, but the feet of the Rainbow Angel are not beautiful, they are moving pillars of fire, dreadful and terrible in their desolation tramp, for wherever they tread, they kindle a fire that cannot be quenched, (cp. Dan. 7:9-11).

**Verses 2 and 3: “And he had in his hand a little scroll which had been opened: and he placed his right foot upon the sea, and the left upon the earth, and he cried with a loud voice like as a lion roars: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.”**

In contrast to the seven sealed scroll of chapter 5:1, this scroll is said to be “little” because of the limited time in which the things recorded shall be accomplished. Bro. Thomas states: “The little scroll is the most important fragment of the Apocalypse. Without it the rest would be of little interest to the believer.” The little scroll is the period in which the judgments of God are poured out upon the nations when the “finishing of the mystery of the Deity” will have been accomplished. It is the Rainbow Angel that will perform this work.

His right foot upon the sea and his left on the earth, symbolically incorporates the complete work of the subjugation of the nations, including Armageddon and the overthrow of Rome and Papal Europe. The sea represents the ten horned dominion (see further notes on chapter 13:1-10 and also Dan. 7) and the earth is the two-horned dragon power (see further notes chapter 13:11-18).

Bro. Thomas deals at length with this topic in *Eureka*, Vol. II, pages 544-567 under the heading, “The position of the Angel and how it is acquired”. This is a very important section which should be read and compared with Rev. 10:2.

Being the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Angel’s proclamations are the roarings of that lion; and the carrying of them into effect is the noise of the roaring (cp. Rev. 5:5;

Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).

The seven thunders speak of the complete subjugation of mankind after the Lord's victory on the mountains of Israel. Compare the type of David who, having established his power in Jerusalem, then extended his dominion by seven campaigns. Bro. Thomas suggests that the wars are styled seven thunders, because they are the thunderings of the seven spirits of the Deity sent forth from before the throne into all the Earth (Rev. 4:5 and 5:6). The Rainbow Angel is the seven spirits incorporate in Jesus and His brethren going forth in their wars into all the earth; hence the connection between the lion roar of his voice and the voices of the seven thunders. The thunders are, therefore, the echoes of the voice of the all-powerful and omniscient seven. They are the wars of the Saints in the execution of "the judgment written" and "give to them"; and waged against Babylon and the apocalyptic beasts until the wrath of Deity is filled up and the smoke from His Glory and power no longer prevents an entrance into the Nave (cp. chapter 15:8).

**Verse 4: "And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard out of the heaven, saying, unto me, 'Seal the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not'."**

The precise details of God's plan of campaign are presented in outline, but not in specific detail. "The utterances of the thunders will be written upon the historic page by the valiant and mighty deeds of all the Saints. This is the only record of them the world will be permitted to inspect" (*Eureka*, cp. also Dan. 12:9,10).

**Verses 5 - 7: "And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to the heaven, and swore by him who lives for the aions of the aions, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, That the time shall not be longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall sound, the mystery of the Deity shall also be finished, as he hath announced the glad tidings to his servants the prophets."**

The phrase "time no longer" is better rendered as in the R.V. margin "there shall be delay no longer". When Christ returns there will be no further delay in executing the Divine Judgments.

The days of the voice of the Seventh Angel are referred to in chapter 11:14 and 15. These days began with the end of the second woe at the time of the French Revolution 1789-1794. The phrase in the A.V. "when he shall begin to sound", is better rendered by Bro. Thomas "when he shall sound". It covers the period of the Third Woe.

Likewise the expression, "He hath declared", in the A.V. is rendered by Bro. Thomas, "He hath declared the glad tidings" (Greek, *evangelizo*). This gives us to understand that the subject matter of the Mystery was good - or glad tidings of great joy. This mystery of the Deity to be finished is styled by Paul "the mystery of Christ", "the mystery of the Gospel", "the mystery of the Deity's will", "the Mystery of Godliness", "the Mystery of the Deity, even of the Father and the Christ". We must not lose sight of the fact that the purpose of the Apocalypse is not merely to reveal the unfolding of historical events, but rather to bring to light the "Mystery of Godliness",

and to reveal the principles by which the Deity will manifest His Glory in the Earth. These are the Glad Tidings which have been declared to the prophets and apostles and recorded in the pages of the Bible.

**Verses 8 and 9: “And the voice which I heard out of the heaven was again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the little scroll which has been opened in the hand of the angel who stands upon the sea, and upon the earth. And I went to the angel, saying to him, Give to me the little scroll. And he saith to me, take and eat it up; and it shall imbitter thy belly, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey.”**

To eat a book is intellectually to absorb its contents in reading. The eating of the open book shows that the Rainbowed Angel was the symbol of a class to which John belonged: for whereas the book was first in the Angel’s hand, it was transferred from the Angel to John and thus an identity was established between them. John relished the act of eating, but the effect produced after the eating was disagreeable. This harmonizes with the fact that every Saint even now in measure experiences, viz. that while the reception of Yahweh’s truth is itself a source of pure sweetness and peace, it makes us the subject of great bitterness afterwards in the feelings with which we view the state of the world and the wickedness of men around us on every hand. Compare Ezekiel’s similar experiences in Ezek. 3:3,14.

**Verses 10 and 11: “And I took the little scroll out of the hand of the angel, and I ate it up; and it was in my mouth as honey, sweet: and when I had eaten it, my belly was imbittered. And he saith to me, ‘Thou must again prophesy against many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings’.”**

This is the beautiful climax to the three which has permeated the whole of the Apocalypse, viz. that the ultimate purpose of God will be revealed in that day when the clouds shall pour down their rain upon the mown grass and bring blessings on all nations. The Saints will go forth to teach the nations the wonderful truths of God and will prophesy (to teach to edification 1 Cor. 14:3) the good news of the Millennial Age (cp. Rev. 14:6). The Rainbowed Angel symbol is representative of just such work as this and therefore it is fitting that this section of the message should conclude with John being told that he had yet greater work to perform when he should prophesy before peoples, nations, tongues and Kings.

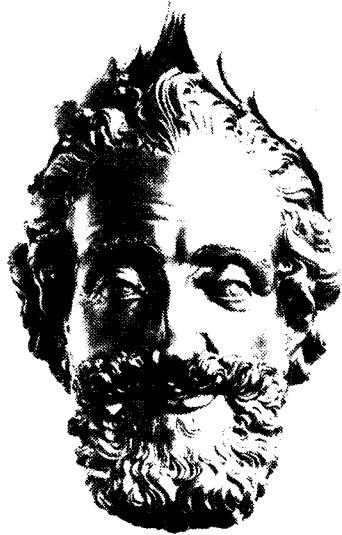


## CHAPTER 11

# The Persecution of the Witnesses

The events of the fifth and sixth trumpets considered so far affect the eastern section of the Roman Empire and cover the period from the rise of Mohammedanism and the development of the Turkish Empire, down to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Those events principally concerned a succession of extraordinary military eruptions from the east: first the Saracens from the Arabian peninsula and secondly, 300 years afterwards, the Monguls from the desert steppes of Turkistan. These events saw finally the establishment of the Turkish Empire on the ruins of the "Eastern Third" of the Roman Empire, but had little effect on the Western Empire.

In this chapter we are taken backwards in point of time to consider the contemporary events in the western section of the Empire. It depicts the history of the contest between the apostasy and the witnesses of God and describes the persecutions that the Catholic Church brought upon the so-called heretics.



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Henry of Navarre, the leader of the Huguenots, became king of France in 1589. He was only able to secure Roman Catholic toleration of the Protestants by becoming a Catholic himself!

**Verse 1: "And there was given to me a reed like to a rod: and the angel stood saying, Rise up, and measure the nave of the Deity, and the altar, and those worshipping in it."**

The reed is not only a symbol of measurement (cp. Ezek. 40:3; Rev. 21:15-16) but also signifies judgment. This is further emphasised by likening the reed to a rod (Mic. 5:1; 1 Cor. 4:21; Prov. 13:24). The symbol therefore speaks of a measured period of severe

affliction and in the following verses John gives further details of the time periods involved.

Bro. Thomas states, "The reed then was a rule of time, indicating period of severe trial and therefore like to a rod and on the principle of loving chastisement - 'Whom the Lord loveth he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives'. It is to be noted here, that John, and not the Angel, is the measurer. There was great symbolic decorum in appointing John to be the measurer, in giving the reed like a rod to him. 'Rise up and measure,' was the voice of the Spirit. The measuring is here connected with the rising up; in other words, John's symbolical resurrection was the limit of the measuring."

The temple of God and the altar represent the community of believers (2 Cor. 6:16) who are associated with the Christ altar (Heb. 13:10; 1 Cor. 9:13) and hence are symbolized as true worshippers. As such they are the beloved of God and experience His chastening, (Heb. 12:5-6) and are likewise partakers of Christ's sufferings (Heb. 13:12-14).

**Verse 2: "And the court which is outside of the nave cast away out, and measure it not, for it has been given the nations; and the Holy City they shall trample forty-two months."**

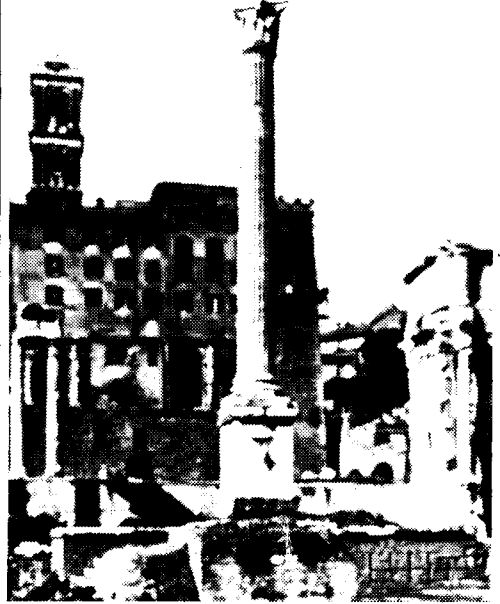
John's measuring was restricted to the one body of Christ - (the Saints). He was expressly commanded to cast out all the Gentiles not of the one body. The apocalyptic court is the anti-type of the court of the Gentiles under the Mosaic order and therefore represents Israelites and Gentiles who are not part of the One Body and whilst they might protest the errors of Catholicisms they do not necessarily uphold the Truth.

We have already seen that this Temple community as a whole (without discriminating between its false and true elements) prevailed against the pagan adversary enthroned at Rome, displaced him from his seat and set on the throne Constantine, the so-called first Christian Emperor. With such a change in its favour it would have seemed natural to suppose that the believers would experience peace and prosperity, but the reverse is shown to be the case by this measuring of it off with a "rod of affliction". The temple itself (the true ecclesia) was to be a down-trodden institution; the exception to this measuring off for affliction was the part of the Temple enclosure styled "the court without". This part of the church system occupied by "the Gentiles" being exempt from affliction would be in prosperity and renown. The history of Europe presents a picture of a church established by a law enjoying the support and patronage of the state and acquiring thereby a respectability so great that "to be the meanest ecclesiastic is to have a passport to the highest society". In light of this prophecy, we can rightly estimate the state communions as they appear before God. They are all parts of the Outer Court of the spiritual temple, the Court not measured, not recognized, given over to the Gentiles.

It is clearly foreshown in this chapter that the occupants of the Outer Court - the nominal Christian element of European society - should obtain the upper hand and tread down the true and faithful Saints who are symbolically the Holy City which, they shall tread underfoot forty and two months. This is a period of three and a half years or 1260 days. It was literally the period of Christ's ministry and in the symbolic use of this time period in the Apocalypse it represents the same number of years (on a day for a

year basis) that the followers of Jesus will have to withstand persecution and affliction like their elder Brother. This period of down-treading of the Christ body is the allotted span for the temporal power of the papacy dating from the decree of Phocas A.D. 606-610 to the time when the Papacy lost its temporal power 1866-1870. For 1260 years therefore, the Papacy persecuted the true believers.

The principle Bishop of the Catholic idolatry of Rome was developed into "The God of all the earth" by the legislative favour of the imperial power at Constantinople. This development was legislative and circumstantial and therefore progressive. Rome was pregnant with this blasphemous deity during a gestative period of 280 years namely, from A.D. 324 to A.D. 604-608, the former being the date when Constantine became sole Emperor and established Christianity as the state religion. He was quickened into political life by Justinian's Code (A.D. 529) and his Decretal Epistle (A.D. 533), which affirmed the Roman Bishops' universal supremacy in spiritual affairs. Seventy-five years after this he was brought to the birth by the Emperor Phocas acknowledging the supremacy of his See (A.D. 604), in grateful memory of this, and other benefits, the Pope caused to be erected by the Exarch of Italy, a Corinthian marble column standing on a pyramid of eleven steps and bearing a gilded statue of Phocas. The date of the pillar was A.D. 608, and it bore a Latin inscription to the following effect: "For the innumerable benefits of his piety and for the quiet procure to Italy and the preservation of liberty". Perhaps a baser wretch than Phocas never wore the dragon crown, but not a more worthy in the estimation of the new god.



The Column of Phocas

**Verse 3: "And I will give to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, having been clothed with sackcloths."**

Because they are clothed in sackcloth they are seen to be in affliction, and under these conditions they would prophesy or preach. The two witnesses are described as standing before (or in opposition to) the god of the earth (verse 4) not to be confused with the God of Heaven (verse 13, see further note verse 4). The two witnesses include the true and faithful members of the one body who would not take the sword; and their revolutionary allies (the protestants) who had no scruples. They are collectively "the woman" and "the earth" (cf. chapter 12). The woman class include both the true and faithful members of the one body as well as their revolutionary allies known as protestants and are described in Rev. 12 as "the woman" and "the remnant of her seed". The other witnessing class styled "the earth", consist of the political opponents of the Roman Catholic power.

The twelve hundred and sixty days of this verse, whilst being the same length of time as that of verse 2, refers to a different period. It speaks of a warfare that commenced at the time of the establishment of the State Church A.D. 312, to the massacre of Saint Bartholomew in A.D. 1572.

## WARS OF RELIGION 1562-1598

This was a series of civil wars in France, the immediate issue of which was the French protestant's struggle for freedom of worship and the right of establishment. Of equal importance, however, was the struggle for power between the Crown and the great nobles and the rivalry among the great nobles themselves for the control of the King. The foremost protestant leaders were, successively, Louis I de Conde, Gaspard de Coligny, and Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV); the Catholic party was dominated by the House of Guise. A third party, called The Politiques and composed of moderate Catholics sided with the protestants, while Catherine de Medici and her sons, Charles IX and Henry III, and Frances of Alencon, vainly sought to maintain a balance of power by siding variously with the Catholics and with the Huguenots. The conspiracy of Amboise (1560), by which the Huguenots attempted to end the persecutions suffered at the hands of Frances II, was a prelude to the first three civil wars (1562-63, 1567-68, 1568-70). The Peace of Saint-Germain (1570) gave the Protestants new liberties and the wardenship of four cities including La Rochelle.

The fourth civil war (1572-73) began with the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, a general slaughter of Protestants throughout France began in Paris on August 24th 1572. It was preceded, on August 22, by an attempt, suborned by Catherine de Medici on the life of Admiral Coligny. The failure of the attempt led to the formulation of the plan for a general massacre, for which an opportunity was furnished by the presence in Paris of numerous protestant chieftains, guests at the wedding of Henry of Navarre. Coligny was the first victim; his death was followed by the killing of minor chiefs and of all Huguenots within reach of the soldiery and the mob. The massacre quickly spread from Paris into other sections of France.

The fifth civil war (1574-76) ended with the Peace of Monsieur which, ratified by the edict of Beaulieu, granted freedom of worship throughout France except Paris. When the Catholics retorted by forming the League (1576) and persuaded Henry III to repeal the edict of toleration (1577), the Huguenots revolted once more and sought the aid of foreign Protestant states. There followed a sixth civil war (1577) and a seventh (1580). With the Edict of Nantes, which granted freedom of worship throughout France and established protestantism in 200 towns, and with the treaty of Vervins with Spain (1598), Henry IV brought the wars of religion to as successful a conclusion as the Protestants could desire. This result, however, was completely reversed in the seventeenth century by Cardinal Richelieu, who broke the political power of the Protestants, and by Louis XIV, who destroyed their religious privileges by his Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.



**A Depiction of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's day.**

**Verse 4: “These are the two olive trees, and two lightstands, which have stood before the god of the earth.”**

The two witnesses prophesying for twelve hundred and sixty days are declared to be the “two olive trees and the two lampstands which have stood before the God of the earth”. The two olive trees here, are not united by pipes into one lampstand as in Zech. 4:11-14. There are two lampstands, with a tree to each: one olive tree and its lampstand symbolizing the “one body” of the Saints and the other is symbolical of “the earth” - the anti-Catholic and anti-Papal champion of civil and religious liberty and the rights of man standing defiantly before the “God of the earth”.

The “God of the earth” here is not to be mistaken for the Eternal Creator. His title in this chapter is the “God of Heaven” to whom Glory is ascribed at the concluding act of the second woe (verse 13). It is true that the witnesses, in a certain sense, stand before the Creator; but in the sense of giving testimony “against” they do not, and that “before” is to be understood in the sense of “against” is evident from the effect of their testimony, which torments and stirs up the powers to destroy them (verses 7-10). These two classes of anti-papists confront the representatives of the papal deity in all the nations of the earth. The God of the earth is therefore synonymous with the anti-Christ (2 Thess. 2:3,4 and 8) in contrast to “the God of Heaven” (Rev. 11:13).

**Verse 5: “And if any will to injure them, fire bursts forth out of their mouths, and devoureth their enemies: and if any will to injure them, in this way must he be put to death.”**

The God of Heaven did not require the members of the one body to stand and be murdered by their enemies without help. “The earth”, not believing in non-resistance and passive obedience to ecclesiastical tyranny, stood their ground and devoured their enemies. This was their mode of prophesying against the anti-Christ, which, in all the days of the prophecy, was very effective in the preservation of civil and religious liberty and the rights of man and in perpetuating them to succeeding generations. The “Earth” (or political opponents of the papacy) went to the aid of the true brethren and stood ready to defend them with the sword. History records many examples of groups who, though not agreeing with the teaching of the “woman” or “the remnant of her seed”, were nevertheless ready to defend her. The fire which proceeded out of their mouth represents the wars of the witnesses against their Catholic persecutors.

**Verse 6: “These have power to shut the heaven, that rain may not fall in their days of the prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they may have willed.”**

To shut up heaven that rain might not descend upon those who live under it, is figurative of Divine wrath upon the sufferers (cp. Deut. 11:17). In this case it is the political Heavens that are referred to and therefore represents peace being taken from the earth (contrast Ps. 72:6).

The waters refer to “peoples” (Rev. 17:15) and therefore speaks of the effect on those involved in the warfare.

**Verse 7: “And when they may have finished their testimony, the beast ascending**

**out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them, and put them to death.”**

The trampling of the Holy City was one thing and its prophesying in sackcloth another. These two series of events were not to be parallel in the whole of their courses; so to prevent confusion, the two periods of equal duration were stated in different terms (cp. “42 months” verse 2 with “a thousand and threescore days” verse 3). The witnesses through the ages have included Donatists, Waldenses, Novatians, Huguenots etc. The opposition of the witnesses by word and sword gave protection to the ecclesia. But as the 1260 year period neared its end in 1572, the hitherto forthright witnessing of the Saints became lax. This being the case, the Deity removed the protection. The Papacy gained the ascendancy which was signalized by a terrible period of persecution that culminated in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day. This effort on the part of the Papacy continued until 1598 when the Toleration Edict of Nantes was issued by Henry IV. However, this was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685 and persecution continued apace.

This verse contains the first reference to “the beast” in the Apocalypse. It draws attention to the “fourth beast” of Dan. 7 which had ten horns and of the little horn “that made war with the Saints and prevailed against them” (cp. Dan. 7 with Rev. 13:1-2).

The Abyss (bottomless pit A.V.) was previously mentioned in Rev. 9:1,2 (see note on those verses).

**Verse 8: “And their corpses shall lie upon the breadth of the Great City styled spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified.”**

The Great City of the Apocalypse is Babylon the Great (Rev. 16:19; 17:18) and the street (*plateia* or Broadway) is France, the first and chief Catholic country. This Great City is evidently both a city and a country and answers to the city of Rome which was “co-extensive with the Empire”. Christ was crucified by Rome outside the walls of Jerusalem. He was therefore crucified in a province of the Roman Empire; for the Jews then inhabiting Palestine earnestly testified that they had no other King but Caesar (John 19:15). Hence the Great City is the Empire of Rome, whose frontiers were declared by the Emperor Caracalla to be the limits of the city. In this Great City, 3,000 miles in one direction and 2,000 in another, both the personal and “mystical Christs” were put to death by the violence of the Roman power - Jesus in Palestine and the witnesses in the Western breadth thereof.

With regard to the bodies of the witnesses remaining unburied, Bro. Thomas states, “now when people are dead it is usual for the living to put them out of sight or bury them as soon as possible; but in the case of these corpses they would not suffer them to be enthroned (cp. verse 9). Who would not suffer it? Their enemies, or some others friendly towards them? Certainly not their enemies for these did their best to destroy them and to blot out the remembrance of them forever. It was the protection afforded them in the Protestant States that prevented their burial and decomposition. The refugee witnesses that fled by hundreds of thousands from the presence of the deity of the earth and his regal adherents settled in Holland, Britain, Protestant Germany and America where, under the protection of the laws, they existed as corporate societies, but bearing no testimony as of old. Some of these governments remonstrated on their

behalf, which was not without influence in staying the destroyer's hand. Hence an unburied remnant of them was permitted to remain in the breadth of the Great City - a prostrate remnant no longer able to testify, but awaiting in silence their resurrection to life and power."

**Verse 9: "And they shall see their corpses among the peoples, and tribes, and tongues, and nations three days and a half, and they shall not suffer their corpses to be put into tombs."**

Three and a half days is a significant Biblical time period. It constitutes half a week. Three and a half times (or Jewish years) equals 1260 days, a time period already referred to earlier in this chapter. Three and a half years was the period of the Lord's ministry and is referred to as half a week in Dan. 9:24-27. In this case, however, it refers to the time elapsing between the political death of the witnesses in 1685 and their political resurrection in the French Revolution 1790 - a period of 105 years. It is significant to note that one hundred and five is equal to three and a half times thirty, therefore Bro. Thomas suggests that the days referred to are in fact lunar days, a period of thirty normal days answering to the phases of the Moon.

The Pope determined to commemorate the great slaughter of Saint Bartholomew's day and ordered a medal to be struck in commemoration of it. This illustrates the meaning of the statement that they would not suffer the dead bodies of the witnesses to be put in graves. To put a thing in the grave symbolically is to bury it out of sight - forget it. Instead of being thus buried away, the slain witnesses were kept in public view in the way referred to. It was particularly in France that their dead bodies thus lay exposed in the symbolical sense for there it was a day to be observed as every year came around - a day in which it was to be considered. "The Church" in 1685 had finally triumphed over its enemies who had planned it for ages.

**Verse 10: "And they who dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and be exultant: and they shall send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented them who dwell upon the earth."**

The earth referred to here is the Roman Earth i.e. those within the orbit of Catholic control. Their rejoicing was perpetuated as described previously by the striking of a medal in commemoration of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day.

**Verse 11: "And after the three days and a half, spirit of life from the Deity broke in upon them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those who beheld them."**

Having found fulfilment to the slaying and lying dead of the witnesses in the persecution of Protestantism in France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the close of their dead period in the "National Justice" of the French Revolution in 1790, Bro. Thomas dwells at length in *Eureka* upon the revival which has since taken place, not only in political liberty, but in the resuscitation of a witnessing for Gospel Truth in which he himself had so important a part. Among the circumstances of which he makes mention as belonging to this period of revival is the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, by which, in defiance of the mandates of

the “god of the earth”, the Scriptures have been circulated greatly among those nations in which the witnesses “stood upon their feet again”, greatly strengthening “the earth” in its resistance to arbitrary power and preparing the minds of many to receive and seek for the Truth as it is in Jesus. Other attempts to return to primitive Christianity are noted on the part of the Sandemanians (1755) and the followers of Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell in the United States. Bro. Thomas was himself associated for some time with the latter and it paved the way for the much greater advance which he started in 1834-47.

The resurrection of the witnesses, together with their display of power, filled the authorities with fear and forced them to proclaim the convocation of the estates general in 1789. This in turn precipitated the terrors of the French Revolution (1789-1795).

**Verse 12: “And they heard a great voice from the heaven, saying to them, ‘Ascend hither!’ And they ascended into the heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.”**

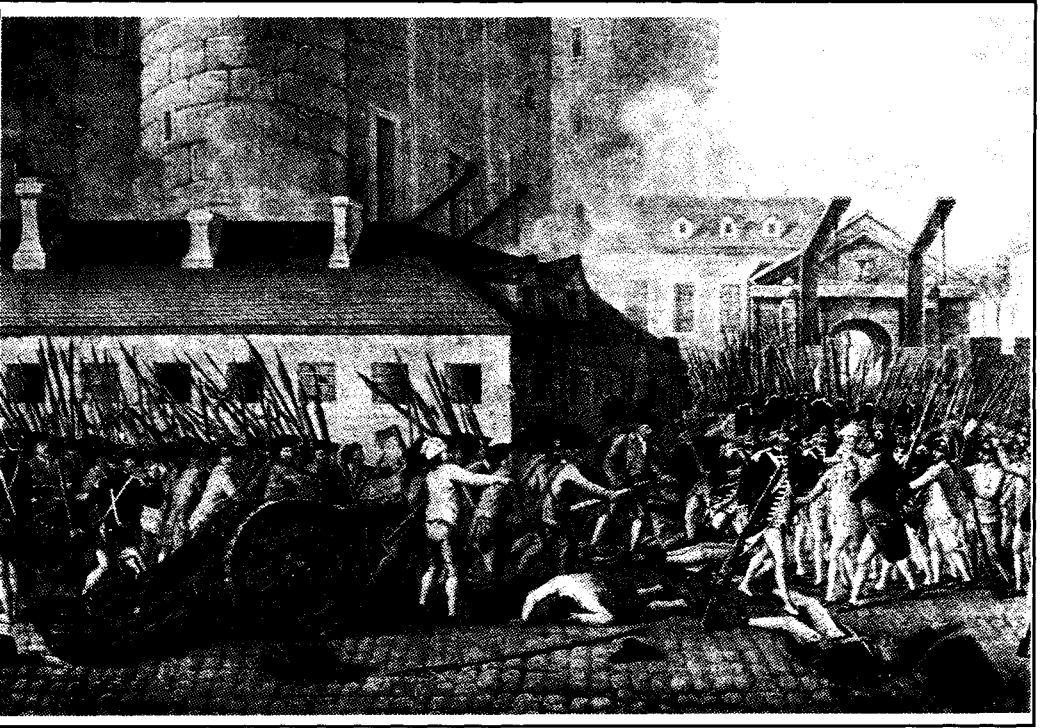
Once again the symbology is based upon the literal death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but as with the rest of the symbols in this chapter this ascension related not to the heaven, but to the political heavens. The royal decree of Louis XVI convoking the estates general, permitted the oppressed classes to send their representatives to Parliament. As a result the Roman Catholics viewed the situation with much fear.

**Verse 13: “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth of the city fell, and there were destroyed in the earthquake seven thousand names of men; and the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the Deity of the heaven.”**

An earthquake, in symbolical language, is a shaking of “the earth”, which in the political system of the world is representative of the common people. In this instance it is graphically descriptive of the events of the French Revolution, with its upsetting of the old kingdom of France, one of the ten kingdoms of Europe, or “a tenth of the great city”, and of the substitution of democratic rule in its place. The national assembly proved far too powerful for the king and court and consequently the king was reduced to its mere executive officer. The national assembly was replaced in 1791 by a newly elected legislative assembly, the aim of whose members was not merely to limit the monarchy, but to abolish it altogether. The king was practically a prisoner in their hands, vainly hoping that foreign invasion by other monarchical powers already commenced, would effect the restoration of his position. On June 29th, 1792, an armed mob invaded his palace and demanded that he should sanction the decrees of the legislative assembly for expelling from France all priests who would not swear allegiance to them and also a vigorous prosecution of war against those foreign powers by whose interposition he was hoping for deliverance. After some weeks of tension, forty-eight sections of the city of Paris petitioned the assembly to decree the dethronement of the king. The palace was subsequently besieged, the royal family imprisoned and later beheaded.

Forty days after this, the national convention was constituted and by a unanimous vote the President declared that royalty was abolished in France and on September





The storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution

22nd, 1792 the new Republican era began, 1260 years after Justinian's delivery of the Saints into the hands of the Pope.

The "seven thousand names of men" referred to in this passage indicate men of dignity and "seven thousand" a symbolical number signifying completeness. In the Revolution, all the monastic and sacerdotal, together with all ranks and degrees of nobility, were utterly abolished, no title being recognized higher than "citizen".

The property of the privileged orders of the old feudal society was confiscated, the churches were despoiled and dedicated to the worship of the "goddess of reason". "The rest were terrified" finds its counterpart in that phase of the Revolution known forever in history as "the reign of terror". The victims of the massacres in Paris and in other parts of France are reckoned at over a million. When the passion for vengeance and blood had spent itself, constructive work began and in its earlier stages, at the instigation of Robespierre, the National Convention decreed acknowledgement of the existence of the Supreme Being.

**Verse 14: "The second woe has passed; behold the third woe comes immediately."**

The fifth trumpet, which summoned the Saracens against the Greek division of the Catholic apostasy, was the first woe; while the sixth trumpet, which brought the powers from beyond the Euphrates to put to death the Greek Catholic dominion, having its centre of government at Constantinople, was the second woe. This was not only to

extinguish this dominion, but to torment with a terrible testimony the world rulers and spirituals of the European commonwealth in church and state, symbolized in the prophecy, by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. Hence the judgments of the second woe were widely diffused over the whole of the great city (the Roman Empire), from the Euphrates to the Danube, the Rhine and the ocean. They began their desolating career in A.D. 1062 and continued in their work of death upon the worshippers of demonials and Catholic idols until this worship was destroyed in France and its national homage was transferred from the Roman (“god of the earth”) to “the Deity of heaven” in A.D. 1794. This was a calamitous period of 732 years. The ascription of Glory to the Supreme Being was the remarkable act by which the second woe was consummated.

## **THE SEVENTH TRUMPET AND THE THIRD WOE**

### **THE CONSUMMATION OF GOD’S JUDGMENTS ON CATHOLIC ROME**

**Verse 15: “And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, ‘the kingdoms of the world have become our Lord’s and His Christ’s, and He shall reign for the aions of aions’.”**

The seventh angel was mentioned previously in Rev. 10:7; what follows is a brief rehearsal of the final effect of the Seventh Trumpet in “finishing the mystery of God” as revealed in the prophets.

The Spirit of the eternal in Jesus and his brethren is “the Lord and his Christ”, by whom this world-wide revolution will be developed and directed. The political witnesses of Jesus, developed and directed the great French Revolution. Theirs was a great and mighty, as well as a terrible work; but it is the witnesses of the Holy City and the One Body, who will constitute the revolutionary government and to whom the higher and nobler, mightier and more terrible mission is assigned, of breaking in pieces the ignorance and “strong delusion” and of blessing them in Abraham and his seed. This is the work which is before them and which, when accomplished, will introduce them to the reign of the aions, or the thousand years.

**Verses 16 and 17: “And the twenty and four elders sitting upon their thrones in the presence of the Deity, fell upon their faces, and did homage to the Deity, saying, ‘we give thanks to thee, O, Lord, the Almighty Deity; who is and who was and who art the coming One, because thou hast assumed thy great power, and reignest’.”**

The over-riding theme of God Manifestation is brought prominently into view once again in these two verses. The saints are represented as the twenty-four elders (see previous note on chapter 4:4) and the title “which art and wast and art to come” has been previously considered in chapter 1:4.

**Verse 18: “And the nations were made angry, and thy wrath came; and the time for the dead to be judged, and to give the rewards to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and those who fear Thy Name, to the small and to the great; and to destroy those who corrupt the earth.”**

Since the French Revolution, the nations of Europe (and many beyond the confines of Europe for that matter) have been involved in one war after another. The careers of the

first and third Napoleons embittered the nations greatly and now after two world wars in this twentieth century, the world seems poised on the eve of World War Three. The purpose of God is to judge the nations for their wickedness by Christ and the Saints and therefore the first work to be performed in this time of trouble, is to raise the dead that they should be judged and to give reward to the servants of God who fear His Name.

“The time of the dead” is part of the “time of the end” (Dan. 12:1-3) and of the time of trouble such as never was. Bro. Thomas states: “This period will take time: how much is not revealed. The Lord Jesus, who is ‘the resurrection and the life’, as well as ‘the truth and the way’, descends to Mt. Sinai while the present sixth vial is continuing to pour out. ‘Behold’, says he, ‘I come as a thief’. He comes, before the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable, are gathered into the region termed in the Hebrew tongue ‘Armageddon’. How long before is not revealed; but between his thief-like advent and the Armageddon gathering is the time of the dead; and when his work is finished with his dead ones he gathers the kings together operating upon a situation already created by the frog power (France). But how many months or years the work of setting in order his own household will consume, I know not. The Lord is never in a hurry; He is always deliberate and dignified. If He pleased He could flash everything into order in this way in the past; and it is clear from the Word that He does not intend to do so in the future.

Every individual saint who has died has first to be awakened from his sleep of death and made to stand bodily upon his feet. After this they are to be gathered together from all parts to the general convention which brings them into the presence of Christ. In this gathering the few living saints that may remain have to be visited by his messengers and be caused to report themselves to the king; for one who well knew what he spoke says: ‘we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ’. Thus in the time of the dead there will be a judicial separating of just saints from unjust saints. A sinner becomes a saint by believing and obeying the truth and he continues a just saint if he continue in well-doing; but he becomes an unjust saint if he does not so continue. Now the appearing at the tribunal of Christ of all the saints of these two classes, is that the just may be separated from the unjust and that the unjust may be driven from the presence of the judge into the darkness of the outer world where they may ignominiously partake in the vengeance which is to devour the adversaries. This explains the phrase in the text ‘the time of the dead to be judged’.

The time of the dead was not only for the judicial separation of the worthy from the unworthy and the quickening of the approved, but for the giving of the ‘reward to the servants of the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear the name of the Deity, to the small and to the great’. This testimony shows that whatever the reward may consist in, the righteous do not obtain it until after the resurrection and strengthening”.

**Verse 19: “And the nave of the Deity was open in heaven, and the Ark of His Covenant was seen in His nave and there were lightnings and thunders and earthquake and great hail.”**

This nineteenth verse is parallel with chapter 4:1 in which John saw a door opened in the heaven and looking through the door, he saw a throne and one sitting upon it. This throne and its glorious occupant is identical with the Ark of the Covenant. In the typical

Mosaic Tabernacle, the Ark stood in the “nave” or Most Holy Place. It was Yahweh’s throne in Israel on which He was said to “sit between the cherubim”. The nave and the Ark were beyond the veil, (which represents the flesh - Heb. 10:20). The opening of the nave is therefore equivalent to that which constitutes the nave being no longer simply holy in the flesh but most holy in Spirit nature having passed from flesh to Spirit. Thus, the Ark of the Covenant seen in the opened nave, is the Deity in most holy manifestation - manifested by Spirit in Jesus and his brethren “glorified together”.

The “lightnings and voices and thunderings” are the same that burst forth out of the throne, as represented in chapter 4:5. They are symbolical of the judgments of the seventh vial; which is the consummation of the judgments of the seventh trumpet and the seventh seal. No-one can enter into the nave until the seven plagues of the seven angels be finished (chapter 15:8). The thunderings are the seven thunders of the last vial. They burst forth against the powers of the aerial in which they roll and are accompanied with an earthquake, whose shocks surpass everything of the kind experienced by men since they began to dwell upon the earth (cp. chapter 16:18). While the governments of the nations are unconsciously contributing to the formation of a situation to be signalized by their irretrievable and final overthrow, the master of the situation proclaims to his brethren, “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame”.

## CHAPTER 12

# The Development of the Roman Apostacy

“You will recollect that at the end of chapter 11 we arrived at the time for the dead to be raised and for the kingdoms of the world to be transferred to Christ as God’s vice-regent upon earth. In chapter 12 we find ourselves again face to face with the age of Roman Imperialism and circumstances of persecution, as, for instance in verse 17. It must be evident that this is long before the transfer of the kingdoms of the world to Christ, for when that point is reached, all persecution will have ceased, power being taken from the adversary and vested in Jesus and his brethren. Hence, the conclusion is self-evident that as in the case of chapter 11 so in the case of this chapter 12, we are taken away back from the point reached at the end of the previous chapter and brought to the consideration of other scenes having to do with the prior history of human government upon earth . .

It may strike us as strange that there should be this zig-zag sort of order in the exhibition of the scenes of the Apocalypse. This feeling will disappear if we realise that there are various departments in the Divine programme that have filled up the interval since Christ’s departure from the earth - various areas of the Roman habitable in which the plan has been worked out - various channels in which Providential superintendence has been actively giving shape to events with a view to the great consummation appointed; at one time east, at another west, at another both together. By these various roads, we are several times brought to the same general end which they all reach.

The opening of chapter 12 takes us back to the place in history marked by the sixth seal, when a mighty revolution upset and abolished the Pagan government of the world, the avowed enemy of Christ and established in its place a system based upon professed allegiance to Christ. This revolution, effected under the leadership of Constantine, “the first Christian Emperor”, was a great revolution. It was, in fact, the inauguration of Christendom - the commencement of the nominal dominion of Christ on the earth, to be succeeded by his real dominion. That nominal dominion was far from being a system of real submission, still it was a great improvement upon the Empire of polytheism in a variety of ways. There was hereafter at least a recognition (though in a corrupt form) of the God of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ and the adoption of precepts having a humanizing effect on society. In connection with this change, there were details which could not be represented by the sixth seal. The sixth seal merely represented the occurrence of the revolution under the symbol of a catastrophe in nature. It could not show how it affected the friends of Christ among themselves. This is what is done in chapter 12.”

R. Roberts, *Thirteen Lectures*

**Verse 1: “And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman who had been invested with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a wreath of twelve stars.”**

The phrase, “a great wonder”, (Greek: *semeion*, a sign) reminds us that we are not considering literal events but symbolic. The woman is a sign and not a literal woman. The sun, moon and stars of this great sign belong to the heaven in which the sign appears. It is the same heaven as that in which “silence as it were half an hour” supervened, after the departure like a scroll of the heaven which preceded it (chapter 6:14; 8:1). The prediction was fulfilled in the change of the constitution of the Roman “heavens” consequent upon the success of Constantine. The Emperors prior to Constantine, were all worshippers of Jupiter and his associate gods; the sunlight of their imperialism was reflected from the idol superstition of which they were the supreme pontiffs. This was the ecclesiastical moon of the heaven, shining by the reflected imperial light of the sun. So long as the Roman constitution continued Pagan, none but pagans could constitutionally execute the functions of the imperial office; for none but a pagan could be “Pontifex Maximus” of the Roman Orb; but the victories of Constantine changed all this.

In the great sign of this chapter, the Roman sun is no longer invested with blackness, but contains a woman invested with the sun. Whatever the woman may signify, this investiture signifies the clothing of the thing signified with supreme imperial authority; so that whatever might emanate from the woman would be by the sanction of the highest orders of the State. The position of this imperially invested woman in this “great sign” with “the moon under her feet”, indicates that she occupies the former place of the Roman moon. The light and glory of the imperial majesty fell upon her; and the rays whose brightness had formerly glorified the priests of Jupiter and conferred dignity upon his superstition, were now intercepted by a hierarchy more favoured by the state.

The woman therefore represents a religious community. The true Ecclesia is described as the “bride of Christ” and presented unto him as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). This woman, however, was no longer a chaste virgin, but had committed fornication with the kings of the earth (cp. 17:1-3) and was with child by them, (see verse 2).

The woman wears the crown (Greek: *stephan*) or coronal wreath. The *stephan* was the symbol of victory and here symbolises the victory that had come to the “Christian” community in its warfare against Pagan State religion. Bro. Thomas suggests that the twelve stars represent the princes of the realm who ruled Rome from the time of Augustus the first Emperor, to Nerva who was on the throne at the time John received the Apocalypse. For further details on these Emperors refer to the chart on page 39.

**Verse 2: “And being pregnant she cried in pangs and straining to bring forth.”**

This woman was designed to be a chaste virgin unto Christ and had been betrothed unto the “second Adam”. However, the serpent power had beguiled her and corrupted her mind from the simplicity that is in Christ and she was found to be with child. From the very inception of the Ecclesia on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 33, errors began to creep

in and the gestation of the man of sin commenced. Two hundred and eighty years later (the number of "day years" for the period of gestation) the results were "brought forth" in the birth of the man-child of sin, viz. Constantine, in A.D. 313. See further notes on verse 5, (see also *Elpis Israel*, pages 101 to 106).

The woman was pregnant and therefore, if she lived through the period of her painful gestation, her time would certainly come to bring forth. It is therefore written of her, "she cries being in pangs and straining to bring forth". The period during which she was tormented with the pangs of parturition were the "ten days", or years, preceeding the proclamation and edict of Constantine and Licinius, which were issued in A.D. 313. This ten days parturient tribulation came upon her with the opening of the Fifth Seal in A.D. 303. This is known in history as the great Diocletian Persecution, the severest ever inflicted by the great red dragon "devil and satan" upon professors of Christianity. Her pains now become forcing; she felt that she must die, if she did not give birth to a deliverer.

**Verses 3 and 4: "And there appeared another sign in the heaven, and behold, a great fiery red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his seven heads diadems: and his tail draws the third of the stars of heaven, and he casts them into the earth. And the dragon stood in the presence of the woman about to bring forth, that when she may have brought forth, he might devour her offspring."**

The first sign which John saw, was the woman invested with the sun; now he sees "another sign" in the same Roman heavens - a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns. This is the first place in the Apocalypse where this hostile power is mentioned by the name of "dragon", though it is not the first where the power itself is indicated. The power is referred to in chapter 2:10, where it is styled "the devil" (cp. 12:9).

The word "dragon" (Greek: *drakon*) signifies a crocodile, (Ezek. 29:3) and answers to the early stages of the development of Daniel's un-named fourth beast, (Dan. 7:7,8). Daniel's nameless "dreadful and terrible" fourth beast is a contraction, or condensation, of John's great fiery dragon, ten horned beast of the sea, two horned beast of the earth, image of the beast and scarlet beast and drunken woman.

The seven heads are explained in chapter 17:9,10 as relating to the seven mountains and seven kings of Rome. The seven mountains are Mts. Coelius, Viminal, Aventine, Esquiline, Quirinal, Capitoline and Palatine. The seven kings or forms of government are:

- (1) the Regal head, which continued 240 years;
- (2) the Consular head, which continued 11 years;
- (3) the Dictatorial head, which continued 15 years;
- (4) the Decemviral head and,
- (5) the Tribunitial head, with consular authority, which continued until it was superseded by
- (6) the Imperial head, B.C. 31
- (7) the Gothic head - A.D. 476.

John explains the historical details of these seven forms of government in a more detailed fashion in chapter 17:10,11. The ten horns speak of the ultimate division of Rome by the invading hordes from the north, which laid the foundation for the Holy Roman Empire and modern divided Europe of today. Bro. Thomas states, "The difference between the ten horns of the dragon and the ten horns of the beast of the sea (cp. 13:1), consists in the ten upon the beast being diademed, while the ten upon the dragon are not. This indicates that the beast symbol represents things concurrent with the horns in their exercise of sovereignty; while the dragon, as far as old Rome is concerned, had to do with the sovereignty of the heads before the horns had received their kingdoms."

At the time of John's writings, the ten horns were ten kings which had not received their power as yet (cp. 17:12), hence the crowns were on the heads of the dragon, not the horns. By contrast the beast of the sea (13:1), depicts the crowns on the heads, thus designating a later period of the history of Rome.

The tail of the crocodile is used to sweep its prey into the water, thus in a symbolic sense it represents the fierce anger of that power against its enemies, as manifested in its movements of an army to destroy them (cp. Isa. 7:4). The Roman Empire at this period of history (about A.D. 300), was divided into three parts - the Eastern, the Western and the Illyrian praefectures. On the defeat of Maxentius, Constantine ruled the Western, Licinius the Illyrian and Maximin the Eastern third of the Roman Empire. Maximin was the champion of Jupiter and the gods, and as the champion of paganism, he determined to overthrow Christianity. He initiated a war against Licinius, but died shortly after, allowing Licinius to annex his territory. He was now the Pontifex Maximus of Paganism, or chief prophet of the tail of the dragon. He was the centre of attraction to the stars of the eastern third of the heaven; and therefore to a "third of the stars of the heaven". Having drawn them after him, he then repudiated his previous decree of toleration for the Christians and became champion of Paganism. This left only Constantine and Licinius in the arena of battle and the subsequent verses in this chapter describe the conflict between Constantine, representing "Christianity" and Licinius, the representative of the old pagan Greco-Roman religion.

**Verse 5: "And she brought forth a male child, who is about to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre: and her son was carried up to Deity and His throne."**

This woman, who had committed fornication with the kings of the earth (17:1-3), represented the apostate church which brought forth the first "Christian Emperor". The birth of the man-child does not signify the literal birth of Constantine, but his ascension to power in the name of Christianity. Like Cain, who was a product of his father the devil (the serpent) and a beguiled Eve; so Constantine was a product of the Roman serpent and the Ecclesia, which had been beguiled and drawn away from the Truth.

Constantine was the man-child of sin (2 Thess. 2:3,4) and his ascension to the political and religious heavens is described in the terms, "he was caught up unto God and to His throne".

The expressions in this verse are reminiscent of the ultimate work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the fact that it is not Christ's ascension to heaven that is here spoken



of, is evident, because the Apocalypse is speaking of things which would come to pass “hereafter”, that is after A.D. 96, the time of John’s writing, (chapter 4:1).



A fresco depicting Constantine transferring supreme authority in Western Europe to the Popes.

**Verse 6: “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place that had been prepared of the Deity, that they may sustain her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.”**

The very system that had been instrumental in bringing Constantine into power, eventually was forced to flee from his presence. Constantine had found it convenient to use the corrupt church as a stepping-stone to power and whilst initially he had granted religious freedom to all Christians whether Catholic or not, he was later forced to take sides in a dispute and declared himself for the Catholic party. The anti-Catholic party, including the true and faithful brethren and all whom the Catholic party denounced as heretics, were excommunicated and exiled (see further note verse 14).

The twelve hundred and sixty days is the same period as that of chapter 11:3, dating from A.D. 312 to 1572 and ending with the massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day.

**Verses 7 - 9: “And there was war in heaven. The Michael and his angels waged war against the dragon; and the dragon waged war and his angels. And they**

**prevailed not; neither was there place found any longer in the heaven. And the great dragon the old serpent, surnamed Diabolos, was cast forth; and the Satan which deceives the whole habitable was cast into the earth; and his angels were cast forth with him.”**

The contest between Constantine and Licinius was recognized by both sides as one between the Deity of the Christians and the many gods of Paganism. Each party regarded itself as the respective instrument of these. Hence the propriety of the Apocalyptic title bestowed on the enemy of the dragon tail, “The Michael”. Constantine’s victory was regarded by him, by the church and by the people at large, as the victory of the Deity that is living and true, over false deities, i.e. of Christianity over idolatry.

Constantine and his forces fighting in the name of Christ (who is the real “Michael” - “one like God” Dan. 12:1), are represented in the text by “Michael and his angels”. Licinius and his forces fighting in the names of the gods of Paganism against the Christians, are designated by “the dragon and his angels”. With the defeat of Licinius and Paganism, Constantine was now sole ruler. Hence there was no place found any more “in heaven” for the dragon power.

The serpent was the epitome of the thinking of the flesh (the carnal mind) and is therefore a fitting description of the old pagan dragon. The thinking of the flesh manifests itself in individuals as well as religiously and politically in the world. Here it is politically manifested. The serpent was called (or surnamed) the “devil and satan” because it was both a false accuser and an adversary against the Truth, as well as against the Catholic church.

**Verses 10 - 12: “And I heard a great voice saying in the heaven, ‘Now is the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our Deity, and the dominion of His anointed; for the prosecutor of our brethren, who accused them in the presence of our Deity, day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life unto death. On account of this let the heavens rejoice and those who tent in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, because the Diabolos has fallen among you having great wrath, foreseeing that he hath a short time’.”**

The heaven in which John heard this great voice was not the literal heavens, but the political heavens in which the woman, Michael and the dragon existed. The great rejoicings were those of the Christians, who mistook the shadow for the substance. They viewed Constantine’s victories and the termination of their persecutions, as the establishment of the kingdom of God through the Church. The Catholic Church still teaches that “the Church is the Kingdom of God on earth”.

The Catholics believed that Constantine had triumphed “through the blood of the Lamb”. This was true in a sense, for Constantine’s victory was the development of efforts made by those in earlier times to maintain the Truth in time of persecution (cp. 6:9).

Licinius, who stood as the champion of paganism, found the last resort among the people (symbolised as earth and sea), but those who supported him did so at their own peril, for it was apparent to the pagan powers that the defeat of Maxentius by

Constantine in A.D. 312 meant the end of the prevailing authorities. It was obvious that Constantine must triumph. Twelve years later he stood as sole ruler.

**Verses 13 and 14: “And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he pursued the woman who brought forth the male. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, in which she is sustained there a time and times and half of a time, out of the sight of the serpent.”**

Constantine first triumphed in the western section of the Roman Empire and gradually extended his power into the east. In the meantime the Christian community (represented by the woman, verse 2), was opposed and persecuted by the remnants of paganism where it remained in power.

The eagle was a symbol of Rome (cp. Deut. 28:49) and the wings indicate the outlying provinces of the Roman jurisdiction. The city of Rome itself was the head of the eagle; Italy its body; and the countries east and west, subject to its authority, its wings. History shows that the witnessing community was nourished in these wings.

The wilderness is a political wilderness and represents exile from place and power. The wilderness wanderings of the woman are illustrated in the experiences of the Donatists, Novatians, Paulicians, Waldenses, Albigenses, etc. In the outlying extremities of the Empire the woman class experiences a measure of relief and was able to serve God according to their conscience. The time period of three and half times, equals twelve hundred and sixty days (or years) and has been referred to previously in chapter 11:6.

The serpent was previously referred to in verse 9 and in that place represented paganism. The serpent now represents a pseudo-Christian power. There is no difficulty in applying the same symbol to two different powers because they both manifested the same serpent-like characteristics of the flesh, only in two different phases of its political manifestation. This is a further reminder that the Apocalypse is to be seen as a thematic unfolding of the manifestation of God’s judgments rather than a historical outline of the rise and fall of nations and empires.

**Verses 15 - 17: “And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a flood, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. And the earth ran with help for the woman, and the earth opened up her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged against the woman, and went away to wage war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of the Deity and have the testimony of the Anointed Jesus.”**

Bro. Roberts comments on these verses: “In verses 15 and 16 we have ‘the serpent’, also styled ‘the dragon’, exhibited as the persecutor of the woman for a lengthened period. After the overthrow of the pagan dragon, the actual persecutor in the case was the government of Constantine, under the instigation of the bishops of the Catholic church of the Court Party. This creates a seeming difficulty in view of the fact that the Pagan dragon was finally disposed of by the victories of Constantine. It is staggering at first sight to find the dragon stand for paganism and then for the Christian government

of Constantine, who overthrew paganism. The explanation is to be found in the fact, that though in the conflict in which Constantine, as the champion of the Christian name, only paganism could be considered as the serpent and adversary; yet, afterwards, when Constantine occupied the dragon capital - Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople - and had absorbed the dragon territory into his dominion and became, in his turn, an adversary and persecutor of 'the remnant of the woman's seed': his government became transformed into the political serpent and dragon, as distinctly as his pagan predecessors. Therefore, this vision, which has more to do with the nature of things than their nominal distinctions, retains the serpent dragon, as the symbol of the ecclesia's protectors. The vision is thus in harmony with events as they unfolded themselves in fact, though out of it with historical nomenclature, from the human point of view. In this, it gives one of many marks of its Divinity. It is after the analogy of the symbol of the woman, which in one relation of things is the community of the faithful; and, in another, the apostate church in adulterous association with the kings of the earth".

The water as a flood represents the persecuting hosts sent against the true woman. The earth represents "the lawless lovers of liberty in Africa" who resorted to violent measures in her defence. The Circumcellions and other revolutionary sympathizers of Africa stood for political liberty. They opposed the policy of Rome and stood in defence of the Donatists.

The dragon, representing the civil power of Rome, now paraded itself in the guise of Constantinian Christianity and determined to exterminate the remnant of the woman's seed i.e. the true and faithful witnesses to the Truth. The dragon continued to persecute such people and will not be finally put down until the saints are enthroned in the Kingdom of God (20:2-6).

## CHAPTER 13

# The Beast of the Sea and the Beast of the Earth

This chapter draws a symbolic picture of the varying phases of the Roman Beast's career during the twelve hundred and sixty years of its supremacy. The vision is really supplementary to Daniel's vision of the fourth beast (Dan. 7). In Daniel the dominion of the fourth beast is at last taken by the Son of Man and the saints. So in John's visions, the dominion of these beasts is taken by the Lamb upon Mount Zion, (chapter 14) and the one hundred and forty four thousand "redeemed from the earth" that are with him.

The Apostle John beheld a beast ascending out of the sea, which, like the dragon, had seven heads and ten horns. Its power, throne and authority, it acquired from the dragon; but now the crowns were on the horns instead of the heads thus indicating a later stage of the development of the Roman power. After the ascending of this beast from the sea, John beheld another beast ascending out of the earth, having two horns and speaking as a dragon. This indicated a further development again of the Roman beast and details the spread of Rome into central Europe, by which the basis was laid for the development of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Verse 1: "And I stood upon the Sand of the Sea, and I saw ascending out of the Sea a Beast, having Seven Heads and Ten Horns; and upon his horns Ten Diadems, and upon his heads a Name of Blasphemy."**

Most modern translations commence the chapter with the words "And I saw a beast". They refer the preceding sentence "and he stood upon the sand of the sea", to the dragon of chapter 12, thus making that phrase the conclusion of chapter 12 rather than the beginning of chapter 13. It should of course be remembered that chapter divisions were inserted at a later stage "for convenience", although sometimes they detract from the flow of the original record.

The beast has already been introduced in chapter 11:7, where it was said to "ascend out of the abyss". It is Daniel's fourth beast in its later phases and is identified with the dragon of Rev. 12:3,17 by its features and works; also, for a like reason, with the scarlet coloured beast of Rev. 17:3,8. (For its place in the overall development of the Roman Empire refer to the accompanying chart - "The Kingdom of Men, Christadelphian teaching since 1848").

The seven heads and ten horns have been previously referred to in chapter 12:3. The ten horns are “ten kings” that arose consequent upon the fall of the Roman Empire. They are enumerated by Bro. Thomas as follows:

Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Burgundians, Gepidae, Lombards, Franks, Suevi, Alans, Bavarians.

The Roman Empire is first divided into two parts, Eastern and Western, answering to the two legs of the image of Daniel chapter 2, and then with the successive invasions of the European hordes, the Empire was divided into ten parts answering to the ten toes of the image and the ten horns referred to in this verse. As mentioned previously, it is significant to note, that the crowns are now on the horns, thus designating a later stage of the development of the Roman Beast than that described in chapter 12.

Whilst the crowns were on the horns, the heads bore the names of blasphemy. The basis of the Empire at this stage, was an anti-Christian Papal system speaking blasphemous words against the Most High God, (2 Thess. 2:4).

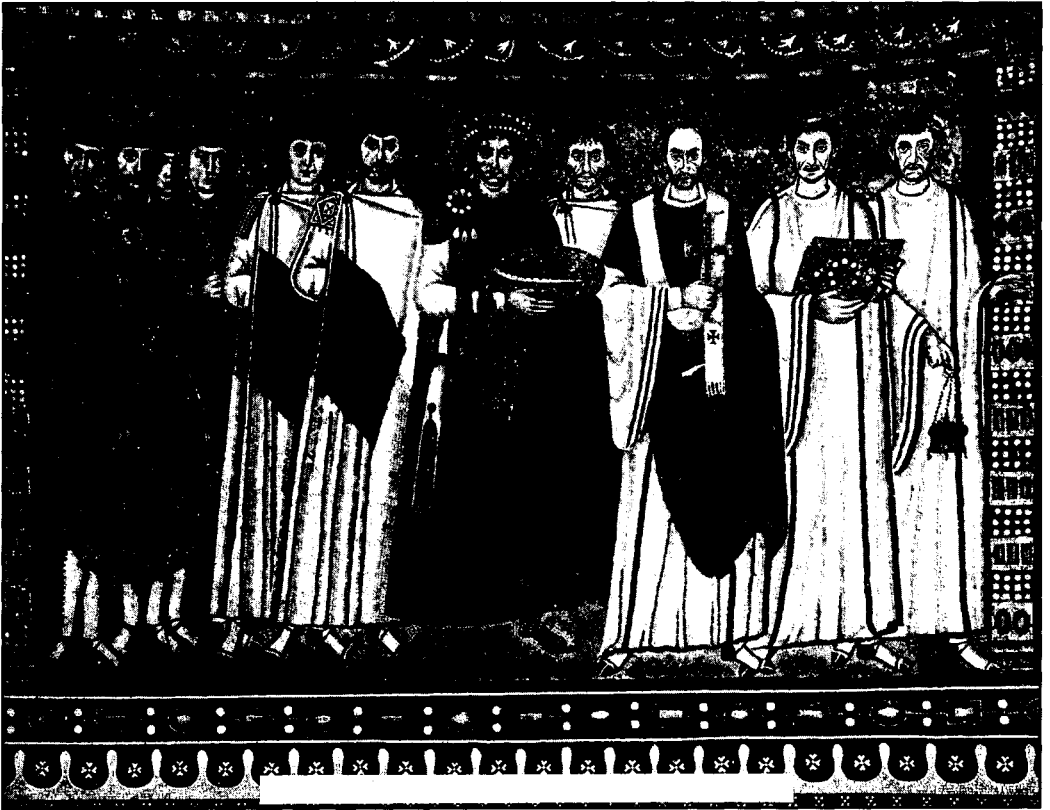
**Verse 2: “And the beast which I saw was like to Leopard, and his feet as of a Bear, and his Mouth as the mouth of a Lion: and the Dragon yielded to him his power and his throne, and extensive authority.”**

The leopard, bear, lion and dragon represent the Kingdom of Men as described in Daniel chapter 7. Bro. Thomas states in *Exposition of Daniel*, pages 7 and 8: “. . . it will be seen that the Kingdom of Men has been diversified in its constitution, extent and throne, since its foundation by Nimrod to the present time. It has nevertheless been the same Nimroudian kingdom, with Babylon and Assyria for its characteristics.” It is significant to note that the “beast of the sea” had the mouth of a lion, thus it promulgated a doctrine which emanated from Babylon, the Nimroudian capital of the Kingdom of Men.

The dragon represented the Civil power of Rome now established in Constantinople. By the decree of Justinian (A.D. 535) and finally by the decree of Phocas (A.D. 607), the Bishop of Rome became universal Pope, with great authority. While the western Empire was breaking up, the Empire in the east with its capital in Constantinople, continued to be the throne of the dragon though professedly Christian in character. It was from the Emperor reigning in the East that the Papacy in the west received its constitution and recognition, or its “power and seat and great authority”.

**Verses 3 and 4: “And I saw one of his heads as if wounded to death: and the plague of his death was healed; and there was wondering in the whole earth after the beast. And they worshipped the Dragon which yielded dominion to the Beast; and they worshipped the Beast, saying ‘who is like to the Beast? who is able to make war with him?’”**

The head which was wounded was the sixth or Imperial head; and it was mortally wounded by Odoacer, King of the Heruli, who took Rome in A.D. 476 and became the Gothic King of Italy. He was followed by Theodoric, the Arian King of Italy, who reigned over the Popes for 33 years, (493 - 526). In A.D. 553, after many years of war and desolation for Rome, the Gothic kingdom (the seventh head) was overthrown and



A haloed Justinian surrounded by priests and rulers.

the Roman Senate abolished and the dominion passed to the eastern Empire (cp. Rev. 12:3; 17:10).

The head had been “as it were wounded to death”. The Imperial sixth head was later brought to life in a new form and the decree of Justinian, amongst other things, paved the way for the restoring of the Imperial head and later, for the enthronement of Charlemagne and the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire in A.D. 800. The healing of the Imperial head was viewed by people everywhere with admiration and astonishment who gave praise to the dragon (Constantinople), for the part it had played in rejuvenating the ancient Roman Empire.

All these things happened in fulfilment of the words of Dan. 11:38,39 and the prestige of the Papacy rose, as Justinian and Phocas gave their support.

**Verses 5 and 6: “And there was given to him a Mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was granted to him licence to practise Forty-Two Months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy concerning the Deity, to have blasphemed his Name, and his Tabernacle, and those who tabernacle in the heaven.”**

The power enthroned in Constantinople gave authority to the Papacy to dictate to the world in spiritual things. The Roman Pontiff, in his official utterances, was this mouth, whose great speakings were blasphemies. The period forty-two months, has been

mentioned previously in chapter 11:2. From the decree of Justinian, in A.D. 535, forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days (years) reached to A.D. 1795 and the period of the French Revolution and rise of Napoleon. From the decree of Phocas, A.D. 606/610, the same time brings us to 1866/1870 and the fall of the temporal power of the Papacy.

The phrases “his name”, “his tabernacle”, and “them that dwell in the heaven”, are all synonymous with the phrase found in verse 7 “the saints”, of whom Christ is “the head”. The Deity dwells in them and therefore they are His Temple, habitation, or Tabernacle, (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22). But Christ and the saints are not only the name and tabernacle of the Deity, but they are also “those who dwell in the heaven”, (cp. Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6).

**Verses 7 and 8: “And it was given to him to make war with the Holy Ones, and to overcome them: and there was given to him dominion over every tribe and tongue and nation. And all the dwellers upon the earth shall worship him, of whom there hath not been written the names before the foundation of the world, in the book of the Life of the Lamb that hath been slain.”**

As the Papacy became more powerful, so the persecution of the true believers increased in intensity. The Pope extended his temporal power over the countries of Europe and dictated the way of life in these places, (Cp. Daniel 7:21; Rev. 11:7). The Deity’s condemnation of such a system is clearly stated and that of its adherents is equally plain - “their names are not written in the book of life...”.

**Verses 9 and 10: “If anyone have an ear, let him hear. If any gathereth together a captivity, into captivity he goes away; if any shall kill with the sword, it behooves that he be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints.”**

The Lord’s warning is reminiscent of the messages which he delivered to the seven ecclesias of Asia in chapters 2 and 3. It is a timely reminder that the Apocalypse is an exhortation to the true followers of Christ that they might discern the signs of the times and see in them warning and encouragement, no matter in what age they are living. God shall ultimately judge the Papal system and regardless of the power which it has wielded in the past, its ultimate destruction is assured. As Rome has judged so she will be judged; she has led into captivity, but will in turn go into captivity herself; she has killed with the sword and will in turn be killed with the sword. The saints do not wage a like warfare, but patiently await the time when God will punish Rome for her sins.

## **VERSES 11 TO 18**

### **THE BEAST OF THE EARTH**

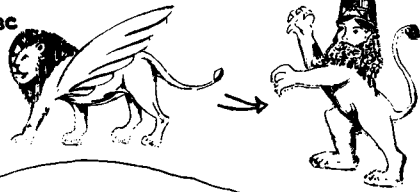
“John beheld another beast come up - not out of the sea, but out of the earth. That it is another form of the Papal beast is proved by the statement in verse 12, that ‘he causeth them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed’. You may ask, ‘why should there be another form of the Papal beast?’ Because, in the progress of events, the papal ascendancy took on an entirely new phase. The Constantinopolitan dragon of the east, who in the first place gave him his authority, finally became of no account; and from the interior regions of Europe there now sprang up a new conquering power, which obtained the controlling ascendancy



# "THE KINGDOM OF MEN" — CHRISTADELPHIAN TEACHING SINCE 1848

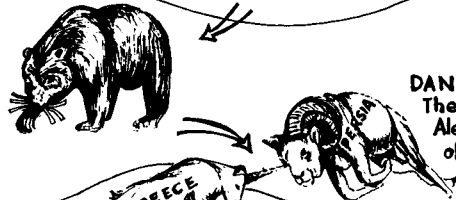
BABYLON 612 - 542 BC

LION



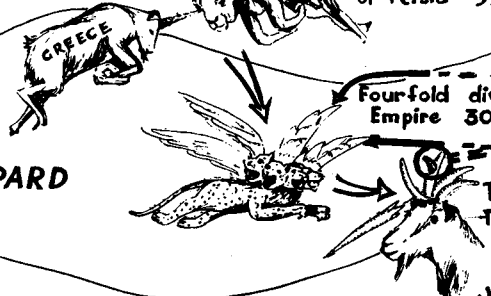
ASSYRO-BABYLONIA.

BEAR



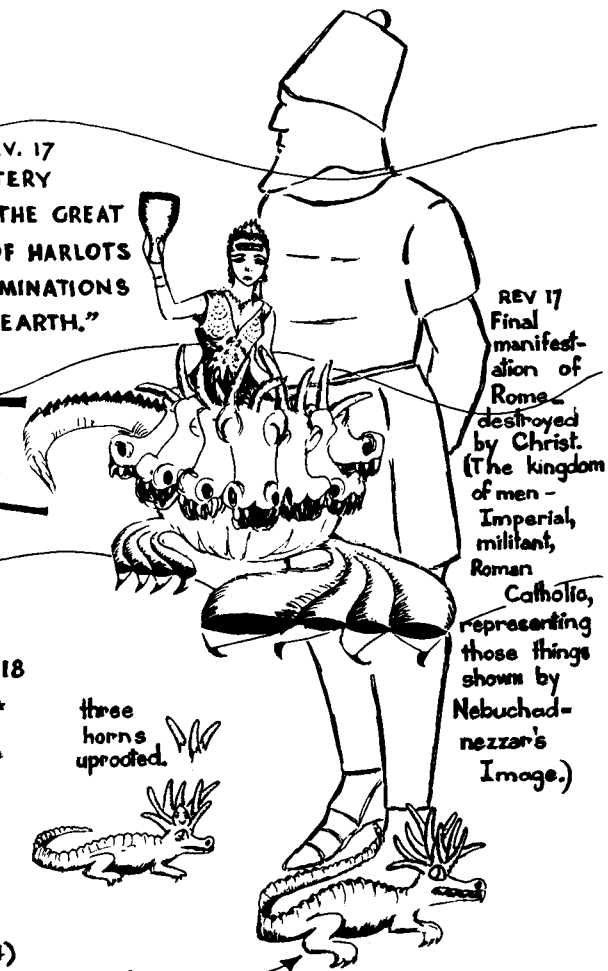
DAN 8  
The rise of Greece under Alexander, & the defeat of Persia 334 B.C.

WINGED LEOPARD



Fourfold division of Alexander's Empire 301 BC (approx)  
KING of the NORTH  
KING of the SOUTH  
DAN 8:9-23, 11:36  
The little horn of the goat  
The emergence of Rome in the East 67 BC.

REV. 17  
"MYSTERY  
BABYLON THE GREAT  
MOTHER OF HARLOTS  
AND ABOMINATIONS  
OF THE EARTH."



REV 17  
Final manifestation of Rome destroyed by Christ. (The kingdom of men - Imperial, militant, Roman Catholic, representing those things shown by Nebuchadnezzar's Image.)



MEDO-PERSIA  
542 BC - 334 BC

Silver

GREECE  
334 BC - 67 BC

Brass

ROME  
67 BC - ?

Iron

DIVIDED ROMAN EMPIRE of Iron & Clay 493 A.D. - ?

FOURTH BEAST remains till Christ & saints destroy it.

REV. 12 The Roman dragon Pagan, then Christian under Constantine 312 A.D.

The beast of the Sea, Rome in development 493 A.D. - 800 A.D. showing the eclipse of the imperial system & its rejuvenation in the Justinian epoch, (554 A.D.) giving papal privileges.

REV. 13:1-10

The beast of the Earth & Image of the beast. The development of the Holy Roman Empire 800 A.D. Daniel's little papal horn (DAN. 7:8,24)

REV. 13:11-18



three horns uprooted.



in Europe, and incorporated the Papacy itself in a new order of things. This was the Germanic Empire, springing out of the order of things established by the victories of Charlemagne, king of the French, the Emperor of the Romans. Let anyone read the history of this Germanic Empire, which slowly and peacefully shifted from France to Germany and finally to Austria, as the leading German power. They will find that it had two horns, or was constituted of two contemporary dynasties - viz. the Emperor and the Pope. These were the two leading figures of the Empire, to which the rest of Europe were subject. The Pope held his position subject to the confirmation of the Emperor and the Emperor did not hold a valid position until he received his crown at the hands of the Pope. It was a dual Empire, a two-horned beast. They were lamb-like horns; that is, by profession, they belonged to Christ; between them they were Christendom; but the beast spoke like a dragon for all that. In nature and principles it was thoroughly dragonic, though ostensibly holding a lamb-like character. Let anyone study the deeds of the Pope and Emperor and they will see the truth of this symbolism. No more merciless tyranny ever afflicted earth than that which, under the name of the Holy Roman Empire, caused the tears and blood of thousands to flow in dire persecution and oppression, under a pretext of authority from Christ."

- R. Roberts, *Thirteen Lectures*, pages 109-110.

**Verses 11 and 12: "And I saw another Beast ascending out of the Earth; and he had Two Horns like to a Lamb, and he spake as a Dragon. And all the dominion of the former beast he exerciseth in his sight: and he causeth the earth and the dwellers therein, that they worship the former beast whose plague of his death was healed."**

About 758 A.D. the Lombards had become masters of the exarchate of Ravenna, hence a protector of the Roman people against the Lombards was needed. This ally appeared in the form of Peppin, king of the Franks to whom Pope Stephen appealed for help. In 744 A.D. Charlemagne (son of Peppin) continued the conquests of his father by defeating the Lombards after a mastery of 206 years. To show his gratitude to Charlemagne, Pope Leo crowned him Emperor of Rome on Christmas day, 799, as the king was at Mass in St. Peters in Rome. The people cried "Long life and victory for Charles the most pious Augustus, crowned by the hand of God". By the annexation of Italy, Charlemagne also annexed the Roman church. He "plucked up the horns of the Vandals, Lombards and Huns" (Dan. 7:7,8) and in so doing inserted a pair of eyes and mouth into the little horn (the Papacy) of which he regarded himself the ruling brain. This laid the foundation for the ultimate development of the Holy Roman Empire.

The two horns of the beast therefore represent the two ruling powers, viz. the Emperor and Pope. The dragon-like speech emanating from the beast indicated that despite its lamb-like appearance it was still pagan and opposed to the Truth.

Gibbon says, "Rome was revered by the Latins as the metropolis of the world, and the throne of the Pope and Emperor, who from the 'Eternal City' deprived their title, their honours and the right for exercise of temporal Dominion".

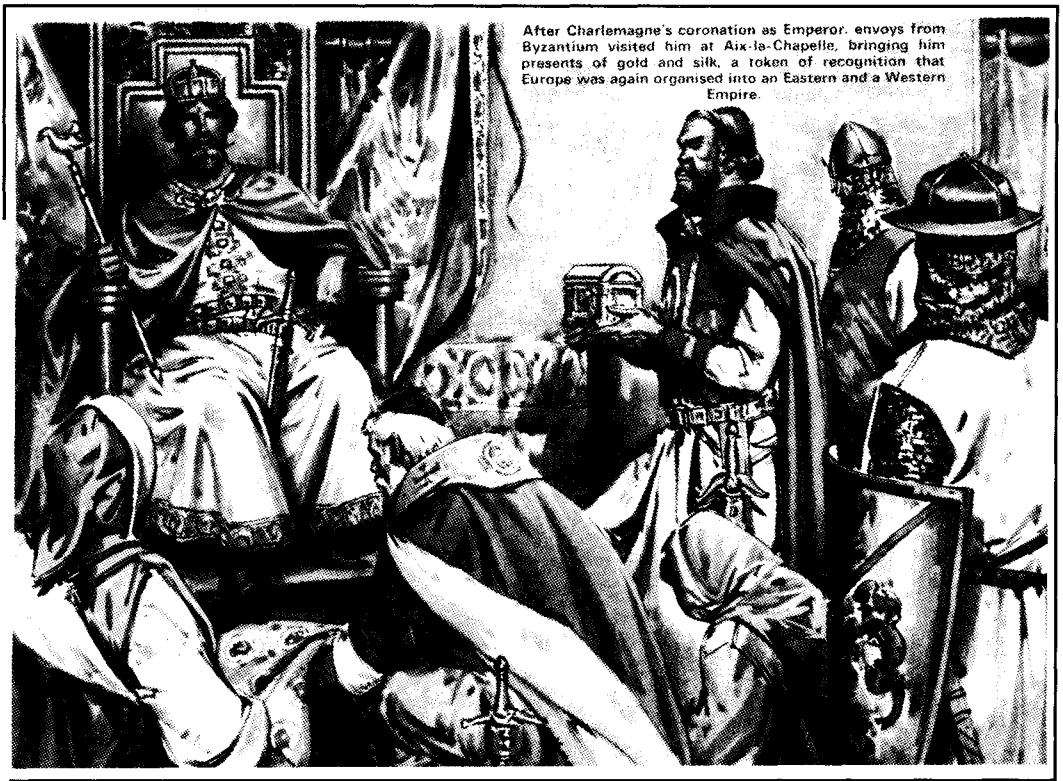
The beast of the earth was not a distinct and separate dominion from the beast which preceded it (verses 1 to 10), but a combination of revived Roman Imperialism (the Pope) and the secular horn (the Emperor). Bro. Thomas states, "One Pope, One Emperor, seven independent and three vassal kingdoms, south and west of the Rhine and Danube, represented by John's two beasts, is the politico-ecclesiastical and



apocalyptic constitution of modern Europe, from A.D. 800 to 1793" (*Eureka*, Vol. II, page 294).

**Verses 13 and 14: "And he performs great signs, so that he even causeth fire to descend out of the heaven into the earth in sight of the men. And he deceiveth the dwellers upon the earth through the signs which it was given to him to perform in the sight of the beast, commanding the dwellers upon the earth to make an Image to the beast which hath the plague of the sword, and lived."**

The wars of Charlemagne, who in thirty-three campaigns subdued Germany to Romanism, are illustrations of the signs referred to in these verses. Fire is a symbol of war and destruction (cp. Isa. 42:25; 66:15; Zech. 13:9). By these political signs and miracles he deceived "them that dwell on the earth" into believing that Divine authority was on his side and proposed that an image should be made of the killed beast that had recovered. This is not a literal image but is part of the symbolism of the Apocalypse and is a political representation. The Imperial Rome system that had been "killed by the Goths" was representatively restored in this "unholy combination" of Emperor and Pope. This was accomplished on the investiture of the Pope with all the prerogatives of an Emperor. In this position he was the exact likeness of the old Roman Emperors of the sixth head - chief magistrate in the dominion of civil law and, at the same time, chief Pontiff of the national religion, He was, to all intents and purposes, an image of the



After Charlemagne's coronation as Emperor, envoys from Byzantium visited him at Aix-la-Chapelle, bringing him presents of gold and silk, a token of recognition that Europe was again organised into an Eastern and a Western Empire.

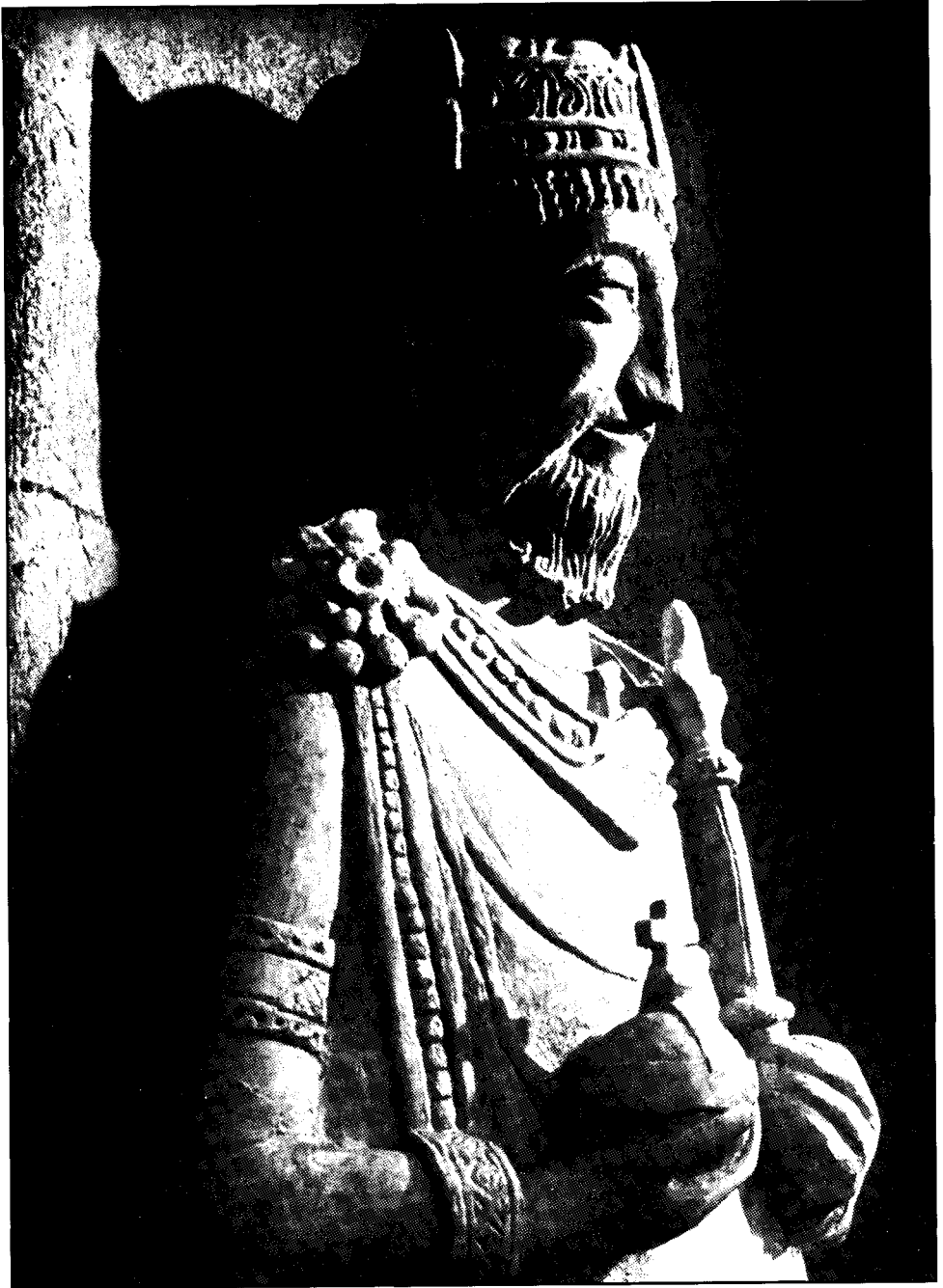
defunct imperialism of the west, but a speaking image; for the new beast which came on the scene with the victories and empire of Charlemagne had “power to give life unto the image of the beast”.

**Verse 15:** “And it was given to him to give spirit to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might both speak and practise, that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

A speaking image is representative of the decrees that this Papal system has issued to enforce its will and to subdue the true believers.

**Verse 16 - 18:** “And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and bond, that there should be given to them a mark upon their right hand, or upon their foreheads; and that no-one be able to buy and sell, but he having the mark, or the Name of the Beast, or the Number of his Name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath the understanding count the Number of the Beast: for it is a Man's Number, and his number is Six Hundred and Sixty Six.”

The right hand symbolizes action and power; the forehead symbolizes intelligence. Verses 16 and 17 therefore speak of a universal religion completely dominating the minds and the actions of its adherents. There is a remarkable parallel seen in the “sign of the cross” imprinted on the foreheads of infants when they are “baptised” and on the



Charlemagne

right hand of priests when ordained. Contrast the mark of Christ - the seal of the living God in the forehead (Rev. 7:2-3) which speaks of the impress of the mind of God upon those who are Christ's. See also the contrasting vision in Rev. 14:1.

The buying and selling referred to in these verses principally has relation to that of spiritual merchandise. In Dan. 11:38,39 the Spirit styles the churches of Christendom as "Mauzzim bazaars" or "bazaars dedicated to guardian saints". Thus God sees the churches dedicated to "St. Peter, St. Paul, All Saints", etc., as being places of spiritual merchandise, hence styled "bazaars". It is also interesting to note that literal trading was limited by the Papacy to those who possessed the church's mark; hence both literally and symbolically the Papacy extended its power over the minds and actions of those within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire.

The last verse of this chapter summarizes the Lord's view of this whole system. It is based on flesh, it is human, it is carnal and hence the number of his name is the number of a man. In Bible numerology, six represent man and it is therefore significant that this man has a number 666. Bro. Thomas outlines the following solution, which he explains can be traced back to Irenaeus, a friend of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John himself. Each letter in the Greek alphabet has a numerical value as shown in the accompanying chart and here we are told that the numerical sum of the value of the letters in the name of this system would total six hundred and sixty six. The word *Lateinos* answers to this numerical total and means a Latin power, kingdom or church, headed up in the Pope.

This statement concludes and climaxes John's vision of this Papal system. By contrast in the following chapter, John now turns and sees another multitude with the Father's Name written in their foreheads, "who are redeemed from the earth being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb."

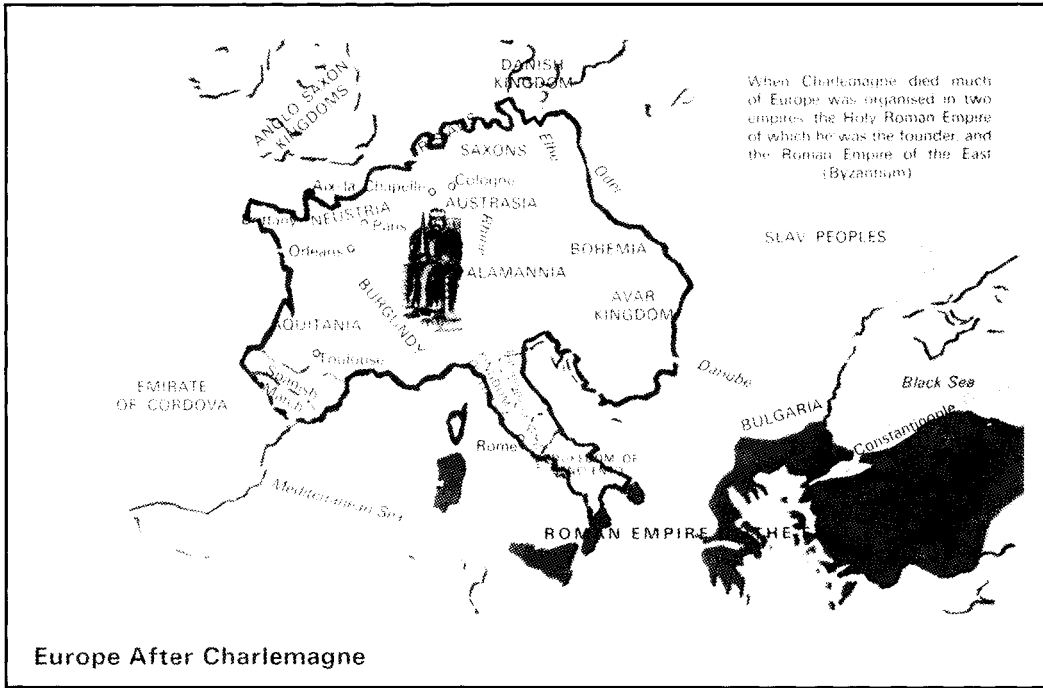
**LATEINOS**

The Greek alphabet showing the numerical value of each letter.

Α α	Β β	Γ γ	Δ δ	Ε ε	Ζ ζ	Η η	Θ θ	Ι ι
ALPHA 1	BETA 2	GAMMA 3	DELTA 4	EPSILON 5	ZETA 6 7	ETA 8	THETA 9	
Κ κ	Λ λ	Μ μ	Ν ν	Ξ ξ	Ο ο	Π π		
IOTA 10	KAPPA 20	LAMBDA 30	MU 40	NU 50	XI 60	OMICRON 70	PI 80	
Ρ ρ	Σ σ	Τ τ	Υ υ	Φ φ	Χ χ	Ψ ψ	Ω ω	
RHO 100	SIGMA 200	TAU 300	UPSILON 400	PHI 500	CHI 600	PSI 700	OMEGA 800	

The sum of the numerical values of the letters of the Greek word "LATEINOS" equals 666.

λ	α	τ	ε	ι	ν	ο	σ
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	200



Europe After Charlemagne



## CHAPTER 14

# The Triumph of The Lamb and The Redeemed

This chapter stands in marked contrast to the previous one, for whereas in chapter 13 John saw a multitude with the mark of the beast in their foreheads, in chapter 14 he sees another multitude having the name of the Father written upon their foreheads. The chapter includes details of the enthronement of the Lamb and the one hundred and forty four thousand on Mt. Zion; the summons to the nations to fear God and give glory to Him described as the work of an angel flying in mid-heaven; the enforcement of the summons by the overthrow of Babylon the Great (being the work of the second angel) and a warning to all the worshippers of the beast that they could suffer the same fate (the work of the third angel). From verse 14 to the end of the chapter the execution of these judgments is outlined and symbolized by the harvest of the earth (the battle of Armageddon) and the vintage of the earth (the subjugation of the nations subject to the beast).

**Verse 1: “And I looked, and behold a Lamb stood on the Mt. Zion, and with him an hundred and forty four thousand, having the Name of His Father, which had been written upon their foreheads.”**

The chapter opens with a striking picture of Christ and the Saints enthroned in Zion and proceeds to portray in graphic terms the qualifications for incorporation into this Divine society. Although the Lord is about to manifest himself as the judge and ruler of the nations, he is nevertheless depicted in this verse as the Lamb (i.e. as a redeemer). The symbol of a Lamb has been introduced previously in Rev. 5:5,6 and reveals him as one who was slain in order to redeem his brethren. It is therefore important to realise in studying this chapter, that it has more to do with the elevation of Christ as the redeemer than simply an outline of the way in which God’s judgments will be poured out on the nations. The latter events, whilst being described in this chapter, are incidental to the main theme.

Whilst the Lord will be literally enthroned in Mt. Zion, as the place which “Yahweh has chosen to dwell in”, (Psa. 132:13,14; Isa. 2:2-4) it is also symbolic of the time of glory when the redeemed shall be “born of the spirit”. In Gal. 4:26 and Psa. 87:5,6 the redeemed are described as being “born in her” or as Paul describes it “Jerusalem which is from above is the mother of us all”. Whilst Yahweh (our Father)

begets us by the incorruptible seed of the word of Truth (1 Pet. 1:22-25), we will come to the birth only in the day of Zion's Glory, so that whilst we may be begotten of the Spirit Word now, Rev. 14:1 speaks of the day of the Spirit Birth. The true ecclesia is represented as Mt. Zion in contrast to the seven-hilled city of Rome (Rev. 17:9) or in the language of Obadiah "saviours shall come up on Mt. Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obad. verse 21).

The number one hundred and forty four thousand is the symbolic number of the redeemed (cp. Rev. 7:4). The number is formed by the square of twelve with thousands added, and shows them to be the "true Israel". Previously they were merely "sealed in the forehead", now they are the redeemed (cp. verse 3) with their Father's Name "written" there.

The main feature of this verse is the fact that the redeemed will be those who have been mentally and morally impressed with the Word and have declared the Father's Name (or glory) thus qualifying them for the position of the redeemed and revealing the Father's Glory in its fulness.

**Verse 2: "And I heard from the heaven as a sound of many waters, and a sound of loud thunder."**

The heaven referred to in this verse is the new heaven (Isa. 65:17,18) i.e. the saints in the ruling places. The many waters defines them as being a great multitude (chapter 7:9); while the voice of great thunder is symbolical of their warlike attitude (Isa. 29:6,7). Before peace can be brought to the earth the Lord Jesus Christ and his redeemed will administer God's judgments upon the nations and for that reason much of this chapter deals with this aspect of their work.

**Verses 3 - 5: "And they sing as it were a new song in the presence of the throne, and in the presence of the four living ones, and of the elders: and no one was able to learn the song, except the hundred forty-four thousands, who had been redeemed from the earth. These are they who had not been contaminated with women; for they are virgins. These are the attendants upon the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These had been redeemed from among men, an offering of first fruits for the Deity and for the Lamb. And in their mouth had been found no guile; for they are faultless in the presence of the throne of the Deity."**

In the day of Zion's glory, the true Israel will no longer be depicted as having harps hanging on the willows of Babylon (Psa. 137:1,2), a symbol of tribulation and distress; but now they will sing songs of rejoicing and triumph (Psa. 87:7; Rev. 5:8; 15:2). Bro. Thomas states: "The saint himself is the harp of Deity and thus an instrument of joy; the angels are not harpers, for they cannot truthfully sing the 'song of the redeemed' but join with the saints in hymns of praise (Rev. 5:11,12)." The saint as a harp of Deity is graphically described in Eph. 5:19 (Roth.) "speaking to yourselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing and striking the strings with your heart unto the Lord". A mind impressed with the Word and a heart full of joy and thanksgiving will cause the "saint-harp" to become an instrument of pleasure to God.

The new song to be sung is a song of deliverance (Rev. 5:9,10; Psa. 22:22-25; 149:1). Never before has there been a multitude who are eligible to sing such a song -

146 *Psa. 40:3; Psa. 149:1; Psa. 33:3*

not even the angels could appropriate the terms of such a song to themselves. John says, “they sung as it were a new song”. It is not really a new song but a changed song, as the word signifies, for although the words are revealed in Scripture, the true import has not yet been experienced. The Lord now proceeds to outline the grounds of the eligibility of these redeemed ones who stand with him on Mt. Zion.

Another figure of the redeemed, is that of a virgin espoused to Christ, and in this sense it could be said of these ones that they had not associated with the apostate harlot described in other places (Rev. 17:5; 12:1; 2:20). The Apostle James says that “friendship with the world is enmity with God” and constitutes spiritual adultery. The Lord desires his bride to remain truly espoused unto him (2 Cor. 11:2) and this they do by following the Lamb “whithersoever he goeth”. Recognizing the true principle of a bride, they have been created for his glory and therefore remain faithful to him, keeping their garments unspotted from the world.

The vision described in this verse is the anti-type of the Feast of Firstfruits. Bro. Thomas states: “Under the Law of Moses, the firstfruits were the new fruits of the harvest of the land, offered in the form of two loaves, called ‘the bread of the firstfruits’, fifty days after the waving of a single sheaf of the firstfruits on the third day after Passover. In the anti-type, Jesus risen from among the dead, is the ‘wave-sheaf of the firstfruits’, and the new converts to the faith preached by the apostles, ‘the bread of the firstfruits’. Of this there is evidence in 1 Cor. 15:20, where Paul says, ‘Christ is risen from among the dead and become the firstfruits of them who have been sleeping’: and in James 1:18, addressing the true believers of his day, he says, ‘Of His own will the Father of Lights begat us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures’. By this we are informed, that all who are truly begotten by the Word of Truth, are designed to be what Jesus became in being waved before the Father after leaving the house of the dead. The Word of Truth, or the Gospel, illuminates the understanding; so that when the enlightened are immersed into ‘Christ the firstfruits’, they are planted in the likeness of his death, in hope that they shall also be planted in the likeness of his resurrection; or become ‘firstfruits for the Deity and the Lamb’ - ‘the bread of the firstfruits’, which can only be offered in the land promised to the Fathers, as indicated in the type (Lev. 23:9-21); and symbolically represented in this chapter of the Apocalypse.”

The redeemed are said to be “without guile” (1 Pet. 2:21,22) and “without fault”. This does not mean that they have never sinned, but their sins have been covered in the Blood of the Lamb and therefore righteousness has been imputed unto them (Rom. 4:6-8).

**Verses 6 and 7: “And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having aionian news to proclaim to them who dwell upon the earth, even every nation and tribe and tongue and people; Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear the Deity, and give to him glory, for the hour of his judgment hath arrived; and do homage to him who hath made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters’.”**

It is after Christ has come and raised the dead and judged and immortalized his brethren; and after he has, with them, made his appearance in the affairs of the world as a new political power, that this proclamation goes forth to the nations. It is in fact, after

the overthrow of Gog; for Jesus and his brethren are not enthroned on Mt. Zion until Gog is driven out of the land. This overthrow having been effected, we have here the government of Christ established in the Land, entering into diplomatic relations, so to speak, with the rest of the world which is still unsubdued. The angel flying in the midst of heaven is the symbol of the Divine ambassadorship, through which they will be addressed.

The angel referred to in this verse, is the angel of the rainbow (Rev. 10:1) i.e. the saints. The Lord enthroned in Zion, has laid the basis for the new heavens which he will establish but the heavens in which the beast rules still hold sway over much of the earth. For this reason, the “angel ambassadors” fly in the midst of heaven, or into the political air of Babylon into which the judgments of the seventh vial are to be poured (Rev. 16:17). Babylon occupies a “middle station” between the worshippers of the beast (verse 9) and the new throne established in Zion (verse 1). The good news, or Gospel, which is taken to the world, is not the Gospel, but a Gospel. It proclaims Divine mercy upon those who will submit, but warns of impending judgment on those who will not (Psa. 2:6-12). Doubtless the work of Elijah (Mal. 4:1-6; Ezek. 20:33-40; Isa. 66:19-21) is incorporated in the mission of this angel flying in the midst of heaven. (For a detailed exposition on this theme, refer to the book *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained* by John Thomas).

The following extracts from *Eureka* are of interest and have some bearing on the work of the mid-heaven angel... “Now as to the precise time after Christ's advent and the justification of his household by Spirit, in which this proclamation through mid-heaven shall be made, it may be remarked, that it is immediately consequent upon the smiting of the Assyro-Gogian image upon the feet by the Stone power, and before the grinding of its metallic and clay fragments to powder (Dan. 2:34,35; Matt. 21:44). It will therefore be in the interval between the Armageddon overthrow of the Sixth Vial and the outpouring of Divine wrath upon 'the air' of the Seventh. . . . In this still dry heat of impending vengeance, the Pentecostian proclamation of liberty and return is made; after which 'the great trumpet is blown' by Yahweh Tz-vaoth (Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14); - the jubilee trumpet of the judgment of the Great Day. The angel-proclamation in mid-heaven is this Pentecostian proclamation briefly preceding the jubilee trumpet of 'the Day of Atonement', when the Eternal Spirit casts up accounts with the nations, and exacts from them the settlement that is due. The proclamation in mid-heaven is Pentecostian, not judicial and vengeful. It announces the approach of judgment impending, not in actual manifestation; and therefore invites return to God as the condition of liberty, or escape from wrath to come.

As to how long the period of proclamation will continue, it is not possible to speak with certainty; the work to be done indicates that it will not be an instantaneous operation. Between the ‘memorial of blowing trumpet’ on the first day of the seventh month and the Day of Atonement there was an interval of ten days; after this pattern it may, therefore, be, that between the beginning of the proclamation in mid-heaven and the commencement of the second-angel judgment upon Babylon (chapter 14:8), there will be an interval of ten years. This would leave an ‘hour’, or month of years, that is, thirty years, for the judgment to sit in slaying the fourth beast of Daniel and destroying his body politic in the burning flame (Dan. 7:11).

These forty years after the manifestation of the son of David and his mighty ones on Mt. Zion, are the period of ‘the building again of the tabernacle of David and of setting up of its ruins, as it was in the days of old’ (Act 15:16; Amos 9:11), the exodal period of the gathering together under one king of all the tribes of the house of Jacob (Micah 7:15). These forty years will be the most important and terrible of the world’s history.”

The result of the Lord’s judgments on the nations will be to separate them one from another as a shepherd divides sheep from the goats (Isa. 66:19; Mtt. 25:32). The Judgment which succeeds this Pentecostian proclamation in mid-heaven is “national”, and executed by Christ and the saints.

**Verse 8: “And another angel followed saying, Fallen, fallen hath Babylon the great city; because she hath made all nations drink of the wine of the raging of her fornication.”**

Whilst this verse speaks of “another angel”, it will be seen that it is in fact still part of the work of the saints, but in another aspect of their duty. It is therefore in keeping with the theme of manifestation, that where an individual or group of individuals are involved in different facets of the fulfilling of God’s purpose, they are designated by a different symbol; hence the three angels of verse 6, 8 and 9 are, in fact, the same group of individuals. This verse reveals that some nations will not hearken to the “merciful proclamation” of the first angel and chief among these is “Babylon, the great city”. Subsequent to the battle of Armageddon, Christ’s armies, comprising the emissaries of Judah under the leadership of Elijah and the saints, together with the scattered tribes of Ephraim in the process of being re-gathered, will invade the territory of the enemy. Their first major victory will be the overthrow of Babylon. The events described here are synchronous with the outpouring of the Seventh Vial (chapter 16:19). The period of the second and third angels is the “time of trouble” for Israel and all the nations and is contemporary with the “Second Exodus”.

Consider the following references:

The work of the refined third of Judah - Zech. 9:13; 10:3; 12:6-9; 13:7-9;

The refining of Ephraim - Mal. 4:5,6; Ezek. 20:33-44;

The subjugation of the nations - Psa. 149:5-9; Isa. 11:9-16; Hos. 1:11; and 2:14-19.

**Verses 9 - 11: “And a third angel followed them, saying, with a loud voice. If any one worship the Beast and his Image, and receive a sign upon his forehead, or upon his hand, He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of the Deity, which hath been prepared without mixture in 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 ascendeth until the aeons of aeons: and they have no respite day and night, who worship the Beast and his Image, and whosoever receiveth the sign of his name.”**

The calamity which befalls the modern-day city of Babylon (Papal Rome), evidently fails to influence Catholic adherents in other parts, so the third angel by military

conquest eradicates the superstition from the kingdoms of western Europe, by which means they then become the kingdoms of Yahweh and His Christ (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 11:15). Whilst the city of Rome has been destroyed, the Papal system will survive (Rev. 18:19), so now the worshippers of the Beast are warned against giving continued allegiance to that system.

Rome is a power that is symbolically described as “making nations drunk with her wine” (cp. verse 8). Now God will make them drink of the wine of His wrath - a symbol of bloodshed and judgment (Isa. 51:17-23; 63:1-3; Jer. 25:27). The nations are warned that Yahweh had a full cup of unmixed wrath about to be poured out and that there will be torment for those who may have to drink it. The wine is, in a sense, sacrificial. Because the nations have refused God’s mercy and the blood of the Lamb which He has provided (cp. verse 1), their blood must now be shed in order that Yahweh’s righteousness might be vindicated.

The “tormenting with fire and brimstone” is symbolical of the war which will be waged by the Lamb and his ambassadors. The smoke of this torment will ascend until the “aeons of the aeons”. This does not speak of “eternal torments”, but a fate like to that of Sodom which, says Jude, “suffered the vengeance of eternal fire”, (Jude verse 7). It does not mean that the fire will burn forever, but the effect of its burning is complete and the Millennial Age is ushered in, with Christ ruling over a subjugated world, completely at peace. Bro. Thomas suggests this will be a period of forty years before the judgments are consummated.

**Verses 12 and 13: “Here is the patience of the saints; here they who keep the commandments of the Deity and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from the heaven, saying to me, Write! Blessed the dead dying in the Lord from this time. Yea saith the Spirit, in order that they may take rest from their labors; and their works he goes in aid of with them.”**

This is the crisis for which the true saints wait patiently in faith and obedience, assured that God will avenge His own elect upon ‘the Beast’ that killed them (cp. 13:8,10).

The blessing is pronounced upon those who are faithful unto death (2:26), but the blessing itself is not granted at death, but “from henceforth”, that is, in the Kingdom Age when Rome has been destroyed and the saints can rest from their labours in the Millennial Sabbath (Heb. 4:9). The phrase “their works do follow them”, has led many people to believe that the reward to be bestowed upon the righteous will be granted immediately upon death. Such, of course, is not in keeping with the Truth and Bro. Thomas’ translation is a help in understanding this passage. He translates it “. . . their works he goes in aid of with them”. He further comments in *Eureka*: “The error in the translation is not for want of a grammatical knowledge of Greek; but because the translators when they render it correctly can see no sense in it . . . In this exposition the reader will see in what sense it is said, ‘their works he goeth in aid of with them’; and he will also perceive, who it is that goeth in aid with them. The Spirit goeth with them in aid of their works. Without the Spirit they could do nothing; but aided by the Spirit, there is nothing too difficult for them to accomplish.”

The works of labours spoken of in this verse, constitute the work of the three

angels described in the previous verses. This work will be under the guidance of the Spirit and it is only when “this work” is completed, that they may enter into the Millennial rest (Zech. 4:6; Ezek. 1:12, 20).

**Verses 14 - 16: “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like to a son of man, having upon his head a golden stephan, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the Nave vociferating with a loud voice to him sitting upon the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap, because for thee hath arrived the hour of the reaping, for the harvest of the earth hath been ripened. And he that is sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.”**

Prior to this time John had been merely “listening”. Now he “looks” and “beholds” a new scene. When John last wrote the words “I looked and behold” (verse 1), he saw the Lamb on Mt. Zion. Bro. Thomas likened this to the anti-type of the feast of Pentecost - “an exhibition of firstfruits; but before Pentecost comes the Passover in its fulfilment in the Kingdom of God” and John has not as yet dealt with this. He is now about to reveal the means by which the Lamb comes to be enthroned in Zion, as a result of the reaping of the harvest of the earth in verses 14 to 16. This is followed by the vintage of the earth (the judgments on Papal Rome) in verses 17 to 20.

The symbol of the cloud has been considered previously (1:7; 4:5) and has been seen to refer to the saints in various aspects of their work. In this verse John refers to “a white cloud” - a cloud of mighty ones clothed in fine linen, white and clean, which represent the righteousness of them who are clothed with it (19:8, 14). These mighty ones are the white cloud, or cherub, upon which the Spirit rides (Psa. 18:10) or, in the language of the Apocalypse, “upon which one like to a son of man is sitting..”

The sickle represents the act of reaping and is connected with the symbol of Armageddon (see future note chapter 16:16), based on such passages as Micah 4:12; Joel 3:14 etc.

The angel coming out of the Temple depicts the saints in another aspect. The Temple itself is representative of the saints, and the angel, their aspect as messengers calling for vengeance on Gog. This event is prior to Armageddon for the Temple is not yet “in heaven” (cp. verse 17). In response to the cry of the angel, the earth was reaped. This is a symbol of Armageddon (Joel 3:12-17).

**Verses 17 - 20: “And another angel came out from the Nave which is in the heaven, he having also a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, having power over the fire, and he shouted with a great ourcry to him having the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and cut off the clusters of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and cut off the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of the Deity. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out from the winepress unto the bridles of the horses, for a thousand six hundred furlongs.”**

John now depicts the judgment on Rome and the nations after the Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned in Zion as a result of his victory at Armageddon. The Sanctuary “in heaven” indicates the Lord, together with his glorified followers, enthroned in the Kingdom.

These heavens are “the new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness” (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13).

It is important to compare the work of the angel associated with the harvest of the earth (verses 14 to 16), which takes place prior to the establishing of the Temple in the heavens: Armageddon takes place before Christ is enthroned in Zion; but by contrast, the work of the same angel associated with the vintage of the earth (verses 17 to 20), takes place when the Temple is in heaven - that is, the Lord enthroned in Zion, ruling over “the stone kingdom of Judah”.

In the natural order of events, vintage comes after wheat harvest; so it is in the spiritual order in this chapter. The vine of the earth speaks of the Gentile nations (Rev. 19:15), which have produced the wine of Babylon. This naturally speaks of Rome and her confederate powers. As the grapes ripen after the grain, so the destruction of Rome and Europe follows Armageddon.

The great city referred to frequently in the Apocalypse, is Babylon the great, or the city of Rome. The winepress is trodden “without the city”, and therefore indicates that judgment will extend beyond the confines of Rome into all nations. Nations in warlike aspect are frequently symbolized by horses (See previous note on chapter 6). The blood which flows from the winepress is represented as ascending “to the bridles of the horses”. This Bro Thomas understands as symbolizing that the judgments reach to the riders of the horses, or those who govern them (Zech. 10:5, 12:4; Haggai 2:22). With regard to the sixteen hundred furlongs, Bro. Thomas suggests that as this is a measure of length, and is unaccompanied by any measure of width, it is to be taken as symbolical of the time for which the judgment will last. Sixteen hundred is a square of forty, and he says: “The treading of the winepress by the Saints in command of the armies of Israel, will continue by the space of forty years, the period of Israel’s exodus, at the end of which every Israelite will return to his possession” (Ezek. 20:33-36, Micah 7:14,15).

The chapter opened with a picture of the Lamb enthroned on Mt. Zion, preparatory to pouring out his judgments on the nations, that they might be brought into subjection to him prior to the commencement of his Millennial reign. The chapter concludes at the end of the forty years of judgment, during which time Israel will have been regathered, Rome destroyed, Europe subdued and the Temple built in Jerusalem in preparation for the return of the redeemed of Israel (Isa. 35:10).



## CHAPTER 15

# The Sea of Glass and the Song of Victory

This chapter depicts the results to be reached by the outpouring of the Seven Last Plagues.

**Verse 1-4:** “And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and marvellous, Seven Angels having Seven Last Plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of the Deity. And I saw as it were a glassy sea which had been mingled with fire; and the conquerors of the beast, and of his image, and of his sign, and of the number of his name, standing upon the glassy sea, having harps of the Deity. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of the Deity, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, O Lord the Omnipotent Deity; just and true thy ways, O King of the Saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For *thou only art* absolutely pure: for all the nations shall come, and do homage before thee; because thy righteous judgments have been made manifest.”

The first four verses of this 15th chapter conclude the vision which commenced in chapter 7:9 (refer to chart, section 1, page 3). The seven last plagues are the last judgments by which this present order of things is abolished and the Kingdom of God established.

John sees the nations now at peace, represented by the sea of glass, coming out of a time of fiery trial. Time is a symbol of war and though the nations will have been involved in war, this will have finished at the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy. This is further confirmed by the fact that the harpers stand on the sea of glass. This represents the saints rejoicing in their victory over the nations and is further indicated in their song styled “the Song of Moses and of the Lamb”. The “Song of Moses” was a song of deliverance, speaking of Yahweh’s triumph as a man of war (Exodus 15). The “Song of the Lamb” is that of Revelation 5:8 to 10 in which the saints rejoice in their new positions as King-Priests.

These verses bring to a climax the judgments on Catholic Rome as symbolized in the Seventh Trumpet. In subsequent chapters, John is taken back to the events following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, to consider God’s judgments on Papal Rome. As Bro. Roberts states: “We are so often brought to the end of the matter

and taken back again, because of the structure of the Apocalypse, which has well been likened to a telescope shut up. When a telescope is shut up, the outer case contains all the inner ones. The end of the outer ones, is the end of all the inner ones; yet in the drawing out of the inner ones, the instrument is several times lengthened beyond the space which at first contained the whole. The whole of the contents of the Apocalypse are all contained within the the seven-sealed scroll. At the seventh seal you are at the end of the programme in a general sense; yet, as this seventh seal contains seven trumpets, you have to transverse the trumpets to get to the end of the seventh seal; and yet in the seventh trumpet, you are not at the final end, for the seventh trumpet contains seven vials (the next slide of the telescope, so to speak); and these again, seven thunders. The exhibition, in succession, of these various interior sections of the whole structure involves the arrival several times, so far as the order of narrative goes, at the end of the whole; and therefore necessitates the going back again.”

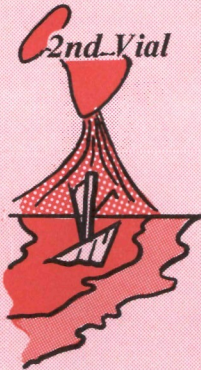
**1st Vial**



**A.D. 1789**

'There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the Beast' — the elements of civil and foreign war in active operation spreading its sores out from France and afflicting the Catholic portion of Europe.

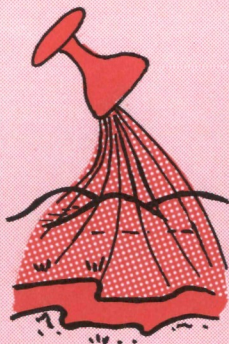
**2nd Vial**



**A.D. 1793**

'Poured upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man' — the great Naval wars carried on for over ten years in which England destroyed most of the fleets of the priest-ridden countries, and the loss of life was very great, as the above symbolic language conveys.

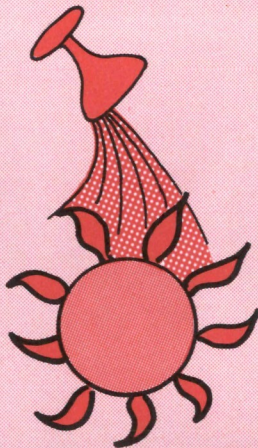
**3rd Vial**



**A.D. 1796**

Napoleon in war with Austria in the region of the 'rivers and fountains of waters', chiefly in Northern Italy, 'and they became blood', descriptive of those sanguinary engagements.

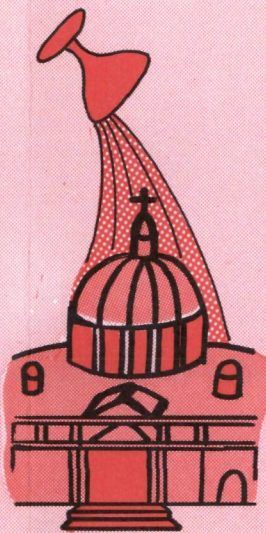
**4th Vial**



**A.D. 1805**

'Poured upon the sun', the overthrow of the royal house of Austria, which had long been the military support of the Papacy. The European powers, in their fierce conflict with Napoleon who was the sun 'scorching men with fire', the fiery elements of war bringing about great national calamities.

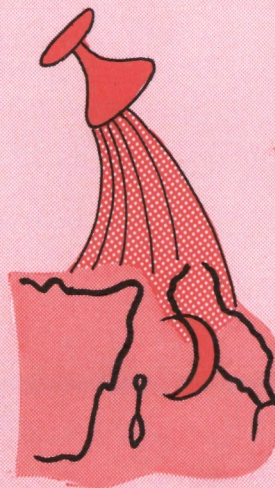
**5th Vial**



**A.D. 1808**

'Poured upon the seat of the Beast' — the descent of Napoleon upon the Papal throne. The Head of the Catholic world carried captive to France and 'his kingdom full of darkness' or extinguished and his adherents stripped of their wealth and power 'gnawed their tongues for pain'.

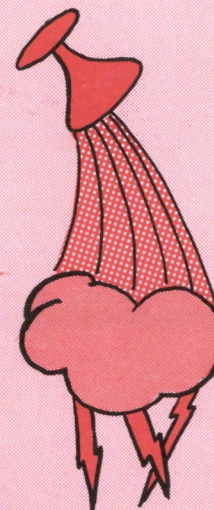
**6th Vial**



**A.D. 1820**

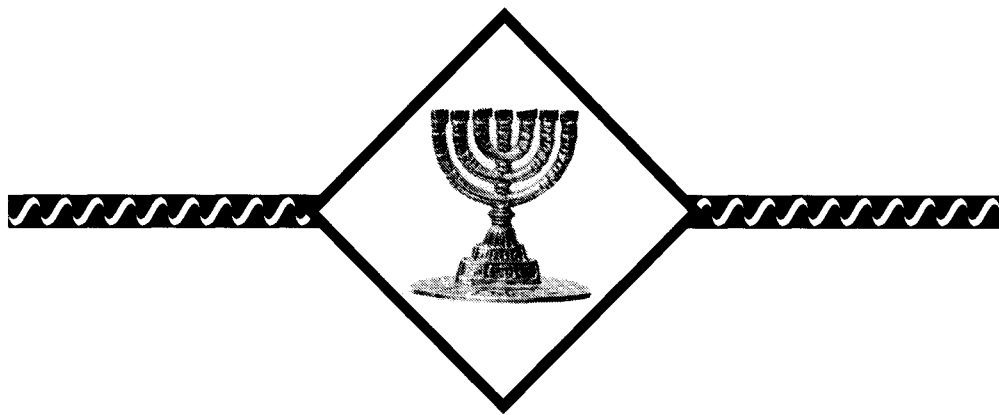
'Poured upon the great river Euphrates' — the great Ottoman Empire which became so formidable a menace to Europe, but not long after the fall of Napoleon its water commenced drying up, and when the Turkish empire falls to pieces, 'the way of the kings of the east (or sun's rising — the saints) is prepared'.

**7th Vial**



'Poured upon the air', affecting the kingdoms of the nations. The nations become angry, their political and ecclesiastical systems disappear through the uttering of the Seven Thunders.





# Come Out of Her My People

*A Study of the Book of Revelation*

Section 4

Rev. 15:5-18 • Pages 155-186





## Introduction to Section Four

“The time is short, and the days are few and evil. A voice has resounded through the world, calling attention to the fact that the dispensation of the times under which we Gentiles live is fulfilled. Whether it be consummated immediately or within the lifetime, at most, of the generation now existing, is a question which at present we intend neither to discuss nor determine; but from the events which we see transpiring in relation to the ecclesiastical and secular affairs of men, collated with the things noted in the Scriptures of truth, we are satisfied that the time which remains is brief, and that our eternal well-being demands that we not only believe that he will come, but that we prepare to meet the Lord.

This is our firm conviction and, believing assuredly that ‘the day of Christ’ is at hand, we address you all, without distinction of name, party or denomination in the words of sacred text:

‘Come out of Babylon, my people,  
That ye be not partakers of her sins . . .’ “

So wrote Bro. John Thomas over 100 years ago, and how much more applicable are his words to our own generation.

The contents of this section centre around God’s judgments on Papal Rome, Revelation 15:5 to chapter 17:18; and the Judgment on Babylon, chapter 18:1 to 24; and it is our prayer that the day will not be far hence when this work will see its consummation, with the return of our Lord from Heaven.

A study of the Apocalypse with the aid of “Eureka” opens one’s mind to a vast panorama of Scripture and gives the reader a greater insight into the mind of the Deity whose Glory it is to conceal His purpose in such a wonderful fashion and yet reveal it unto those who set their hearts to understand.

We trust these notes will prove a help to this end.





## CHAPTER 15

# The Seven Vials God's Judgment on Papal Rome

**Verse 5: “And after these things I saw and behold, the Nave of the Tabernacle of the Testimony had been opened in the heaven.”**

The phrase “after these things” is once again an indication that John is to witness a new phase of the Apocalyptic vision. It is necessary to re-emphasise that John is not merely witnessing a prophetic foreshadowing of certain historical events, but rather is being shown “spiritual things in spiritual words”, and that the thematic structure is an outline of the principles by which Yahweh will manifest His glory in the earth. A purely historic approach would necessitate that all the events be set out in chronological order. This is not the case, however, so that when John says “after these things I saw . . .”, he does not tell us in these words, the exact time of the opening of the Nave of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in the heaven. He simply affirms that, after the music of the harps and voices of the glorious choir upon the glassy sea, had ceased its ravishing harmony, his attention was diverted to another scene and he perceived that the Nave, or Most Holy “had been opened”, or manifested.

The “Tabernacle” is one thing; the “Nave of the Tabernacle” is another: they are both, however, significative of a society of people and a state of things pertaining to them. The Tabernacle, or Holy Place (ch. 13:6) consists of the Saints in their present mixed and imperfect condition, blasphemed and trodden under foot of the Gentiles. They are in their generations, “the Tabernacle of the Testimony”, because they bear witness by the Word for Jesus and the Faith. The Nave of the Tabernacle is the Most Holy. It consists of the One Body freed from everything that defiles. It represents the Saints clothed with immortality. In the next chapter we shall be particularly informed what the things are, that must successively transpire in the development of this “great and marvellous sign in the heaven”, before the Nave is opened, or manifested, therein.

**Verse 6: “And the Seven Angels having the Seven Plagues came out from the Nave, having been clothed in linen, pure and bright, and girded around the breasts with golden girdles.”**

Bro. Thomas states, “The Seven Angels coming out from the Nave indicates that they are the Seven Elohistic constituents of the Nave sent forth into all the earth. The

approved Saints of the Nave are constituted ‘Angels’ by being ‘sent forth’; *angelos* signifying ‘one sent, a messenger, etc.’ The Saints of the Nave have a mission to perform which the powers that be cannot be made to accomplish; and they go forth into all the earth clothed, girded and accompanied by the Spirit, to execute it.”

The symbols associated with the linen garment and the golden girdles, have been previously considered in the vision of the One like unto the Son of Man in chapter 1. This was seen to be a symbolic representation of the multitudinous Saints in the day of their immortal glory.

**Verse 7: “And one of the four living ones gave to the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of the Deity who lives for the aions of the aions.”**

In considering this verse, it is essential to remember that John is not describing in detail how these events will be accomplished, but rather, the reason for their accomplishment and the ultimate purpose to be achieved in the manifestation of His glory in the earth. “The Four Living Ones” is a symbol considered previously in chapter 4 and seen to be representative of the Spirit “manifestly encamped in the Saints”, in the aspect of militant manifestation. The fact that the Seven Angels also represents the Saints, is a further indication that the theme of this Book is that of God Manifestation, and not merely an outline of historical facts and the means by which they will be achieved.

“The Living One”, incorporate in the Saints, gives judgment to the Seven Angels which, to show their relation to the Saints in judicial operation, are represented as receiving the golden vials of wrath from ‘one of the Four Living Ones’, which indubitably represents the Saints (ch. 5:8 to 10). The wrath of the seven golden vials is not poured out in all its details by the Saints. The sixteenth chapter shows this. It shows that the ‘one of the Four Living Ones’ (Christ and the Saints), appears upon the scene. The word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel was ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit’ (Zech. 4:6). The Spirit is the girder or strengthener, whether it be Cyrus (Isa. 45:5), Alexander, Constantine, Alaric, Attila, Genseric, the British power, Napoleon, or the Saints. The British upon the sea and the French upon the land, were girded in their operations against the worshippers of the Beast and his image in the first five vial-periods on the same principle that Cyrus was girded by the Spirit for the overthrow of the dominion of Babylon and for the punishment of the worshippers of Bel. The Four Living Ones and the Seven Angels, apart from the Spirit who energizes them, are as nothing. The wrathful power of the ‘great and marvellous sign in the heaven’ is ‘golden’, because just and true and faithful. This is supreme and righteous; its agents are subordinate and not necessarily pure and holy. The power being the same Seven-Spirit power, though the agents employed are diverse, in the outpouring of all the seven vials, these are all said to be given to the Seven Angels; although the Saints do not come upon the arena till toward the close of the Sixth Vial period.

The word “Vial” comes from the Greek, *phiale* and denotes “a bowl”. The emptying of these bowls represents the pouring out of God’s judgments upon certain nations.

**Verse 8: “And the Nave was full of smoke from the glory of the Deity and from his power: and no one was able to enter into the Nave until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”**

The Holy and Most Holy Places in the Tabernacle represent respectively the one body in two states - “as it is” before the Ancient of Days comes; and “as it will be” after that appearing. The body in its “Most Holy” constitution is the Deity in Manifestation, from whom the wrath of the Seven Vials issues forth to its consummation. This Divine and glorified body is “full of smoke” because it is full of burning anger and indignation; and its breath like a stream of brimstone in fiery conflagration (Isa. 30:27 and 33). The Nave is full of smoke until the wrath of the Seven Vials is all exhausted. The Nave at the present time is invisible. The Eternal Father, the Seven Spirits of Deity and the Anointed Jesus are the present known constituents of the Most Holy. When the veil of the flesh, which now obtains between the Nave and the Tabernacle of faithful mortals, shall be done away, “the approved” will enter into the Most Holy and be incorporated with it. God’s judgments upon the nations are administered by men like Alaric, Attila, Genseric and others, but in the Apocalyptic sense, they are simply the agents working on behalf of the Deity and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, upon the principle that “what One doth by His agents He doth by Himself”, He being the Most Holy or Nave, the Seven Angels or Spirits went forth from Him to pour out the Vials of the wrath of Deity upon the earth. This they continue to do through the “powers that be”, until the time arrives for the Lord to reap in person; and to visit all the powers with a retribution that shall abolish them from the earth.

The symbol of this verse is based upon such passages as Exodus 40:34, 1 Kings 8:10 and Isaiah 6:4. The smoke-filled Nave also suggests that there is no priestly intercession for the nations or hope for the world until the judgments are complete. In this connection then, John says that “no man was able to enter into the Nave”. When God’s judgments upon the nations are complete and they have been enlightened in the Truth, which they will heartily believe, they will be permitted to enter into the Covenant of the Most Holy; and thus to be joined to Yahweh and to become His people in fellowship with Israel.



## CHAPTER 16

# The Seven Vials of the Wrath of God

**Verse 1: “And I heard a great voice from the Nave, saying to the Seven Angels, Go forth and pour out the vials of the wrath of the Deity into the earth.”**

The Seven Angels, prior to the appearing of the Ancient of Days, are the Seven Spirits of the Deity operating through the judgments on Pagan Rome. Whilst the Seven Seals represented God’s judgments on Pagan Rome, culminating in the Constantinian earthquake, and the Seven Trumpets represented God’s judgments on Catholic Rome, culminating in the earthquake of the French Revolution, the Seven Vials now about to be poured out represent the subsequent judgments to be poured out on the Roman “earth” whose power is now vested in the Papal Roman system. The culmination of these judgments will be the great earthquake when the Lord Jesus Christ and the Saints personally overthrow all human government and establish the Kingdom of God in their place.

The sound of the great voice was heard in the nations of Europe who massed on the borders of France in support of the nobility who had been overthrown in the French Revolution. The first five Vials symbolize the effects of the Napoleonic campaigns on the nations of Europe.

### **THE FIRST VIAL - THE FRENCH REVOLUTION - A.D. 1789**

**Verse 2: “And the first went forth, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there ensued a grievous and malignant ulcer upon the men who have the sign of the beast, and who do homage to his image.”**

The period of the French Revolution comes at the end of the 1260 years from the decree of Justinian in 533 A.D. (See note Rev. 11:13) and for this reason the events of the first five Vials are concentrated in the area of Europe in general and France in particular. Bro. Roberts states, “We already had occasion to see why France should stand in the foreground in all that affects the Papacy. She has been in all her history the principal section of the Papal spiritual dominions. Her position in this respect is indicated by the official title which the head of the French State has held from the Pope - ‘the eldest Son of the Church’. Other States hold other names from the same source. Thus, the Austrian

Emperor is 'His Holy Apostolic Majesty'; the King of Spain, 'His Most Christian Majesty'; the Monarch of England, 'Defender of the Faith', etc. These are imposing titles, but 'The eldest son of the Church' points to the most important position in the Papal family; the eldest son is always an important member of any family. To inflict the firstborn is to bring trouble in its most direct form, as in the last and worst of the plagues of Egypt. When, therefore, the time arrived to subject the worshippers of the Beast to special judgment, we should on this principle expect to find France most intimately affected and it was so. She was not the Republican France of our day, but the priest-ridden, pope-worshipping, heretic-slaying country which befitted her position in the papal family. At the close of the eighteenth century, events well answering to the infliction of 'a noisesome and grievous sore' - or ulcerous sores - on the worshippers of the beast, occurred in France."

There is an interesting parallel between the Trumpets and the Vials. As the First Angel sounded his trumpet against "the earth" before it was planted with the modern kingdoms of Europe, or ten horns, to bring them into position as elements of the new papal constitution of the West (8:7); so the Angel of the First Vial pours out his portion of wrath upon the same arena considerably extended. He begins with France, the tenth of the Great City, the most murderous of the horns in their co-operation with the Papacy in its wars against the Witnesses and Saints of Jesus. His visitations descended grievously upon all the departments of that country; but with the greatest intensity upon those section of it where their blood had been most abundantly shed. Brother Thomas states: "France became an altar of sacrifice to which beasts were brought for slaughter that had devoured and oppressed the Saints."

The conditions at this time are aptly described as a malignant ulcer. In the natural body, an ulcer is an open, running sore, resulting from local inflammation or constitutional irritation, more or less intense. In its formation, it is attended with heat, redness, pain and swelling. If malignant, it eats away the flesh and lays bare the bones.



## THE SECOND VIAL - THE SEA BECOMES BLOOD - A.D. 1793

**Verse 3: “And the second angel poured out his vial into the sea; and it became blood as of a corpse, and every living soul died in the sea.”**

The events of the first vial affected the land: the Roman habitable in its entire extent was afflicted, but the sea was to be brought under the operation - yet not the sea as a physical element but as the basis of the maritime interests of nations, in which there is a mingling of both the literal and the figurative. To stop trade by sea would be to inflict much suffering on those living on land. As the result of the Vial, the sea was to become as “the blood of a dead man”. The blood of a dead man is stagnant - non-circulatory. The sea would be stopped as a medium of national-life circulation.

Whilst the work of the first angel was operating in France, God’s judgments were to be extended beyond the borders of that country for all the powers of anti-Christendom were guilty before heaven - they had all, in the 1260 years of the Papacy which had passed since its institution by Justinian, “committed fornication with her”; and their populations had all “been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (17:2, 18:3). Once again we find this second vial somewhat reminiscent of the second trumpet. In this, the sea became blood; the creatures that were in the sea and had life, died; and the ships were destroyed. All this resulted from that Genseric Mountain burning with fire, being cast into the same sea as the contents of the second vial. The consequences were similar, but upon a grander scale. The Vandal power destroyed the power and commerce of Rome from the Sea; and afflicted its maritime provinces with sanguinary incursions. A like result ensued through the agency of Britain, which annihilated the maritime power, commerce and colonies of the countries of Babylon the Great.

## THE THIRD VIAL - THE RIVERS BECOME BLOOD - A.D. 1796

**Verses 4 - 7: “And the third angel poured out his vial into the rivers, and into the fountains of the waters; and there was blood. And I heard from the Angel of the waters saying, Righteous, O Lord, art thou, who art, and who wast and who art coming, because thou has decreed these things: For they have poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and to them thou hast given blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard from another out of the Altar saying, Yea, O Lord, the almighty Deity, true and righteous are thy judgments.”**

The judgments of this Vial upon the Great City are parallel with those of the Third Trumpet upon the Catholic world, before the constitutional institution of the Papacy by Justinian. The first four Trumpets punished the Catholic West for its apostacy and crimes; the corresponding Vials the same region, for the sanguinary cruelty of its populations and rulers in their wars upon the saints and prophets of the Deity. Hence the parallel in the order and similitude of the judgments.

The Rhine, Danube and Italian Lake country, where Attila had been the “Scourge of God” in the 5th Century, now became the arena of God’s judgments in the Italian campaigns of Napoleon. Because of the persecutions that the Papal system had engaged in against the saints of God, the judgments are now being poured out because their blood, like that of Abel, cried for vengeance upon the Beast and his worshippers.

### NAPOLEON I, BONAPARTE

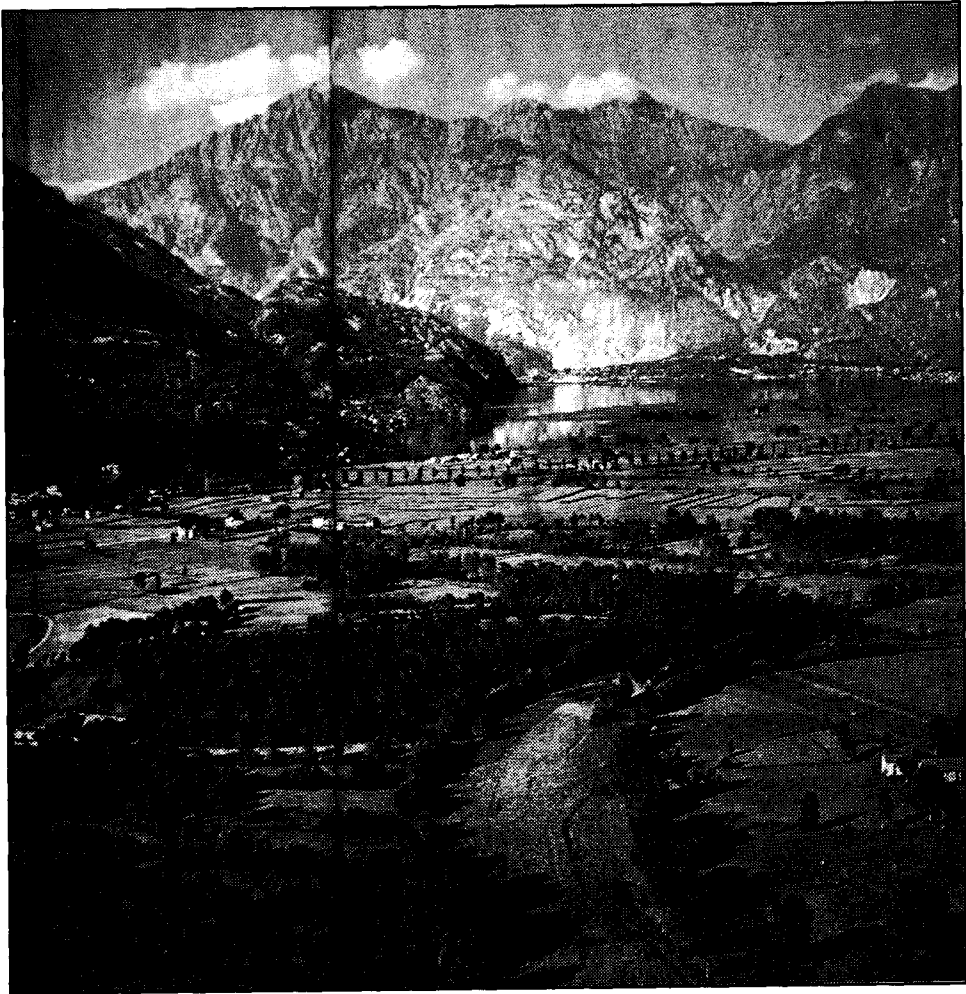
Born at Ajaccio in Corsica, entered the French Army in 1785, specializing as an artillery officer. He was given command of the secondary Army in a pincer offensive against Austria in 1796, but, through his victories in the north of Italy, established his reputation as the first great General of the Republican Armies, and himself dictated peace terms to the Austrians at Campo-Formio. After an abortive campaign in Egypt, he returned in 1799 to overthrow the Directory, and was appointed First Consul, being made Consul for life in 1802. From 1799 to 1814 he was thus the autocrat of France and the dependent territories his conquests secured for her. It was during the Consulate that he accomplished his greatest reforms as well as winning the War of the Second Coalition. By crowning himself Emperor in the presence of the Pope in France, he ensured recognition of his right to authority while assuming a title that would enable him to rule over a greater unit than the old Kingdom of France. In the War of the Third Coalition of 1805-7 he won the remarkable victories of Austerlitz and Jena and forced the Russians to accept a reversal of alliances at Tilsit. From 1808 his power began to wane; he was faced with the failure of the Continental System, and the Peninsular War began to drain away his reserves. He was able to win his fourth campaign against the Austrians by the victory of Wagram. He invaded Russia in June, 1812 and, although victorious at Borodin, never redeemed the retreat from Moscow and with weary troops was left to fight the War of the Fourth Coalition, with the inevitable defeat at Leipzig. He abdicated on 11 April, 1814 and was granted the right by the Allies to rule the sovereign principality of Elba. He escaped from Elba in February, 1815, landing near Cannes and advanced on Paris. From 20 March to 22 June, 1815, he again ruled as Emperor from Paris, in the episode known as the 'Hundred Days', which ended at Waterloo. He was conveyed to St. Helena as a prisoner of war, where he died. He had married Josephine Beauharnais in 1796 but divorced her in January, 1810, as she had not borne him any children. He then married the Austrian Archduchess Marie Louise, daughter of Emperor Francis I, who bore him a son in March, 1811. The boy was known as the King of Rome during the Empire, was brought up in Vienna as the Duke of Reichstadt and was accepted by loyal Bonapartists as Napoleon II from 1821 until his death in 1832, although he never used the title.

The use of the title, "O Lord, which are, and wast, and shalt be" is reminiscent of the theme introduced in chapter 1:4. It reminds us, once again, that the theme is one of God-manifestation, and not merely a dissertation of historical events prophetically foreshadowed. The work of Napoleon at this time was an act of God-manifestation. Yahweh used him to bring judgments upon the Papal system and the worshippers thereof, but this did not mean that Napoleon understood his mission or manifested the moral attributes of Deity such as were seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, like Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander and Titus, Napoleon had a work to perform and in this the saints of God could see, in their day, an assurance that God was still active in the affairs of the nations and would shortly intervene to establish His glorious Kingdom. The assurance of His constancy is seen particularly in the title "which art, and wast, and shall be". Yahweh is changeless; and whilst He sees fit to manifest His Glory - His mercy and His judgment - in various ways at various times, the true saints in all ages can see a constant pattern of God's love being shown forth on behalf of those who are His sons.

Those who have become associated with the Christ-altar recognise the signs of the times and extol God in such words as "true and righteous are Thy judgments O Lord". Surely the words of praise and thanksgiving to the Father should ascend from our lips



today more than ever before, for we are living on the eve of the greatest manifestation of the Deity which this world is ever to witness.



Italian Lake Country – Scene of Napoleon’s Italian Campaigns

### **THE FOURTH VIAL - MEN SCORCHED WITH FIRE - A.D. 1805**

**Verses 8 and 9: “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and it was given to him to scorch the men with fire. And the men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of the Deity who hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give glory to him.”**

The judgments or plagues of the Fourth Trumpet smote so as to darken a third part of the sun, moon and stars; so that for a third part of the day and of the night, there was no



light. This was seen to refer to the Imperial Catholic constitution of the western third of the Roman Empire; which was superseded in Rome by the Gothic Kingdom. The crowning of Charlemagne by the Pope in Rome, reinstated the Imperial sun in the form of the Holy Roman Empire centred in Vienna. The sun, then, of the Fourth Vial is the Imperial and Regal sovereignty of European anti-Christendom. The Pope, the Emperor, and the Kings, are the official terms indicative of the sun in its shining forth on the nations. To pour out wrath upon this sun so that the outpurer should “scorch with fire the men who have the sign of the Beast and who worship his image”, is to develop terrible disasters specially affecting in their consequences the power of these potentates.

Like Egypt of old, the people at large fail to see the judgments of God in these events, and that, in fact, God’s mercy and longsuffering was still evident and if only they would acknowledge His Truth and declare His righteousness there was still time for repentance. However, like Pharaoh of old, the nations of the world still await the last and greatest plague, when the prophet like unto Moses shall arise and deliver the people of God amidst a terrible slaughter of the “world’s firstborn”. Like Pharaoh, the nations today are hardening their hearts against God more than ever before, and therefore the intensity of “the plagues” will increase until the manifestation of “the time of trouble such as never was”.

## **THE FIFTH VIAL - JUDGMENTS Poured OUT ON THE SEAT OF THE BEAST - A.D. 1808**

**Verses 10 and 11: “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast; and it was his kingdom which had been darkened; and they did gnaw their tongues from the anguish and blasphemed the Deity of the heaven because of their pains and because of their ulcers; and they repented not of their works.”**

The fulfilment of these symbols is found in the final chapter of the judgments inflicted on Papal Europe by Napoleon Bonaparte and in proceedings which specially afflicted the city of Rome and the Pope in Rome as the “throne” of that European system which figures in the Apocalypse as “the Beast”. His Kingdom, which was co-extensive with the Holy Roman Empire, had already been darkened by the judgments of the first four Vials, and the darkness and misery were now to be greatly intensified. Napoleon’s first endeavour was to make the Pope an instrument for the consolidation of his power. He sought to be a Second Charlemagne, whose crown, sword and sceptre he caused to be carried before him on the occasion of his coronation. But, unlike Charlemagne, who went to Rome to be crowned by the Pope, Napoleon caused the Pope to come to him in Paris, not to crown, but to consecrate his dynasty in the estimation of the worshippers of the “image of the Beast”.

The judgments upon the throne of the Beast cover a number of years. In 1798 Pope Pius VI was arrested by the French and taken prisoner to France, where he died in 1799. Pius VII succeed him in 1800. He crowned Napoleon King of Italy and afterward excommunicated him. In 1809 Napoleon arrested him and had him brought to Avignon, abolished the temporal power and reduced Rome itself to the rank of second city in the Empire. It was not until 1814, when Napoleon’s power was in decline, that Russia, Prussia, England and Sweden bore the Pope back to Rome. The battle of Waterloo in the following year, brought to a close the eventful period symbolized by the outpouring of the Fifth Vial.

The friends of Rome suffered greatly during these events. They were stripped of their wealth; the ecclesiastical property was taken from them; and the churches given up to public use and even pillage. Symbolically, “they gnawed their tongues for pain”. “Darkness set in upon their kingdom”, and the Papacy never fully recovered from the shattering effects of the fifth Vial. It was a mere shadow of its former self and finally the shadow disappeared with the ending of the temporal power of the Papacy in 1867 - 70.

## **THE SIXTH VIAL - THE DRYING UP OF THE RIVER EUPHRATES - COMMENCED A.D. 1820**

**Verse 12: “And 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 who *are* from a sun’s risings, might be prepared.”**

In the days of Isaiah, the Euphrates was the principle river of Assyria; and is therefore used by that prophet in chapter 8:7 as a sign or symbol of the Assyrian Empire. When the Ninevite dynasty was abolished, Assyria was annexed to Babylon. The Euphrates then became a river of Babylon. For this reason, as Babylon is introduced into the Apocalypse as symbolical of the Fourth Beast of Daniel 7, whose dominion migrated

from Babylon to Rome and Constantinople, so the Euphrates is also introduced there; for a figurative Babylon without a figurative Euphrates, would be in violation of the analogy and fitness of things. At the time of the outpouring of the Sixth Vial, the great river, Euphrates is representative of the Ottoman power which was progressively “dried up”, during the whole of the Nineteenth Century.

The water of the great river Euphrates represents the military power of the Ottoman Empire, which is dissipated by a “drying up”; a gradual exhaustion, so as at last to leave the channel of the river in the heart of the great city, empty. Whilst the symbol of “waters” in the plural Apocalyptically signify “peoples, and multitudes and nations and tongues” (Rev. 17:15); in the singular, “water” represents military power (compare Revelation 12:15).

The expression in the Authorized Version, “the way of the kings of the east: is more literally “the way of the kings who are out of a sun’s risings”. The symbology of the Sixth Vial is based upon the overthrow of the literal city of Babylon by the Persian king, Cyrus, who was enabled to enter the city by diverting the course of the river Euphrates which flowed through the city and thus entered into Babylon by the dried-up water course. In the anti-type of the symbols contained in Revelation 16, the kings refer to the Saints who are associated with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), who is the Lord Jesus Christ.



The Turkish Empire in the Nineteenth Century

**Verses 13 and 14: “And I saw out of the Mouth of the Dragon, and out of the Mouth of the Beast and out of the Mouth of the False Prophet, three Unclean Spirits like Frogs; (for they are Spirits of Daemons working wonders) go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable, to gather them together for the war of that great day of the Deity who is almighty.”**

A “mouth” is Apocalyptically a symbol of government, through which a political organization gives expression to its policy. In this verse three such mouths are indicated. The “mouth of the dragon” is equated with the “mouth of the Serpent” in chapter 12:15,16. It refers to sin imperially manifested in the flesh and in the terms of the prophecy, enthroned in Constantinople.

The “mouth of the beast” is identical with the mouth of “the beast of the earth”, which speaks as a dragon (chapter 13:11) and which appears in chapter 17 as the imperial scarlet-coloured supporter of the “mother of harlots”. This refers to the Holy Roman Empire, whose mouth for a long time was enthroned in Vienna, but is now Germanic in character. Ezekiel 38 indicates that Gog’s policies will emanate from the land of Magog, answering to this same area.

The “mouth of the false prophet” is identical with the “lion mouth” of chapter 13:2,5 and 6. This is the mouth which speaks “great things and blasphemes”. It is the mouth, also, of the “image” (chapter 13:15), which is the two-horned ecclesiastical element of the European polity, headed up in the Papal dynasty and enthroned in Rome.

The “three unclean spirits like frogs” are described at great length in *Eureka*, Vol. III and relate to the rulers of France. The French Revolution changed the whole fabric of European society and the absolute monarchies of the pre-Revolution era were ultimately replaced by democratic republics.

The phrase “spirits of devils” is better rendered “spirit of demons” (*daimons*).

#### “DEMONS”

The term “demons” was applied to people suffering from mental diseases and epilepsy because of the ancient theory of Greek medicine which claimed that demons were the cause of the illness. These demons were looked upon as lesser gods, or the spirits of departed human beings who had the power to possess a person and so afflict them. A case in point is found in Acts 16:16, where a girl, obviously insane, is said to have a “spirit of divination” or of “Python”. (Python was the name of a mythical serpent who was supposed to have dwelt in Pytho at the foot of Mount Parnassus to guard the Oracle of Delphi and to have been slain by Apollo. From this myth, the name was transferred to Apollo himself and according to the popular manner of speech of the day, a diviner or soothsayer was popularly regarded as inspired by Apollo or possessed by Python.) The word *daimonion* is used in an interesting sense in Acts 17:18 and translated as “gods”.

Similar language is used today when a person is described as a lunatic (literally “moon-struck”), bewitched (affected by a witch), or the term “pandemonium” (literally “all the demons”). The Lord, similarly, used the idiom of the day when he cured people and it was termed “casting out devils”. The “unclean spirits”, therefore, relate only to the description of the disease, not to the possession of something such as the Greeks imagined. The fact that Jesus in his words used the language of the people can be seen from his comment on Beelzebub in Matthew 12:27.

In Revelation 16:14, the “spirits of demons” refers to the insanity among the nations driving

them on to the war “of the great day of God Almighty”. The prophet Jeremiah described the nations as “mad” in chapters 51:7 and 25:16. The “madness” among the nations today is a sign (translated “miracles” in the Authorized Version) that the thief-like advent of the Lord is near at hand and that he alone can cure the madness among the nations.

The “kings of the earth” refer to the Roman “earth”, described in previous chapters, but the time of trouble is not limited to that area alone, for it will also extend into the whole world (*oikoumene*, “inhabited earth”).

The “battle of the great day of God Almighty” is that day of which the prophets speak in such places as Zech. 14, Joel 3, Ezekiel 38, etc.

**Verse 15: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed he who is watching, and keeping his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they may see his shame”.**

Bro. Thomas comments in *Eureka* that the “position of this announcement of the thief-like advent in the prophecy, is remarkable. It stands between the going forth of the frog-like spirits and the gathering of the kings into Armageddon. This indicates, that the advent takes place before the gathering into that place or country. But, who is it that comes as a thief? This must be answered Apocalyptically. This prophecy is introduced by directing the reader’s attention to chapter 1, verse 4 and 8, to him ‘who is, who was, and who is coming’. In this latter text, this august personage styled himself ‘the Almighty One’, and in verse 13, “one like to a son of man’, ‘he that liveth, and was dead, and is living for the aions of the aions’. Verse 18. The Son of Man similitude whose ‘voice is as the sound of many waters’ or ‘the voice of a multitude’, the One Body of which the anointed Jesus is the Head is the Omega and the End, ‘who is to come’.”

### A NIGHT IN THE TEMPLE

One writer suggests that there is a remarkable similarity between the symbols of Revelation 16:15 and the nightly ritual in the Temple in Jerusalem.

“By day and night it was the duty of the Levites to keep guard at the gates, to prevent, so far as possible, the unclean from entering. To them the duties of the Temple police were also entrusted, under the command of an official known to us in the New Testament as the ‘Captain of the Temple’. (Acts 4:1) but in Jewish writing chiefly as ‘The Man of the Temple Mount’. The office must have been of considerable responsibility, considering the multitude on Feast Days, their keen national susceptibilities, and the close proximity of the hated Romans in Fort Antonia. At night, guards were placed in twenty-four stations about the gates and courts. Of these, twenty-one were occupied by Levites alone; the other innermost three jointly by Priests and Levites. Each guard consisted of ten men; so that in all two hundred and forty Levites and thirty Priests were on duty every night. The temple guards were relieved by day, but not during the night, which the Romans divided into four, but the Jews, properly, into three watches, the fourth being really the morning watch. Hence, when the Lord says, ‘Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching,’ he expressly refers to the second and third watches as those of deepest sleep (Luke 12:38).

During the night the ‘Captain of the Temple’ made his rounds. On his approach the guards had to rise and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten or his garments were set on fire - a punishment, as we know, actually awarded. Hence the

admonition to us who, as it were, are here on Temple guard, 'blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments'."

"... But then the preparations for the service of the morning required each to be early astir. The Priest whose duty it was to superintend the arrangements might any moment knock at the door and demand entrance. He came suddenly and unexpectedly, no-one knew when. The Rabbis use almost the very words with which Scripture describes the unexpected coming of the Master when they say, 'Sometimes he came at the cock-crowing, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later. He came and knocked, and they opened to him. Then said he unto them, All ye who have washed, come and cast lots.' (Compare Mark 13:35 and Mishnah Tamid i. 1,2)."

Edersheim, Alfred, "*The Temple - its Ministry and services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ*"

"The coming one, who makes his entrance stealthily, is not merely a single individual; but a body of individuals, consisting of the kings of the east and their prince (chapter 1:5) to prepare whose way the great River Euphrates has been dried up. It is the body of earth's future kings, who will all be conformed to the Christ-image (Rom. 8:21, 1 John 3:2). They constitute the mighty angel, Heaven descended, who had been clothed with cloud (chapter 10:1) and from whose glory the earth is illuminated (chapter 18:1)."

The Lord now gives to his disciples a sober warning to watchfulness and preparation for the day of his coming. The word "watch" signifies to "keep awake" and the keeping of the garments is a responsibility to ensure that that garment provided by the Lord when our sins are covered through the waters of baptism is kept firmly in place, secured by the girdle of a tried faith (Dan. 10:5), that the shame of nakedness does not appear. See previous notes on Rev. 3:1 to 6, the exhortation to Sardis.

**Verse 16: "And he gathered them together into the place which called Hebraistically, Armageddon."**

The prophet, Joel, describes the latter day gathering of all nations to experience the judgments of Yahweh and describes the locality as the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2). He further likens the judgments of Yahweh to the harvesting and threshing of corn (3:12,13), and likewise describes the valley Jehoshaphat as the "valley of threshing" (3:14 margin). The valley of Jehoshaphat (the northern end of the Kidron Valley, just outside the walls of Jerusalem) is the actual spot symbolically described as Armageddon in Revelation 16:16. This is the only occurrence of the word and as Bro. Thomas suggests in *Eureka*, Vol. III, pages 603 and 604, it is a compound word comprising the Hebrew words *arama* ("a heap of sheaves"), *ge* ("a valley"), and *don* ("judgment"): that is, "a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgment". This symbol is in keeping with those used by the prophets, who not only describe the harvesting and threshing of the nations, but also the involvement of the armies of Israel who shall be associated with the threshing and the treading out of the sheaves (Micah 4:11 to 13), and the prophet Malachi (chapter 4:1 to 3) describes how the stubble will be burned up. Daniel also speaks of these judgments in chapter 2, verse 35, when, referring to the destruction of

the great metallic image with feet of iron and clay, he states that the image shall be ground to powder and blown away “like the chaff of the summer threshing floor”. The Psalmist, however, shows that the sequel to these judgments will be the blessing which Christ’s reign will bring upon the nations, when he shall “come down like rain upon the mown grass” (Psa 72:6).

Many of the prophets, therefore, use these illustrations associated with the harvesting and threshing of corn to describe the latter-day judgments of God upon the nations. All of these facets are brought together in the one word “Armageddon”.

## **THE SEVENTH VIAL - THE FALL OF BABYLON THE GREAT**

**Verse 17: “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the Air: and there came forth a great voice from the Nave of the Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.”**

“The Seventh Vial is the concluding period of the Seventh Seal and of the Seventh Trumpet; in other words, the Vials, the Trumpets, and the Seals, all terminate at the same time. This Vial will not begin until after the resurrection period, the capture of Jerusalem by Gog’s forces and its recovery by the Lord Jesus Christ and the Saints. The casting out of the enemy from Jerusalem is followed by the establishment of the Nave, or Most Holy, and the Throne of David, therein. This must precede the outpouring of the wrath into the air; because ‘a great voice’ goes forth from the Nave Throne, saying, ‘it is done’; which could not be if the Throne had not already been set up. The Seventh Angel consists of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Brethren; who, though incorruptible and deathless, do not manifest themselves in their brightness, until they have accomplished the work of this Seventh Vial upon ‘the air’.”

(This can be seen from a literal rendering of Zechariah 14:5-7 “And Yahweh my Elohim shall come in: all the Saints with Thee. And it shall be in that day there shall be no brightness, the splendid ones drawing in, and it shall be one day that shall be known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it shall be at the time of evening there shall be brightness”.)

It will only be after the consummation of the judgments of the Seventh Vial, including the overthrow of Babylon the Great, the subjugation of the nations of Europe, the re-gathering of Israel to their land, and the building of the Temple, that the Glory will return, (Ezekiel 43:4), and the Saints “shall shine as the brightness of the firmament”.

“The air” is the political firmament or heaven of the world, and the “air” of the Seventh Vial is “the heaven” of chapter 20:11, which, in consequence of the wrath poured upon it, flies away with the earth that stands related to it. Compare the use of the same symbol in 1 Thess. 4:17, Eph. 2:2; and 6:12.

“The Nave of the heaven” is the anti-typical Most Holy Place, symbolically representing the One Body of Christ in immortality. At this period of time, the One Body is still in the process of pouring out the judgments of God as seen by the symbols in subsequent verses of thunders, lightnings, earthquake, etc.

The statement coming forth from the Nave “it is done”, indicates that all that had been predicted by the prophets is fulfilled. Compare Ezekiel 39:8.



**Verse 18: “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake so great.”**

When this earthquake shall occur, Yahweh Elohim will be enthroned in Jerusalem. The voices heard in the heaven will be that of the One Yahweh roaring out of Zion and uttering His voice from Jerusalem (Joel 3:16). Compare also Ezekiel 38:19 to 21; Isaiah 30:25; Haggai 2:6 and 21.

This may be called the “epoch of earthquakes”, for the period of the conclusion of the Sixth Vial is signalled by an earthquake that divides the Mount of Olives and creates a very great valley between its northern and its southern portion.

This shakes the earth whilst Gog is in the land, and will be one means which Yahweh will use to humble the nations. There will also be “nation-quakes” whose shocks will be felt worldwide. This is part of the “time of trouble such as never was”.

**Verse 19: “And the Great City came into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell; and Babylon the Great was called to mind before the Deity, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”**

As to the three parts into which the great city, Babylon, is divided, Bro. Thomas says, “We are left without positive information.” It is probable, however, that it answers to the three sections of verse 13. The dragon of Constantinopolitan power dominated by Russia will be overthrown first, followed by the false prophet (Rome), and finally the Catholic powers of Europe (the Beast), thus bringing about the fall of the cities of the nations.

**Verses 20 and 21: “And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And a great hail as of a talent’s weight descended out of the heaven upon the men; and the men blasphemed the Deity, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceedingly great.”**

A natural island is land entirely surrounded by water; a political island is analogous thereto inasmuch as it is a kingdom, or state, insulated from all other waters or peoples by which it is surrounded. Mountains on the other hand refer to political powers, such as the Kingdom of Babylon of the past (Jer. 51:25). This verse therefore indicates that all political powers, whether great or small, will become subject to the Stone-Kingdom which will grow and eventually fill the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34,35).

When a government sends forth its armies to lay waste its adversaries and their countries with fire and sword, its troops are a storm or plague of hail and each individual trooper is a hailstone of a certain weight. Again the natural elements are used as a symbolic representation of Yahweh’s judgment upon the nations. Compare Isaiah 28:2; Ezekiel 13:11. After the hail of the talent weight ceases, the wrath of the Seventh Vial burns no more. The Beast and The False Prophet have been destroyed, the Dragon is bound and shut down in the abyss, the ten horns are conquered, and nothing remains but the New Jerusalem government ruling in righteousness, a world of regenerated nations, blessed in Abraham and his seed for a thousand years.



## CHAPTER 17

# The Judgment of Babylon The Great

**Verse 1 and 2: “And there came one of the seven angels having the seven vials, and talked with me, saying to me, Come along; I will show to thee the judgment of the Great Harlot that sitteth upon the many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and they who inhabit the earth have been intoxicated by the wine of her fornication.”**

The Angel referred to here is obviously the one associated with the pouring out of the Seventh Vial, because it is during the period of this Vial that Babylon is to be judged (c.p. chapter 16:19).

The woman herein described as the great harlot, has been previously introduced in chapter 12, where it was seen that the community of believers, designed to be a chaste virgin unto Christ, through association with the things of the world (spiritual fornication) became in time more aptly described by the symbol “a great harlot”. For further details, see notes on chapter 12.

The “many waters” refers to peoples, as explained in chapter 17:15. Compare also Jeremiah 51:13. This symbol shows to us that mystical Babylon is not only a corrupt religious system, but also one claiming power over many peoples. It answers to the Papal system.

The wine of her fornication applies to the false doctrines that deceive the nations and make them “mad”. (Revelation 18:23; Jer. 51:7). by contrast with this, the Gospel of the Kingdom is described in Isaiah 55:1 as “wine and milk” which can be bought from God Himself. “Wine and milk” are both used in the Scripture as symbols of that which can bring happiness and health, but the mixed wine of Babylon brings only intoxication.

**Verse 3: “And he conducted me away into a wilderness in spirit; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of Names of Blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”**

The area of influence of this woman would be the “wilderness of the people” (Ezekiel 20:35), descriptive of that spiritual wilderness which will exist in the time of the end and into which the tribes of Israel will be re-gathered preparatory to their entering into

the Land under the leadership of Elijah. The condition of Israel in the wilderness of the people is described in Isaiah 35, and it will be the work of Christ and the Saints to bring the “water of life” into that “desert area”.

That this woman is associated with the Roman system can be seen from the fact that she rides upon the Beast previously introduced in chapter 13:1. The scarlet colour being the colour of sin (Isaiah 1:18) is a further designation of the Spirit’s assessment of this system.

**Verses 4 - 6: “And I saw the woman who had been arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, holding a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; And upon her forehead a name had been written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS, AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman intoxicated by the blood of the saints, and by the blood of the witnesses of Jesus: and beholding her, I marvelled with great astonishment!”**

The purple colour of the woman’s apparel is a symbol of royalty, because she “sits a queen”. It is also interesting to note that on a medal struck in 1825, in the reign of Leo XII, the Roman state is represented by a woman holding a cross in the left hand, and a cup in the right hand, extended, with the inscription *sedet super universam*, “she sits upon the universe”.

By contrast with the true Bride, who has the name of the Father sealed in her forehead (c.p. chapter 7:3; 14:1), this adulterous woman, is associated with the “mystery of iniquity” that the apostle Paul warned would come (2 Thes. 2:7). The drunkenness of the system, styled by Paul “the mystery of iniquity”, is the cause of the “strong delusion that they should believe a lie” (2 Thess. 2:11). They corrupted the Truth, and the corruption waxed strong in them; and deluded them into the belief of a lie or system of falsehood. By this, the nations of Christendom are overspread as by a covering (Isaiah 25:6-8). No nation is exempt from the delusion. The most enlightened believe “the lie” in common with the least. Delusion and Delerium have a near and intimate relationship and the stronger the delusion, the more intense the delerium. In the Apocalypse, therefore, when the strong delusion, in its effects upon the nations of Christendom, comes to be “signified” or represented, they are described as having been “made drunk”, and as being drunk and therefore in a state of delerium.

The appropriateness of the name, “Babylon” to designate this latter-day system of iniquity, is commented upon by Bro. Thomas in *Exposition of Daniel*, pages 7 and 8, where he makes the following statement; “In taking a general survey of the contents of the Book of Daniel, it may be seen that two great powers are the principal subjects of its predictions. The one is styled ‘the Kingdom of Men’ (Daniel 4:17), and the other ‘the Kingdom of God’ (Daniel 2:44; 4:3; 7:27). It is true, that there are many symbols, such as the Image, the fiery furnace, the tree-stump banded with iron and brass, the four beasts, the ram, and the he-goat; but these are signs in the prophetic heraldry, not of kingdoms distinct and independent of those which have preceded them, but of one and the same ‘Kingdom of Men’ in the several phases of its existence.

It will be seen that the Kingdom of Men has been diversified in its constitution,

extent and throne, since its foundation by Nimrod, to the present time. It has nevertheless been the same Nimroudian Kingdom with Babylon and Assyria for its characteristics.”

The designation “mystery Babylon” is extended to all other related systems which are not in harmony with Truth, because she is styled “the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the Earth”. She is described as drunken with the blood of the Saints because of the Papal persecutions and massacres of Protestants and so called heretics (compare chapter 11:17; 13:15).

The word “admiration” in verse 6 should be rendered with “great wonder” or “astonishment”. John was amazed that a system claiming to be the Bride of Christ could be guilty of such cruelty against the true believers.

**Verses 7 and 8: “And the angel said to me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will explain to thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, having the seven heads and the ten horns. The BEAST which thou sawest, was, and is not; but is hereafter to ascend out of the abyss, and to go away into perdition: And they who dwell upon the earth, of whom there hath not been written the names upon the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, shall wonder when they behold the beast that was, but is not, although it is.”**

The beast described in these verses is the same one that has been introduced in chapter 13, but with certain additional particulars. In the days of John it did not exist, for the ten horns upon it had not then received a kingdom. The territory upon which they now exist was then included in the Western division of the Roman Empire; but upon it, distinct horn kingdoms did not exist. In this sense, therefore, it is “the beast that is not”.

Further clues are given to the interpretation of this symbol in verse 10, “There are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come”. The beast of the sea, in its origin, could reckon up only seven heads upon the seven mountains; but this beast of the abyss can count the same seven with an additional head, which is styled “the Eighth”. The eighth head is “the Holy Roman Empire”, answering to the two-horned beast of Revelation 13, with its spiritual Emperor in Rome and its secular Emperor in Vienna. In verse 11, we are informed that the eighth head is one of the seven. It was, in fact, a revived form of the sixth or Imperial head (see notes on chapter 13:3). Although it was a different line of Emperors, it was, nevertheless, a government based upon the same principles as the old pagan, Imperial Roman system. In this sense it can be styled the “beast that was”.

Whilst this Romano-Babylonian system has changed its forms over the years, at no stage could it ever be said that it did not exist in some form or other, and therefore John, whilst saying that the beast “was and is not”, is also correct in stating “yet is”.

**Verses 9 - 11: “The mind having wisdom is this. The seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman is sitting upon them: they are also seven governments: the five have fallen, and the one is, and the other is not yet come; but when it may have come, it is necessary that it continue a short time. And the beast that was, but is not, even he is the EIGHTH, and he is of the seven, and goeth away into perdition.”**

The seven mountains define Rome both literally and symbolically. There are seven literal mountains upon which the city of Rome is built, as there have been seven forms of government, or seven kings, as described in verse 10. (For details of the mountains and forms of government, refer notes on chapter 12 verses 3 and 4).

Of the seven kings (or forms of government), John states that five have fallen. The Regal, Consular, Dictatorial, Decemviral, and Tirbunitial forms of government had passed. The one “that is” (in existence in John’s time) was the Imperial, and the one that “is not yet come”, but would “continue for a short space”, was the Gothic kingdom. The Gothic kingdom was at length replaced by a Papal system ruled jointly from Rome and Vienna, and whilst it was a new system, it was, in another sense, the re-establishment of Imperial Rome under the name of the Holy Roman Empire. (See notes on the “beast of the earth”, chapter 13:11 to 18).

The phrase to “go into perdition” in verses 8 and 11, suggest that it will be this eighth or Papal form of Roman government that will exist at the time when the Lord will return and destroy the system completely.

**Verses 12 - 14: “And the Ten Horns which thou sawest, are ten governments, which have not yet received kingdom; but they receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one purpose, and they shall deliver their power and authority to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those with him, called, chosen and faithful.”**

These verses describe a coalition between the ten horns (the European powers) and the Roman beast itself. Subsequent verses show that the time would come when they would also persecute the Roman system, as history testifies in the events of the French Revolution, the period of Napoleon, and such like. At the time of the end, when the Lord destroys this system, the Papal power will have again revived and hold sway over the nations of Europe.

In regard to the statement “receive power as kings one hour with the beast”, Bro. Roberts states, “The Ten-horned, scarlet coloured beast of Revelation 17, which we are considering, while embracing the history of that time, represents more particularly the constitution of the Roman Empire at the crisis of its destruction, as we have seen. Consequently, the ten kings of verse 12 are the powers that will confederate with Rome in the hour of her retribution. The cause of the unity of mind with which they ‘give their power and strength unto the beast for one hour’ is evidently the Lord’s presence in the earth - (though they know not he is the Lord, but imagine him an anti-Christ). ‘These’, it is added, ‘shall make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings’. The Lamb overcomes them, but not in a moment. To make war with the Lamb is not the work of a day. It implies all that is involved in preparation, organisation, discussing plans of campaign, etc., and extends over a considerable period. ‘One hour’, is not literal, of course; it must either be taken generally (‘this is your hour and the power of darkness’), or it must be understood with precision as the fraction of a duplicated day of years - that is a year of years. An hour of a day-year of years, would be the twelfth part of three hundred and sixty years - thirty

years. In either case, the statement brings with it the idea of a prolonged struggle.”

The power the horns receive with the beast co-exist with the eighth head of the beast. In the first instance this was the Holy Roman Empire, but as there is to be a latter-day manifestation of the beast (Revelation 16:13), so the system must be revived in the latter days. Current trends in Europe are clear indications of this latter day development.

**Verses 15 - 18: “And he said to me, The waters which thou sawest, where the Harlot is sitting, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the Ten Horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the Harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire. For the Deity hath given into their hearts to execute his will, and to perform one purpose, and to deliver the kingdom to the beast, until the predictions of the Deity have been fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest, is that Great City having dominion over the kings of the earth.”**

Verse 15 is one of those key verses which appear from time to time in the Apocalypse and give a clue to the interpretation of certain symbols. We are shown in this verse that waters, represent peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues. In the context of Revelation 17, the nations are those ruled over by the Roman harlot.

The conflict between the harlot and the horns of the beast as described in verses 16 and 17, consists of the anti-Papal policy of the European powers (especially France), in the events of the French Revolution and the subsequent campaigns of Napoleon. The Catholic Church has lost nearly all her power and is symbolically described as being made “desolate and naked”. Europe today consists of the beast with ten horns, but in the future will once again make an alliance with the woman. (See notes on chapter 18).

Verse 18 again provides another of the Spirit’s interpretations of the symbols of the Apocalypse, in that the woman is described as the “great city” - namely, the city of Rome. Bro. Thomas states, “This seventeenth chapter contemplates so much of the judgment of the great harlot as pertains to her preadventual consumption.” In other words, the 17th chapter describes the activities of the Papal system up to the coming of Christ and subsequent chapters describe her destruction at the hand of the Lord and the Saints.





## CHAPTER 18

# The Destruction of the Great Harlot

**Verse 1: “And after these things I saw an angel descending out of the heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated with his glory.”**

The statement “after these things” is the indication of a new vision which John saw. (See chart, Volume I, page 3). This new Angel is in addition to the seven which were involved in the pouring out of the Vials. When John says it is “after these things”, he means after the ten horns had hated the harlot and made her desolate, but not after the war of those ten horns with the Lamb. This other Angel, therefore, represents the Lord Jesus and the Saints, whose special mission is the destruction of this great city. They had been referred to previously as “the kings of the east” (Rev. 16:12), after the type of Cyrus and his armies that conquered the literal city of Babylon (Isaiah 45:1). Bro. Thomas points out that there are stages in the descent of this Angel. In the outset of the descent, the justified and glorified Jesus, descends to Sinai in whose wilderness he unites himself to ‘His Body’, the Bride, of whom he becomes the head. Thus recruited and enlarged, he is the “one Angel”, whose measure is 144 cubits (chapter 19:17 and 21:17). Having finished his work in Teman, he marches through the land in indignation and threshes the Gentiles he encounters in anger. Arrived at the Mount of Olives, he descends from thence into Jerusalem, the city of the great King, there, standing in the sun, he pauses in his descent upon the lofty city, Babylon, which he purposes to level with the dust. Before he invades her peoples with his troops, (Habakkuk 3), he sends forth a voice from the heaven, announcing the judgment that impends. When this proclamation is fulfilled he will then complete his descent upon Babylon, which he will not abandon until he has abolished her from the earth.

The development of “his glory” is in the overthrow of the great harlot; the destruction of the military and secular organizational power, “the beast that carries her”, and the conquest of the European kings and their armies: and in the new order of things he establishes on the ruin of the old. As the result of the whole operation, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh (of the Angel) as the waters cover the sea”. (Habakkuk 2:13 and 14; Isaiah 11:9; Numbers 14:21; Psalm 72:19).



**Verses 2 and 3: “And he shouted in power, with a loud voice, saying, Babylon the Great hath fallen, hath fallen! For she hath become a habitation of daemons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hated bird: For she hath caused all the nations to drink of the wine of the raging of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have fornicated with her; and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the potency of her voluptuousness.”**

The words of this Angel identify him with the second Angel of chapter 14:8. In this chapter we are given greater detail of the fall of Babylon which had been previously mentioned in chapter 14. This Angel is also the same as the one Paul refers to in I Thessalonians 4:16 and II Thessalonians 1:7.

The description of the overthrow of anti-typical Babylon is couched in terms reminiscent of Isaiah’s description of the overthrow of the ancient city of Babylon (Isaiah 13).

**Verses 4 - 7: “And I heard another voice from the heaven, saying, Come forth out of her my people, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have followed until the heaven, and the Deity hath called to mind her iniquities. Render to her as also she hath rendered to you, and double to her twofold according to her deeds: in the cup which she hath mingled, mingle for her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived profligately, so much torment and sorrow give to her; for in her heart she saith, I sit Queen, and am not a widow, and sorrow I shall not see at all.”**

Down through the ages the Spirit’s voice has sounded calling the people of God to separate themselves from that system of iniquity, styled “Babylon”. “Babylon is a system of things made up of every departure from the positive institutions and practices of the New Testament. The religious system of Christendom, in whole or in part can no-where be found in the Scriptures, except as the Apostasy, which they declare would arise, and cover the face of the nations as with a veil of strong delusion. The morality of the social system is vicious, giving countenance to all unrighteousness, viciousness, and malice; and judging from what comes out of their mouths the hearts of all kinds of religionists are full of envy, deceit and malignity; being whisperers, backbiters, slanderers, haters of truly good men, despicable, proud, boasters, volatile, and so forth; being lovers of trifling, more than lovers of God. Upon such, His law pronounces death.” (J. Thomas, “The Faith in the Last Days.” P. 310)

The more specific application of this verse, however, is in the time of Babylon’s judgment, when the mid-heaven proclamation (Rev. 14:6,7), shall go forth to the nations, calling upon them to “Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come”. At this time the invitation will be extended to the natural seed of Israel (after the type of the exodus from Egypt in the days of Moses) to come out of Babylon prior to the sounding of the second Angel, declaring “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (Rev. 14:8). The voice of this verse, is the Angel company flying in mid-heaven, and consisting of the Saints and the refined third of Judah under the leadership of Elijah taking the Lord’s proclamation to the nations. (Malachi 4; Isaiah 66:19,20; Ezekiel 20:33-40).

Bro. Thomas translates verse 5, “her sins have followed her until the Heaven”. He states, “Her sins have been her followers. They have not been fitful, or occasional, attendants; but have been the invariable and constant and desperate ruffians of her train, ‘until the Heaven’, that is, until the time arrived to establish the new Heaven. Had she repented of her deeds when the darkness or political eclipse of the Beast’s Kingdom was removed by the fall of Napoleon, her sins would not have followed her ‘until the Heaven’. But her officials ‘blasphemed the Deity of the Heaven and repented not of their deeds’ (chapter 16:11), but continued in the practice of all their abominations until now, and will do until sudden destruction comes upon them, from which there will be for them no escape.”

Although Rome survives the judgments of the first six Vials, and though shorn of the temporal power, the Papacy will revive in influence in the time of the end. With the fall of the temporal power Rome was in a sense, made a widow then; for the Pope

suffered a kind of political death, and his city was wedded to “the Usurper”, and became the capital of a united Italy.

**Verse 8: “On account of this her plagues shall come in one day, death, and anguish, and famine; and she shall be consumed in fire: for YAHWEH ELOHIM who judgeth her is powerful.”**

The fall of Babylon the Great - like Babylon of old - shall come suddenly and without warning (Jer. 51:64). The term “one day” does not mean a literal day, but refers to the day of Yahweh when His power shall be vindicated in the earth through the anti-typical Cyrus and the kings of the East. (c.p. Isaiah 45).

This judgment upon Babylon is part of the “judgment given to the Saints”. It is the Omnipotent Spirit who executes the judgment written; not as an abstract and naked power, but clothed with, and clothing, the Saints. The one body spiritualized, and therefore Spirit, is the “Lord God” of the text - the Spirit, who imposed upon Himself at the bush, the Name “Yahweh”, manifested in flesh “justified by spirit,” as the Elohim of Israel - Yahweh Elohim, He Who shall be Mighty Ones, the Omnipotent, “Who was, and Who is, and shall be” manifested in power and great glory, “the first and the last ones,” to resist whom will be certain destruction.

**Verses 9 and 10: “And the kings of the earth fornicating and luxuriating with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, having stood at a distance through the fear of her torment, exclaiming, Alas, Alas, that great city Babylon, that might city! for in one hour thy judgment hath come.”**

Although Babylon the Great is overthrown (the work of the Second Angel of Rev. 14), the kings of the earth survive her destruction, and it will be the work of the Third Angel (Rev. 14:9-11) to bring judgment upon those who have been the worshippers of the Beast. The term “smoke of her burning” is expressive of the political destruction of the system of Babylon, but may also apply in a literal sense as well, since literal earthquakes are to form a very important part of the changes which the Lord Jesus Christ will bring about when he returns (c.p. Zech. 14).

The statement “in one hour is thy judgment come” is again expressive of the suddenness of the overthrow of the city of Babylon. This could well be the effect of the earthquake which would destroy the city of Rome in a moment of time, thus leaving the kings of the earth in a state of wonderment and distress.

**Verses 11 - 13: “And the merchants of the earth shall wail and lament over her, because no-one buyeth their shipslading any more. Lading of gold, and of silver, and of precious stone, and of pearl, and of fine linen, and of purple, and of silk, and of scarlet: and all thiyne wood, and every ivory utensil, and every article of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon, and odours, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and grain, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and of carriages, and of bodies, and souls of men.”**

Bro. Thomas states, “the ships lading of a vessel is its cargo, which represents the revenues of the merchants, who own, or charter, or use the ship. The Roman ship has

for many ages been freighted with wares, which, have through the trading of its importers, brought back to the state the ladings referred to in these verses. Hence these things come to represent the spiritual wares, which cause the revenues to flow in from all countries into the treasury of the Church. Such, for instance, as masses for the dead, absolution of the living, indulgences for sin, consecrations of cemeteries, churches, sermonizings, reading Latin prayers, ordaining Priests, consecrating Bishops, sprinkling babies with 'holy water', and putting the sign of the cross upon their foreheads, marriages, burials, canonization of saints, lying wonders, and so forth. These belong to the invoice of wares which are the stock in trade of the soul and body merchants of the Great Harlot and her daughters and abominations of the Babylonian world. All the State and non-conformist churches of Europe and America deal more or less extensively in the invoice. They do not all keep the same assortment of wares; but they will all be found to deal in some of the articles enumerated as the lading of the old ship Babylon, whereby they are proved to belong to the shipmasters, ship's companies, sailors, and traders upon the sea, who bewail, and lament the fall of their Harlot mother, because no-one buyeth their ships lading any more".

It will be the privilege of the Saints in the Kingdom Age to execute upon Babylon "the judgments written" and to educate a world which has, for centuries, been steeped in the mysteries of the great delusion which the Roman system has spread over all nations.

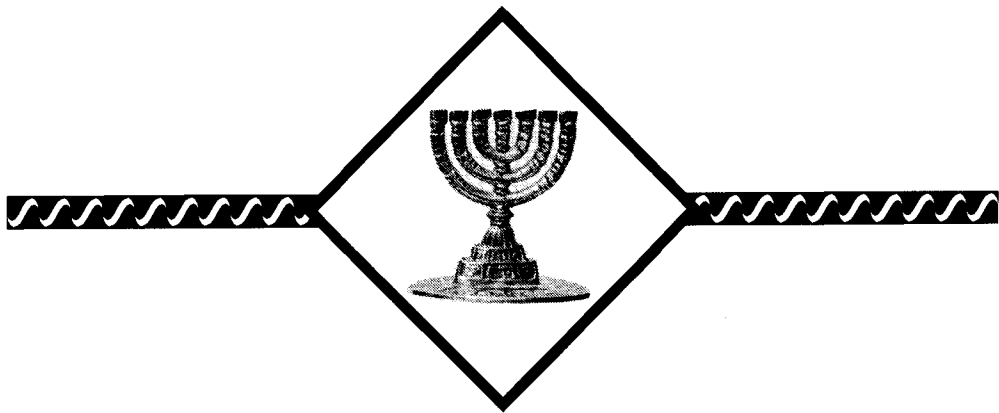
**Verses 14 - 19: "And the fruits of the cupidity of thy soul hath departed from thee, and every dainty and sumptuous thing is departed from thee, and no more shalt thou find them at all. The merchants of these things who have been enriched by her shall stand afar off through the fear of her torment, wailing and mourning, and exclaiming, Alas, alas, that great city, which had been clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stone, and pearls! for in one hour so much wealth hath been destroyed. And every shipmaster, and every company upon the ships, and sailors, and as many as ply the sea, stood afar off, and cried, seeing the smoke of her burning, exclaiming, What was like to that great city? And they cast dust upon their heads, and cried wailing and weeping, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, by which all having ships on the sea were enriched through her costliness; for in one hour she has been desolated!"**

There is a remarkable connection between the literal and the symbolic in these verses. Bro. Roberts states, "There is a literal Rome and a spiritual Rome, and while these are separate, yet they are to be identified one with the other, and in a sense, you cannot have one without the other. The Spiritual Rome is the architectural Rome in her ecclesiastical relations with the people of the earth. There could be no 'church of Rome' without a Rome to give that standard of affinity. There is no such collection of precious articles and art treasures in the whole world as there is in Rome. The result is that there is a concentration at Rome in the churches of a vast material wealth of the character described in the category occurring in verse twelve of this chapter."

**Verses 20 - 24: "Rejoice over her, O Heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for the Deity hath punished your condemnation by her. And one mighty angel**

**took up a stone like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence Babylon the great city shall be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and every craftsman of whatever craft shall be found no more at all in thee; and the sound of a mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a lamp 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 thy chief men of the earth; for by thy sorcery all the nations have been deceived. And in her had been found blood of prophets and saints, and of all who had been slain upon the earth.”**

With this typical overthrow of the city, this section of the Apocalypse concludes: but although the city has thus been symbolically “cast into the sea”, the Roman system survives.



# Behold, I Come Quickly . . .

*A Study of the Book of Revelation*

Section 5

Rev. 19-22 • Pages 187-216







## Introduction to Section Five

This fifth and final section of Notes on the Apocalypse covers John's final vision from chapter 19:1 to 22:21. The main theme of the vision is the development and manifestation of the New Jerusalem. It is a symbolic representation of the great community of the saints throughout all ages based upon the visions of the Old Testament prophets who looked for the day when the literal city of Jerusalem will be established as the metropolis of the future age.

As we examine the characteristics set forth in the symbols of this New Jerusalem there is a wonderful exhortation to those who would desire to be part of this community to persevere even unto the coming of the Lord being assured that "he that overcometh I will 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."

John's exhortation is "Behold, I come suddenly". Might it be that a study of the Apocalypse will help each one of us to find now as though in the future and therefore be prepared for the Lord at His Coming. We trust that these notes will be an assistance to this End.



## CHAPTER 19

# “The Marriage Feast of the Lamb”

**Verses 1 and 2: “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in the heaven saying, ‘Hallelu Yah’! The salvation and the glory, and the honour, and the power to YAHWEH our Elohim! For true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great harlot, who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”**

“After these things”, is an intimation that the vision about to be described, signified what is to happen after the fall of Rome. This is clear from the statement in these verses, “for he hath judged the great harlot . . . and hath avenged the blood of his servants”.

There is a change of scene in this chapter as attention is now directed away from Rome to Jerusalem. The phrase “much people in the heaven” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ in company with the saints who are in Jerusalem. They are seen rejoicing over the judgment poured out on Babylon the Great, as a further step in the complete subjugation of the earth (cp. Isaiah 65:17,18; Rev. 14:8).

“Alleluia”, or “Hallelu-Yah” means “Praise ye Yah” and the reason why these words are proclaimed is because of the fall of Babylon. The expression occurs only four times in the Apocalypse, viz. 19:1,3,4,6, but “Hallelujah” occurs prominently in the Psalms - for example, Psalms 111 to 113 and 146 to 150. Psalms 95 to 100 also speak prophetically of this time of judgment. The word “Hallelujah” is a compound word, incorporating the abbreviated form of Yahweh, the Memorial Name revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14,15). It is evident from such passages as this, that the Name was not just intended as a memorial for the Mosaic Age, but as applying to the true seed of Abraham who are the “Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Exodus 3:15; Gal. 3:27-29).

**Verse 3: “And the second time they said, ‘HALLELU YAH’.”**

The occurrence of the expression, “Hallelujah”, a second time, implies an interval between the first and second, during which there are further judgments following upon the fall of the capital and government of modern Babylon. At the first Hallelujah, “the remnant” still remained to be “slain by the sword of the King of Kings” (19:21). The

kings of the earth and the merchants who bewailed her destruction were as yet unconquered. The mission of the Third Angel of Revelation 14:9-11 has to be discharged between the first and second “Hallelujah”.

The Hallelujah was not raised by the saints when they first established the throne on Mount Zion. They had first to destroy the Roman Babylon before they could praise Yah and ascribe to Him the glory, honour and power of her desolation. Before they can apocalyptically say “Hallelujah” a second time, all the things described in chapter 19:11-21 must be accomplished.

The complete destruction of Babylon is declared in the words, “her smoke ascendeth unto the aeons of the aeons”. This is not literal, but refers to irremediable destruction as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. See notes on chapter 14:10,11.

**Verse 4: “And the twenty and four elders, and the four living ones fell down, and did homage to the Deity sitting upon the throne, saying, ‘Amen’, ‘HALLELU YAH”’.**

When this “Amen” is pronounced by the twenty four elders and four living ones, the war of the great day of the all powerful Deity will be ended. The “it is done” of the seventh vial will have been attained.

The elders and the living ones are symbols of the redeemed with Christ, previously introduced in chapter 4.

**Verses 5 - 8: “And a voice proceeded from the throne, saying, ‘Praise the Deity all of you his servants, and ye that fear him, both the small and the great’. 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 thunderings, saying ‘HALLELU YAH’. For Yahweh Elohim the all-powerful, hath prevailed! We can rejoice and exult, and have given the glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb hath come, and his betrothed hath made herself ready. And to her it hath been given that she may have been clothed with fine linen pure and resplendent, for the pure linen is the righteous actions of the saints.”**

The “Hallelujah” of verse 6, the “voice of the great multitude”, the “voice of the many waters” and the “voice of the mighty thunderings” are symbols associated with the first Hallelujah (verse 1). There are no thunders connected with the “Amen, Hallelujah” for all that succeeds this celebration is “Glory to God in the Highest Heaven and over the earth peace, and goodwill to men”.

Bro. Thomas states “The Hallelujah of the first time not only celebrates the ruin of the great harlot, and the prevailing of the Omnipotent, but gives the reason why they, the “heaven, and the holy apostles, and prophets” slain by her, are able to respond to the exhortation to ‘rejoice over her’. They say ‘we can rejoice and exult, and we have given the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb hath come, and his betrothed hath made herself ready . . .’ All this had been done in Teman (Sinai) and before the bride had been established upon Mount Zion. It is true that the English version reads differently, but the tenses are incorrect. The betrothed had made herself ready by deeds of righteousness, on account of which she had been married or united to the Lamb, in being invested with the clothing of incorruption. This investment was preliminary to judg-

ment being given them for execution upon the great harlot and the ten-horned scarlet beast that carried her. It was not until the occasion of the first Hallelujah celebration commemorating the destruction of the great harlot that the prowess of the Omnipotent Yah was celebrated by the ‘much people in the heaven’.

The marriage of the Lamb is the union that takes place between Christ and the saints when they have been raised from the dead and bestowed with immortality. As Adam and Eve (and all natural marriages) constitute two people, “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24) so the anti-type is seen in the union of Christ and his bride in which they become “one spirit”.

The Bride is in course of preparation now, as she develops those characteristics which will fit her to be the King’s wife (Psa. 45). For the garment of righteousness given to her, as a covering for sin, at the time of her baptism into the name of the Lord, will become a garment of salvation and she will be clothed upon with immortality. (See notes 1:13). Cp, also Gal. 3:27; Rev. 19:8,14; 2 Cor. 5:2,4.

The garment of righteousness is put on at baptism, and constitutes a sinner a saint. This must be followed by a life of manifest righteousness, with the garment held firmly in place by the golden girdle of tried faith. Hence Bro. Thomas translates the words as “the pure linen is the righteous actions of the saints”.

**Verses 9 and 10: “And he said to me, ‘Write! Blessed are they who have been called to the feast of the marriage of the Lamb’. And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of the Deity’. And I fell before his feet to do homage to him and he said to me, ‘See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus, do homage to the Deity: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy’.”**

The marriage feast is a separate event from the marriage itself. The marriage had taken place in Sinai but the feast, with all the invited guests, will be celebrated in Jerusalem.

#### Marriage Customs

The following extract on marriage ceremonies is taken from Unger’s Bible Dictionary - “Before the time of Moses, when the proposal was accepted, the marriage price paid, and the gifts distributed, the bride-groom was at liberty to remove at once the bride to his own home (Gen 24:63-67). This was an unusual case, because of the bride being secured at a distance, while the bridegroom remained at home. Usually the marriage took place at the home of the bride’s parents, and was celebrated by a feast, to which friends and neighbours, were invited and which lasted seven days (Gen. 29:22,27). The word “wedding” does not occur in the A.V. of the Old Testament; but it is probable that some ratification of the espousal with an oath took place (see Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8; Mal. 2:14), and that a blessing was pronounced (Gen. 24:60; Ruth 4:11,12). But the essence of the ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father’s house to that of the bridegroom or his father. There seems, indeed, to be a literal truth in the Hebrew expression “to take” a wife (Num. 12:1; 1 Chron. 2:21, marg.) for the ceremony appears to have mainly consisted in the taking. After putting on a festive dress, placing a handsome turban on his head (Isa. 61:10, A.V. “ornaments”) and a nuptial crown (Song. 3:11), the bridegroom set forth from his house, attended by his groomsmen (A.V. “companions”, Judges 14:11; “children of the bride-chamber”, Matt. 9:15), preceded by a band of musicians or singers (Gen. 31:27; Jer. 7:34; 16:9), and accompanied by persons bearing flambeaus (Matt. 25:7, c.p. Jer. 25:10; Rev.

18:23, "the light of a candle"). Having reached the house of the bride, who with her maidens anxiously expected his arrival (Matt. 25:6) he conducted the whole party back to his own or his father's house, with every demonstration of gladness (Psa. 45:15). On their way back they were joined by a party of maidens, friends of the bride and bridegroom, who were in waiting to catch the procession as it passed (Matt. 25:6). The inhabitants of the place pressed out into the streets to watch the procession (Song. 3:11). At the house, a feast was prepared, to which all the friends and neighbours were invited (Gen. 29:22; Matt. 22:1-10; Luke 14:8; John 2:2), and the festivities were protracted for seven, or even fourteen days (Judg. 14:12). The guests were provided by the host with fitting robes (Matt. 22:11), and the feast was enlivened by riddles (Judg. 14:12) and other amusements. The bridegroom now entered into direct communication with the bride, and the joy of the friend was "fulfilled" at hearing the voice of the bridegroom (John 3:29) conversing with her, which he regarded as a satisfactory testimony of the success of his share in the work. The last act in the ceremonial was the conducting of the bride to the bridal chamber, (Judg. 15:1; Joel 2:16), where a canopy, named *huppah*, was prepared (Psa. 19:5; Joel 2:16). The bride was still completely veiled, so that the deception practised on Jacob (Gen. 29:23) was very possible. A newly married man was exempt from military service, or from any public business which might draw him away from his home, for the space of a year (Deut. 24:5). A similar privilege was granted to him who was betrothed (Deut. 20:7)."

This first Hallelujah will be a great festival. John was commanded to write, and to say, "Blessed are they who have been called to the feast of the marriage of the Lamb". There will be two classes that will be blessed; the first consisting of those who, having believed the gospel of the kingdom, been immersed, and thenceforth continued patiently in well doing; and the second class consisting of the "many waters", or peoples, who may have already become joined to Yah as the subjects of His dominion. The destruction of the great harlot corrupter of the earth, will prepare many people for the reception of the light. The veil spread over them will be removed, and they will be able to "buy wine and milk without money and without price". (Isaiah 25:6,7; 55:1).

The angel would not receive homage of the apostle John and the angel in the scene represents the brethren of Christ. They were the fellowservants, brethren and prophets, who keep the sayings of the apocalyptic prophecy - who keep in memory the saying, and who keep them in the sense of executing the judgments of the seventh vial. The angel's declaration in the scene, indicated that the class he represented was restored to life; for he says he was one of them. John and he meet in the "time of the dead", and see and hear the things of the prophecy in their fulfilment, which they were before acquainted with only in vision when the apocalypse was communicated in Patmos.

**Verse 11: "And I saw the heaven which had been opened, and behold a White Horse, and one sitting upon him, called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judgeth and makes war."**

The scene in the following verses is an amplification of Revelation 17:12 when the Ten Horns receive power as kings one hour with the beast (i.e. with the eighth head). The Ten Horns and the Lamb, are the parties in the great war described therein, and the result of the conflict will be the transfer of all power and authority to Christ (Psa. 2:8, Zech. 14:9).

The "heaven which had been opened" is the heaven of Revelation 4:1,2 when the

Lord Jesus Christ sits on David's throne in Jerusalem. The time setting of the vision is, therefore, subsequent to the opening of the heaven, and the appearance of the Lamb with the 144,000 upon Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1).

The Commander-in-Chief, (or "Captain who leads many sons to glory") was seen by John sitting upon a white horse in the opened heaven; and all his "called and chosen and faithful" hosts sitting upon white horses likewise (cp verse 14). The white horse which the commander rides is not the Roman horse of Revelation 6:2 which was seen in the First Seal period, but the goodly horse of the House of Judah (Zech. 10:3, cp also Zech. 9:13; 12:7). The horse will become nationally white, or goodly, being washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

The work to be done at the appearing of Christ, being a work of God, we should expect it to be done in an orderly and consecutive manner. What more orderly and appropriate than the following programme, which appears from the symbols and testimonies bearing upon the case:

1. The arrival of Christ in the earth as a thief during the progress of the sixth vial, viz., in this current epoch, when the political Euphrates is at the dried-up point, and the nations of the earth in an armed state, as the result of the policy of the political frogs (Rev. 16:15).

2. The gathering together of the household of faith - living and dead, faithful and unfaithful, into his presence, to be judged by him - as the 'account' may warrant - to be accepted or rejected - immortalised or sentenced to inherit corruption according as it shall be shown the things done during probationary life have been good or bad (2 Thess. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:1; Luke 19:15; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; Luke 12:8-9; Gal. 6:8).

3. The sending away of the rejected to await the judgment that will "devour the adversary" (Heb. 10:27), that is the manifestation of Divine power that will overthrow the nations who will oppose Christ, organized as "the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41), and Apocalyptically described as "the great dragon, that old serpent, the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 20:1-2).

4. A season of rejoicing together (in the seclusion of the judgment scene - probably Sinai - in the presence of the attendant host of angels), on the part of Jesus and his accepted brethren - the long separated but now united bride and bridegroom, yielding mutual joy and gladness - the bridegroom beholding in the bride the fruit of 'the travail of his soul' during the terrible days of his sufferings and the bride, realizing in the spectacle of her visible Lord and Saviour that 'joy unspeakable and full of glory', which, in measure, she experienced in the days of faith, when she had to say 'whom having not seen, we love' (John 16:22; Matt. 25:21; Isa. 53:11; 1 Pet. 1:8).

5. Their ascent together from the desert to the mountains of Israel to way-lay and overwhelm the northern Gog, who will have victoriously overspread the resettled Holy Land, and have brought the partially restored Jews into great affliction, he resting in confident possession of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:5; Joel 3:11; Ezek. 38:1-12,21; Dan. 11:45).

6. The destruction of the northern hosts, and the expulsion of a miserable remnant out of the land (Ezek. 39:1-5; Isa. 17:14).

7. The setting up again of David's fallen tabernacle (Amos 9:11).
8. A call to the nations to surrender to Yahweh's king, enthroned on Zion (Psa. 2:6,10-11; Isa. 52:13-15; Rev. 14:7).
9. The destruction of Rome (Rev. 14:8; 18:21).
10. Great rejoicings in Jerusalem (Rev. 18:1-6).
11. Preparation in the Holy Land for carrying war into the enemy's country, and inflicting the vengeance of God throughout the world (Isa. 41:15; Micah 4:13; Jer. 51:20; Rev. 19:11-16).

**Verses 12 and 13: "But his eyes are as it were a flame of fire and upon his head many diadems: having a name which had been written, which no one knows but he himself. And he had been clothed with a garment that had been dyed with blood; and his name is called, the Word of the Deity."**

The name written, which no-one knows but he himself is called in verse 13, "the Word of God". It is of significance to note that it was the Apostle John, who, in his Gospel record described the Lord as the "Word made flesh". He now sees him as the Word manifest in Spirit power.

The term "crowns" in this verse, (Greek, *diadem*) occurs only here and in Rev. 12:3 and 13:1. This is the crown of royalty (as opposed to the coronal wreath - *stephanos*) and symbolises his many successful conquests.

**Verse 14: "And the hosts in the heaven followed him upon white horses, having been clothed with fine linen white and pure".**

These hosts being invested with the same clothing as the betrothed, indicates that they are the same persons. In the scene before us, they illustrate the name "Yahweh Tzvaoth", which signifies in English "He Who shall be Hosts". They are the kings and lords, the official companions of the Great King, who accompany him in all his enterprises against the nations. They are the third angel, and the angels of the harvest and vintage scenes of Rev. 14 and Joel 3:13.

Here then we have a complete army exhibited for the conquest of the nations, and the salvation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel - the Lord Jesus Christ, the commander; "the called, chosen and faithful", his brethren and companions, filling all the offices of the army; and the men of the Hebrew race the goodly soldiery of the Kingdom. The heavenly hosts, or immortal saints, are "the heavens" ridden by the "El of Jerhurun" (Deut. 33:26); while these heavens ride upon their goodly Hebrew horses to the destruction of all the governments of the world.

**Verses 15 and 16: "And out of his mouth goeth forth a sharp long-sword, that with it he may have smitten the nations; and he shall govern them with an iron rod and he treadeth the vat of the wine of the wrath of the indignant of the all-powerful Deity, and he hath upon the garment, and upon his thigh the name which had been written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

The symbol of the sword proceeding out of the mouth is taken from Isa. 49:2. Isaiah also speaks of Christ "smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips" slaying the wicked (Isa. 11:4).



The treading of the wine vat links the theme with that of Rev. 14:18-20 which is another description of the same period of judgment.

The garment and the thigh are symbolic of his strength - that is, his triumph over death and that he is now clothed with immortality. The thigh is where the sword is worn (Psa. 45:3,4) and is a reference to his work of judgment.

**Verses 17 and 18: "And I saw one angel who had stood in the sun: and he shouted with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls flying in hid-heaven, 'Come hither, and assemble together for the banquet of the powerful Deity, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of chieftains, and the flesh of mighty ones, and flesh of horses and of those sitting upon them, and the flesh of all, both free and bond, and small and great'."**

In the original text it is not simply "AN angel", but emphatically "ONE angel". This angel is the one that "had stood in the sun", but translated in the English version as "standing in the sun". This reference to a past position of the angel, gives a clue to his identity. The only place in the previous chapters where a body of people having a mission are found "in the sun", is the twelfth chapter. This angel-body is there styled "a woman", who is said to have "been clothed with the sun". A community clothed with the sun is "standing in the sun" so long as it continued so invested. But this angel woman did not continue to stand in the sun, for she fled into the wilderness where she remained for 1260 years. It could therefore be said of her that she had "stood in the sun"; but has never stood there since. It was a great military success that placed her temporarily "in the sun" - the conquest of the Pagan-Dragon government by her deliver, Constantine, who, in this particular, was a type of her greater and eternal deliverer, the king of kings and lord of lords, whose conquest of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, will place her in the sun to enlighten the earth with glory.

The loud voice of the one angel is one of the voices of the Seventh Vial (chapter 16:18), preparatory to Ephraim being shot forth like lightning from the Judah bow in the hand of Yahweh Elohim (Zech. 9:13,14). It is the loud voice of the Rainbow Angel as of a lion roaring. This had been preceded by a loud voice, announcing in all the mid-heaven, or "air", into which the seventh Vial will be poured, that the hour of judgment, so long threatened, had actually arrived (chapter 14:6). This is a voice of peace, friendship, and goodwill, to all who shall obey it; but terrible in its consequences to all those who shall neglect or reject it. The angel who proclaims this loud voice, or message, to the nations, "flies in mid-heaven" - in the apocalyptic "mid-heaven", which is peopled by birds of prey, then ready to take wing when the loud voice of the one angel shall reach them. It is the same angel who makes proclamation in mid-heaven, that invites the fowls of the mid-heaven to the Deity's banquet of slaughtered kings (See further notes on Rev. 14:6,7).

The proclamation of good news in mid-heaven by the saints is not only to warn the nations what is about to break forth upon them, but so to operate upon the scattered Israelites, as to make them willing to acknowledge Jesus as David's son and lord, and to place themselves at his disposal, so that whatever he, as the "prophet like unto Moses", may command to be done, they will readily and zealously obey, under the direction, orders, and superintendence of those of his brethren who he may appoint.

The apocalyptic banquet for the fowls of heaven is the last period of judgment upon the worshippers of the beast and his image. The loud voice of the one angel calls them to the work of slaughter. Babylon having fallen, the work of the third angel has now to be executed upon her sympathising survivors, the kings of the earth and their armies. John saw them already gathered in battle array; and he saw the fowls gathered who were to devour them - the ravenous birds of him who rides the godly horse and his hosts of the heaven.

**Verses 19 - 21: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies which had been gathered together to make war with him sitting upon the horse, and with his host. And the Beast had been taken and with him the False Prophet who had worked the wonders before him, with which he had deceived them who received the sign of the beast, and who worshipped his image. The two had been cast alive into the lake of the fire burning with brimstone. And the rest had been killed with the long-sword of him sitting upon the horse, which sword proceedeth from his mouth and all the fowls had been satiated with their flesh."**

Bro. Thomas states: "A lake is a tract of standing water. The lake into which the beast and the false prophet are to be cast, is not, however, of water, but of fire. A lake of fire is a tract of land in a state of fiery ignition. The Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, with their officials, are the symbols of what the Lord Jesus in his discourse recorded in Matthew 25 styles "the devil and his angels"; for whom the fire of aionion judgment has been prepared. The Beast and the False Prophet are symbols of relation and comparatively modern developments upon the original Dragon territory. The title "the devil and his angels" is, in effect, inscribed upon the Dragon in the words, "the Dragon, the old serpent, who is Devil and Satan". His origin is rooted in rebellious human nature and therefore he is "Devil"; and being always, in whatever form he may exist, the enemy of the Truth and righteousness of the Deity, and the adversary of His adherents, he is Satan.

## CHAPTER 20

# The First Resurrection and the Thousand Years

**Verses 1 - 3: “And I saw an angel descending from the heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain upon his hand. And he laid hold of the Dragon, the old serpent, who is Devil and Satan, and he bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a mark over him, that he might deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years had been finished: and after these it is necessary that he be loosed a short time.”**

The significance of this symbolism becomes evident enough after what has gone before. It shows the elements of previous scenes in new combinations. Just as the marriage scene gave way to a picture of war, in which the marriage parties appear in a new guise; so here we have the combatants in the war under a new figure, illustrative of the altered relations resulting from the war. The heaven-descended angel is Jesus and the saints (chapter 18:1); the key and chain, power to open and shut at will, and to bind or reduce to a condition of powerlessness; the dragon the Devil and Satan, or human nature in organised opposition to God, also called the Old Serpent, because the Edenic serpent was the beginning of human rebellion, and became the symbol of the system resulting from it. For such an angel to lay hold on the dragon and bind him, is for Jesus and the saints to seize on human government, and impose on all its officials such a restraint as will effectually prevent them from re-asserting their authority, or making any attempt to re-establish their power. To cast him into the abyss - (translated “bottomless pit”) is to eject human nature - (sin’s flesh, alias “the devil”) - from all share in the government and to cast all its officials into privacy among the common people. To shut him up, and set a seal upon him, is to establish such a system of repression and watchfulness as will leave no loophole for the escape of human Satanism from the abyss of powerlessness into which it will be thrown.

Whilst the Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the lake of fire (chapter 19:20) the Dragon is not destroyed, but simply bound for a thousand years, at the end of which time he is loosed for “a little season”. The Beast and False Prophet are destroyed so that similar political organizations never again appear upon the

earth, while the Dragon, in consequence of flesh and blood nature being still the constitution of the subject nations, is only shut up and bound, waiting its opportunity to reassert its independence of the Divine government of the saints. The Beast and False Prophet are symbols of relation and comparatively modern developments upon the original Dragon territory. This same event is represented in Daniel's prophecy when Daniel saw the "dreadful and terrible fourth beast" (chapter 7:11) consigned to the flames for total destruction. As for the rest of the beasts (chapter 7:12), their dominion was taken away but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. Thus we are informed, that while the apostate political system will be totally destroyed, mortal nations will continue to exist for a season and a time (a thousand years) but with their political dominion taken away.

The abyss is representative of the aggregate of the nations occupying the Dragon section of the inhabited earth. (See further notes on verse 7 in reference to the post-Millennial revolt).

**Verse 4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment had been given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the word of the Deity, and who had not worshipped the beast, or his image, and had not received the sign upon their forehead, and upon their hand and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years."**

Those who occupy thrones of judgment are described as "them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God". This does not mean that it is only those who have been martyred for the Truth that will be eligible for such a position of honour. There is, however, a special appropriateness in classifying the occupants of the Millennial thrones in this way, in view of the preceding portion of the vision, which exhibits the beast and his image in the ascendant in all the earth, and prevailing against the saints, "even unto death". The time has now come in this chapter for a reversal of position. The saints rise from the dead; the beast and his image are destroyed, and the saints reign. Those who have contended for the Truth, and in the process suffered for it (2 Tim. 2:12) will "reign with him" regardless of the form of their death.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the Millennial reign of Christ in 1 Cor. 15:24-28 and whilst he did not specify the exact period, he pointed out the necessity of this reign to allow for all enemies to be brought into subjection unto Christ - the last enemy to be destroyed being death. The prophet Daniel in speaking of the extension of life granted to the "rest of the beasts" (Dan 7:12) stated that the period of prolongation was a season and a time. Bro. Thomas observes in *Exposition of Daniel* that "a 'season and a time' is one thousand years, or two 'times' of 360 years each and a 'set time' of 280 years; or nine months and ten days of years, 280 days being a 'set time' or period of gestation (Gen 21:2). For this season and time the holy ones possess the world as theirs. At the end of that time, sin being eradicated, death is abolished and their priesthood necessarily ceases". (pp. 21 and 22).

### The Millenium

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millenium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in the present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy, it was inferred, that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth until the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. The assurance of such a Millenium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was Preceptor to the son of Constantine. Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers: and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the Christian faith. But when the edifice of the Church was almost completed, the temporary support was laid aside, the doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism.

Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 15.

**Verses 5 and 6: “But the rest of the dead ones lived not again until the thousand years had been finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he having part in the first resurrection: upon these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of the Deity and of the Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.”**

The prophet Daniel informs us that “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) Jesus states, “the hour is coming in which all that are in the grave 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.” It is therefore clear from these testimonies that both the righteous and unrighteous will come forth from the graves with the same earthy nature to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The difference is that one class comes forth unto a resurrection of life and the other unto a resurrection of damnation. This mixed multitude comes forth at the same hour for two separate and distinct ends or destinies the one sort to die again, and to reap of the flesh corruption, the other sort to live in the aion and beyond, possessing the kingdom with eternal glory.

In these verses, however, the term “first resurrection” is applied to only that class upon whom the second death will have no power, therefore it is obvious that “first” must be understood in a sense other than meaning first in respect of time. Bro. Thomas states: “Perceiving, then, that ‘the first resurrection’ does not consist of the indiscriminate mingled people, who come forth from the grave in the hour of judgment; we proceed now to attend to what John says the first resurrection is. The first resurrection consists of those who ‘come forth to a resurrection of life’; of the one hundred and forty four thousand redeemed from the earth, having the Lamb’s Father’s name written in their foreheads; of the redeemed from among men, the FIRSTFRUITS unto the Deity

and to the Lamb, in whose mouth is found no guile and who are without fault before the throne of the Deity (Rev. 14:4). These all being the firstfruits unto the Deity are Apocalyptically styled 'the first resurrection'. It is not so styled in relation to a second or third resurrection: but because it is the resurrection of the firstfruits. Christ is the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's in his presence -and are planted in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6:5) are resurrection firstfruits also. Therefore blessed and holy is he that hath part in the firstfruits resurrection on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of the Deity and of the Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

During the Millennial age, death will still prevail among the mortal population, and therefore there will be the necessity of a resurrection of those who have died during the Millennium when the thousand years are finished. Bro. Thomas states "The 'rest' is the remainder of a whole number of certain dead ones to whom eternal life is to be imparted by the son. The firstfruits are only the earnest of the harvest to be gathered in. The Millennial generation will have the happy assurance, that, though the resurrection of the firstfruits had passed, there would be a resurrection of the remainder of the whole number originally given by the Father to the son. The manifestation of this whole number 'redeemed from among men', is assigned to two notable and extraordinary epochs; the first, the beginning of the thousand years; the second, the end thereof. The first epoch precedes the Millennium, and is illustrated by the resurrection of the firstfruits; the second epoch after the Millennium, is passed, is celebrated by the manifestation in life of 'the rest of the dead' given by the Father to the son to complete the fold - 'one fold and one shepherd' - 'the Deity the all things in all'.

After the thousand years are passed, the restraint, represented by the great chain in the angel's hand, will be relaxed. A generation of flesh and blood will then be living, whose men and women will have been born in times of peace and great prosperity. Some have thought it strange that after a thousand years of righteous reign, there should be such a revolt as this, and have sought to explain it away as being a description of events prior to the Millennium as described in Ezekiel 38. There are a number of reasons why this cannot be correct, the foremost of which being the correct understanding of human nature itself. The theory which suggests that there will be no post-Millennial revolt is based on the concept that if flesh is placed in a good environment it will become good and therefore after a thousand years of good reign it would be incongruous to expect a revolt of this nature. The Scriptures, however, teach otherwise. "In the flesh dwells no good thing", and the Apocalypse itself has made it clear that whilst the beast and false prophet have their lives terminated at the beginning of the Millennium, the dragon, in consequence of flesh and blood nature being still the constitution of the subject nations, is only shut up and bound and when given the opportunity reasserts itself at the end of the Millennium.

## Gogue and Magogue in Ezekiel and the Apocalypse.

If the reader compare the two prophecies, he will discern the following diversities, which prove them to be confederacies belonging to different epochs.

1. The Gogue of Ezekiel invades Judea “in the latter days”; but the Apocalyptic Gogue does not invade the land till 1,000 years after the building of the dragon;

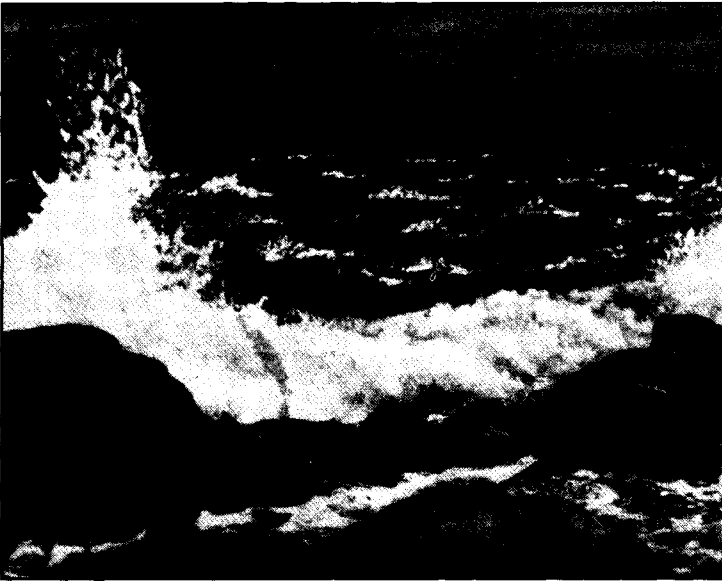
2. Ezekiel’s Gogue goes forth from the north; John’s from the four corners of the earth;

3. The Ezekiel-Gogue’s invasion is the occasion of the Lord’s manifestation, and therefore premillennial; but that of John’s is after the Lord has reigned with his saints on earth 1,000 years, and therefore post-millennial;

4. The Lord himself brings the Ezekiel-Gogue against his land; but some arch-rebel stirs up hitherto loyal nations against the government, and as the Apocalyptic Gogue and Magogue defy the king already in Jerusalem;

5. The Lord brings the Ezekiel-Gogue up to battle against Jerusalem, that he may be made known to the nations; but John’s Gogue has known Him for 1,000 years.

*Elpis Israel*, pp. 421,422



“The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57).

**Verses 11 - 15: “And I saw a Great White Throne, and him sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place had been found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, who had stood before the Deity, and books had been opened; and another book had been opened; which is of the life; and the dead had been judged out of the things which had been written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea had given up the dead in it, and death and the grave had given up the dead in them; and every one had been judged according to their deeds. And death and the grave had been cast into the lake of fire. This is the Second Death. And if any one had not been found written in the book of the life, he had been cast into the lake of the fire.”**

Bro. Roberts states: “Now the aggregate of those who died during the reign of Christ must be very great, and as these will be times of great light, they will be times of great responsibility. Consequently when at the suppression of the post-millennial revolt, the time arrives for the great antitypical harvest into life eternal, something like a general resurrection must take place differing very much in its extent from that which takes place at the pre-millennial coming of Christ, on account of the great difference in the dispensation preceding it. This seems to be the teaching of the scene described by John in these verses. The import of the leading features of this scene must be evident enough. A Great White Throne - the symbol of righteousness in judgment: the occupant of it, the Mighty One before whose face the whole fabric reared by the post-millennial politicians had crumbled into nothing; the dead, those who had died but were now raised; the open books, symbols of the law by which they will be judged; the book of life, the Divine record (preserved on something more enduring than parchment) of those who are chosen for life eternal because of obedience; the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire, the obliteration of death and the grave from the earth by the giving over to the destroying judgment of God of all who are Divinely decreed worthy of death, leaving in the land of the living those only who by the same prerogative are adjudged worthy of the unspeakable gift of immortality. When this mighty result had been reached, a new state of things upon the earth must result from the altered conditions. Till then sin and death will always more or less have prevailed necessitating arrangements and institutions suitable thereto. But now, the population will be without exception immortal, and socially and racially fused into one, as the result of assimilation to a common perfection of nature and harmony with God.”

*Thirteen Lectures, page 177.*



## CHAPTER 21

# The Holy City - The New Jerusalem

**Verse 1: “And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away: and the sea is no more.”**

The twenty-first chapter sees “a new heaven and new earth”, which from the description is seen to be a perfect condition of things, in which there is no more death - death and Hades and the last rebels have been utterly destroyed. It is a heaven and earth in connection with which there is “no more sea” that is, no longer any multitude of flesh and blood, nations liable to be stirred into tumult and needing to be stilled by the Divine control.

The Israelitish new heavens and new earth are those of the millennial reign, called in this chapter “the former heaven and the former earth”. These will be a great advance upon the conditions of the Mosaic dispensation and the Gentile times, but their glory will fall short of the ultimate order of things beyond when the last enemy shall have been destroyed. “We learn this from Paul”, says Bro. Thomas, “in his reference to visions and revelations, granted unto him, it would seem, for his own exclusive benefit; for he would not, could not, or might not, communicate what he had seen and heard to others” (2 Cor. 12:1). Speaking of himself, he says: “I have known a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in body I know not, or without the body I know not; the Deity knew), such a one suddenly transported into a third heaven. I have known such a man that had been transported into the Paradise, and had heard secret things which it is not lawful for the man to utter”. This Paradise, or third heaven, in full manifestation, is John’s new heaven and new earth, in which there is no more sin. In the “former earth” which passes away, there is sin, and generation, and death; and because of the existence of sin and flesh and blood and death there are mediatorship and priesthood, and ruling with an iron rod. These things are not to continue permanently. Sin, which is the transgression of law, must be wholly and finally suppressed; flesh and blood must be exterminated from the earth; disease and death, which are the wages of sin, abolished; mediatorship and priesthood, necessary in the offering to the Deity of gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the erring and the ignorant, “delivered up to the Father”; and religion, which is a Divinely appointed remedy for an existing breach between the

creature and the Creator, superseded, as having answered its purpose, and being, therefore, no longer necessary. All these things pertaining to the former or millennial heaven and earth John saw had passed away ...

There are three “stages” of “the sea” answering to the three heavens described previously.

The sea of nations today is troubled (Isa. 57:20) and roaring, (Luke 21:25) with men’s hearts failing them for fear; this is the first stage. The second, is the millennium when the nations at peace are symbolized by a “sea of glass” (Rev. 4:6). Consequently, the third “stage” as described in this verse is when there is “no more sea” and depicts the period beyond the millennium when there will be no more mortal nations.

**Verse 2: “And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from the Deity out of the heaven, having been prepared as a bride who had been adorned for her husband.”**

THE HOLY CITY – by metonymy the city stands for its inhabitants (Matt. 8:34; 12:25; 21:10; Mark 1:33; Acts 13:44.

NEW – Not new in respect of time (Gr. “neos”), but new as regards form or quality (Gr. “kainos”).

JERUSALEM – The redeemed - Rev. 3:12; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Psa. 87:5.

FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN – They are begotten from above (John 3:3) through the incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23). See also 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Rev. 22:12.

AS A BRIDE – 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; 21:9; 22:17.

ADORNED – Isaiah 61:10

**Verse 3: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, ‘Behold the tabernacle of the Deity with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and the Deity himself will be with them, their Deity.’”**

They shall all of them be divine people, like to the saints who will have ruled the nations for the thousand years. Having come forth from the graves, they become, together with the living who suffered not themselves to be deceived by the Devil and Satan in the Gog and Magog revolt, the post-millennial harvest of the dead and living, of which Jesus and His brethren are the firstfruits. “The rest of the dead”, being thus added to these, the whole number given by the Father to the Son is complete.

**Verse 4: “And the Deity shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death; nor shall there be sorrow, nor crying, nor pain any more: for the former things have passed away.”**

Such is the consummation of the Divine purpose in the creation of the heavens and the earth. He founded it to be inhabited (Isa. 65:18); to be a tabernacle for Himself with men. He could, had it pleased Him, have created it perfect, and filled it with immortal inhabitants at the beginning. To have done this would have prevented all the crime and misery that blot and crimson the record of the past; but then the world would have been a characterless automation, and unfit for association with the Governor of the Universe,

whose attributes are moral as well as intellectual and potential. He desired a society for our planet consisting of tried and faithful friends, such as Abraham, who loved Him better than his dearest son. He promised to develop it upon the principle of belief in His promises and obedience under trial, and to crown the whole with His incorruptibility and life.

**Verse 5 - 8: “And he that sitteth upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith to me, ‘Write; for these are true and faithful words.’ And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be Deity to him, and he shall be to me a son. But to the fearful and unbelieving, and to those who have been detestable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and to all the liars, their part shall be in the lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the Second Death”.**

Having prepared such a society as this, and concentrated it from all ages and generations into one glorious community, He would then put His hand to the final completion of its dwelling place, as He declared to John, saying, “Behold, I make all things new”. When these true, and faithful words are fulfilled, “It is done”. Everything is finished by the Alpha Spirit, who began the work in the week of days, and completed it in the week of thousands of years. The invitation to participation in the sublime inheritance is worthy of the Deity, who saith: “I will give to him that is thirsty of the fountain of water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be Deity to him, and he shall be to Me a son”.

“Fearful” - 1 John 4:18

“Unbelieving” - Heb. 11:6

“Abominable” - Luke 16:15

“Murderers” - 1 John 3:15

“Whoremongers” - Rev. 17:5, James 4:4

“Sorcerers” - Isa. 8:19,20

“Idolaters” - Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5

“Liars” - 1 John 2:4; 5:10

“Shall have their part” - Chapter 20:11-15

**Verses 9 - 11: “And there came unto me one of the seven angels having the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and he spake to me, saying, ‘Come hither, I will show to thee the Bride, the wife of the Lamb’. And he carried me away in spirit to a great and high mountain, and he showed to me that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of the heaven from the Deity, having the Glory of the Deity. And the brightness of it was like to a stone most precious, as to a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”**

“The Holy City, the New Jerusalem” - Although the Apocalypse has thus led up to “the end”, it, as it were, goes back to give another picture of things in the intermediate stage

before this end is reached. We read (21:2) "And I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from the Deity out of heaven, having been prepared as a bride who had been adorned for her husband". We learn from the ninth and tenth verses that John was presented with a view of "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" - "the Great City, the Holy Jerusalem" - by "one of the seven angels having the seven vials full of the seven last plagues". The reason for this reference to the vial angels here is because the manifestation of the Bride belongs to the time of the dead when they are judged, and the approved and chosen receive their reward. This is the time of the Bride's adorning and investment with the fine linen of incorruption, clean and bright, in recompense according to her deeds. And as this adorning transpires at the coming of the Ancient of Days, which occurs under the outpouring of the vial upon the Euphratean power in preparation for her way - that is, under the sixth - so it would be the sixth angel that shows John the Bride. He is quite emphatic in saying what he saw. He is not content to say, "I saw", but "I, John, saw". And he may truly say this; for when the Bride is manifested in the time of the dead, he, John, the beloved disciple himself, will see her with his own eyes, for he will be one of her constituents in glory, as he was formerly "in tribulation and patience".

The New Jerusalem is seen "descending from God out of heaven," and in regard to this circumstance Bro. Thomas propounds the question: "If the approved and accepted saints be the Bride, and they by resurrection come out of the earth, how can the great and Holy City be said to descend from the Deity out of heaven? If, in coming forth from the graves, the prophets, apostles, and saints all emerge thence immortal, perfect, and thoroughly furnished, ought not the Bride, the Lamb's wife, to be styled the New Jerusalem ascending from the tomb?" For the answer Bro. Thomas points out that the Holy Jerusalem is a spiritual body corporate - that is, it is a community of people, every one of whom is spirit, or an incorruptible, deathless, and powerful individual. Their nature or bodily substance is clean, pure, holy, and divine, by being born of the Spirit from above. The thing thus born is properly and truly said to be from heaven, or to descend from the Deity out of heaven.

This principle is taught in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, and afterwards illustrated in His own person. "Except a man", saith He, "be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of the Deity." No; such a birth being wanting in his case, if he come forth from the grave he will be cast into the sea mingled with fire, and tormented in that fiery lake without rest day or night to the beginning of the thousand years. Flesh and blood cannot inherit or possess that indestructible and incorruptible Kingdom, but only that which has been born out of Spirit. The principle consists in writing, impressing, or engraving the thing designed upon the subject or material to be so fashioned. The writer or engraver is the seven-horned and seven-eyed Spirit (chapter 4:5; 5:6), who engraves the graving thereof (Zech. 3:9) when the dead body prepared for the Spirit (Heb. 10:5) was restored to life, and had come forth from the sepulchre. The Spirit in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, engraved or impressed upon it ever attribute necessary to constitute it "the Lord from heaven" - He "made it both Lord and Christ". It matters not whether it be one man to be made "the Lord from heaven" or a countless multitude of earthdoms to be made the Holy Jerusalem "descending from the

Deity out of heaven” the question is the same, all the earthiness and corruptibility of the grave-body is “swallowed up of life”, it loses the likeness of the first Adam, and acquires the image of the Lord from heaven.

**Verses 12 and 13: “And it had a great and high wall, having twelve Gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names had been written thereon, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; on the west, three gates”.**

The Yahweh Spirit, as the wall of the legislative and executive body of the Kingdom, encloses all its members, who, having been baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, are “in the Deity, the Father, and in the Lord Jesus”; and being in Him “walk in Him” faithfully, and are born from above - are walled or enclosed in Him with a wall so lofty and great in dignity and power that nothing can enter within it that is not of the same structure intellectually, morally, and materially as itself.

The relationship of the Lamb and the Bride in regard to the city wall will exemplify the idea of “no temple there”. The wall of a house or temple is the building itself. When the Lamb and the Bride are perfected in One Body, they are themselves a temple. This, however, is not to say that there is no temple in the architectural Jerusalem of the coming time. Jerusalem, though it should be utterly demolished and rebuilt from the foundation, would not therefore be “Jerusalem above the mother of us all”, or the new and holy Jerusalem. The angel is not speaking to John of things unsymbolical and pertaining to men in mortal flesh, but of saints immortalized and glorified. Ezekiel, in treating of the temple, speaks of the unfigurative which mortals will help to build (Zech. 6:15), and which become symbols in the construction of the Apocalypse. The temple Ezekiel treats of is the house of prayer for Israel and the nations; but the apocalyptic temple, constituted of the Lamb and his wife, both “in the Deity”, is for them who are “pillars in it, and shall go no more out.”

The twelve gates of pearl (verse 12), are the twelve gates in the wall and the gates of entrance into the city from the east, north, south, and west, from whence are gathered all upon whom the name of the city is engraved by the Spirit. The names written upon the pearls show that the gates are representative of the tribes of the sons of Israel, and that consequently, the members of the New Jerusalem community become such by adoption into the Commonwealth of Israel. These must become “Jews inwardly”, “Israelites indeed”, to be citizens of “the Israel of the Deity”.

At the twelve gates are twelve angels, indicating that the messengers were at the gates to invite men to do the commandments of the Deity, “that they may enter in through the gates into the city” (chapter 22:14). These angels at the gates represent “the Spirit and the Bride”, who say “Come”. They invite all who are athirst, and who are willing to take the water of life freely. These are the commissioned angels of the gates of the city - faithful members of the Bride in all ages and generations, who are able to teach others “the truth as it is in Jesus”. They are in this passage (chapter 22:17) commissioned by the Jasper Light to turn men from darkness, and to invite them to enter as heirs of the Kingdom and glory of the Deity. This they do by preaching the

Gospel of the Kingdom for the obedience of faith, by which obedience a people are separated from all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, and adopted as citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, in the nations hope of that remarkable and favoured people. They thus become part of what Paul styles “the Israel of Deity”, which, in its glorified state, with the King of kings in the midst, was displayed in vision descending from the Deity to Mount Zion, as already explained.

**Verses 14 - 21: “And the wall of the city had Twelve Foundations, and on them the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. And he that spake with me had a golden reed, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. And the city lieth foursquare, and its length is as much as also the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed at twelve thousand furlongs: the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall of it a hundred forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, that is of an angel. And the structure of its wall was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like to clear crystal. And the foundations of the wall of the city had been embellished with every precious stone. The first foundation a jasper; the second a sapphire, the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, a sardius; the seventh, a chrysolite; the eighth, a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each one of the gates severally was of one pearl; and the Broadway of the city pure gold, as it were transparent crystal.”**

**“The Twelve-foundations”** - The names of the foundation-stones of the city wall, indicate that each stone is representative of an apostle, as a foundation element of the New Jerusalem Body Politic. Each of these great polished gems, or precious “living stones”, would be beautiful alone; but how much more beautiful when decorated, embellished, or adorned, by all manner of precious stones beside. The significance of this symbol is expressed in Paul’s words to them in Thessalonica whom he had been instrumental in “sealing in their foreheads”, and had brought into fellow-citizenship with the saints of Israel. “What”, saith he, “is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus Christ in his presence? Ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thess. 2:19, 20). They were not “wood, hay, and stubble”, but “gold, and silver, and precious stones”. Such destructible materials as wood, hay, and stubble; or ignoble vessels of wood and earth are useless and unfit for incorporation in the glorified bride of the Lamb; it is only those who can stand fire “in the day of Inspection”, who will find themselves the “stones of fire” by which she is adorned for her divine husband. Such were many, not all, of the apostles’ converts to the faith. They will rejoice together in the presence of Christ, the Jasper Light and Wall of the great city; and those who have been brought to the obedience of the faith by an apostle, or by the apostolic teaching, and are declared worthy in the day of fiery revelation (1 Cor. 3:13), will be to an apostle-foundation gem of sparkling glory the garnishment of precious stones upon the foundations of the city.

The elements of the wall, and the precious gems, are built upon the jewels (Mal. 3:17) of the foundation. The reality incorporated into this symbol is found in the words “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself

being the chief corner stone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded together for a habitation of the Deity through the Spirit;" which spirit, in the Holy Jerusalem Association of the Saints, issues from the Deity out of heaven, and flows through every member of it, as "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal".

### **The Measurement of the City -**

When John was commanded by an angel to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshippers therein, the measuring reed given to him was "like to a rod", the symbol of affliction and down-treading of the Holy City by the Gentiles of the unmeasured court, for the long period measured by it, and now happily soon to expire (chapter 11:1,2). But in the measurement of the Holy City, when the down-treading is no more, the measurer is not a man in the flesh, but an angel; nor is his measuring reed, a rod of affliction, but a reed of gold. This is the most precious of metals, and symbolical of the most precious things pertaining to the saints. But the gold of the city is more precious than the finest and purest gold current among men; for "the city is pure gold, like to clear crystal"; and "the Broadway of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent crystal". The gold of the reed is no exception, nor anywise inferior to the gold of the city. Whatever is measured by it has attained to the fullness of perfection, both of magnitude, number, structure, and intellectual and moral attributes. "The Almighty shall be thy gold, and treasures of silver to thee". This will be practically illustrated when the saints, inspected and approved at the judgment seat, are born of spirit from above - the transmutation of a baser metal into gold.

**The Twelve Stones** - These doubtless correspond to the order of the 12 tribes listed in Rev. 7.

<b>1. Jasper</b>	<b>Judah</b>	<b>7. Chrysolite</b>	<b>Simeon</b>
<b>2. Sapphire</b>	<b>Reuben</b>	<b>8. Beryl</b>	<b>Levi</b>
<b>3. Chalcedony</b>	<b>Gad</b>	<b>9. Topaz</b>	<b>Issachar</b>
<b>4. Emerald</b>	<b>Asher</b>	<b>10. Chrysoprasus</b>	<b>Zebulon</b>
<b>5. Sardonyx</b>	<b>Naphtali</b>	<b>11. Jacinth</b>	<b>Joseph</b>
<b>6. Sardius</b>	<b>Manasseh</b>	<b>12. Amethyst</b>	<b>Benjamin</b>

Whether there will prove to be any exactness of correspondence between the nature of these precious stones and the apostles they represent, we cannot know beforehand; but it must be manifest that one thing is distinctly signified by this classification, and that is that diversity of excellence will characterise the spirit state. The saints will not be all to one pattern. They will be all of a sort in one way. They will all be precious stones; but each with a preciousness of his neighbour. We see the principle faintly at work now.

Brethren, resembling each other closely in their love of God and their affection for all spiritual things, and their fruitfulness in every good word and work, may yet differ entirely in their intellectual and moral characteristics. The difference, so far from being a defect, is an excellence, giving zest to their intercourse and their love one for another. We shall see this law in perfection in the supernal state to which the truth in its obedience will finally introduce men and women who please God through Christ. One other idea is suggested by the employment of

precious stones to represent the saints. Precious stones owe their beauty to light. In the absence of light they are dark: let the light come and they glow in all the dazzling and many-coloured refractions that give them their preciousness. The counterpart will be recognised in the relation of Christ as the sun to the precious stones, his brethren. Apart from him, they can do nothing and are nothing. "The head of every man (of them) is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." This is true both now and hereafter. At the same time, there must be fitness in themselves to reflect the light. The brightest sunshine falling on brick produces no beauty; it only reveals the deformity of fire-baked stuff. There must be a nature in the stones suitable to the light. There must be good soil before the seed will germinate. There must be an honest and good heart before the fruit of the spirit will come forth. This is a matter of original bestowal to some extent, but the education of the truth, ministered by the word of God as contained in the holy oracles committed to Israel, has a wonderful power to change the old inferior man into a new man, created after the image of the firstborn - the Lord Jesus.

**Verses 22 - 27: "And I saw in it no nave; for the Lord the all-powerful Deity is the Nave of it, and the Lamb. And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, that they shine in it; for the glory of the Deity hath lightened it, and the lamp of it is the Lamb. And the nations of them who are being saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean, and working abomination, and falsehood but they who have been written in the book of the Lamb's life."**

**"I saw no temple there" -**

Literally "nave" or "Most Holy". In this symbolic city there is no distinct difference between Most Holy and Holy. It is altogether a temple - "Most Holy" - the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb being the substance thereof; that is Yahweh El Shaddai or Multitudinous Yahweh and the Lamb or Christ.

**"The city had no need of the Sun" -**

There will be no political systems or ecclesiastical powers. Zion's light only will shine forth from the New Jerusalem. "The Lamb is the Light thereof".

"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 honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of all nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life". This will be easily understood by those who have followed what has gone before, and who comprehend the gospel of the kingdom. The New Jerusalem is the governing institution of the future age. It is the official incorporation and manifestation of the power of God, following on the change which turns "the kingdoms of this world" into "the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ". Christ and the saints, enthroned in the land of promise in glory, honour, and immortality, are the New Jerusalem, in the light of which the nations will walk in which there will be no night, but everlasting day, whose attention to mankind will not be intermittent through



weakness, and at whose feet will be poured the wealth and honour of all nations. Into their glorious community none will be admitted who do not conform to the standard of well-being exhibited in the revealed will of God.



## CHAPTER 22

# The Tree of Life

**Verses 1 - 5: “And he showed to me a pure stream of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of the Deity and of the Lamb. In the midst of its broad space, and on each side of the stream, was a wood of life producing twelve fruits, through one month, yielding its separate fruit: and the leaves of the wood were for the healing of the nations. And there shall no more be any curse: but the throne of the Deity and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be upon their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: and they shall have no need of a lamp and light of the sun: for YAHWEH ELOHIM illuminates them and they shall reign for the Aions of the Aions.”**

The pure stream of water of life is symbolism based on the literal stream which shall spring from under the south side of the altar and will flow east and west and heal the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 47). The water of life represents the Spirit in all its relations and effects (John 7:37 to 39). A stream of this pure, transparent water of life was poured out upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. It anointed them with knowledge, wisdom and power; but it left them as it found them, subject to disease, sorrow, pain and death. Now, people have so much Holy Spirit in them as they have of the words and ideas of the Deity understood, affectionately believed, and obeyed (John 6:63). When the righteous are granted immortality at the judgment, the transparent stream of living water is distributed through them as its channel to mankind, until the knowledge of Yahweh, the fountain of living waters, “shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

The street (better rendered “the broad space”) of the new Jerusalem is the four-square area within the wall. We read of no rows of habitations dividing the intramural space into avenues, streets, broad or narrow. The “broad space” is constituted of all the “wise” who shine as the brightness of the firmament, and of “the stars” who have turned many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3), in other words, of “the general assembly - ecclesia of the firstborns - spirits of just ones who have been made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23).

The tree of life (as it is translated in the A.V.) is not a single tree as in Genesis 2:9, where the Hebrew rendering is literally “tree of lives”; but the Greek *xulon* means a “wood” or “forest of life”. If *xulon* be rendered “tree”, the difficulty is, how a tree can be at one and the same time on both sides of a river. Trees and leaves when used as symbols often relate to persons and are used to describe the saints in glory (Psalm 1:3; 92:12; Isaiah 60:21; 65:22). The trees of life represent many individuals all possessing the one life. (See previous note on Revelation 2:7).

Leaves of the trees represent the saints as the administrators of the Kingdom who will heal the nations. The Greek word for “healing” is *therapia* and occurs as “healing” in Luke 9:11 but is translated as “household” in Matthew 24:45 and Luke 12:42. These latter two occurrences are of particular interest since the word literally means “a waiting on, service, attendance, tending in sickness, medical treatment; hence a body of attendants, etc”. The Diaglott renders Matthew 24:45 as “domestics”. Compare the English word “therapists”. The saints are therefore represented in this place as a congregation of therapists or healers and, in prospect, constitute the leaves of the trees of life which are for the healing of the nations. The Lord’s parable recorded in Matthew shows that there is a need for present day manifestation of these attributes as each servant in the household must give nourishment to his fellow servants “in due season”.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that there shall be no more any curse upon the earth and upon them who inhabit it. So long, then, as the sin nature continues to inhabit the earth there must be sorrow, toil, and death; for the sentence pronounced upon the sinning nature declares the continuance of the curse to be in all the days of its life. To abolish the curse, then, is equivalent to the abolition of the nature cursed with sorrow, toil, disease and death. This abolition is the consummation of all things, by which is introduced an entirely new creation, the basis of which is a nature that neither has nor can transgress - that is, the Divine nature.

The Millennial reign of Christ is depicted as the day when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise (Malachi 4:1-2) and like “a morning without clouds” (2 Sam. 23:4), and such conditions will prevail throughout the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ who is “the Light of the world”.

**Verses 6 - 21: “And he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true; and Yahweh Elohim of the Holy Prophets sent his angel to show to his servants the things which must come to pass with speed. Behold I come suddenly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.’ And I, John, am seeing and hearing these things. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to do homage before the feet of the angel showing these things to me. And he saith to me, ‘See thou do it not; for I am the fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book do homage to the Deity’. And he saith to me, ‘Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is near. He that is unjust, let him be unjust now, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy now; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous now; and he that is holy, let him be holy now. And behold, I come suddenly, and my reward is with me, to render to every one as his work shall be. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are they who do his commandments, that**

their right may be upon the wood of the life, and they may enter in to the gates into the city. But without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and every one that loveth and inventeth falsehood. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things for the Ecclesias. I am the Root and the offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and he that heareth, let him say, Come, and he that is thirsty, let him come, and he that will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify to every one hearing the sayings of the prophecy of this book: If any one add to these things, the Deity will add upon him the plagues which have been written in this book, and if any one take away from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, the Deity will take away his part from the Book of the Life, and out of the Holy City, and the things which have been written in this book.' He who testifieth these things, saith, Yea I come suddenly. Amen.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen."**

In the concluding verses of the book, the Lord Jesus Christ draws on many of the symbols which have been referred to previously and directs John's attention to them as a final word of exhortation. In verse 6 we are reminded of the "faithful and true witness" of chapter 1:5 and chapter 3:14. In verse 7 the blessing of true happiness is a reminder of chapter 1:3; in verses 8 and 9 we are reminded of the incident in chapter 19:10; in verse 13 there is a reference to chapter 1:8 and 11; in verse 14 a further reference to chapter 2:7; in verse 16 a reminder of the words of chapter 5:5; verse 17 is an allusion to chapter 21:6 and verse 18 a reference to chapter 3:5 and 12.

In concluding our comments on this wonderful vision of God manifestation we would refer to the final words of Bro. Thomas in *Eureka* Vol. III, pages 706 and 707, where he says, "The rest of this chapter, in view of what has already been written, appears so obvious as to require but little additional to be said. The prophecy begins with the announcement in the 7th Verse of the coming of Christ with clouds. The Ecclesia in Sardis was threatened, that if they did not watch, he would come upon them as a thief, and they should not know at what hour he should come. To those in Philadelphia, he said, 'Behold, I come quickly', or suddenly, and to the Laodiceans, he said, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; 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'. From this chapter 3:20 until we come to chapter 16:15, no warning is given of the advent with an exhortation to 'watch'. In this place, the spirit saith 'Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame'. This coming occurs under the Sixth Vial, now in operation, and at the terminal crisis of the Laodicean apostasy. After this, the warning is not repeated until this last chapter. But it is three times suggested here - in the seventh, twelfth, and twentieth verses." Bro. Thomas concludes, "Behold, Adonai Yahweh will come, with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him - the work of what yet remains of the Sixth and the whole of the Seventh Vial. Then will be the time when this exposition will be appreciated at its real value; and its author be rewarded according to what he hath sown. Until this great crisis he is

contented to wait, knowing that the criticism of the Judge of the living and the dead, will be without partiality, malice, envy, or hypocrisy. The work has been faithfully and honestly executed and therefore when 'he who testifieth the things' expounded, 'saith, surely, I come suddenly; Amen', the author can say heartily with the apostle himself, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus; Amen'."

*Surely we would join with our late Bro. Thomas and with the apostle, John in expressing praise and thanksgiving unto our loving Heavenly Father that he has enlightened us with an understanding of his Word of Truth and granted us a vision of the glory soon to be revealed in the earth. May we come to appreciate the glorious principles of God manifestation so clearly annunciated in this last vision of the Word of God that we may make it part of ourselves now in a mental and a moral sense, that in the day of Christ's coming we may be clothed upon with that garment of immortality and so be privileged to manifest the glory of God in the fullest sense in the Millennial Age to come and in the Ages of Eternity beyond, when God shall be ALL things in ALL.*

*- John Knowles*

## ABOUT THIS BOOK . . .

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The successive four volumes were produced as the class continued until the study was concluded in December 1977.

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