

# THE VITAL MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION For Christ's Servants TODAY

*"I Jesus have sent mine angel  
to testify unto you these things  
in the ecclesias" — Revelation 22:16.*

Paul Billington

**October 1994**

Published by **THE BIBLE MAGAZINE**  
[www.biblemagazine.com](http://www.biblemagazine.com)

## INTRODUCTION

There are circumstances in the Christadelphian Household today which make the message of the book of Revelation particularly urgent and relevant for us. It will be our task in the first chapter of this study to explain the reasons for this conclusion. Readers are requested to patiently consider the points made, with the open Bible before them; these points have led the writer to feel it imperative that these things should be placed before his brethren and sisters for their prayerful consideration.

May we urge attention here to the words of the living Jesus which have been communicated to us from heaven: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.” The words suggest that there must first be a willingness to listen. If we think that these matters are unimportant and that they are “not essential”, then we are not going to give them the priority that they deserve, and that is what we feel is happening in the brotherhood today. It is only those who are willing to “hear” this message who *can be* blessed with an understanding of it.

Many brethren and sisters realize only too well that there are very real dangers to our spiritual life today. Many of these dangers arise from the world in which we live. Our Lord knows that we need help and strength to overcome the evil environment in which we find ourselves — and he has graciously provided it for us, so that we might be able to overcome through faith.

The book of Revelation is particularly important to us in this regard. It is the Testimony of Jesus Christ to his ecclesias; to those ecclesias which are in the Gentile world. As such it warns us against disguised enemies, it warns us of foes within and without — and it gives us the strength with which to overcome. These are blessings indeed — and they are granted to those only who read, hear and keep the sayings of this book. It is therefore a matter of considerable concern that some ecclesias give very little attention to the book of Revelation — whether because of lack of interest, or whether because it raises unwanted controversy. The way forward however is not in avoiding this message from the Lord Jesus Christ, but through patience and love we must seek to understand its relevance for us as the brethren and sisters of Christ; and it is in love that this present booklet is offered to the reader. The writer recognizes only too readily his own fallibility, and if there are mistakes of any kind it is to be hoped that they will be forgiven. This booklet has been hurriedly written and it by no means covers completely the book of Revelation. The intention has been one only: to place before the reader an honest attempt to explain simply and briefly this wonderful book in a way that will meet our Lord’s approval. Where we have felt that the burden of the message has been heavy, we have not shunned the task of delivering it. May those who have ears that are willing to hear, accept what the Spirit has left on record for our benefit.

*The Author.*

# THE VITAL MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION For Christ’s Servants TODAY

## 1

### *The Need For a Complete Faith.*

**W**hen the apostle Paul wrote that all inspired Scripture is profitable, he says that its objective was “That the man of God may be perfect” (or complete, c/p R.V.) — “completely furnished unto all good works.” This completeness is necessary, and we cannot expect to develop “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13) with only half a Bible.

All Scripture is essential to those who would reach to the spiritual maturity of a true man of God. This includes the Law and the Prophets; the Psalms and books of wisdom — and from our perspective today it must include the book of Revelation. The thought which is expressed sometimes in saying that only the first principles are essential, demonstrates a wrong spirit. It is not a question surely, of how little we need in order to get by, but rather our purpose should be that of developing thoughts and ways which are as close as possible to that of the Son of God himself. We require a complete faith. Spiritual maturity should be a goal for us all.

#### *A Vision of Faith*

Now when faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 it is described as “things hoped for” and “things not seen”. Also in verse 6 of that chapter we learn that the faith which pleases God not only recognizes His existence, but it also trusts in the reward that is promised to those who seek Him with diligence.

So the Truth sets before us a vision of that promised reward, but the environment of the world in which we live blurs that distant hope — the constant day-by-day climate of godlessness can dull our awareness to the living presence of our God so it is essential that we carry with us an awareness of God and His great purpose in order to counter this influence of the world.

In Hebrews 11:27 we read of Moses who “endured, as seeing him who is invisible” — and it is that inner “sight”, that eye of faith, that is perhaps not quite as alert today as it ought to be. The worldly environment in which we live, its media, education, and “democratic” way of discussing issues in which the reality of God is never brought into consideration, can develop a certain “blindness” in us — affecting prayer and our general behaviour. This constant exposure to the godless world can be more powerful than we may think. In the study of history God is left out of account; in considering current affairs the media leave out the hand of God; in the decisions made by Governments and laws passed — the will of God is not considered. We can get so used to this godlessness that we may begin to manifest the same spirit ourselves, and even ecclesial life itself can become a coldly administered routine, more like the business world (or worse, the political ways of other organizations) than the loving care of God’s household. In all things we must be aware of God’s presence.

This awareness of the Living God is a basic feature of faith. If our awareness of God is dull — if we are not as conscious as we ought to be of angelic presence and ministration in the circumstances of our life (Heb 1:14), then our confidence in the hope of the reward can be affected also.

Now it is worthy of note that “vision” (or “seeing”) is a theme that runs through the chapter about faith (Hebrews 11). Note the following:

- verse 1. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not *seen*.”
- verse 7. “Noah, being warned of God of things not *seen* as yet, moved with fear...”
- verse 10. Abraham “*looked* for a city.”
- verse 13. These all died in faith not having received the promises, but “having *seen* them afar off.”
- verse 27 Moses “endured, as *seeing* him who is invisible”.

Clearly, a Biblical Faith involves *vision*. It involves seeing the invisible, seeing the true nature of present temporal things and seeing the realities of the future. Hebrews chapter 12 goes on to speak of Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (verse 2). These words can leave us in no doubt that Jesus had a clear vision of the joyous hope before him — and that this vision sustained him during his most gruelling and painful moments. The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4 writes about his vision of faith in the same way. He speaks of his “light affliction” of the moment working for him “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While (and notice the wording) we *look not at things which are seen*, but at the *things which are not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (verses 17, 18). This is the same language as in Hebrews 11:1.

So can we see how Jesus and Paul overcame their world and endured even cruel physical violence? They overcame through the vision of faith which they had. Their case is an exact illustration of John’s words (I John 5:4), “this is the

victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” For us today, such a vision as this is clearly needful also — and it can only be obtained from God’s word — “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

The Bible then is our source of faith, and it is the function of prophecy (which comprises at least one third of all scripture) to provide us with a vision of the future. It also reveals to us the hand of God in the history of the Jewish people and of other nations as well. It thus strengthens our awareness of God’s continuing involvement in the rise and fall of nations and in human affairs generally. Without this aspect of God’s word faith would be incomplete and our spiritual growth stunted.

It is important that we understand this. It is the prophetic word which helps to make us conscious of God’s hand at work day-by-day, bringing about His purpose in the earth. Newspaper headlines, which to other people are just passing events, are constant trumpet blasts in the ears of those who are enlightened by God’s inspired prophets and apostles. It is a constant counter-balance to the godless environment that can be so damaging to our faith.

#### **“Where There is No Vision”**

We do not wish to dwell on the fact that in recent years some have sought to destroy the vision that Christadelphians have held for over 140 years — but it must be mentioned. It is written, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18); it is no trivial matter therefore to have deprived the people of their vision, and that is what has happened. Whilst many Christadelphians today still believe that the main lines of prophetic interpretation which have served us in the past are sound, others have lost faith in that approach and have adopted different views which they have been bold enough to publish and proclaim. The result is that many brethren and sisters have become confused about the subject. Some wish to avoid the subject altogether because they dislike controversy and strife — and what is so worrying to this writer is the result that today our community lacks a clear vision. Anyone who looks at this situation honestly, must surely see that not one of the alternative “new” views have emerged as a conspicuous successor. Confusion and strife are the only fruits visible — and that ought to tell us something (Matt 7:15-20).

#### **The Effect of Vision**

It is important as well that we realize that a vision of faith develops character. For example, in Hebrews 11:13 we read of those who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off; they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Here, we see how that the vision of faith that was held brought forth confession to their being “strangers and pilgrims” to the world of their day. They were different from their contemporaries. Different aspirations and goals in life rendered them “strangers” — there was a marked difference in their character. Also, in 2 Peter 1:5-9 where the apostle describes the development of characteristics which spring from faith (“add to your faith virtue... knowledge... temperance... patience... godliness... brotherly kindness... love.”) — he makes the relevant

point that "...he that lacketh these things (the attributes mentioned) is *blind*, and *cannot see afar off*..." So it is a lack of vision which hinders the development of Christ-like attributes. Let us appreciate the truth of this. It is of course in this same chapter that Peter tells us (v.19), "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed..." Let us then consider those things in order that we gain a stronger vision of faith — a clear picture in our minds — of what God is doing and of what He will yet do in fulfilling His purpose. If we can do this, the vision will effectually separate us from the world because we shall see things differently from those around us. We will become "strangers and pilgrims". The vision will strengthen us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Finally note the advice of Jesus to affluent, lukewarm Laodicea. He says (Revelation 3:18), "...anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest *see*."

Let us then proceed to seek God's blessings in the study of his word, and now through that Last Message in the book of Revelation particularly, let us anoint our eyes that we may see ever more clearly "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" — that as a beacon of light it may guide us through the perils of this dark world.

## 2

### *Reading and Hearing the Words of this Prophecy.*

**L**et us first *believe* the word which tells us that the Revelation was given to "show" the servants of Jesus Christ things which must shortly come to pass. It was not intended that this symbolic prophecy should mystify and confuse the Lord's servants. We ought not therefore to feel daunted at the prospect of studying the book. It is our Father's good pleasure to show us His purposes.

The word "show" in Rev 1:1 is from the Greek *Deiknuo* meaning to show or exhibit. Vine says that it means "to show by making known." Let us not enter into our subject with doubtful minds therefore — let us expect that God will do what He says and enlighten us.

What is the alternative conclusion to this? Are we to say that the book has failed in its purpose? Has God failed? We know that that cannot be so.

What about ourselves then — Are we the ones intended to have this knowledge; are we really "his servants"? This is a serious question.

#### *A Preliminary Test*

Turn up Revelation 5:2-4 and read the words: "Who is worthy to open the book...?" Is it not interesting that in opening the book of Revelation the first thing we meet is *a test*. We are, as it were, required to pass an inspection: Who is worthy to open the book; are we "his servants"?

For centuries, we are told, no one — not even the angels of heaven — were able to open the book. Until the Lamb prevailed no one could unseal the book (c/p Daniel 12:9). If none of the faithful from Old Testament times were worthy enough to open the book — what about us! We surely feel the burden of our own unworthiness. Yet we read in Revelation 5 that the Lamb *is* worthy. Now are we identified with the Lamb of God? Are we not identified with him through belief and baptism? Consider then the implications of Romans 5:19 and let us receive in faith that we have been made, or constituted, righteous. Having then been baptised into Jesus Christ — baptised into his death — let us wake up and arise to walk in newness of life.

Beloved brethren and sisters let us grasp the message of Romans chapter 6. Can we be truly baptised into Christ and yet continue to be the servants of sin? Of course not! "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, *his servants ye are* to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16).

Our baptism into Jesus Christ has freed us from service to sin, but it takes time for some of us to realise this! Do not be discouraged however; “Awake to righteousness and sin not” (I Cor 15:34). Get busy in the work of the Truth (for Christ says he is the truth). Have we wasted years in serving the old man of the flesh — ie. ourselves? Let us do something about it then. Forget self, he’s dead — he’s history. *Arise* and walk in newness of life, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

### “Love one another”

Some may say, yes; we see that this is right — but what would our Lord have us do in service to him? In reply we would say that the general principle to be followed is — in the words of Jesus himself — “That ye love one another, as I have loved you” — see John 15:12. Let this spirit motivate us and we shall truly be “his servants”.

In Revelation 1:5 we read of “him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Here is our example; here is the one who has showed us what true service is.

The apostle John makes the issue clear:

“Hereby perceive we the love (note: “of God” is not in the original) because he laid down his life for us: *and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (I John 3:16).

We see this spirit in the apostle Paul; read what he says and consider the implications — Romans 9: 1-3.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:”

So here then is the qualification required for understanding the book of Revelation. We are to be identified with the Lamb of God through belief, baptism *and service*, for it is a book that is intended to show unto *his servants* things which must shortly come to pass.

### “He Sent and Signified it”

To “signify” means to make something known by sign; to *intimate* it. It does not mean a straight forward telling of a thing, but rather an intimation of it by sign, signal or clue. It is to impart information by code or special language.

For example, the same word is used in the following passages:

Revelation 12:1,3 “a great *wonder* (sign) in heaven”.

Revelation 15:1 “another *sign* in heaven”.

The Revelation then is signified in a spiritual language which can be readily understood by those for whom it is intended — ie. by “his servants”. It is in this sense a “mystery”: (a Revealed secret to the initiated —Vine). Compare the following:

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the

seven churches.”— Rev. 1:20.

“...I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.”—Rev. 17:7.

### *Blessed is He that Readeth*

“Blessed is he that readeth... the words (*logos*) of this prophecy”. The *Logos* — *the reasoning expressed* in the prophecy, its teaching. The sense of this word *logos* may be seen from its use in Hebrews 6:1 where it is translated “doctrine” in the King James Version.

Now there is a blessing for those who can read the *logos* signified in the prophecy. This idea is expressed also in the context of Nehemiah 8:8:

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

It is important to note the R.V. marginal note here. It seems that the reading required some interpretation by those who read it. Another example can be seen from Daniel 5 (verses 8, 17, and 25-28). The wise men could “read” the words written on the wall — but could not make sense of them. This is just like the book of Revelation — the wise men of this world can “read” what is written but have no idea what it’s all about. As Daniel could *read* this writing on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast in Babylon, so in our day the servants of Jesus Christ can read the words or *logos* of the Apocalypse which completely mystifies the wise men of modern Babylon.

### “And They That Hear”

There are two classes among Christ’s servants here in Rev 1:3. Those who can *read* the words of the prophecy and those who are willing to *hear* them.

This matter of “hearing” is a recurring theme worthy of our notice in the book of Revelation. Compare the following passages:

#### Chapter 2:7, 11, 17, 29

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias, He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias; To him that overcometh 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.”

“He that hath an ear, let him here what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”

#### Chapter 3: 6, 13, 22

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias."

### Chapter 13:9

"If any man hath an ear, let him hear."

### Chapter 22:8; 17&18.

"And I John saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things."

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of this book, If any man shall add unto these things. God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

True servants will always hear their Masters' voice, but the implication here, surely, is that not everyone in the ecclesias would hear. It is important to notice this.

Perhaps the words spoken to Israel will come to mind: "To day if ye will hear his voice, *harden not your hearts*" c/p Hebrews 4:7; 3:7-12; also verses 15-19 and John 8:47.

In the passage of scripture which tells us how faith is obtained (Romans 10:14-17) it may be noticed that the true sense of "hearing" is that of belief and obedience. Verse 16 reads "But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath *believed* our report." This then is the biblical sense of "hearing"; it involves both belief and obedience to the message of the gospel. Similarly in John 10:16-27 Jesus says that his sheep *hear* his voice and *follow* him, whereas those who are not his sheep do not. So to "hear" signifies both the acceptance of the message as well as to act upon it.

So why is the message of the book of Revelation written in symbolic figures so that it is not readily understood? The answer is to be found in the same reason which Jesus gave to those who asked why he spoke in parables (see Matt 13:13)—the message just isn't intended for anyone and everyone. These things are holy and precious; thus they are protected and guarded from those who cannot walk in the way of the tree of life: the words of Jesus thus becomes a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient — 1 Peter 2:8. In practice this built-in protection works because the true meaning or interpretation is either unintelligible or else offensive to minds which are not in harmony with the things of the spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14-16.)

### "Keep Those Things Which Are Written Therein."

The word "keep" in Rev 1:3 is from the Greek *Tereo* which we are told means to watch over, preserve. So the idea is that of "keeping" or preserving the *logos* or sense, meaning, or *teaching* of the prophecy. Compare this with the sober words of Chapter 22:19 "And if any man shall take away from the *logos* (the reasoning expressed) of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life..."

Do we believe that? Do we hear it? Those who hear the words of the prophecy are responsible to keep and preserve it — as well as to observe it.

The meaning of the prophecy then, is something that we should seek to preserve or hold on to. In Revelation 6:9 we read of "the testimony which they *held*". In Revelation 12:17 we read of those who "*have* the testimony of Jesus Christ." This is not just a passive holding — the Greek word is *Echo* — the active sense is that we should echo the testimony of Jesus Christ.

### *The Origin of the Prophecy*

The prophecy is "from Jesus Christ" (Chapter 1:1; 1:5; 22:16). It is his "testimony", account or record of what God gave to him so that he might show his servants the purpose or plan of his Father. Let us then open our ears to receive this message which is — as Bro. John Thomas once expressed it — a "remarkable prophecy transmitted from unapproachable light".

### *The First Vision*

The first things that we are shown are contained in the section — chapter 1:12-20. The first vision is important and we should take particular notice of what is said — and particularly how these things are to be "read" or interpreted.

Let us note what we are told:

1. The mystery (or Revealed secret) of the 7 stars refers to the 7 angels (or messengers) of the 7 ecclesias.
2. The 7 Candlesticks are the 7 ecclesias.

The point to notice here is that the meaning is not left to our imagination; we are not left to guess at the meaning — we are told. This, surely, should teach us not to attempt to "read into" the prophecy anything which our own earthy "wisdom" might suggest. Let us understand and be content with being "shown" the things communicated for our information. Let the Lord himself teach us. This he will do *through Scripture*.

For example this vision is clearly built upon other Scriptures. The imagery of Chapter 1:13-16 rather obviously reflects passages such as Daniel 7:9; 22, which provide us with a symbolic picture of the saints in judgment.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

"Until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

Parallel ideas from Daniel 7 are seen in Revelation 1:13-16.

"And in the midst of the seven candle sticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance

was as the sun shineth in his strength.”

We can see other reflections from Dan 10:5, 6 also:

“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”

There the symbolic man has the voice of the multitude, and therefore must represent a multitude. Compare also Rev 1:17 with Daniel 10:8+9.

Who is this multitudinous man? It can be none other than the “One body” of I Corinthians 10:17 and 12:12-14.

“For we *being many* are one bread, and *one body*: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

Every member of this one body is “knit together” in the manner described in Colossians 2:2,3.

“That their hearts might be comforted, being *knit together in love*, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

In Daniel 10 we see that the prophet's strength was turned into corruption — yet he is raised and strengthened. Similarly John, in Rev 1:17, 18 “fell at his feet as dead,” but he is touched by the Living One. We would be slow to miss these similarities —and who can oppose the inevitable conclusion that it is God himself who explains and interprets these visions through His word. Finding this key then, we produce a diagram opposite showing the main features of the one “like the Son of man” tied to other Scriptures which can explain the vision.

We find that it refers us to the grand theme of *The Spirit Name in Multitudinous Manifestation*.

## REVELATION CHAPTER ONE

Revelation 1:20. “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the messengers of the seven ecclesias: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven ecclesias.”

**Nahum 1:6.** “Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like *fire*, and the rocks are thrown down by him.”

**Isaiah 1:18.** “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

**Coloss 1:18.** “And *he is the head* of the body, the ecclesia: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

**1 Peter 1:7.** “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

**Ephesians 1:18.** “The *eyes of your understanding* being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.”

**Ezekiel 1:24.** “And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like *the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host*: when they stood, they let down their wings.”

**Ephesians 6:17.** “And take the helmet of salvation, and the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*.”

**Revelation 16:15.** “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth *his garments*, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

**Psalm 132:9.** “Let thy priests be *clothed with righteousness*; and let thy saints shout for joy.”

**Ezekiel 1:7.** “And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of *burnished brass*.”



## 3

## *Christ's Testimony to Ecclesias in a Gentile World*

**A**lthough given to show *individuals* what must come to pass, John is told to send the prophecy to seven ecclesias in Asia (chap. 1:11). These ecclesias are addressed in chap. 1:4, and then in detail in chapters 2 & 3.

The first thing to note is the unhappy point that not everyone in these ecclesias would respond. See chap. 2:7 for example. "He that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the spirit says to the ecclesias."

### *Why would Some not Hear?*

In these 7 ecclesias there were those who were *not* servants of Jesus Christ.

- e.g. chapter 2:2 those who were false apostles
- chapter 2:9 false Jews—the "synagogue of satan".
- chapter 2:14 "thou hast there" Balaamites.
- chapter 2:15 Nicolaitanes
- chapter 2:20 Jezebel

These were not perfect ecclesias—True and false disciples were mingled together. Some in the ecclesia would hear and respond, others would not.

The seven ecclesias addressed here are *representative* of ecclesias in the Gentile world. The number 7 is, of course, a number which implies a completion. But more significantly we see that no limit is suggested in the words of Revelation 22:16.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the ecclesias..."

All ecclesias are thus included, showing that the original seven were representative — and the message delivered is as relevant for our ecclesias today as it was for those original seven in Asia.

Ecclesias today are composed of false and true disciples, just as the early ecclesias of Asia were. In 1 Corinthians 11:19 the apostle wrote; "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." "Heresies" literally mean a sect or party—A school of thought or opinion. Christadelphia today is full of "schools of thought"—and they cannot all be correct; some ideas are false.

We may not like to recognise this. It would be nice to think that everyone will be accepted when Christ comes—but we know it isn't so—2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:24-25.

"For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath

done, whether it be good or bad."

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

We must not be surprised or discouraged by these facts. We should be stirred up and made manifest as 1 Cor.11:19 says. How? By holding fast to that which we have! (See Rev 2:25).

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard and hold fast, and repent. 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."—Chapter 3:2-3.

"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—Chapter 3:11.

There is an important lesson here—a guiding principle.

*We are given no instructions to leave or abandon a dying ecclesia*

*We are given no instructions to split an ecclesia and start a new one.*

The task is:

1. Hold fast to what we have.
2. Strengthen what remains.
3. Remember our Roots!

This is the outworking of love of the brethren as we see it expressed in Jude—

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."(Jude v. 20-23.)

Christ's mission was to save, *not* destroy. This must be our mission also.

### *The aim is—to "Overcome"*

If there is one word expressing *the* exhortation of the Apocalypse this is it.

"To him that overcometh"—chapter 2:7

**Chapter 2:11:** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death."

**Chapter 2:17:** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it."

**Chapter 2:26:** "And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:"

**Chapter 3:5:** "He that *overcometh*, 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."



**Chapter 3:12:** "Him that *overcometh* 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."

**Chapter 3:21:** "To him that *overcometh* 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."

It is clear that in some way we are to overcome in order to receive the promises. *But what are we to overcome?*

The clue is given in chapter 3:21 where Jesus says "even as I also overcame." What does Jesus say he overcame? "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

*This is the issue* and the task before us Brethren and Sisters: To overcome the world. *This is what the book of Revelation is all about.*

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and *this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:4-5.

So *the* exhortation of the Apocalypse is that we should overcome the world through faith. The World—Gk. *kosmos*—signifies *this arrangement of things*; this system. The idea is that of the social, political and religious system—the world, the environment. Now with this in mind consider the following :

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."—1 John 2:15-17.

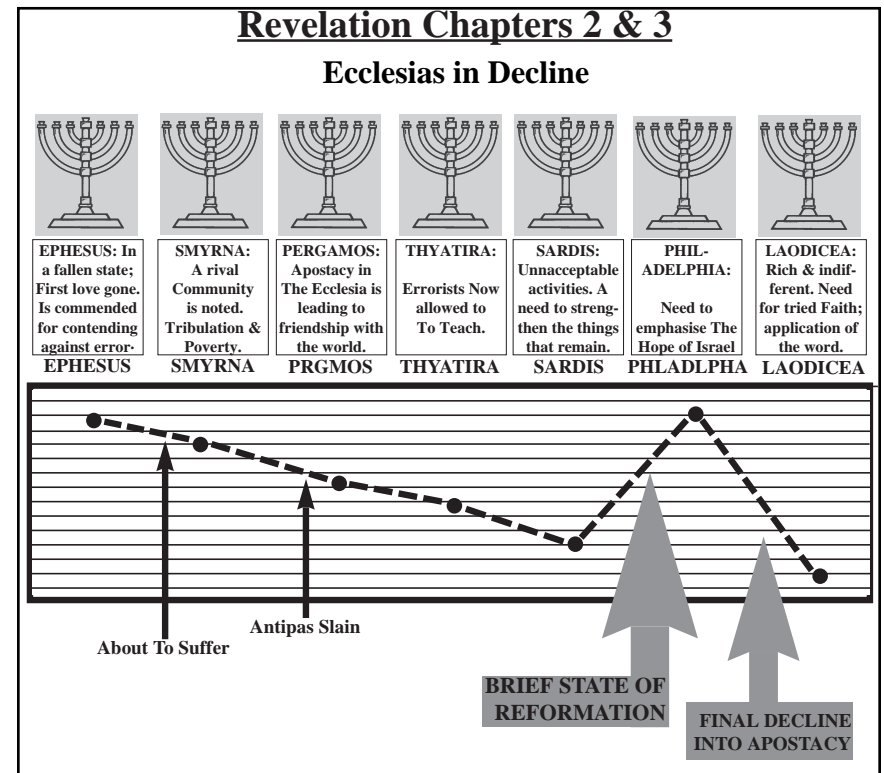
All that is in the world— all that the world appeals to (the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life) is to be avoided.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."—1John 4:1-5.

False prophets are "of the world", so that to "overcome them"—the false teachers— is to overcome the world (v4). We can readily apply this principle to the situation in Rev. 2 & 3, where false apostles, Nicolaitanes, Balaamites etc. must be overcome.

*So it amounts to this: Overcoming the influence of the world within the ecclesia.* This is what the seven letters are about. Our diagram opposite shows ecclesial decline—but as individuals we must make the effort to overcome the world's influence in the ecclesia.

The influence of the world comes into the ecclesia in different ways— and it is the main avenues that are covered by the examples given in the letters to the 7



ecclesias. We will briefly consider each under the following four heads.

**Nicolaitanes** Strong (# 3531) means "Victorious over the people". A study of the name shows that it signifies those who conquer or triumph over the people. This symbolic name refers to would-be rulers, the empire builders, leaders who seek a following for themselves. C/p Diotrefes 3 John verses 9, 10.

"I wrote unto the ecclesia: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the ecclesia."

We see here an illustration of "*The pride of life*" c/p 1Peter 5:3; Acts 20:29-30. Such men are destroyers of the people; false teachers as in the time of Jeremiah:— "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD."— Jer 23:1.

This is the character of Nicolaitanes.

**The Synagogue of Satan** is a symbolic title for those who say they are Jews (by adoption) but are not.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and

I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”—Revelation 2:9.

Compare the description of Paul:—

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”— 2 Cor. 11:14-15.

These “ministers of satan” teach another Jesus and another Gospel says Paul. Their technique is to *use the terminology of the truth* whilst teaching something different. They set up a rival community, a community within a community, a schism—see Jude verses 16-19:

“These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”—Jude verses 16-19.

They will be seen *separating themselves*, walking after their own ungodly (or worldly) lusts.

Why form their own separate synagogue or meeting? The answer must be that they think themselves above, or better than their brethren—Pharisaical. Again, pride is manifest.

**The Doctrine of Balaam** (Rev. 2:14). Balaam was a traitor to Israel, and becomes a *type* of those who are willing to lead the brethren and sisters astray for the rewards of the world. Consider the following:—

“For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did not I earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour? “— Num. 22:17 and 37.

“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;”— 2 Pet. 2:14-15.

Again *the lusts of the world* are involved.

Do we think it can’t be like this in the meeting today? We are being told that it *is* going to be like this, “He that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the Spirit says to the ecclesias.” To him that overcome this influence, there are rewards promised. When we see brethren and sisters being led along a wrong path, we must have the *faith* and courage to stand apart from those responsible. Whether this has always been done in our Christadelphian community to the extent that it

should have been, is a point that we do well to consider.

**That Woman Jezebel** (Rev. 2:20). There is absolutely no evidence to show that this was the Recording Brother’s wife as some have suggested. The idea has been imported into our community from elsewhere. The apocalyptic Jezebel is a symbolic “woman” based upon the horrible character of the wife of Ahab in the Old Testament, who taught and encouraged Baal worship in Israel.

The point here is that this self-styled prophetess or teacher was “suffered”. Here were teachers in the ecclesia that were paganising the truth.

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”— Jude verse 4. c/p Titus 1:10-11.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision. Whose mouth must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”

This surely teaches us that it is our duty as brothers and sisters, to protest against the abuse of the ecclesial platform. The spirit here says quite clearly that he held it against this ecclesia because they suffered or tolerated teachers who were leading the flock astray.

The original Jezebel was a Phoenician and she was bringing the world into the ecclesia. The apocalyptic Jezebel does the same thing and she must be “overcome” (v. 26). The lesson is there for us brethren and sisters, if we have ears to hear it.

### *Overcoming the World*

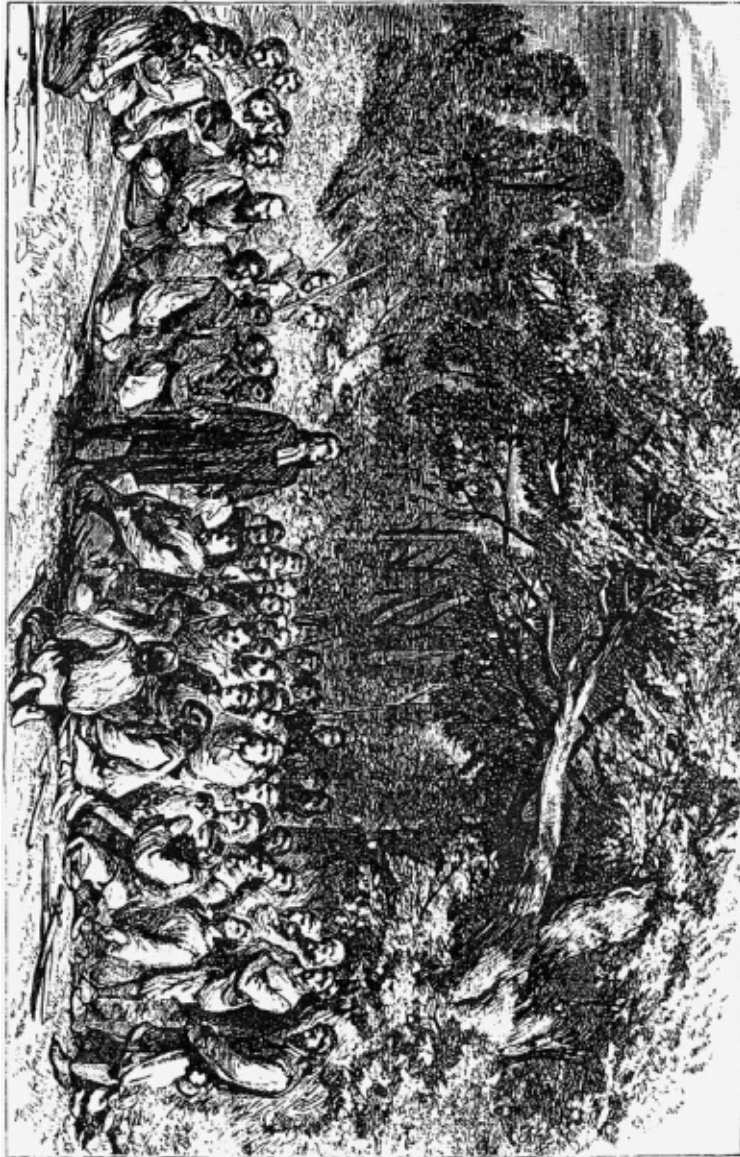
In Revelation 2 & 3 then, we are exhorted to overcome the influence of the world *that threatens* the ecclesia. In other parts of the prophecy however we will see how the influence of the ecclesia can overcome world systems.

This idea of overcoming the world is seen again in the rest of the Revelation. For example in chapter 6:2 we see the rider of the white horse going forth “conquering, and to conquer”. The word here translated “conquering and to conquer” is the same as for “overcometh” in chapters 2 and 3. So we can see that the efforts to overcome the world are continued. Again, in chapter 12:11 there is reference to the dragon-power being overcome through sacrifice and testimony. In chapter 15:2 we read of those who had “gotten the victory” over the beast system — they had also “overcome”. In chapter 21:7 those who *overcome* are promised their inheritance. Clearly, this theme runs throughout the book of Revelation.

We see then a *conflict* between the ecclesia—the Servants of Jesus Christ—and *the world*. This is what the Book of Revelation is all about. It is the story of how the Servants of Jesus Christ overcome the Gentile world through Faith.

The end of the story is—Revelation 11:15:

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”



# 4

## *Strength to Overcome*

---

“Now faith is the substance—ground or confidence (A.V. mg.)—of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. For by it the elders had witness (or testimony) borne to them (says the R.V.). Through faith we understand that the ages (see R.V mg.) were framed by the word of God...”

---

**A**bove is the essence of what we can learn from Hebrews 11:1-3. Notice that the apostles of the first century had a faith which involved the understanding of something:—“through faith *we understand*.” The passage is not referring to the normal creation of the “worlds” as many read the passage. That is not the sense. The apostles had faith in the fact that the ages were framed by the word of God.

We either share that faith or we do not. The passage says that the ages were *framed* (Greek: *katartizo*; made to fit, prepared) by the word of God.

Most of us recognise this truth in Daniel chapter 2. Here, we see how the word of God prepared, or framed the ages of world history in advance. The things that are seen, namely the systems of rulership or orders upon earth, were brought about by the unseen hand of God as the Divine purpose was worked out. This we understand through faith. A continuous historic view of God’s purpose being accomplished then, formed a part of the Apostolic Faith.

We see the same thing in regard to Israel. There has been a long continuous-historic outworking of God’s purpose with the Jews. There was the period of her nationhood when under David and Solomon she constituted the Kingdom of God upon earth. Then there is the period of her downtreading and dispersion during “the times of the Gentiles”. This is to be followed by “the times of restitution” or restoration (Acts 3:21). So there is a clear continuous-historic flow of events concerning both Jewish and Gentile history.

Now it was because the disciples of Jesus had faith in the future restoration of Israel that they asked him (Acts 1:6) “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” The Lord’s answer is often misunderstood. Let us look at it.

Jesus replied, (v7) “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put (or appointed, see R.V. mg) in his own authority.” How often this passage is quoted to show that it is not for us to know the date of Christ’s return. But that is *not* the point of the passage at all. In fact Jesus goes on to say (v8) “But ye shall receive power (authority), after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” Jesus was saying that it was not for them to know at that time, but

that they would receive authority in these things at a later time—sometime *after* the holy spirit had come upon them.

Now look at the facts. Did the apostles receive knowledge of times and seasons later? 1 Thess. 5:1 would suggest that they did. They knew perfectly well, for example, that a time of peace and safety would precede destruction. But more importantly, we are pointed in the direction of the book of Revelation which certainly does have to do with times and seasons.

In explaining the two words used here in Acts 1:7 (times—Gk. *chronos*; and seasons—Gk. *kairos*) Vine says: “Broadly speaking, *chronos* expresses the duration of a period, *kairos* stresses it as marked by certain features...*chronos* marks quantity, *kairos* quality.” In the book of Revelation we have “times” (time periods) and we have “seasons” (epochs characterized by events. e.g. seals, trumpets, vials). The giving of the Revelation to John on Patmos therefore fulfilled Jesus’ promise in Acts 1:7-8.

That this is so is further confirmed by the fact that we are told in Revelation 10:7, which epoch or season the mystery of God (according to the gospel—c/p R.V. mg) will be completed in. It will be finished in the 7th trumpet period. This is the resurrection trumpet and if we think about this we will realize that it includes the national resurrection of Israel. Here is the very information desired by the disciples in Acts 1:7 —the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

**Consecutive Epochs**

In order to follow what is about to be discussed now, it is important that the reader take the trouble to open his Bible and consult the passages referred to. Failure to do so will result in missing the points being made.

As we read through the book of Revelation we note that there are seals, trumpets, vials etc. Coming to the seals first, we note how they are presented.

In chapter 6, verse 1 “one of the seals” is opened and there is an invitation to “come and see” what happens. Then there is (verse 3) “the second seal” with an invitation to “come and see” the relevant events. Verse 5 introduces us to “the third seal” and so on. So *the seals are specifically numbered* in the text (see the pattern on diagram B opposite).

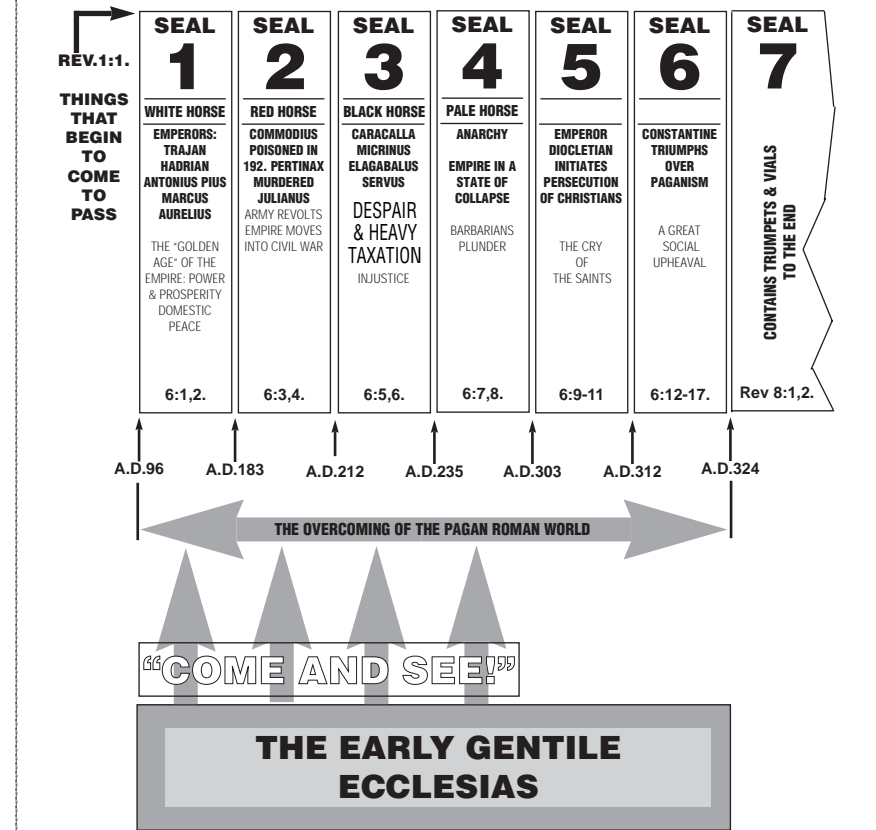
Chapter 7 gives us a vision of those who “came out of great tribulation” saying that they “shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more” (verses 14 and 16). This is obviously a picture of the kingdom, but we shall return to this point later.

In chapter 8:1 the “seventh seal” is opened—and when it is, we find that the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the result (chapter 8:6) that the seven trumpets follow. So the seventh seal really contains the seven trumpets (see seal 7, diagram B opposite). Thus, as we put all this together we see a pattern to the structure of the book of Revelation as depicted in Diagram C opposite.

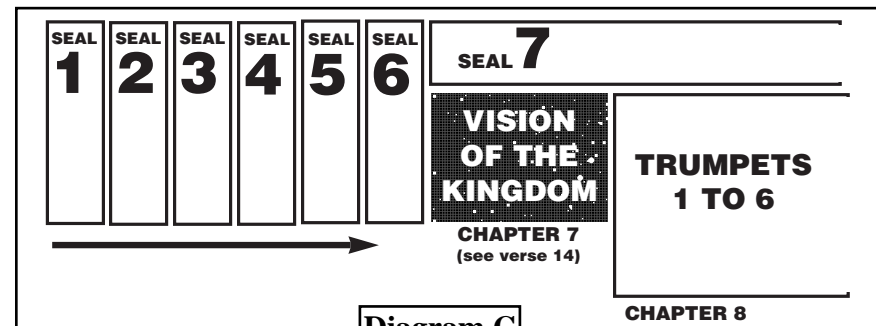
**Snapshot Visions**

We note now, that between each part (seals, trumpets etc), there appears to be what we may call a “snapshot vision” of the kingdom. We will come back to this later, but for now we simply wish to note the way in which these snapshots are placed before and after the epochs of seals and trumpets (see Diagram D on

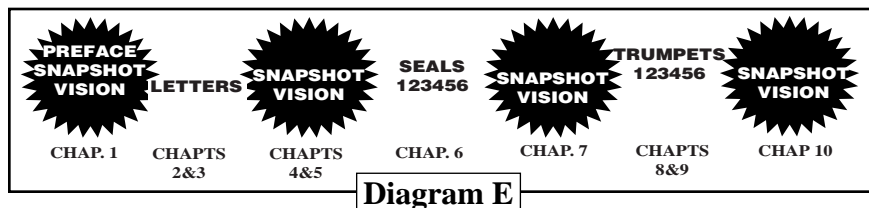
**THE SEVEN SEALS — REVELATION CHAP 6.**



**Diagram B**



**Diagram C**



page 25).  
 These visions of the kingdom are a regular feature of the book of Revelation. Note this regularity from Diagram E above. These visions can be considered more fully later, as we come to them. We are only concerned here to point out their position in the general structure of the book of Revelation.

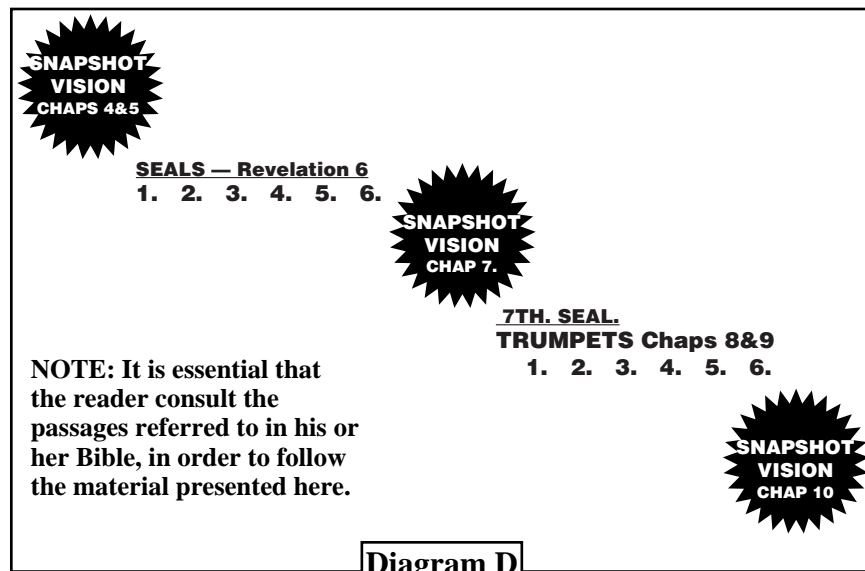
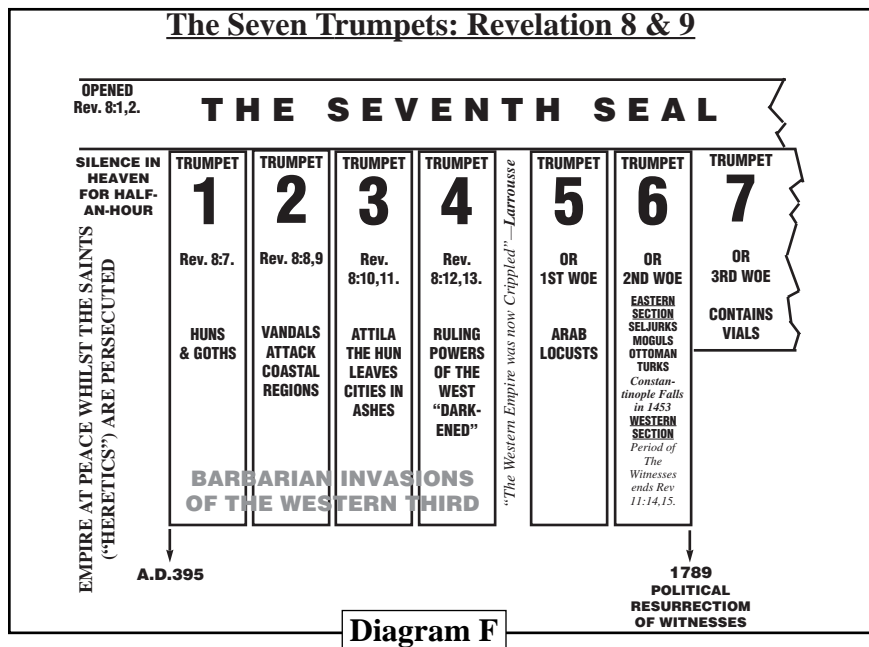
**A Special Section**

Chapters 11, 12 & 13 constitute a special section which describes in more detail the conflict between the believers and the world. Believers are described here as:

1. Witnesses
2. The Woman's seed
3. The Saints
4. Those who hold the testimony of Jesus Christ

Their enemies are described variously as:

1. The Devil
2. A ten-horned Beast
3. A two-horned Beast



4. A Whore (Babylon)

This special section appears here because the events of Revelation 11:14-15 come between the 6th and 7th Trumpets (or 2nd and 3rd woes). Read Rev. 11:14-15 and study the detail of the 6th and 7th trumpets on Diagram F opposite. The sixth trumpet is sounded in Rev. 9:14-15. Chapter 10 is a snapshot. The special section therefore begins with chapter 11, which is its right place in the pattern of construction.

The special section continues on to describe the development of the Beast system (Rev. 12 & 13). Chapters 14 & 15 are snapshot visions, and so chapter 16 (the vials) describes the judgements of God upon the Beast system (the development of the beast system having been detailed in the special section).

Chapters 17 & 18 are describing God's judgements upon the whore and upon Babylon. Chapter 19 describes the victory of Christ and the saints over the world. Our Diagram G (on page 26) depicts the construction of all the parts of the Revelation.

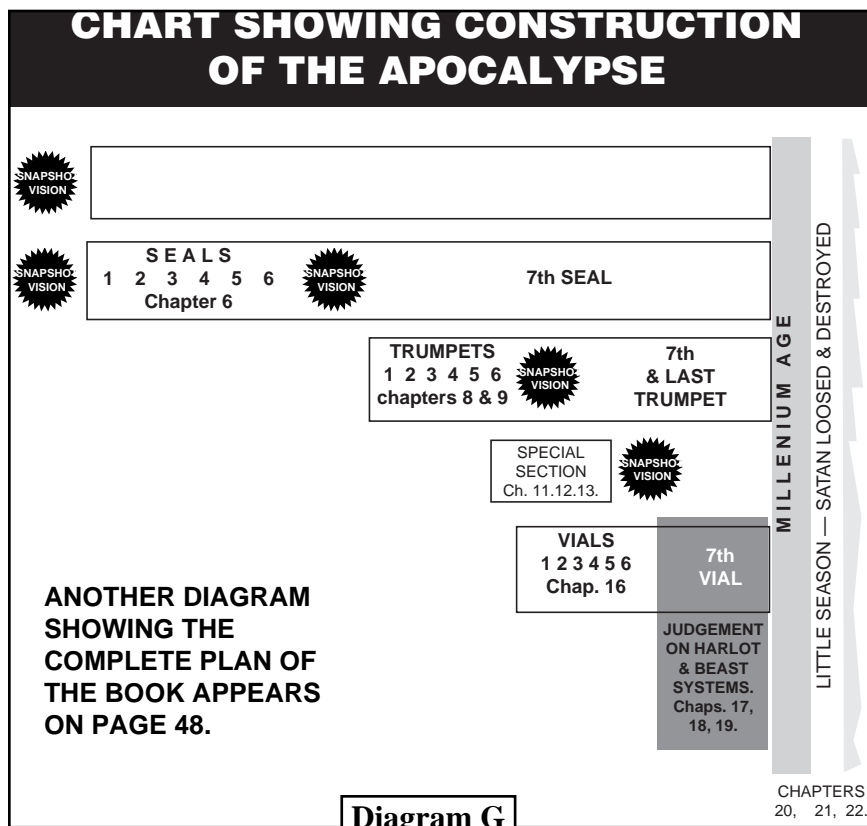
Chapter 20 to the end then takes us into the millennium and beyond. There is thus seen in the book of Revelation a blueprint (as it were) of God's purpose in bringing about His kingdom upon earth, and of the struggle of His people as they *individually* "overcome" during their mortal life, through faith.

**A Vision of The Kingdom**

As the plan has unfolded through its seals, trumpets and vials—and as believers have noted the times in which they lived—so the snapshot visions of the kingdom have encouraged and strengthened brethren and sisters down the ages as they have looked in faith to the vision of the kingdom.

Let us now consider some brief notes on the visions in chapters 4 & 5.





## BRIEF NOTES ON REVELATION CHAPTER 4

### REV. 4:1. A door Opened in Heaven.

This vision concerns the “hereafter” we are told (verse 1). Therefore this cannot be an “Old Testament Heaven” as some suggest. Also there is a “throne” set in this “heaven” — The language of 2 Peter 3:13 suggests what this “heaven” can refer to :

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

See also Isa 65:17—19:

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth....for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.”

So this means that the “heaven” is Jerusalem (ie. its Administration or government), and the earth represents “her people”. In Rev. 21:1 & 2 this is the new Jerusalem community, Christ and the saints.

**A Trumpet:** The Last trumpet or Trumpet of Resurrection c/p Rev 1:10; 1 Cor 15:52:

\* “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

\* “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

**Verse 2. “Come up hither”:** 1 Cor 15:52 tells us that “the dead shall be raised incorruptible”— they will be raised in nature; changed.

**Immediately:** This will happen “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” says 1 Cor 15:52.

**In the Spirit:** c/p Rev. 1:10. “there is a spirit body” says the apostle and ....“this mortal must put on immortality” — that is, it will become a spirit body like that which Jesus now has. See 1 Cor 15:44,53. Philippians 3:21:

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

**Verses 2 & 3. A throne set in heaven, a rainbow round about the throne.** The throne is the seat of the King. In this case it is seen as a throne encircled with a rainbow— which is the scriptural sign for a covenant. Therefore this is the throne of the Covenant. It is the Davidic throne (the only covenant throne in Scripture) — Luke 1:31-33. This is the throne of the restored Kingdom of Israel.

**Verse 4. Elders clothed in white linen.** Just as there were elders of Israel (eg. Ex 3:16) so were there elders of the Gentile ecclesias (eg. 1 Tim 5:17). These elders in Rev 4 are clothed in white linen, which represents the righteousness of saints (chap. 19:8). These 24 elders therefore, are saints and not angels as some have suggested. “Crowns (Gk. *stephanos*) of gold” indicates the victory of faith because the stephanos was the victor’s crown — and gold represents faith (1 Pet 1:7 etc).

**Verse 5.** Is a symbolic picture of judgements and teaching proceeding from the throne of the Kingdom — c/p Isa 2:3-4.

**Verse 6. In the midst of the throne.** c/p chapter 3:21; 5:6:

“To him that overcometh 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.”

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

This means that the four beasts, or Living Creatures are involved in the rulership of the Kingdom.

**Verse 7. Lion, calf, man & eagle;** These are the features of the cherubim of Ezekiel (chapters 1 and 10). They are vehicles of the Divine will.

(For example compare Ezek 1:20 with Rom 8:14).

**Verse 8. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty....** This is a quotation from Isaiah 6:3; the passage reads: “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” — the whole earth is full of his glory? This *is* the Kingdom, for only then can this be fulfilled, Numbers 14:21.

**Verse 11.** Some have thought that this reference to creation requires that the one on the throne is God Himself. But this refers to the new creation; the new heaven and earth — and the sense is that which is given in Colos. 1:15-19.

## CHAPTER 5. “TAKING THE BOOK OUT OF THE RIGHT HAND”

Chapter 5 is continuous with chapter 4. The scene is the same, so that the things described are seen from the position of the Kingdom. We must remember that for many of those who awake when Christ returns, the book of Revelation and the things accomplished by Christ will be fresh news — they are the things that have happened whilst many have slept in the dust of the ground — and now; in the kingdom age, those Old Testament characters are learning these things for the first time.

**Verse 1. “In the Right hand”** Gk. *Dexios* signifies authority c/p Acts 2:33; Matt 28:18:

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

**“Him that sat on the throne”** As in chapter 4:3. Christ is the one who possesses the authority to reveal the contents of the Book.

**“Sealed”** c/p Daniel 12:8-9, An understanding of the book had not been possible—nor could it be carried into effect. No one “was able” to open the Book.

**Verse 2. “Who is worthy”** Who *is* worthy? No one— Rom 3:10.

**Verse 3. No one in heaven or earth.** No one “*was* able to open the book”. This had been the case for many centuries, from the time of Adam to that of Christ in the first century A.D. Only then did the Father give this book to Jesus Christ — Rev 1:1

**Verse 4. “I wept much”** John represents all those who prayed “What shall be the end of the vision”. c/p Daniel 8:26-27, 12:8-9.

**Verse 5. The lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed.** The word is overcome (c/p R.V.). See John 16:33. Looking back from the position of the Kingdom this will be an accomplished fact—the book will have been carried into effect.

**Verse 6. “In the midst”** The sea of glass represents the peoples at peace —this is the result of Christ’s righteous rule (c/p Isa 32:3-4). The vision is not just of the Lamb, but of the Lamb “*in the midst*” of the throne, four Living creatures and elders. Compare the following:—

• “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I *in the midst* of them.”— Matt. 18:20.

• “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory.”—Col. 1:26-27.

• “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and *I in him*, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they be burned. If ye abide in me, *and my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”—John 15:5-7.

• “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, *in the midst of* the ecclesia will I sing praise unto thee.”—Hebrews 2:11-12.

• “And *in the midst of* the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”— Rev. 1:13.

• “Unto the angel of the ecclesia of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh *in the midst of* the seven golden candlesticks.”—Rev. 2:1.

This is the slain Lamb in the midst of the ecclesia—Christ in us. The Multitudinous one Body. C/p Psalm 80:1

**Verse 7.** So in this vision it is the Christ body; the ecclesia that is seen taking the book out of the right hand of him who sits upon the throne. This is the meaning. The “He”, is the multitudinous one body who “hath taken” (R.V. mg.) the book. This is as viewed from the position of the Kingdom.

**“Took”** Gk. “to get hold of” c/p James 5:10. *Young’s*: The word is translated *accept, attain, catch, have, hold, obtain 133 times*. We must *get hold of the book*, not just read it! As we study this book and come to understand its message we are as it were, taking the book out of the right hand of the one who will sit on the Dauidic throne. This is the thrilling task now before the reader!

**Out of the right hand:** This is a book of instruction—a blueprint for taking over the world. c/p Psalm 45:3-6; Psalm 98:1-3; Daniel 7:22; Psalm 149:5-9; Deuteronomy 33:2. This is the right hand of authority giving the Christ body instructions for the taking of the Kingdom by faith. Ponder the implications of the following words:

“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: *because thou hast been faithful* in a very little, *have thou authority over ten cities*. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And likewise to him, Be thou also ruler over five cities.”— Luke 19:15-19.

**Verse 8.** The understanding of the book leads the Saints into prayer.

**Verse 9.** Jesus has been worthy to take the book and open its seals. It is the Lamb *himself* who has done this as can be seen by comparing chapter 6:1, for it was he who was slain to redeem the Saints:

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.”

**Verse 10.** “We shall reign on the earth.” This is a vision that provides strength to overcome, if we can but see the reality of it, and put ourselves in the picture. What a glorious hope! What can this world offer us by comparison? It is the vision of the kingdom—this vision of faith—that strengthens us to overcome this present evil world. It inspires us to rise above all the pettiness and wrangling that surrounds us even in ecclesial life sometimes. It gives us a perspective to the whole of life which is more precious than anything else we may own.

All the “snapshot” visions of the kingdom offer us similar encouragement as we are brought to ponder the glorious future that awaits the servants of Jesus Christ.

# 5

## *Response To the Faith & Prayers of The Saints*

**W**e have seen from the construction of the Revelation that there is a definite plan within the book. It is constructed so that the seals open out into the trumpets. This is seen clearly enough from Rev. 8:1-2:

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”

The trumpets similarly open into the vials (and are connected by the special section of chapters 11 to 13). This plan of construction can be readily seen without our having to understand how it is all fulfilled. Those believers of the first century who received the book from the apostle John would also have been able to see this structure, even though not knowing *how* it was all going to come to pass.

It is a helpful exercise for us to consider the Revelation from the perspective of those who first received it. What could they have understood from it?

We know from Rev. 1:9 that the apostle John was in the Isle of Patmos, and it seems that he was there on account of his beliefs. It has been suggested that he was imprisoned or had been banished there during the reign of Emperor Domitian. It is during the reign of this emperor that most would place the date of the writing of the book. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* states:

“The main body of early Christian tradition attests the date of its composition in the closing years of Domitian...the evidence for the Domitian date outweighs that for any other.”

This date is not crucial to our understanding of the book (or it would have been more obviously indicated), but usually it is stated as having been around A.D. 96.

### *The First Recipients of the Revelation*

We can understand the perspective of those believers who lived at the time the Revelation was first given. They would have asked (as earlier disciples did): “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (c/p Acts 1:6). When and how will this present evil world—the pagan Roman world in which they lived—pass away, and the Kingdom be established? How do we get from this present situation to the Kingdom situation?

The answer to those early believers in the book of Revelation was: by the opening of the seven seals. These seals must be opened and the events characterized therein take place in order to bring about the removal of the reigning political “heaven”—for that is what happens at the end of chapter 6



(see verse 13-14):

“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of the wind. And *the heaven* departed as a scroll when it is rolled together: and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

Here then, simply put, was the faith of early believers. They could not avoid such a conclusion—the events of the seals would have to take place before the Kingdom could be established; that much at least would have been obvious. There is evidence that they understood far more than this and expected a false Christian church with temporal power to rise upon the ruins of imperial Rome (see *The Protesters*, Alan Eyre, page 13), but it is inescapable that disciples contemporary with the apostle John would have been living in expectation of the apocalyptic seals being opened.

### *The Understanding of The Revelation Leads to Prayer.*

Having to this extent “taken the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne” (chap. 5:7) and therefore having been enlightened to these things, believers are symbolically represented as the four living creatures and 24 elders who fall down before the Lamb “having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints” (chap. 5:8).

Now what is more reasonable than this—believers who were “companions in tribulation” and in patient waiting for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (chap. 1:9), having been told that seven seals must be opened according to the Father’s design of “things which must shortly come to pass,” are seen to be offering prayers.

This, surely, tells us of the effect that the prophecy had upon them. They were moved by the understanding of it to prayer. What would these prayers of faith have been about? Surely, in praise and in supplication they would have addressed the Lamb saying “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof....” (verse 9). They would surely have requested that “Thy Kingdom Come” and that as a necessary preparation for this, the seals be opened and the work of the Truth go forward.

This pattern is seen several times in the book of Revelation and it teaches us how that the understanding of prophecy leads the believer into prayer. In response to the faith and prayers seen in chapter 5:8, the seals are opened in chapter 6. In response to the prayers of saints recorded in chapter 6:10, the 6th seal of Judgement comes (verses 12-17).

In Revelation chapter 8:3-5 “the prayers of all saints” are offered and ascend before God immediately before the seven trumpet judgements come into effect. Again, the idea of “golden vials” which in Rev. 5:8 are seen to be “full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” is repeated in chapter 15 where “golden vials” are seen to be “full of the wrath of God” (verse 7). Clearly, the wrath of God here has come in response to the prayers of those who have patiently suffered for His Name’s sake—note Rev. 16:5-7:

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given

them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgements.”

So in every instance we see that the prayers of the believers are active in urging forward the plan of the book. This is the pattern that we see over and over again in the Revelation. These believers are watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem “which shall never hold their peace day nor night: Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth”—Isa. 62:6-7.

Last century, in the early days of the Christadelphian community, the brethren and sisters understood through Bible prophecy that the time had come for a partial and primary restoration of Jews to their ancient homeland. Their prayers reflected this expectation, and their sentiments are still reflected in some of our hymns. Through their understanding of the prophetic word they were intimately concerned with the unfolding purpose of God and this led them into prayer as they looked for the signs that God’s hand was at work with the Jewish people. As events unfolded, and Jews began to return to Palestine, there was excitement as brethren and sisters thrilled to see such events unfolding. “Come and see!” was the cry, as each step revealed the hand of Israel’s God at work in the earth.

### *“Come and See!”*

If our community has witnessed such vindication of faith and answer to prayer, how can we possibly believe that others in the past have not seen similar works of the Lord? It would have been a similar atmosphere among the saints of the first century when they witnessed the unloosing of the seals in the signs of the times of that day. Thus in Rev. 6:1 “one of the four beasts” or Living creatures (These are the cherubim of chapter 4:7, representing the saints) is heard saying “Come and See!” Believers would have encouraged one another in these things and would have invited people to come and consider the fulfillment of prophecy.

The sense of this phrase can be seen in Psalm 66:5-7. “*Come and see* the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men...” The call is for us to *see* the hand of God in the events that take place. We should not be of those who see, yet do not perceive (c/p Matt. 13:13-17). The Living Creatures (the saints) of Rev. 4:6 are “full of eyes before and behind”. These eyes of faith should *see* the works of God as they take place, for the eyes of their understanding are enlightened (Eph. 1:18) having been privileged to take the book out of the right hand of the Lamb.

So as the seals are opened, believers recognize the sign and communicate in thunderous voice—“Come and *see!*” Thus John, representing those who responded says “And I saw”. The sign was unmistakable! It was a white horse ridden by one who had a bow—and he went forth “overcoming, and to overcome.”

We already know, from what has gone before, precisely what is being “overcome” by the rider of the white horse. It is *the world* (and in the context of the First Century, the Roman world). This is what the brethren and sisters of that time were expecting.

**The Horses:**

The imagery used in Revelation 6, of variously coloured horses going out, is taken out of Zechariah's prophecy (chapter 1:8 and chapter 6:1-8). When asked what these "signs" meant, the angel informs the prophet that "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth" (Zech. 1:11). When asked what the coloured horses represent in chapter 6, the angel replies "These are the four *spirits of the heavens*, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." (6:5); they also "walk to and fro through the earth" (Zech. 6:7).

Both contexts in Zechariah's prophecies concern the time of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In chapter one the result of the coloured horses going forth is: "behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest" and there follows the consolation of Israel when the Lord is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion saying that He will "yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem again." As a result of the coloured horses and their chariots doing their work in chapter 6 we see a like result among the Gentile nations—"Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country! This understanding refers to the work of Christ and the saints who will subdue the nations and establish the Kingdom—c/p Rev. 19:11-14.

When we come to the coloured horses of Revelation chapter 6 however, there is a notable difference. When these four horses have gone forth under the seals the result is *not* rest, peace and a quieted spirit. The saints under the altar (Seal 5) are told that they must await the future martyrdom of fellow servants and brethren (Rev. 6:9-11). The sixth seal which follows does not bring peace and quiet either, it reveals "the wrath of the Lamb". This is clearly a different context to that of Zechariah. The context here, as already stated, is overcoming the pagan Roman world—the social, political and religious environment in which the first century believers found themselves.

In Zechariah's prophecy, the four spirits of the heavens (Christ and the saints) are seen in their work as *horses*. They represent the visible manifestation of that future time. Zechariah 10:3 tells us that the house of Judah will be "his goodly horse in battle". So *the people* are the battle horse, and the spirit that moves them will be of their King and his brethren. Thus, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" will be associated with the future work of Elijah (2 Kings 2:12).

From this we may "see" that the horses of Zechariah are the people of Judah in the future, being directed by Christ and the saints. The horses of the Seals however belong to a different time and context. The controlling power or rider of the horse is "the spirit of the heavens"—it is the work of the risen and living Christ who now has all power and authority. He is the conquering One who is overcoming—but in this case the horses are not Israelitish, they are Roman.

So in answer to the prayers of the saints in the first century—the "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8)—the great work goes forward. The Lamb opens one of the seals and a period of peace and prosperity descends upon the Roman empire allowing the Bowmen to deliver the word of their testimony. That word made such an impact upon society that it would result in the pagan Roman state being overturned and so "overcome" (c/p Rev.

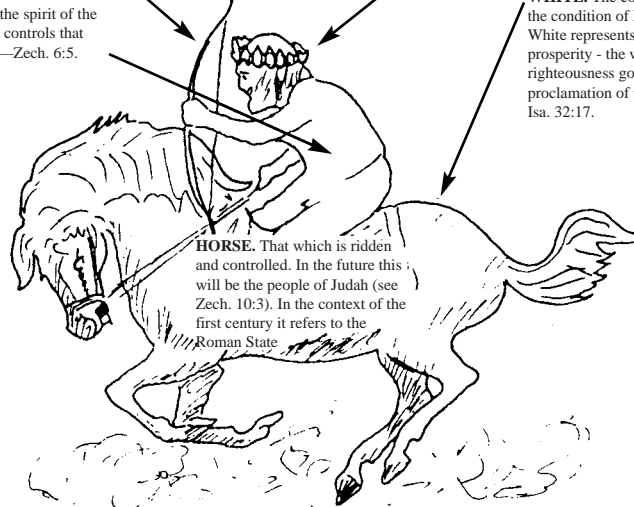
**THE FIRST SEAL: The White Horse**

**THE BOW.** The Bowmen (saints) of the Gospel Preachers. See Habakkuk 3:9; Zech 9:13; c/p Jer 9:3.

**THE RIDER:** "the spirit of the heavens", Christ controls that which is ridden —Zech. 6:5.

**THE CROWN** or "stephanos", A laurel crown — the emblem of victory. He is assured of success in overcoming. See 1 Cor. 9:25. c/p Rev. 3:11.

**"Went forth conquering and to conquer".** See 2 Cor. 10:3—5; Eph. 6:12—20.



**WHITE.** The colour signifies the condition of Roman society. White represents peace and prosperity - the work of righteousness going forth in the proclamation of the Gospel. c/p Isa. 32:17.

**HORSE.** That which is ridden and controlled. In the future this will be the people of Judah (see Zech. 10:3). In the context of the first century it refers to the Roman State

**WHITE HORSE PERIOD OF PEACE**

**CONDITION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR DOMITIAN**

REIGNING EMPEROR	CONDITION DESCRIBED IN <i>Larousse</i> HISTORY
TRAJAN	"To everyone the reign of Trajan seemed like a return to the golden age."—p.208.
HADRIAN	"It would be an exaggeration to say that Hadrian never made war, but the object of the campaigns he fought was simply to avert dangers which threatened the Empire..."—p.208.
ANTONIUS PIUS	"It was during the reign of Antonius that the Roman Empire reached the zenith of its power and prosperity, and for this reason, perhaps, his reign appears rather uninteresting and eventless."—p.209.
MARCUS AURELIUS	"Marcus Aurelius had absolute need of domestic peace in order to carry out his foreign policy."—p.209.

12:11). What a testimony it must have been! If only we today could preach as effectively! We feel that it is well worth reproducing some words here from the pen of Brother John Thomas — His words are an exhortation to us, pointing out our responsibilities.

**BRO. THOMAS ON CHRIST'S BOWMEN.**

As the duty of brethren in relation to the proclamation of the truth, we would remark that our own practice is an illustration of our conviction of their duty

and privilege. We have been studying the Holy Scriptures for the past twenty five years, during all which time we have been running to and fro, and making known to the people what we found therein. We have visited the Old World and travelled through Britain thrice, addressing the people (sometimes by thousands) two hundred and seventy times, besides writing and publishing *Elpis Israel* while there. Since our return hither we have travelled extensively in America, ranging from Halifax to Mississippi; and of late years our circuits have been four thousand miles per annum. Now what are we more than a brother in Edinburgh, Halifax or Nottingham? Have we been "specially called and sent" to draw the bow? We have had no dream, nor heard any voice which they have not heard. Did they then, ever hear that we were called to do what they are privileged not to do? Have they not heard the voice of the Spirit as well as we saying, "Let him that understandeth — *Ó âkouo* — say, come!" And they know that the Spirit saith, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias." We confess that we cannot perceive that we are bound to wear ourselves out by much labour, while they are free to "fold their arms in complacent quietude," doing nothing. Though much may not be effected, yet as we do not know how much and when, it is our common duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints," and with as much energy as though we were going to hurl all the ecclesiastical potentates of gentiledom from their crumbling and tottering thrones. We do not believe in any of Christ's brethren purchasing exemption from this laborious duty. If they be rich, or flush of means, it is their privilege to give as well as do, if they be poor, to do and to receive, which is less blessed than to give, that an equality may be obtained.

Brethren, whether rich or poor, should all remember that when they are redeemed from the sins of the past in putting on the Christ-robe of righteousness through the obedience of faith, they are "a purchased people;" and that when so purchased, the purchaser bought all they possess; so that they are no longer their own, but the property of another. Now when a man purchases a servant, he does not buy him to sit all his days with a bushel on his head in complacent quietude. A *doulos* or slave, owns nothing, neither himself, not anything belonging to self before he became a slave. Such is the relation of the brethren to Christ their Lord and Master. A complacently quiescent Christian is one who will never inherit the kingdom, though his faith be ever so orthodox, or his baptism ever so valid. He is an unprofitable concealer of his Master's property in a napkin, and the property of the truth he has received, and concealed within himself. Woe be to the Christian brother who presents himself at the tribunal of Christ with nothing else to offer but a hidden truth. Ill starred will he be who can only say, "I received the truth and was immersed, and *henceforth* enjoyed myself in silence!" Quietude and silence are not the prerogatives of the Saints in this present evil world. Their duty is to "cry aloud and spare not; to lift up their voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." They have nothing to do with results and consequences — let them make the truth known, and leave the rest to him who gives the increase. Every one can do something for the extension of the truth, if it be only trying to extend it among his acquaintance, and as an element of "the Bride" through

whom the Spirit operates, "say come."

The Bride is the community of the Saints — a community anointed with, and the pillar and support of, the truth. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come!" Is this done without means? Is it done by complacent quietude and silence? By each individual of the community exhausting his energies upon the secular affairs of life? Surely, if there is one thing more than another we have to guard against in this age, it is against being docketed as slothful, unprofitable, parsimonious, do-nothings — lavish of time, labour and riches in the service of the flesh; but covetous of all in the extension of the truth. It is the duty of the Bride to sustain the truth by the press and oral proclamation individually and collectively. Let her voice be heard in reverberating echoes amid the hills and mountains of the world till the isles break forth in song, and forests clap their hands. True this consummation will not obtain till the grand master be apocalypsed; nevertheless, when he comes let him find us so doing.

The usefulness of *public* discussion depends very much upon the way it is conducted. The duty of the Bride is to proclaim, teach, convince gainsayers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. She does not invite the crazy old man of the flesh to *discuss* the truth, if by "discuss" is meant to ventilate, or fan it with the wind of his stupidity. We used to invite discussion until we found the general public incompetent to the work. Erratic geniuses would start up under pretence of discussing the subject before them, for no other purpose than to preach their own crotchets and vagaries. We take higher ground. We under take to teach, not to discuss with the ignorant; yet to answer any questions put for the purpose of obtaining information. An ignorant man cannot discuss any subject profitably to himself, and certainly only to the annoyance of those that hear him. No man can examine an object without light. The ignorant are in darkness, and can see nothing; so that to discuss with them is throwing pearls before swine, and give things holy unto dogs. The first thing to be done is to "declare the testimony of God;" then reason out the propositions contained therein so as that the blind may be made to see out of obscurity, and the deaf to hear the words of the book. Let them ask as many questions about the testimony as they please, and even show the fallacy of the reasoning if they can; but not to introduce their wild crotchets as they are too apt to do. In short, it requires tact, as well as talent and information, to conduct impromptu a public discussion with and in the presence of a promiscuous concourse of brains, ignorant of the whole subject in all its premises and conclusions, anterior to its special introduction by yourself.

In our experience of men and things we have found for the most part, that they make the most outcry about "hard" and "uncharitable writings," who have the most sympathy with error, or are least enlightened in the truth. Their faith and comprehension of the truth are so faint and feeble that they cannot discern the broad, distinctive line of demarcation, or great gulph rather, that divided Immanuel's ground from Satan's. When error is wounded, they wince and become hysterical at the sight of blood. We have not found such equally sensitive at the throes and agonizings of the truth; and as far as their efforts are concerned, it might be consumed of its own anguish so that their quietude and silence were not disturbed. But what do such outcries effect in this world?

What mark do they leave upon their generation for good? Compare the results of our, hard uncharitable, course with their soft and oily displays; “by the fruit the tree is known.” Many are now rejoicing in this truth by our means; but who ever hears of them or theirs? They are too soft and unctuous to hew the men of this perverse and wicked generation into a living image of the truth. The “style” of popular religions writing is too insipid—the little salt in it has completely lost its savour—to be received without disgust. We write with “the spirit of faith” which endures no compromise with error in matter or style “I believed,” says David “and therefore have I spoken;” “we also believe,” says Paul, “and therefore speak;” to which “Amen” is heartily acclaimed.

John Thomas. *Herald of The Kingdom* 1858, page 270.

# 6

## The Unfolding Scroll

We must now address ourselves to the fundamental question as to the way in which the Book of Revelation is fulfilled. It has been suggested that the continuous historic interpretation of the Revelation is wrong—there are other ways to look at it. Is this really so?

The alternatives that have been suggested may be described under the following heads:

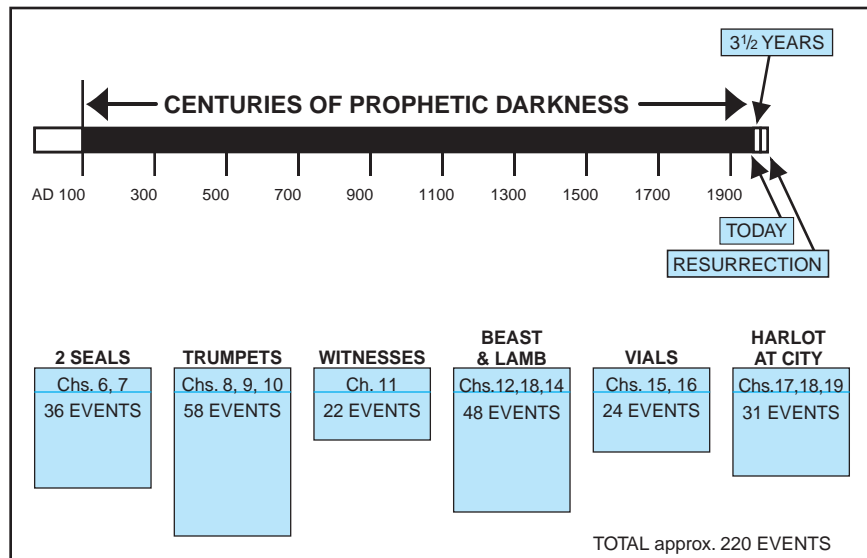
1. **A past fulfillment**
2. **A future fulfillment**
3. **A continuing fulfillment**

The first of these sees the book of Revelation describing the events of A.D. 70, with sometimes a second application to the latter days—a sort of re-run of the events of A.D. 70, with Christ returning as these events come to a climax. This interpretation has one *basic* flaw: it requires that the book of Revelation was written and delivered (and digested by the ecclesias) prior to A.D. 70. If it had been given after the events of A.D. 70 it would not be a prophecy—it would not “shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass”. The idea that the book of Revelation was given in the A.D. 60’s cannot be sustained however; all the available evidence is against it and so the theory falls down at the very first hurdle. There are several other serious problems with the idea, areas in which the message of the book just doesn’t fit the interpretation forced upon it. The need for the early date however is sufficient ground for us to safely dismiss the idea of a past fulfillment—for there can be no doubt that the book was written much later, in the A.D. 90’s (A.D. 96 is the generally accepted date).

The second alternative suggests that the main body of the book concerns a future fulfillment and has therefore earned the label of “Futurist”. It is said that the first four seals are perhaps a vague reference to the past 18 centuries, but the remainder of the book (from Rev. 6:12) refers to events yet future. There are several problems with this view and others have dealt with them over the last 20 years or so. We do not intend to go over that ground again here. But perhaps a main difficulty might be mentioned, and that is the fact that the book of Revelation would have had little or no relevance for believers during a long period of some 18 centuries! The diagram (over page) is reproduced from the book “*The Revelation—which Interpretation*” (p. 51) by Brother Graham Pearce, and it demonstrates the absurdity of one particular view which would squeeze more or less everything from the 6th seal onwards into a period of some 3 1/2 years which are as yet still future.

We may add by way of comment that for all this time the Lord Jesus Christ has

THE SEALS OF REVELATION CHAPTER 6		
SEAL	LAROUSSE HISTORY	EMPEROR
<p><b>WHITE HORSE</b> Goes forth. Hab. 3:9; Zech. 9:13; Jer. 9:13, 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:12; 19 c/p Isa. 32:17.</p>	<p>“...to everyone the reign of Trajan seemed like a return to the golden age....It was during the reign of Antonius that the Roman Empire reached the zenith of its power and prosperity, and for this reason, perhaps, his reign appears rather uninteresting and eventless...Marcus Aurelius had absolute need of domestic peace in order to carry out his foreign policy.” Conquering the Roman world by the word of the covenant. Pages 208–209</p>	<p>TRAJAN HADRIAN ANTONIUS PIUS MARCUS AURELIUS</p>
<p><b>RED HORSE</b> Strong # 4450. Fire-like, flame coloured. A fiery red. This together with what else is stated, signifies the onset of a fiery war</p>	<p>“Three years before his death Marcus Aurelius had named as his successor his son Commodus who was incapable, a drunkard and a profligate. Power at once went to his head, and he demanded recognition and worship as a god. He abandoned the reins of government to his licentious favourites, and renounced the energetic defensive policy of his father. He pillaged the treasury and persecuted the senate without mercy. Not unexpectedly, plots against his life were numerous; in 192 he was poisoned and, when the poison was slow to work, strangled.” Empire descends into civil war Page 210</p>	<p>COMMODIUS (poisoned) PERTINAX (Murdered) JULIANUS (Army revolts) SEVERUS</p>
<p><b>BLACK HORSE</b> C/P Jer. 4:28; 8:21; 14:2. The balances speak of Justice—Job 31:6 c/p A.V. mg.</p>	<p>Period of heavy taxation “The growing cost of the armed forces and the inflation which accompanied it compelled the emperors to increase existing taxes and invent new ones..The spirit of the times was, moreover, very susceptible to the message of Christianity, which made great advances.” Page 217–218</p>	<p>CARACALLA (Assasinated) MACRINUS ELAGABALUS SERVERUS ALEXANDER</p>
<p><b>PALE HORSE</b> Pale — Gk. <i>Chlorus</i>; Green-sallow, deathly color. It exactly fits the character of the times.</p>	<p>“For nearly half a century—since the death of Severus Alexander—the Roman world had been on the verge of chaos, and the consequences were incalculable. The Empire emerged from the period <i>in a state of collapse</i>. Wherever the barbarians had passed they had left behind them <i>waste and ruin</i>, while the peasants whose fields and homes were ravaged, often yearly, had fled. Many of them had been slaughtered and many others <i>had died of starvation</i>.” Page 218–220</p>	<p>MAXIMUS DECIUS GALLUS AEMILIANUS VALERIAN POSTUMUS CLAUDIUS II</p>
<p><b>FIFTH SEAL</b> C/P 1 Cor. 10:16–18. Those under the altar are those who sleep in Christ — c/p Gen. 4:9–10. They sacrificed themselves for the Truth. Romans 12:19. Future persecutions anticipated.</p>	<p>“To complete his work Diocletian set about the task of restoring the moral unity of the Empire, which at once brought him into conflict with Christianity...In 303, therefore, several edicts were published ordering churches to be closed and books sacred to Christian worship to be seized. First the clergy and then the faithful were legally obliged to offer sacrifice in the Roman manner.” Page 224</p>	<p>DIOCLETIAN</p>
<p><b>SIXTH SEAL</b> C/P language of Isa. 34:4–5. Also Isa. 13 (especially verse 10). See also Ezek. 32:7,8.</p>	<p>“At this moment the Empire had finally broken with Roman pagan tradition and a new era was about to begin.” Page 225</p>	<p>LICINIUS CONSTANTINE</p>



been in heaven as “mediator between God and men” (1 Tim 2:5). Are we to believe that there have been no believers to mediate for? No “servants” of Jesus Christ for all that time? We cannot believe that. This book of Revelation was given “to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass”—whether they lived during the first century A.D., during the Middle Ages or in these last days. To suggest so long a period of prophetic blackout is inconsistent with the stated intent and purpose of the book—:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...”—Rev. 1:1.

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.”—Rev. 22:6.

These words are straightforward enough and must have relevance for believers *in all ages*. The idea that most of the book is still future must therefore be disregarded. The third idea, that of a “Continuing Present” is based upon the view that God Himself “is, was, and is to come” or will be. This is not taken to mean that God had existence in the past, has existence now, and that He will always exist in the future, but that He dwells in a state of timelessness. As God Himself is not subject to the passing of time, it is argued that His Revelation also is timeless—it is always *being* fulfilled. But the Bible nowhere tells us that God dwells in a dimension of “timelessness”. We *are* told that He is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2), and that He “inhabiteth eternity” (Isa. 57:15) which is not the same thing as timelessness. Eternity is not timelessness, it is *infinite* time—stretching into the past as well as into the future. It is not surprising to find then, that this idea of timelessness or “continuing present” as it is sometimes called, cannot be made to fit statements in the book of Revelation where the passing of time is clearly indicated. For example:

“Hurt not...until we have sealed...”—Revelation 7:3

“angels which are yet to sound...”—Revelation 8:13

“One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter”—Revelation 9:12.

In view of these statements which clearly require the passing of time, the idea of “timelessness” must be modified. A “continuous present” must become a circular present (i.e. history repeating itself). But this idea again runs into trouble when in chapter 10:6 there is “time no longer” and when (verse 7) the purpose of God is “finished”. The “Continuous present” and “timelessness” philosophy must be rejected. To maintain the idea would soon bring doctrinal problems as well as problems with prophecy.

We must also mention the argument—no doubt intended to reconcile all the differences—that they may *all* be true; that there may be something in all of these ideas. This attempted solution will not work however; it confuses the whole message. There are many parts of Revelation that cannot be made to fit this notion. Let the reader just ask himself such questions as:— How many times are the nations to be gathered to Armageddon (Rev 16:16)? How many different marks of the beast(s) are to be avoided (Rev 20:4)? How many times is the last trumpet to sound? How often are the dead to be raised and judged? How many periods of 1,260 days witnessing? How many reigns of Christ for 1000 years? Clearly, all these will not be fulfilled over and over again—past, future, continuing present *and* continuous historic. The idea is absurd. We must turn from these faulty ideas and show what the Truth is. Let us then show that the book of Revelation *is a continuously unfolding story of events and developments*.

#### ***The Development of The Apocalyptic Beast System***

The starting point is to recognize in the 10 horned Beast of Revelation the obvious features of Daniel’s fourth Beast (Dan. 7:7, 8 and verses 23-26). Secondly, we should note the fact that Daniel’s 10-horned beast continues its existence in some form “till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit” in judgement, or until the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:9; c/p verse 22). We would *expect* therefore Daniel’s ten-horned beast system to have existence during the times relevant to the book of Revelation.

Having that point established, we now plot the story of the Beast in the Revelation. We can note four distinct phases or forms of the Beast, each being a development from one that has gone before.

**Phase one:** Rev. 12:3. A Great Red Dragon with 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns. He is (verse 9) the serpent power, Diabolos and Adversary (c/p chap 2:10 where the “diabolos” casts some into prison.) He is (verse 10) “the accuser of our brethren...which (falsely) accused them...” It is hard to miss the role of the Roman authority which accused brethren and cast them into prison.

**Phase two:** Rev. 13:1-5. A Beast with 7 heads, 10 Horns, 10 crowns, a Name of blasphemy etc.... The Dragon of phase one gives his power (or authority) to the Beast—so there is a transfer of power from the



form of phase one to that of phase two. It is a continuing story (See diagram opposite).

**Phase three:** Rev. 13:11,12. This *Beast of the Earth* is of an entirely different form yet speaks with the unmistakable voice of the Dragon of phase one. Furthermore, he exercises all the power (or authority) of the Beast seen in phase two. We note then that there has been a transfer of power from phase one to phase two and now on to phase three. *This is still a continuing story.*

In Revelation 16 wrath is poured out upon the Beast system—i.e. (verse 10) “his kingdom”. This then is a political power. As a result of the vials the Beast’s kingdom and authority is eclipsed or “darkened”.

**Phase four:** Rev 17:3. A Scarlet Coloured Beast with names of blasphemy, 7 heads and 10 horns. It is identified as having had previous existence (it “was”, verse 8). It then seems to have disappeared, for it “is not”—but it ascends out of the bottomless pit and “yet is” again. Here then is a system that makes an amazing comeback. As this is so, we are compelled to see a continuing story—the development and career of Daniel’s fourth Beast which in its fourth and final phase is “overcome” (see Rev. 17:12-14) and given to the burning flame in a “lake of fire” as both Daniel and John describe:—

“I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to *the burning flame.*”—Daniel 7:11.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into *a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*”—Rev. 19:19-20.

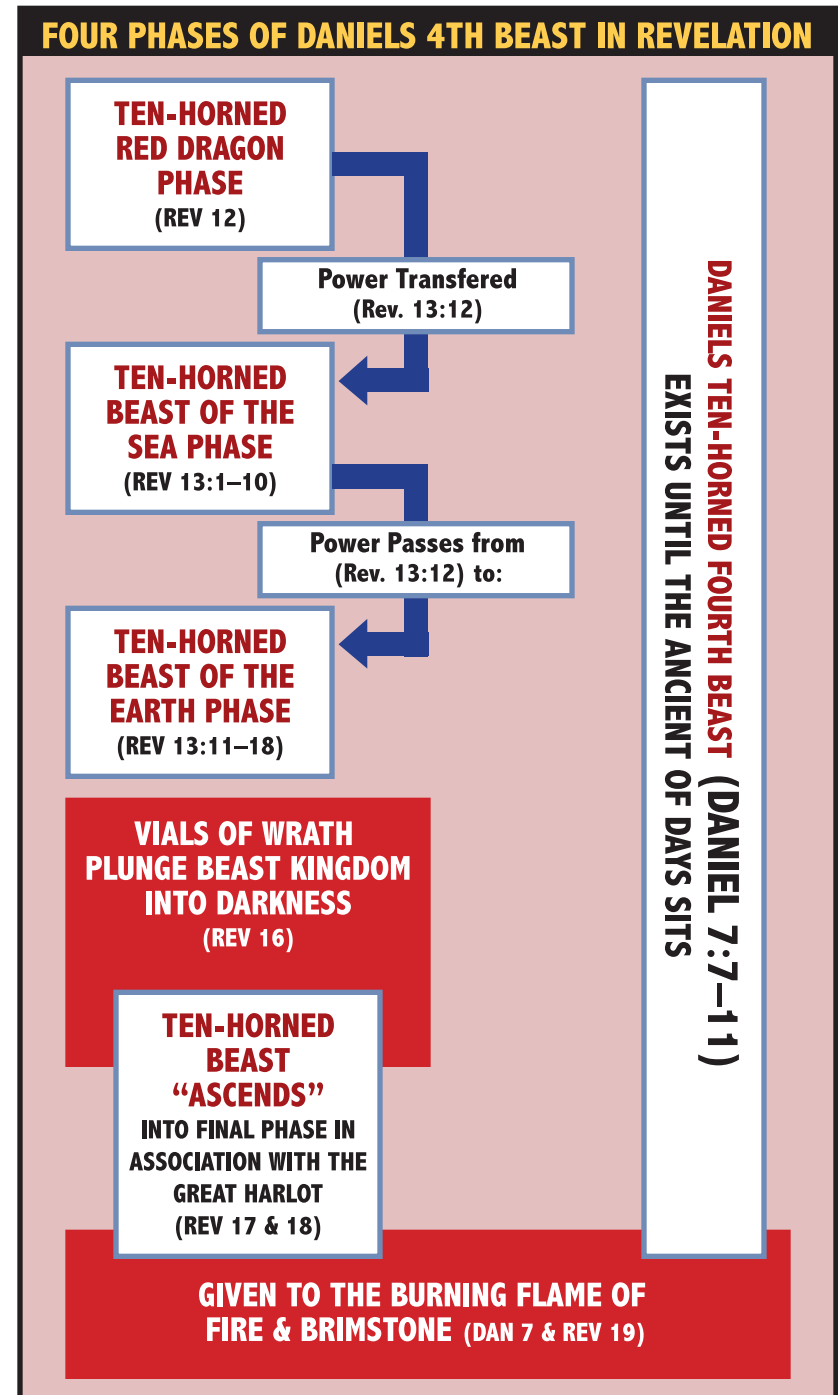
Now this cannot be seen as anything other than an unfolding story—a course of events commencing with the emergence of Daniel’s fourth Beast and continuing through various forms until the coming of Christ when it is destroyed by fire. It is a clear demonstration of the so-called “continuous-historic” pattern.

We saw earlier (on pages 22 to 25) that the consecutive epochs in the structure of the book of Revelation lead naturally to the same conclusion. There can be no doubt therefore that this is the correct view and we need not be hesitant about placing our full faith and confidence in it.

*“Come and See!”*

Let us now return to the seals and note the unfolding of the scroll in relation to the events which overtook the pagan Roman world following the vigorous preaching of the gospel. Let us “Come and see”:

Immediately following the reign of Emperor Domitian we find the succession of events that are detailed on the chart which appears on page 38.



Thus the “world” of pagan Rome was overcome. Further details will arise when we come to consider Revelation chapter 12.

Now as the scroll continues to unfold we see that another “world” is to be overcome—the so-called “Christian” Roman Empire. This concerns apostate “Christendom”.



*Constantine won the Battle of Milvian Bridge in A.D.312. A year later, in the Edict of Milan, state acceptance of Christianity was established.*

# 7

## *Four Wind Trumpets and Three Woes*

**W**e saw earlier how the seals were unloosed and judgements poured out upon the pagan Roman world as a response to the prayers of the saints. Now, in Revelation 8:1-6 we can see the same principle at work again. The prayers of all the saints ascend up before God and result in the rumbling thunder of approaching judgement. Let us appreciate this. Our brethren and sisters earnestly prayed before God in their afflictions and in their sufferings. Their prayers were heard and brought terrible judgement upon their tormentors. What of us today? What can we learn from all this?

The trumpet judgements are divided into two groups:— *the four wind trumpets* of Revelation 8:7-12, and the three *woe trumpets* mentioned in verse 13. The fifth trumpet (which is the first of the “woe” group) is detailed in Rev 9:1-12. The sixth trumpet (second “woe”) is seen in Rev 9:13-21, but it also has to do with the events of Revelation 11 (see verse 14). The seventh or last trumpet (Rev 11:5; 10:7) involves those final judgements and developments which bring the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

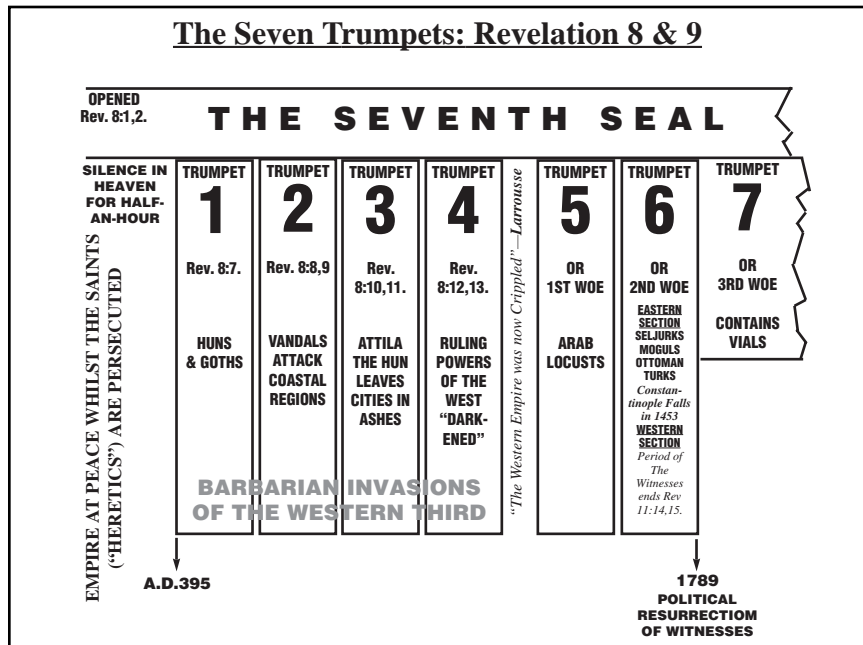
The following brief notes show how the various symbols can be interpreted Scripturally, and how the fulfillment of those things fits once again the pattern of history. The seals were judgements upon the pagan Roman system. The trumpets now follow and describe the next phase of history —namely the judgements poured out upon the “Christian”, or rather Catholic, form of the Empire.

### *Revelation Chapter 8.*

**Rev. 8:7.** The symbolic language of hail and fire in this verse can be quite readily understood if we refer to passages in the Old Testament which use similar language to describe the coming judgements — see Isa 28:2,3; 30:30,31. These judgements are cast upon the “*earth*” which describes those who are ruled over (as in the sense seen in Isa 1:2, a sinful nation). *Trees* are used as a figure for the leaders of the people — see Daniel 4:20-22; Jude verses 11 and 12. Grass represents people — Isa 40:6,7; 52:12.

We notice here, that these judgements were to be brought upon “the third part”. The Roman Empire at this time *was* divided into three (its so-called tripartite division); history shows us how it was *the western third part* of the Christian Roman Empire which was affected by the Barbarian invasions which wrought havoc from A.D.395 onwards (see chart on page 46).

**In Rev 8:8,9** the symbols referring to the second trumpet can be interpreted by



their use elsewhere. A mountain burning with fire is a destroying power, and the idea is seen in Jer 51:25; the "sea" signifies peoples, and ships refer to maritime peoples and coastal parts of Catholic "Christendom". The Roman navy was destroyed as many ships were trying to flee.

**Revelation 8:10** describes "a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp". A star symbolises a ruling power — see Judges 5:19,20; Daniel 8:9,10. In the passage before us, this shooting star of the political heavens falls upon one third part of rivers and fountains of waters. Rivers are nations — compare Isa 8:7-8; 18:7. Water represent peoples —Rev 17:15. Attila the Hun, crossed the Rhine in March A.D. 451, a shooting star in the political firmament bearing (as Gibbon describes) "the sword of Mars". He left cities in ashes and died A.D.453.

The Sun, Moon and Stars of **Rev 8:12** are said to be smitten by the judgements of the fourth trumpet. These are the ruling powers — and it was the ruling power of the Western third part of the Empire which was the first to be "darkened"— Romulus Augustus was the last Emperor in the West; he was banished by Odoacer (after which it became a Gothic kingdom under Theodoric). Thus the Western Empire as such, ceased to exist and the early development of modern Europe began.

**In Rev 8:13** we are introduced to a different aspect of things - "an angel flying through the mid-heaven". The Revised Version margin informs us that the word "angel" here, in the Greek, signifies an eagle. As we saw in Rev 4:7 this is an aspect of the cherubim —the vehicle of the Divine will, the saints. Here then are believers, brethren in Christ, preaching the Truth and warning the inhabitants of the earth of the woe-judgements that were coming. They were

witnessing to the prophetic word, as in chapter 6:1. They would point to what had already come upon the Empire and they would point out what was yet to come, urging people to repent of the works of their hands, their murders, sorceries, fornications and thefts — Rev 9:20,21.

**Revelation Chapter 9**

As the fifth angel sounds (**chapter 9:1**) his judgements follow and are seen to contribute the first of the woes (c/p 9:12). These judgements are described in symbolic language as the coming of locusts. This description is one that echoes Judges 6:1-6 and Judges 7:12 where the Midianities, Amalekites "and all the children of the east" are referred to as grasshoppers or(Revised Version: "locusts"). It is a clear identification of the Arabians who swarmed into the Eastern and N.African parts of the Empire from the south east. *Larousse History* (page 265) says:

"In 737 Leo III suffered several raids from Asia Minor, and two years later, 150,000 Moslems, *stripping the country bare in their passage*, advanced as far as Nicea, and the standard of the Caliph floated once again over the Bosphorus".

Such were the Moslem "locusts" who came, declaring that "There is one God". They were violent anti-trinitarians who brought judgement upon the worshippers of the tri-une god borrowed by Catholicism from earlier pagans. Those who were not trinitarians, and who had the seal of God in their foreheads (c/p chap 9:4) were not hurt by those locust judgements. To apostate christendom however, this really was the judgements of an "Apollyon" or "Destroyer" (see A.V. and R.V. margins).

As the sixth angel sounds (**chapter 9:13**) we are once more reminded by the voice from the four horns of the golden altar, that what follows is in response to the prayers of the believers —c/p chapter 8:3. This is the pattern that is impressed upon us time and time again in the Revelation and it must, surely teach us something. Today, we are not physically threatened as our brethren and sisters were in the past — materially we are very comfortable indeed compared to them. Yet we *are* threatened in very subtle and dangerous ways, and the lesson must surely be that these things ought to be made the subject of our prayers. We will look more closely at this presently, when we come to discuss issues relating to our own time.

The sixth trumpet judgement has to do with releasing, or loosing the four "angels" of the Euphrates. (compare this with our remarks on page 70) Now in Isa 8:7 the Euphrates is specifically identified with the power of the day which was associated with it —namely, the king of Assyria. The powers which were bound by the Euphrates river at the beginning of this sixth trumpet period are readily identifiable. A quick reference to *Penguin Historical Atlas* will show this —they were powers which, once loosed, would destroy Byzantium as the seat of eastern Christendom and establish (in 1453) the Ottoman Empire. This completed this phase of judgement upon Eastern Christendom.

The sixth trumpet judgement has another section to it, and this concerns the Western empire. This is the subject matter of Revelation chapter 11 (see verses 14 and 15) and brings us forward to A.D. 1789 as we shall see presently.



# The Seven Sealed Scroll or The Words Unsealed - Daniel 12:9

## Reign of Saints with Christ 1000 Years on Earth

The First Six Ecclesial States & Seals (Overcoming of the Roman Pagan World)						
Judgements of God upon the Roman System in its Phases	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Roman Horse White with Peace	Horse Red with Civil Wars	Horse Black with Great Woe	Horse Pale with civil strife, famine, pestilence	Dioclesian Persecution	Great Constantinian Earthquake, Day of Wrath
	to A.D. 183 (6:1-2)	A.D. 183 (6:1-2)	A.D. 212 (6:1-2)	A.D. 235 (6:1-2)	A.D. 303-13 (6:1-2)	A.D. 312/24 (6:1-2)
	Preparation for Sounding Wind Trumpets (Rev. 8:6)					
	The Four Wind Trumpets				The Three Woe Trumpets (Judgements upon Apostate Christendom)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Baharian Invasions A.D. 395 – Rev. 8:7	Baharian Invasions A.D. 429 – Rev. 8:8-9	Baharian Invasions A.D. 450 – Rev. 8:10-11	Baharian Invasions – Rev. 8:12-13	Invasions from the East – Rev. 9:1-12	Euphrates Loosed – Rev. 9:13-21/11:14
The Seven Vials (Judgements on Kingdom of Beast)						
7						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A.D. 1789 – Rev. 16:2	A.D. 1793 – Rev. 16:3	A.D. 1796 – Rev. 16:4-7	A.D. 1805 – Rev. 16:8-9	A.D. 1809 – Rev. 16:10-11	A.D. 1820+ – Rev. 16:12-16	Judgement upon Babylon – Rev. 17:2 Earthquake of the 7th Vial and Seven Thunders or Rev. 10 1-4
The Early Ecclesias Fall Away from the Truth						Judgement of Saints
The One Body in Conflict with the World						
42 Month Witness of Saints (Rev. 11)						Prayers Rev. 15:8
Servants of God Sealed in the foreheads						
Prayers Rev. 8 2-6						
Laodician State of Apostacy						
Philadelphia						
Sarids						Prayers Rev. 6 9-10
Thyatira						
Pergamos						
Smyrna						
Ephesus						
Come and See! Rev. 6:1,3,5,7/Psm 66						

apostate Christianity, is “the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (afresh).

As was seen in an earlier section, the “beast” of the Apocalypse is, essentially, Daniel’s fourth beast. This is stated to be “the fourth kingdom upon earth” (Daniel 7:23) and there is no escaping the reference to the Roman Empire. It is therefore this Roman beast (in one of its later phases) which makes war against the witnesses. Clearly then, it is the Roman earth and authorities who are tormented by their testimony—for it is their testimony which provokes the war (Rev. 11:7).

These various pieces of information combine to tell us where to look for the arena in which the two Witnesses would prophesy. It is Roman Catholic Europe.

### *Two Separate Witnesses*

In Revelation “the temple of God” refers to the community of believers. For example, in chapter 3:12 we read:

“Him that overcometh 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 cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

In chapter 15:5 this community is termed “*the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony*” or witness. The same idea is seen elsewhere in Scripture also—e.g. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

John is told to measure this temple and altar of sacrifice, but there is a distinction to be made between this spiritual temple and its outer court which he is told to “leave out”—or more literally “excommunicate”—“for it is given to *the Gentiles*,” those who are *not* spiritual Jews. The implication before us then is of two separate communities—two witnesses. This is confirmed by what follows.

If we ask—Who are the two witnesses? The answer of Rev. 11:4 is “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the god of the earth.”

It is right to notice the reference to Zechariah chapter 4 here, but whilst noticing the similarities we must not overlook the differences. This is important. Zechariah saw two olive trees but only one candlestick; whereas John saw two of each. There is a good reason for this difference.

The apostle Paul, in Romans 11:24, introduces two olive trees:

“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own

olive tree?”

One is a wild olive tree, the other a good olive tree—and the context shows that the wild olive tree represents Gentiles, and the good olive tree Israel.

The Jewish branches, says Paul, are “broken off” (though will be grafted in again at some future time). These Jewish branches, as they are thus broken off, cannot be included in the witnessing trees of the Apocalypse. The Jews are indeed God’s witnesses in that they unwittingly testify to His existence, but they are not part of the Apocalyptic olive trees who prophesy during the Christian dispensation (as is required by Rev 11:3).

When Zechariah saw the two olive trees, they were joined by their pipes to one candlestick. John however, sees them each having their own candlesticks. They are thus completely separate (see diagram below).

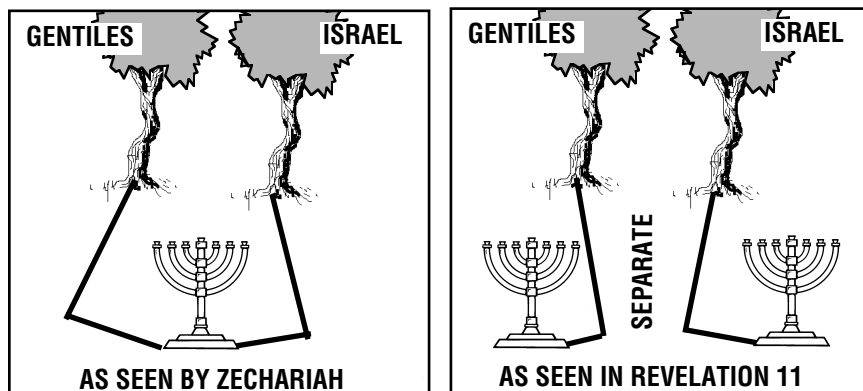
We will recall that true believers in Christ’s gospel are taken out of the Gentiles (Acts 15:14), or wild olive tree, and are grafted into the good olive tree—or Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12,19). This having taken place, they remain separated, sanctified, set apart, from the wild olive tree of the Gentiles.

From this it should be clear to us that one of the Apocalyptic witnesses embodies those who are joined to the Hope of Israel: they are “in Christ” their root, and are thus fittingly represented by the Israelitish olive tree supplying the oil of faith to the ecclesial lightstand.

The other witness is a Gentile olive tree—that which is “wild by nature”—and belongs to “the court which is without the temple.” John was told to “leave out,” or more correctly “excommunicate” this court, as it is given over to the Gentiles. This introduces us to an important principle in the Truth: the principle of separation from the Gentile witness of the outer court. Such is the symbolic picture before us in Revelation chapter 11.

### *The Good Olive Tree Witness*

We learn from Revelation 1:20 that *golden* candlesticks (or Lampstands) represent ecclesias. So one of these witnessing Lightstands of Revelation 11, being associated with the “good” olive tree (as explained above) is seen to represent an ecclesial witnessing body. But the ecclesial Body is not yet in its perfect state. This was seen when we considered the seven letters (see page 14); we observed: “These were not perfect ecclesias—True and false disciples were mingled together.” We must therefore be prepared to see a similar situation in



the Good Olive Tree Community of Revelation 11.

As with the first ecclesial lightstands of Asia, there is within this Witnessing Lightstand the “pure oil olive beaten for the light” (c/p Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:2). This oil comes from a good olive tree and is produced by the flesh being crushed or “beaten” in order that the golden oil may be produced. This oil represents *the faith* of those who are the branches. They partake “of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (Rom. 11:18; Col. 2:7). It is their testimony of faith which provides light in this dark and evil world. As Jesus told his disciples “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). This light makes manifest and reproves evil deeds (John 3:19-20; Ephesians 5:13) and thus influences those who come into contact with it. This purifying effect of “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6) gives light in the house or temple of God—the ecclesia—and is a witness to the world outside.

As the word of God falls to the earth like seed from the hands of the sower, it takes lodgement in various kinds of earth—and as Jesus explains in his parable, produces varying results. Some is fruit-bearing and some is not; some grow into faithful witnesses whilst others have not sufficient strength for that purpose. In another analogy Jesus said to his disciples “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden *under foot* of men” (Matt. 5:13).

#### *The Wild Olive Tree Witness*

Speaking of those who had no “root” in themselves (Matt.13:20-21) Jesus says they hear the word and receive it with joy, but only endure for a while. “When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” Such was the case with those to whom the apostle John referred in 1 John 2:19. He says “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us...” There is a need for discernment therefore, says John, “because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (chapter 4:1). He says “*They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them*” (verse 5). These were apostate Christians who were not rooted into the good olive tree—they were “of the world”; or what Paul calls “the olive tree which is wild by nature” (Rom. 11:24). This being so, they are not governed by the principles of Christ but by the spirit of the world and consequently many of them see no harm in taking up the sword to defend themselves from their enemies.

Now it is important to understand that this wild olive-tree witness—like the good olive-tree witness—is composed of many different shades of opinion. In some there is considerable influence remaining of the teachings of Scripture, in others the principles of Christ have been so diluted as to be hardly recognizable and have become little more than a humanistic “love of neighbour” with no thought of God.

#### *“My Two Witnesses”*

Many brethren and sisters today have difficulty in accepting the idea that both “good” and “wild” olive-tree Lightstands can be called “my” two witnesses. It is sometimes felt that any community described by Jesus as “my” witness must be pure. This however is not so as can be seen from many places in Scripture.

For example, in Philippians 1:15-18 we read:

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

We may find help in coming to terms with this idea if we remember Israel's spiritual condition. Here was a nation and society composed of all sorts of people—faithful men and women to outright rebels and wicked men. Yet God says of the nation “Ye are *my* witnesses...and my servant... Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isa. 43:10-12). And so it has been. In a similar way Jesus Christ has had his witnesses during the centuries of darkness between his ascension and return. These “witnesses” have included the true brethren of Christ, as well as other groups who have contested against Rome.

#### *“Standing Before the God of the Earth”*

In this symbolic prophecy the “earth” must be taken figuratively. From other parts of Scripture it can be shown that the “earth” refers to the common people of society (C/p Gen. 6:11; Deut 32:1; Isa. 1:2;). In pagan Roman times “the god of the earth” was Caesar, but when “the son of perdition” was revealed as a result of “a falling away” (2 Thess. 2:3) this “Christian” apostate sat in the temple of the Roman god “showing himself that he is God” (verse 4). The two witnesses were to stand before this papal god of the Roman earth and deliver their testimony during a symbolic period of 1,260 days (in the one case) and 42 months (in the other case). The sense of this “standing before” the Roman god may be seen from another case—that of our Lord “who *before* Pontius Pilate *witnessed* a good confession” (1 Tim. 6:13). In a similar (though not identical) way the good olive-tree witness was to testify before the papal god of the Roman earth. The wild olive-tree witness played a supporting role, and being “of the world” saw no reason not to defend liberty whenever the need arose.

#### *When was This to Occur?*

We have established, in general terms, what is to be looked for. Revelation 11 teaches us to expect the appearance of witnessing communities “standing before” the god of the earth (contrast the God of heaven—verse 13). One Lightstand represents a community which was fed by the pure olive oil of Truth. The other Lightstand is separate from this and is “of the world”; it was to be a group which had within it the power of prophecy (Rev. 11:3), but not the true knowledge of salvation.

When were they expected to appear? This is not difficult to determine because we are told in Rev. 11:14 “the second woe is past”—that is, the sixth trumpet period (or what is called the 2nd woe trumpet—see chart on page 46). The event which marks this point in time is the great earthquake in which a tenth part of the city falls. It is clear that the two witnesses will have delivered their 1,260 day/42 month testimony and will have suffered their death and experienced resurrection and ascension *before* this point is reached. So, by the conclusion of the sixth trumpet period then, the prophecy of the two witnesses will have

passed into history.

### **“A Great Earthquake”**

As the “earth” represents the common people, so the symbol of an “earthquake” represents a great social upheaval—what is sometimes called a *political earthquake*. Such an event was to take place in “the tenth part of the city”. The city is that of verse 8 where we read of “the street of that great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” This we have already established as referring to Roman Catholic Europe; that later phase of the Roman Empire which was characterized by a great Christian apostasy. The prophecy recognizes a division of the “city” into *tenths*—and scripture teaches us to expect *exactly* that kind of development in the Roman fourth beast—see Daniel 7:23-24. The obvious and reasonable conclusion then is that a great social upheaval—a political earthquake—is foretold, and that this will take place in one of the 10-horn nations of Catholic Europe.

Now we face two alternatives: either this great earthquake still remains to be fulfilled in the future, or it is already recorded upon the page of history. In order to prove the first alternative we must discount the second. So what are the facts? Has this been fulfilled in the history of Europe or not?

History tells us of only two major (or “great”) social earthquakes in the long history of Europe. There have been several upheavals of course, but only two of them permanently changed the social and political scenery. The first “great earthquake” occurred when Constantine completely removed the pagan social order and established the pseudo-Christian order in its place. That event completely changed the whole character of the Roman heaven and earth (Rev. 6:12). But this event was not confined to just one “tenth” of the great city—it involved the whole of it. This cannot be the great earthquake of Revelation 11.

The only other great upheaval is that of the French Revolution which struck in 1789. The shock-waves of that upheaval spread right across Europe and the effects were seen in the revolutions of Europe that followed—and is still seen even today. Here was a great earthquake that took place in a tenth part of the city—and it marks the greatest social upheaval ever seen in the history of Roman Catholic Europe. Much may be said about this event, but the one outstanding feature that cannot be ignored by any fair-minded student is the fact that it fulfills the requirement of this prophecy which foretold of just such an upheaval in one of the European “tenths”. We must consider the probability then, that this drama involving the two witnesses of Revelation 11 is to be found in the history of Roman Catholic Europe prior to the French Revolution of 1789.

### **Historic “Witnesses”**

Since apostolic times the purpose of God has been to take out of the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). This is a work that will continue “until the full number of the Gentiles come in” (Rom. 11:25. R.S.V.)

It would seem both unsatisfactory and incredible if, between the first century A.D. and the 19th century, there were no Gentiles who had responded to the Spirit’s call through the Gospel: that the Lord Jesus Christ, having passed into the heavens as the great High Priest—the mediator between God and man—that

he had not had anyone approach the throne of grace in a period of some 1,700 years! Such a proposition is inconceivable; yet that is what we would have to believe if we denied the existence of historical witnesses. It is tantamount to saying that there has been no redemptive work in operation for the past one and a half thousand years! This just will not do. The Lord has not left himself without witness in all this time; there is always that remnant who have not bowed the knee to Baal (Romans 11:4-5).

Now as we have studied the mixed nature of the witnessing lightstands earlier, there is good ground for us to acknowledge that true believers—Brethren in Christ—existed amongst the various protesting groups that we find mentioned in history.

The following brief notes will help to sketch in some of the other details given in this prophecy of Rev 11:

### **1,260 Days, 42 Months**

This is representative time. The principle is given in the following two passages:

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

“Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of



Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee *each day for a year.*”— Ezek. 4:4-6.

Here days are equal to years. Emperor Constantine commenced to persecute and “tread under foot” the so-called Christian heretics about A.D. 312. 1,260 years from that date brings us to the year 1572 and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in which it is said that 70,000 “protestants” lost their lives.

#### ***Trodden Under Foot:***

The illustration reproduced at the bottom of the opposite page, is taken from *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Ancient & Medieval History* page 232. It shows “heretics” under foot during the time of Constantine VI (776-97 A.D.). The picture describes exactly the position of these people during the period, and demonstrates the fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation chapter 11.

#### ***Chapter 11:7 “War”***

This war lasted from the Massacre of St Bartholomew in 1572 to 1685.



**Medals struck by the Vatican to commemorate the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572**

#### ***The Edict of Nantes***

The Edict of Nantes was a form of human rights charter which was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685. Brownings History of the Huguenots comments:

“Numbers of his subjects were legally and civilly *dead*, with the anomalous tyranny of maintaining a claim upon their loyalty and obedience...the church had gained a victory.”

A medal was struck by Louis XIV bearing the inscription: “To commemorate the recall to the Church of 2,000,000 Calvinists, 1685.”

#### ***The Power of their Prophecy***

It would be possible to fill several pages with quotations from writings penned *before* the French Revolution, showing how an event of that character was expected on the basis of Revelation 11. We will just give three references here.

**Joseph Mede** (1649) identified the great earthquake of Revelation 11 as “a great commotion of the Nations, and alteration of politic affairs”. He refers to a man named Philipus Nicolaus who understood the phrase “the tenth part of the city” as referring to “the ten kingdoms subject to the dominion thereof, which (forsooth) in this stir of the nations, should fall away from Rome...” This was correct.

**Robert Fleming** (1701) observed that there was a “step by step” rise of papal power and saw a corresponding gradation of its fall. These stages in the fall of papal power he expected to occur in the years 1794 (period of the Revolution), 1848 and then finally in the year 2000 (or 2018 according to Julian years).

**Thomas Newton** (1754) notes several contemporary writers who identified the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day 1572 with the death of the witnesses in France (It was the commencement of the “war” which resulted in their political death by the Revocation of the edict of Nantes, October 1685—an event identified by *Peter Jurieu*, (1687). This same writer (Jurieu), one hundred years before the French Revolution wrote:

“The (ten) kings, who yet remain under the Empire of Rome, must break with her, leave her solitary and desolate. But who must begin this last revolt? 'Tis most probable, that France shall...It cannot be any country but France...Seeing the tenth part of the City which must fall, is France, this gives me some hopes, that the death of the two witnesses hath a peculiar relation to that kingdom...”

If those who lived *before* these events could see these things, ought not we who live afterwards be able to understand the prophecy?

#### ***Understanding their Time***

In the following words, Thomas Newton in 1754 identified the period in which he lived as the sixth trumpet, or second woe trumpet of the Revelation:

“These seven last plagues (i.e. the vials of Rev. 16) must necessarily fall under the seventh and last trumpet, or the third and last woe-trumpet; so that as the seventh seal contained the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet comprehends the seven vials...If then these seven last plagues synchronize with the seventh or last trumpet, they are all yet to come; for *the sixth trumpet is not yet past?*”p. 630-631

The great earthquake in France, signalling the end of the second woe or sixth trumpet, was then just 35 years in the future.

## 9

*The Enemy of The Saints*

**W**e have established earlier that a central exhortation of the Revelation is that the saints are to overcome the world—the worldly environment of their age—through faith (1 John 2:15-17; chapter 5:4). To that end we are exhorted to read, hear and keep the things written in this book. The “things which must shortly come to pass” can provide us with a vision that will strengthen us during the trials and tribulations that are to be suffered.

As the plan of the book has been put into effect, and as a continuous story has unfolded upon the pages of history, we have seen how saints were led to prayer as they were engaged in a struggle against the cruel world in which they lived. We have also briefly considered God’s response to those prayers in bringing upon a wicked world “the judgements written” in this Revelation.

From what we have already seen it should be clear to all of us that the Enemy of the saints has always been—and still is—the world; the social, political and religious environment is the enemy against which the servants and witnesses of Jesus “wrestle”—as we read in Ephesians 6:12:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

This enemy of the saints takes on a more specific identity in Revelation Chapters 12 and 13. But some recent interpretations have suggested that the man child of the vision in Revelation 12 is Christ, and that consequently the *woman* who bears him represents the nation of Israel.

*The Woman is not Israel.*

The symbols connected with this sign-woman do not fit an Israel interpretation. The superficial comparison that is frequently made between this vision and Joseph’s dream (Genesis 37:9,10) is seen to collapse when details are compared.

**1. Clothed with the Sun.** If we interpret this on the basis of Joseph’s dream, then the sun is Jacob. There is obvious difficulty in *clothing* Israel with Jacob. It doesn’t make sense. Israel has not yet put on Christ so as to be clothed by him —so that is of no help either. This symbol in no way describes an Israel who is about to *bring forth* Christ.

**2. The Moon under her Feet.** A similar difficulty arises here. In Joseph’s dream the moon = Joseph’s mother. It seems neither

reasonable or fitting to interpret “the moon under her feet” as applying to either Rachel or Leah. And there is no scriptural ground upon which to make the moon = the law as some have done. The law is not under Israel’s feet, for Israel has not conquered it. The modern interpreter is clearly floundering when it comes to such detail.

**3. A Crown of Twelve Stars.** If the twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel (on the basis of Joseph’s dream they must), these have never been Israel’s crown, her crown is Davidic.

*The Sun Invested Woman*

The symbols do not fit Israel because this woman does not represent Israel! It is fundamental in interpreting the Apocalypse, that we realize that the prophecy concerns Christian times. The woman here represents a Christian movement (using the word “Christian” in its wide sense). She is presented to us as *occupying the same heaven as the Dragon*, and as that dragon is quite obviously Daniel’s 4th beast — the Roman Empire — this Christian community is seen to be adorned with the glory of *that* heavenly. She appears at the beginning of the chapter as a kind of preface or heading, showing what the events of the vision will accomplish.

In 2 Corinthians 11 the apostle Paul expresses deep concern over the ecclesia, lest their minds should be corrupted through the subtlety of false teachers. He wrote of those who would preach “another Jesus” and “another gospel”. Paul’s fears were well founded for these teachers seduced the ecclesia (1 John 2:26), and the result was the apostacy *in embryo*. When, therefore, gestation was completed, she was delivered of a man child. This “man of sin” would then bestow the glory of the Roman heavenly upon the woman, who thus becomes the symbol of the Catholic Church (Rev 12:1). The symbolic features are:

- The Roman heaven.
- Invested with the glory of the ruling power of that heaven— Caesar.
- The moon which previously reflected that glory (the pagan ecclesiastical system) is now under foot.
- The twelve Caesars formed the crown of the Roman world.

*War In Heaven.*

This identity of the woman disqualifies her offspring from being Jesus. So also the war in heaven — precipitated by the elevation of the man-child — cannot be consistent with the idea of Jesus going into heaven where he now sits at the right hand of his Father. This *cannot* be Jesus, for note the sequence of events:

1. The dragon waits in heaven to devour the child.
2. Having been born, the child is caught up to heaven where the dragon is waiting.
3. The result is WAR, with victory for “Michael”.

There is no disputing this sequence, and the difficulty now becomes acute for those who see this as Jesus ascending to “God, and to his throne”. Jesus’ ascension did not lead to a “star-wars”. There can be no war in literal heaven as Jehovah’s Witnesses teach — for only God’s will is done there— Matt.6:10.

REVELATION 12	1 PETER 5:8
“...the dragon stood before the woman...for to devour her child.”	“..be vigilant; because your adversary (Satan) and the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour... knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren”
“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.”	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EPH 6:8,9</b></p> “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle...against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”(Please note R.V., “in the heavenly”)

Let us look at what scripture is actually saying here:

There are two antagonists who wage war in the heaven of this Apocalyptic drama. One is the man-child Michael, the other is the dragon. The dragon is the Pagan Roman authority. The obvious connection with Daniel's 4th beast is sufficient in itself, but if further proof be required, we would point to the very language used as having been applied to the Roman power by the New Testament writers, as depicted in the box at top.

When we read of this dragon-power being “cast out” of the heaven in Revelation 12, it ought to be readily recognised as the pagan authority. Once recognised, the other antagonist in the conflict has his identity supplied by the history of time. The man-child was Constantine, for he it was who “cast out” the Pagan regime.

#### **Conception and Birth of “The Man”**

It is this identity of the man-child with Constantine that causes so much doubt in the minds of some. There is really no ground for doubt however, once we grasp the general theme of the prophecy. Brother Thomas was aware of the interpretation which, based on this “iron rule” of nations phrase, identified the man-child with Jesus. In those days the interpretation was being put forward by certain Orthodox Christians, but Brother Thomas discarded it, and wrote to that effect in the *Herald of The Future Age*, 1848, page 7.

The phrase “rule all nations with a rod of iron” is *not* the decisive key which allusionists wish to make it. The words could equally apply to the iron rule of Rome (see Lev 26:19; Jer 15:12; Daniel 2:40; 7:19).

The 12th and 13th chapter of the Apocalypse reveal the development of “the Man”, from birth to maturity. Let us look at this. In Rev 12:5 the woman brings forth her “child”. His career is then outlined: he is caught up to the Roman heaven, engages in war and is victorious. He appears again in verse 13, but is now matured (note, in the KJV “child” is in italics, it is not in the original). He is now *the Man*. The “Man” is of course a figure— not just one individual. In fact the beast of the earth (chapter 13:11) is seen to be the “man” when he is manifested to the mind of wisdom in chapter 13:18 (for the number of the beast is the number of the man!). Thus, through chapters 12 and 13 we see him develop from a man-child to the mature Man of Sin —alias the beast whose number is 666. So we perceive that it represents a *system of government*

or rule:

- \* The system of rule, having Christ-like features, is born into the Roman heaven — 12:5 (Please look up the passage).
- \* Pagan authority (red dragon) is defeated in war — 12:7-9.
- \* Christendom (Christ's Kingdom) is installed — 12:10.
- \* True saints are still persecuted — 12:17; 13:7.
- \* The system becomes an object of worship — 13:8.
- \* It maintains Lamb-like (Christian ) appearances —13:11.
- \* It exercises the power of a previous (Roman) system — 13:12.
- \* It deceives — 13:14.
- \* The system controls tremendous wealth — 13:16,17.

All this surely fits the Christian (Catholic) system of rule which arose after the fall of pagan authority in the Roman Empire. That being the case, it has to be admitted that *Constantine personified this system at its birth*.

This story of the man actually goes back to the prophecy of Daniel, where we see him associated with an aspect of the fourth beast (c/p Daniel 7:8). This is “the man of sin” who Paul says will be “revealed” (or apocalypsed) when the falling away, or apostacy, had matured (2 Thess. 2:3-4. See also verse 8). His existence would continue in some form until the coming of Christ, when he is to be destroyed.

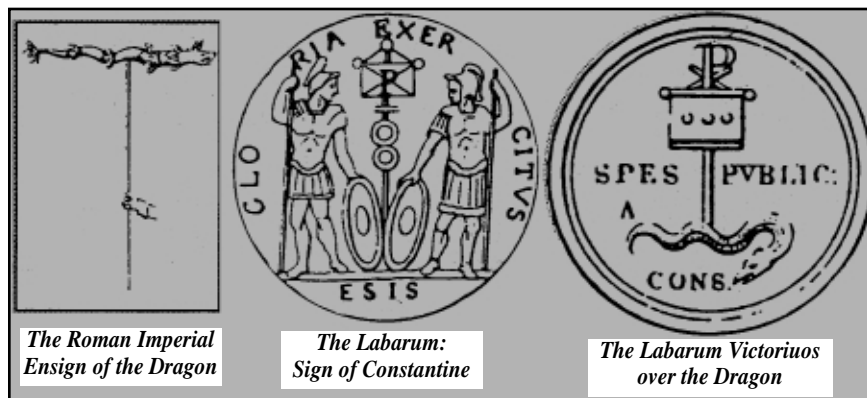
We need to appreciate the position of the Roman Caesar. In the Roman world he was seen as a god and was worshipped. In Thessalonians Paul emphasises this —“...he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” This is why, in Rev 12, the man-child having been caught up to the position of Caesar (verse 5), he is then (verse 7) given the title Michael— “he as God”. This is 2 Thess. 2 *exactly!*

#### **A Fulfilled Prophecy**

Before we close this part of the present study, we must just mention one final piece of evidence which powerfully demonstrates the correctness of the traditional interpretation of these chapters. Not only do we find that history fulfills the theme which we have spoken about — a “Christian” system has ruled with an iron rod for many centuries — but the events were spoken of *in advance!* The interpretation which we have sought to demonstrate was obviously known *before* it was fulfilled. In his book *The Protesters*, Brother Alan Eyre writes (page 13):

“...Tertullian (162-240)...makes quite a remarkable prediction stating that on the basis of Scripture he expected an *Apostate Church with temporal power to grow up in Rome*, rising from the fragmented ruins of Imperial Rome. Hippolytus (died 236) wrote similarly of a revived Roman Empire under a new guise and governing by Roman law.”

The prophetic word is a miracle, and it seems that when men have been informed by it of things which must yet come to pass, and have recorded their expectations so long in advance of the event; then he who would disregard that evidence shuts his eyes to the hand of God just as surely as those who refused the evidence of miracles during the first century. That is a very dangerous position — one where it might be said:



*The Roman Imperial Ensign of the Dragon*

*The Labarum: Sign of Constantine*

*The Labarum Victorius over the Dragon*

“O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken...”

### ***The Dragon & The Beast***

We have previously noted the fact that the Revelation is a continuous story. The Dragon is seen to pass his throne and power to the Beast (Rev. 13:2), and a third beast is then seen to inherit all the power of his predecessor (Rev. 13:12. See chart on page 43). The Dragon and Beast are readily identified as being phases of Daniel’s 4th Beast, and this we understand to be the Roman system.

It is interesting to note the fact that one standard of the Roman Empire was in fact a dragon (See above). When Constantine gained victory over the pagan forces at Milvian Bridge, the sign of the Dragon was replaced by the sign of the cross (in which sign it is said that Constantine was to conquer). In the Revelation this adoption of a pseudo-Christian character is symbolically represented as the Beast having “the name of Blasphemy” upon his heads (Rev. 13:1).

This Roman Beast in its “Christian” phase continued the policy of the Dragon to make war with the true believers (see Rev. 12:17 and Rev. 13:7). This Beast persecuted all those who did not acknowledge its spiritual leadership. The historian Gordon Childe in his book *What Happened in History* comments:

“The Conversion of Constantine is generally hailed as the final victory of the new faith. It may equally be regarded as the triumph of totalitarianism. The church no doubt won not only tolerance and relief from persecution, but also wealth and the right to persecute. The price was clerical endorsement of the existing order on earth.”

The Roman Empire in its Christian phase under Constantine persecuted several Christian communities. Examples are the Donatists (who believed that Christ would return to set up his Kingdom on earth), the Arians and the Ebionites.

From church historians we learn that among these persecuted communities there were many conscientious objectors who would not take up the sword to defend themselves. Milner, for example, refers to the “peaceable Donatists” who were frequently banished into exile—a kind of captivity. As they were forcibly escorted by Roman soldiers from their homelands, the words of Rev. 13:10 would no doubt have had a particular relevance for them:

“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity, he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

This situation had to be overcome through faith and patience.

### ***The Lamb-Like Beast Phase.***

This beast and his principle features and actions are described in Revelation 13:11-18. Note the features of this power as represented in the chart opposite. This symbolic representation is clearly identifiable with the Holy Roman Empire.

The Holy Roman Empire was a system of rule founded by Charlemagne (and the Pope) in A.D. 800. It was the system that emerged in the European heartland in the Middle Ages and which strictly controlled every sphere of life—religious as well as civil. Through the manipulation of cultural, economic, political, religious and scientific thinking this system was able to impress a uniform character upon the whole of society. Everyone followed the same thought patterns, any form of independent thought was virtually out-lawed. Most people were illiterate in any case — and access to information was thus extremely limited. Education was in the hands of the Church so that it was reasonably simple to control the minds of the masses. It “formed” public opinion, so that a unitary mind was created in society. For the few who did not conform, there were special inducements in the agony of the rack, being burnt alive—or some other form of cruelty and death.

It was this power which was to make “an image to the beast” (i.e. to the first “Christian” Roman beast of Constantine’s time). This then would be *an image of the “Christian” Roman Empire* that would be given political life and a voice in political affairs. We find it in the papacy and in the system of papal states which gave the papacy temporal power during the Middle Ages. This was the “image of the beast” that had to be worshipped by everyone.

The judgement of that system, and of those who worshipped it, was assured by the word of God in Rev. 14:9-13:

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of his holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

The Beast system will be judged. Yet God’s saints had to resist this horrifying and dreadful power required the patience (endurance) of saints who exhibited



# What is The Beast of the Earth?

Revelation 13:11

**Like a Lamb  
appears "Christian"**

**HOLY**

**Speaks as  
a Dragon**

**ROMAN**

**Has Authority &  
Power of First Beast**

**EMPIRE**

- Practices Deception (verse 14)
- Noted for Religious Intolerance & Persecution (verse 15)

"the faith of Jesus", and who consequently identified themselves as his body. They would "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in their flesh for his body's sake, which is the ecclesia". (Col. 1:24).

# 10

## *The Mark of the Beast*

---

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."-Rev 13:16

---

In the language of Scripture the forehead denotes a state of mind. For example, in Exodus 28:36,38 we read of the golden plate inscribed with the words "Holiness to the Lord" which was to be affixed upon the forehead of the mitre worn by Aaron. "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead" *showing the state of mind* required by God in those who come to offer their holy gifts — "and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Yahweh." No one could look at the face of Aaron then, without beholding his forehead and the golden plate which provided a constant message, to all those who stood before him, that a holy state of mind was required.

In Jeremiah 3:3 it is said of Jerusalem— "...thou hadst a whore's forehead, and thou refusedst to be ashamed." Jerusalem had played the harlot (Chapter 2:20), and displayed that brazen state of mind which knows no shame or remorse. The forehead thus demonstrates the character and condition of the mind.

In Ezekiel 3:8,9 we see the prophets forehead being made strong against that of the people of Israel — "As an adamant harder than flint I made thy forehead." The mission of this prophet was that he should give the people warning from God "whether they will hear, or whether they will forebear." So the prophet Ezekiel was strengthened for the purpose to which he was sent — he was given a strength of mind to match the stubborn and rebellious minds of those to whom he would be sent.

The idea of writing something upon the mind is another Biblical concept. In Hebrews 10:16 we learn that the New Covenant involves a process whereby God puts his laws into the hearts of men and women, "and in their minds will I write them" He says. Thus in Ezekiel chapter 9 those who sighed and who were brought to tears over all the evil which surrounded them in Jerusalem had a *mark* set upon their foreheads. According to *Strong* the idea is that of a mark or signature being put upon the foreheads of those who vexed their righteous souls from day to day with the unlawful deeds of their neighbours. This signature denotes a state of mind which reflects that of the one who writes or signs — it is "the seal of God in their foreheads" (Rev 9:4); that is "his name in their foreheads"— Rev 22:4. Those who have the mark or signature of God's Name in their foreheads— that is, a state of mind which reflects His — will escape the

judgements which are to fall upon those who rebel against His word.

Such, then, is the way in which these concepts are presented to us in the Scriptures. When we come to Revelation chapter 13:16, it would seem highly unlikely that we should now forget what the rest of the Bible teaches us, and jump to the wild conclusion that the mark of the beast has to do with some form of modern technology associated with bar-codes and a new monetary system. There is no scriptural support whatsoever for such a fantastic interpretation as that. The idea is completely off the wall! Those whose minds are influenced by God's word, will recognize this without hesitation.

In the passage before us (Rev 13:16,17) the word *mark* is the Greek *Charagma*, literally an impress (it is used in Hebrews 1:3 where it is rendered “the express image”— see R.V. margin). It is akin to the Greek *Charakter*. So what is this mark or impress? Well, the mark of the beast is more specifically described in Rev 14:11 as “the mark of his name.” So it is *the mark of the name* of the beast.

What then do we know about the name of the beast? This beast, as we have seen elsewhere, is a phase of the Roman beast — and in Rev 13:2 we learn that his name (not “names” as some translations offer) is “the name of blasphemy.” So we are looking for the mark of the name of blasphemy associated with the Roman Beast.

The blasphemy of the beast reflects its character or *name*, and in chapter 13 verses 5 and 6 we see that this blasphemy issues forth from the beast's mouth — indicating to us a *teaching* or policy which *blasphemes* (that is, brings into disrepute, or maligns) God's good name.

Now with those things before us it should not take any great effort of our minds to perceive what is being referred to — the mark of the beast is the *impression* formed upon a person's mind by the blasphemous teaching carried out for, or to promote, his name. In other words, just as God writes His laws and His name upon the foreheads or minds of believers through the Truth — so the name of this Roman Beast (which, of course, is false Christianity) impresses its principles upon men and women so as to govern their thinking and practice. As the Jesuit writer Malachi Martin put it, a “unitary mind was created” in society by the Roman Church.

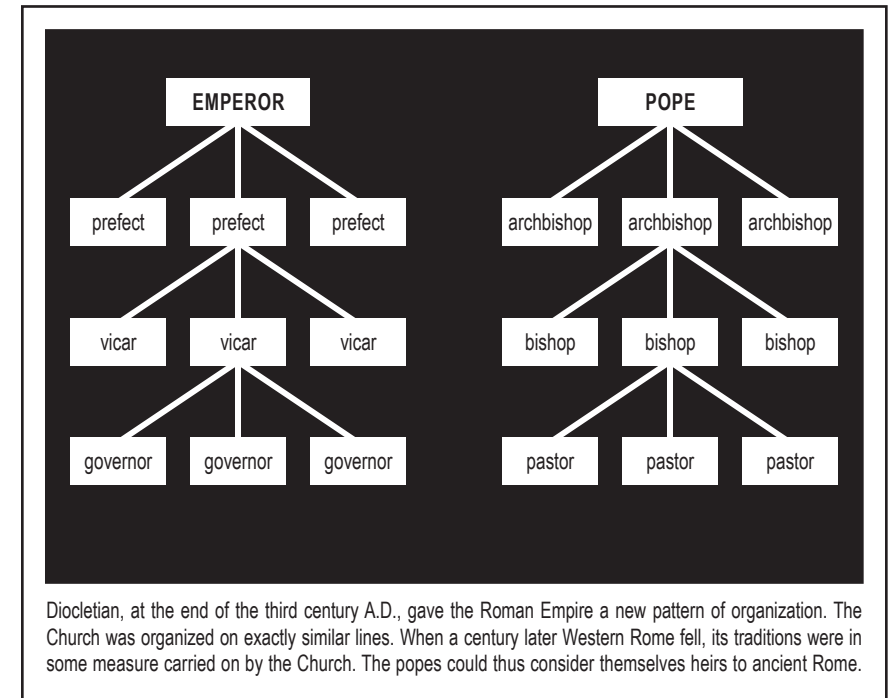
We must not conclude, however, that all this is only of historical relevance. In Revelation 19:20 where the final overthrow of the false prophet (or papacy) and the beast is described, we learn that the false prophet (a term used to describe the papacy during the sixth vial period, which is *our* time) deceives those who receive the mark of the beast. This would strongly suggest that people *today* are recipients of this impress — and one does not have to look too far for evidence of it. It is particularly evident in the mass-media where “the great voice” is heard (Jer 51:55; Daniel 7:11; Rev 13:5,6). It is also evident in the field of education.

This is why the servants of Jesus Christ need to know what this “mark of the beast” is referring to. To be forewarned is to be fore-armed. We must gain the victory over (or overcome) the beast, his image and his mark, as well as the number of his name (Rev 15:2). Where this does not happen, the blasphemous name of the beast will influence the people — the principles of false

Christianity will find lodgement in the minds of men and women and will lead them to receive the mark of the most dreadful system this world has ever known —and that will mean rejection at the judgement seat of Christ —Rev 14:9-11.

Let us not be deceived reader: where the doctrines and principles of this false Christianity gain an entrance into the community of believers — where ecclesias are transformed into churches — and the Truth is displaced, the world is making war upon the saints and overcoming them — Rev 13:7; Daniel 7:21, 22.

“Blessed is he that watcheth....”



# 11

## *Our Time: a Message Specifically for Christadelphians*

**T**he Holy Roman Empire lasted from A.D. 800 until it was dismembered by Napoleon at the beginning of the 19th Century. As the Holy Roman Empire is symbolized as the Lamb-like beast of the earth, so its plunge into darkness under the vials (Rev. 16:10) cannot be understood without reference to the Napoleonic era which accomplished this (as shown in the Chart on page 71). These are events which introduce us to the modern world—to the 19th and 20th Centuries. This is the setting for the period of the 6th vial (Rev. 16:12-16) which is of such importance to us as Christadelphians.

This 6th vial period begins with the sign of the great river Euphrates drying up; it ends with the battle of Armageddon— so it brings us to *our* time. It is during this period of the 6th vial that a community of believers is addressed (Rev. 16:15):

“Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

It would seem that in view of the position of these words, this must be a message specifically for Christadelphians who are contemporary with the period.

This message cannot be divorced from the context in which it appears. The exhortation to “watch” (keep awake, alert) has particular reference to the signs that are given in the immediate context—they are relevant to us and our walk. Our watchfulness in these things, or our lack of *awareness*, can make a difference as to whether we keep our garments or else on the other hand, walk spiritually naked.

As we have seen, the book of Revelation is given to help the servants of Jesus Christ overcome the worldly environment of their age. The things presented to us here in this 6th vial period serve this purpose also, but the signs given here can only be of value to us if we understand them. We must know what is being referred to, and it is in this that there is blessing.

The signs are:

1. The Euphrates drying up to prepare the way of the kings of the east.
2. Frog-like, Demoniacal spirits going forth and gathering the nations to oppose God Almighty.

What then, do these things signify, and why are they important for us? These are the considerations that will engage our attention for the remainder of this section.

### *The Great Euphrates Sign.*

There is no point in us taking this sign language literally as some are doing. To apply this “sign” to some current civil engineering project whereby a dam may be built on the literal Euphrates—or similar interpretations— ignores the stated rule of interpretation at the beginning of the book of Revelation. There is just no excuse for doing this. The message has been “signified” to us (chapter 1:1), and the vials themselves constitute *a sign*— see chapter 15:1. We cannot expect to understand these things aright if we dismiss the guidance given to us by the spirit. To do so will lead us into a wrong understanding.

We should also note the fact that Rev. 16:12 is not the first appearance of this “Euphrates” sign in the book. It also appears in chapter 9:4 as part of the 6th trumpet, where powers bound at that river are loosed (this was referred to on page 47). It is not at all unreasonable to make the connection and see that there is first a releasing of the Euphratean power in chapter 9, and then a drying up of that power in chapter 16 (as indicated in the chart below).

Other Scriptural references inform us that rivers represent nations. In Jer. 46:7-8 Egypt is likened to a river.

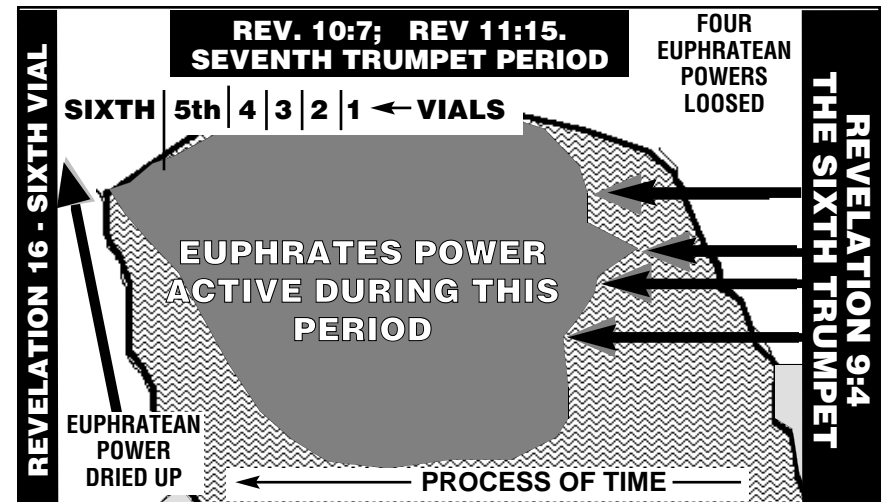
“Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved *as the rivers?* Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved *like the rivers*; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.”

In Isa. 23:10 Tarshish is likened to one.

“Pass through thy land *as a river*, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength.”

Also Isa. 18:7.

“In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a



## THE SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH POURED UPON THE BEAST SYSTEM (Revelation Chapter 16)

<b>VIAL #1</b>	<b>1792</b>	Beginning in France with the proclamation of the Republic in 1792, the effects of the French Revolution spread as a “malignant ulcer” throughout Europe.
<b>VIAL #2</b>	<b>1793</b>	The blockade of Europe by maritime forces.
<b>VIAL #3</b>	<b>1796</b>	Napoleon takes northern Italy and the Tyrol. The Pope is taken prisoner.
<b>VIAL #4</b>	<b>1805</b>	Napoleon enters Vienna. Austria is defeated.
<b>VIAL #5</b>	<b>1809</b>	The Papal States fall and Rome is taken.
<b>VIAL #6</b>	<b>1820 &amp; on</b>	In the East, the Ottoman Empire begins to shrink (or “dry up”). As the Empire recedes, a partial restoration of Jews to Israel’s ancient Land prepares a “way” for Kings of a Sun’s risings (i.e. the Saints). The “unclean” spirits of Democracy (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) go forth to influence the nations and prepare them for the great battle against God Almighty. As this work of preparation proceeds Christ comes and judges his servants. He then gathers the nations to Armageddon.
<b>VIAL #7</b>		Upon the symbolic “air” or political environment. IT IS DONE!

people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land *the rivers* have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.”

Now just as the power of the Nile represents Egypt, the Euphrates river would represent those nations or forces that are associated with it. The power that exactly fits the pattern given to us here then is that of the Islamic Ottoman Empire that held sway in the Middle East and South Eastern Europe between

1453 and 1917. Before it swept into the Middle East and Europe it had been bound at the Euphrates river, and hence that river becomes a fitting symbol to describe it. At the beginning of the 19th Century the Ottoman power began to weaken and gradually shrink or “dry up”. It was finally “dried up” by the British and their allies in 1917.

### *The Way of The Kings of The East*

The Revised Version text of Revelation 16:12 informs us that the waters of this great river were dried up “that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun rising.” Other translations give similar readings. Who are these kings from the sunrising?

We should avoid giving unscriptural meanings to this—such as the Japanese or Arabs. This is spiritual sign-language and must be understood by looking at the Bible. In keeping with what others have taught in the past, we suggest that a consideration of Malachi 4:2 and Isaiah 41:2 & 25, make it plain that it is a reference to Christ and the Saints.

The Euphrates is dried up so that “the way” of *these* future kings might be “prepared”. This is a phrase that is particularly associated with the restoration of Israel—of the time when Jerusalem’s warfare is accomplished and her iniquity pardoned. The language echoes the sense of Isa 40:3.

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our Mighty Ones* (Elohim).”

This “way” of Christ and the Saints (the future kings of the rising Sun of Righteousness) is to be “prepared” or made ready by Jews returning to the promised land and then being instructed in the way of righteousness. The Jewish State that has appeared upon the scene since the Ottoman waters were dried up constitutes a preparation for something which is soon to take place. It is a nucleus from which Christ’s Kingdom will be ultimately established, for the Kingdom of God upon earth *will be* the restored Kingdom of Israel.

We will enlarge upon this shortly, but for the moment we can rejoice in the great sign that we see in the political heaven—a returned nation of Israel through which the way of Christ and the Saints is to be made ready. But whilst that preparation is going on another development is working to gather the nations for a confrontation with Almighty God.

### *Unclean Spirits*

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

These “unclean spirits like frogs” are “the spirits of devils” (or in Gk. *demons*). In the New Testament *demons* or devils are associated with mental instability, insanity—Thus we may understand the basic idea that *a spirit of madness* is to go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them in

opposition to God Almighty (c/p Jer. 51:7).

We may further note that the word “spirit” means a force, and by extension can relate to a disposition of mind (e.g. Eph.4:23). In 1 John 4:1 “spirit” is associated with *teachings* (that which affects or influences the mind)—and that would seem to be the idea in Rev. 16:13 where the spirits come “out of the mouth”. Teachings, doctrines and policies come out of a mouthpiece — and that is what we see here.

#### “Like Frogs”

In seeking a Scriptural key for this sign, we can only go to Exodus chapter 8. It is the only incident where frogs occur in the whole of the Bible. What can we learn from this plague of frogs that will help us to understand that insane philosophy or teaching that will lead the nations of the world into Armageddon?

What did the plague of frogs accomplish? At first glance we may think that they accomplished very little beyond a nuisance and a bad smell. But if the account be read carefully it may be noted that as a result of this plague—and for the first time, Pharaoh promises liberty.

“Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; *and I will let the people go*, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord” (Exodus 8:8).

So as a result of the frogs we can see a promise of liberty; even of religious liberty to the Jewish people—but it was a *false* promise.

But that is not all that we learn. A comment upon the plagues in Psalm 78 mentions “frogs, which destroyed them” (verse 45). The trouble here is that the frogs did not “destroy” them. The Hebrew word here translated “destroyed” is *schachath*; to cause decay or ruin; to *corrupt*. The frogs may have contributed to the ruin of Egypt, but the Psalmist has more than that in mind—for his Psalm is a parable (verse 2). The same word is used in Ex. 32:7 for example, and refers to moral corruption. Such an idea is very well suited to a teaching or philosophy which is to gather peoples in opposition to Almighty God.

#### A Godless Spirit

As we piece together the clues that are provided in the symbolism of the passage under review it is difficult to ignore the growing links with those philosophical teachings that found political expression in the French Revolution. It was indeed a spirit of madness—it was also utterly godless. It was an unclean spirit or teaching that would corrupt not only the French nation, but in time the whole of the world. From this source would come the atheistic teaching of the theory of evolution and the consequent denial of creation. It would teach liberty, only to produce a Reign of Terror. It was a spirit that originated in human wisdom and of which James wrote:

“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, *demoniacal*. For where envying and strife is, there is *confusion* and every evil work” (James 3:15-16).

James uses the Greek word *akatastasia*, translated “confusion” but which Vine renders *revolution* or *anarchy*! The words are important. This “demoniacal” wisdom of which James speaks is the basis of that godless and insane

philosophy that will gather the nations to Armageddon. It was a philosophy brought forth like an abundance of frogs which entered into the chambers of all the kings of Europe, which spiritually is called Egypt (Psalm 105:30). It promised liberty, but it brought moral and spiritual corruption (c/p 2 Peter 2:19).

This spirit has swept all before it. No philosophy or religious creed has withstood it. It has brought vast changes to the world through education, political emancipation and apparent freedoms. Today we see it in women’s rights, gay rights and rights for every other moral perversion. It is madness, it is wickedness—and it is extremely powerful.

Jesus has warned us about this spirit and he has told us what it is accomplishing. His message to us is “watch”. It is the spirit of *our* age and we are to overcome it through faith and patience.

# 12

## *The Coming Christian Socialist State*

The concept of a “Christian State” is nothing new. There have been so-called “Christian countries” in existence for much of history. The idea of a socialist state is not new either—the former U.S.S.R. and many eastern European countries claimed to be such as Communists. A Christian-Socialist State is somewhat different, and in a strange mixture combines the two antagonistic doctrines into one political philosophy — a form of Christianized humanism.

Now the great image of Daniel chapter 2 is representative of “what shall be in the latter days” — namely a great image of human power whose form will be terrible”. As we know, this final image of the kingdom of men will have its roots in previous empires — for the interpretation of it is provided for us in verses 37-44.

The iron legs of this image clearly refer to the Roman Empire, and it is equally clear that there is to be an iron, or Roman element in the feet and toes. It is in the days of “these kings” (the toe-kingdoms), that God will intervene to set up His everlasting kingdom — but immediately before that event the iron element in “the toes of the feet” is to be mixed with clay.

This is interesting.

The clay, we are told in verse 43, represents “the seed of men”. This word, in the original text is the Chaldee word *enash* which signifies man in general — common man. This then *must* refer to a form of rule or government which involves common men, the people. Such is the character of modern democratic government which arose out of those forces which became manifested in France during 1789, and which were discussed earlier — these are to be mingled with the Roman iron element.

As we consider this mixing together of Roman iron and democratic clay, we will see that it has come about because Christendom —instead of being exercised by God’s judgements and reforming itself, has become progressively worse.

### *Catholic Heartland of Europe*

For one thousand years the Roman Church had enjoyed the military and constitutional support of the Holy Roman Empire, but when Napoleon dismembered that support and replaced it with “Democracy” the Church was deprived of her champion. In the mid-nineteenth century revolutions reverberated through Europe and the principles of Democracy and Socialism took root—and the interests of the Vatican were pushed even further back, with

the pope being humiliated by imprisonment. All this was the judgement of God — His wrath being poured out in the vials of Revelation chapter 16.

For the Roman Church this was not an acceptable situation. Steps would have to be planned, and taken, in order to rectify it. It was W.E.Gladstone (1809-1898), a former British Prime Minister who wrote the following:

“There is a fixed purpose among the secret inspirers of Roman policy to pursue, by the road of force, upon the arrival of any favourable opportunity, the favourite project of re-erecting the terrestrial throne of the popedom... The existence at this day of the policy, even in bare idea, is itself a portentous evil. I do not hesitate to say that it is an incentive to general disturbance, a premium upon European wars”—*Vatican Decrees* page 50.

It was thus the aim of the Vatican to re-vitalize its old champion (The Holy Roman Empire) in the German Empire or 2nd Reich—and later in the Third Reich.

The Vatican’s involvement in both the First and Second World Wars has been well documented in several books. Writers such as Joseph McCabe, Edmond Paris, Avro Manhattan, J.A. Kensit and others have documented the facts very thoroughly. In its attempt to re-establish the old order however, the Vatican was defeated. The conclusion of the First World War saw atheistic communism established in the Russian dominated Soviet system—and Rome still had no European champion. The end of the Second World War witnessed an even worse situation—atheistic communism was spread half-way across Europe and the democratic capitalist powers were not exactly the kind of victors Rome had been wanting. The Vatican had signed concordats with both Mussolini and Hitler, in whom she had hoped to see the means of destroying the atheistic communist system—but the mission failed. Rome had to think again.

### *Towards a United Europe*

About halfway through the 1939-45 war, the Vatican would have perceived a probable defeat for Hitler’s Germany. Possibly sometime in 1942, the Vatican would have laid contingency plans for this eventuality; through the considerable channels of influence open to it, the Vatican would have had input into the discussions concerning Europe’s future following an Allied victory.

Certainly the idea of some form of united Europe was being discussed before the war ended. After 1945, Catholic heads of state were put in power in European countries (Konrad Adenaur, Charles De Gaulle). In 1948 the O.E.E.C. (Organization for European Economic Co-operation) was established. The Treaty of Rome (founding document of today’s European Common Market) was signed on March 25th 1957. A wider association E.F.T.A. (European Free Trade Association) came into being in 1959. Thus Western Europe was placed on course for political and economic union while the military power of N.A.T.O. (The U.S. and her allies) was relied upon to halt the advance of atheistic communism. Thus Soviet Communism was held in check, allowing Europe and the Vatican to regather strength and to prepare the ground for a United Catholic Europe, such as John-Paul II has called for on more than one occasion.





of delinquents—Margaret Mead spread moral corruption. The values which had been established in the past, by Bible-believing statesmen, were abolished.

In December 1977 a Pastoral Message was circulated by the Catholic Church in Canada to all priests entitled *A Society to be Transformed*. A similar document would have been circulated in other countries. In essence, it called for the overthrow of the past socio-economic order and the establishment of the new Christian Democracy. In Canada and elsewhere this “transformation” is now nearly complete, and society is getting ever nearer to that promised new world order, and:—

#### *A Unitary Mind*

Today, humanists and Roman Catholics are working in close co-operation in order to control the Minds of Men. The influence of the Bible has been removed from schools (and the influence of parents is carefully monitored too!). Ian Taylor has two useful sections towards the close of his book *“In The Minds of Men”* (TFE Publishing, Toronto, 1984)—the subheadings are: *Unification of the Mind in the Schools* and *Unification of the Mind by the Media*. Those headings are self-explanatory—and the message conveyed is worth knowing by anyone who really values freedom of thought.

During the 1980’s, the Vatican and the United States co-operated in isolating the Soviet system economically and in presenting it with an overwhelming superiority in military technology (Reagan’s “Star Wars” etc.) and with social upheavals in the Soviet satellite countries, notably Poland. A reformed Russia was as good as promised a prominent position in a “Common European Home”—and by the end of the decade atheism had been expelled with the Communist Party. The Vatican of John Paul II was ecstatic! The New Order could now be built without hindrance!

With the influence of the Bible now largely overcome, and with Rome’s atheistic enemy neutralized and accommodated, the world is fast moving towards this new universal order—a Christian/Socialist order based upon the social doctrines of a corrupt church. It has been a long and difficult road through a challenging history, but today the Roman Church stands ready to reassert her control once again over the thinking of men and women. The Vatican is the architect of the New World Order—of that last form of human power seen by the prophets of Israel and the apostles of Jesus Christ.

# 13

## *Watching & Keeping our Garments*

**A**s we come to understand the significance of these signs of the sixth vial, we cannot fail to recognize that they are events contemporary with our Christadelphian Community. This being the case, the words of Rev. 16:15 take on a special relevance for us—these are the words chosen by the spirit of God *for us*. Of all that might have been said to us, these few short words have been given for us to ponder:

“Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

“Behold”—the word is active and imperative: “See!” We are being invited to “Come and see” (c/p chapter 6:1). The sense of this word given by Parkhurst’s Lexicon is to observe, realize or know what is being referred to. We are being told to see, in the sense of understanding what is referred to—namely: “I come as a thief” or more properly “*I am coming* as a thief.” This is an awareness that should be with a Christadelphian brother or sister *daily*.

#### *“As a Thief”*

Jesus himself is not coming to rob or steal of course, but he is coming *as* a thief does; i.e. his coming will be stealthy, without anyone knowing about it, secretly and unexpectedly. As watchmen we should know this—c/p 1 Thess 5:4-6:

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

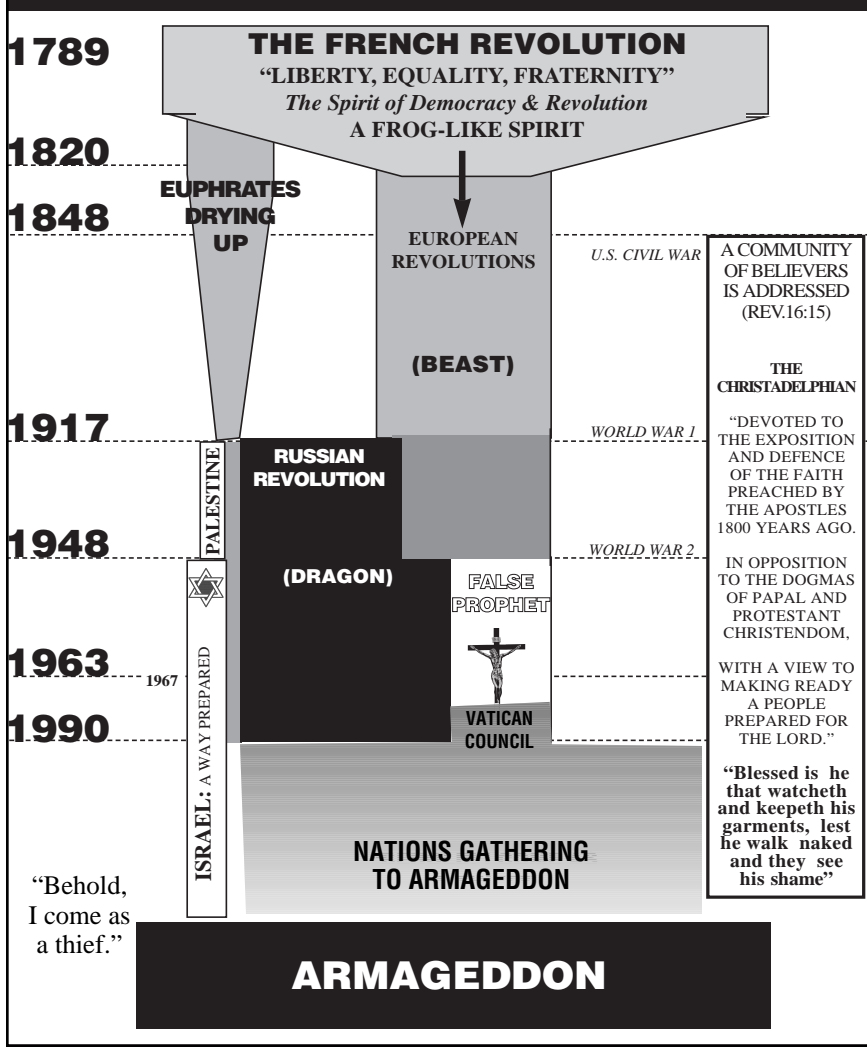
So this coming should be of no surprise to those who are true servants of Jesus Christ. But many religious people in the world today who are looking for the coming of Christ will not recognize him when he does come. In fact, as far as they are concerned, they will consider him a *thief*; they will see him as wrongfully taking possession! They will see him as the Antichrist!

#### *A Vital Key*

As we have seen, the Frog-like spirit and philosophy of our age is fundamentally godless, and has permeated the whole of modern society—both secular and religious. As it has spread through the fabric of society it has given rise to a frame of mind that is, and will continue to be, opposed to Almighty God. It is this humanistic/demoniacal philosophy that has become the driving force of the modern world. *We must grasp this*. It is the key to our



**THE SIXTH VIAL OF REVELATION 16:12—16.**



understanding of unfolding events in our time. Where this key is missing; there will be uncertainty as to how prophecy is fulfilling. It is in this short passage about the 6th vial that the spirit of God has given us this vital key to an understanding of our age, so that we may be in a position to overcome and keep our garments.

**“Out of the Mouth of...”**

This frog-like spirit manifests itself in various forms (politically it is seen in democracy, socialism, communism and liberalism etc.) and is promoted by several different organizations. Rev. 16:13 identifies it as coming principally out of the mouth of the Dragon, out of the mouth of the Beast and out of the

mouth of the False Prophet. These are political and religious centres of power whose interests are served by the advancement of this demoniacal spirit. In other words, it is perceived by them as being a means to gain and retain power over the masses.

Since Constantine moved the seat of the Roman Empire to Constantinople, the Dragon has come to represent the Eastern powers of Byzantium, and later Russia (the seat of Caesar or Czar). The Beast is European, whereas the False Prophet is the religious power associated with the Beast (see Rev. 19:20), i.e. the Papal power.

It is from these three power centres that the demoniac spirit goes forth to the whole of the world. The objective is to gather the nations into some kind of new world order—one in which the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet are masters.

**Gathering the Nations**

Now it is the mission of the frog-like spirits to gather the nations in readiness to oppose Christ and the Saints when they appear on the scene “as a thief”. We should be *aware* of this—and there is tremendous blessing for us if we are aware of it. The spirit of Christ informs us: “Blessed is he that watcheth.” Such watchmen will “see” the frog-like spirit of madness corrupting and gathering the nations of the world.

The word “gather” in Revelation 16:14 is the Greek *sunago* from which the word synagogue is derived. It relates to the “company” (Heb. *qahal*, congregation) of Gog in Ezekiel 38. We must not be surprised then to see a great ecumenical congregation of nations—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Islamic—all conditioned by the frog spirits to oppose Christ and the Saints. It is the synagogue, or gathering, of the satan!

**Watch!**

Or “Watch out!” There are very many avenues through which we can be, indeed *are*, affected by this spirit of our age. We will briefly consider two principal ways through which we are rendered vulnerable to this influence. The first is education, and the second is the media.

**Education**

Literacy, technical skills and true scientific knowledge provide many of us with distinct advantages, not the least of which is the ability to earn a living and provide for our own. As we go to school, college, or university, in order to obtain these things, we must be aware of the fact that most courses are designed to teach us much more than the information or know-how that we require for earning our daily bread. It is important for us to understand this and to use discernment. We must learn to recognize the frog-like spirit wherever it appears.

Some readers may be aware of how social and political considerations influence the slant that is given to certain subjects that are taught today. For example, history has largely been re-written in recent years so as to accommodate modern thinking and attitudes. This re-written history may inform or disinform. We should be aware that certain subjects—such as sociology—can be lethal to the mind of faith. These are things that we ought be aware of in the sphere of modern education. However, what is not always appreciated or identified is the fact that there is *an intended objective to form a*

*particular attitude of mind or character* in much of today's schooling. This is not easy to define and we must think about it for ourselves. In the language of the Revelation this is the "mark of the beast" being impressed upon society. In an age when people are taught to think for themselves and to be independently minded, it is strange to note how so many end up thinking the same way! Especially on social issues. It has been called "social engineering", the creation of "a unitary mind"—or more commonly the forming of public opinion.

There is a sophisticated science to the forming of public opinion which employs behavioural sciences such as psychology. In reality it is a brainwashing of the masses—and most frequently it begins in the classroom. It is seen as soon as children enter kindergarten or elementary schools. The children are immediately exposed to images of dinosaurs and other extinct creatures of pre-history. Children come home all excited about Brontosaurus Rex or some other giant tadpole. Their classrooms are filled with pictures and models of these creatures. Any lessons on nature will always point out how the particular plant or animal "developed" (i.e. evolved). It seems that a faith in the evolutionary process is a first objective.

Next, attitude to parents and guardians is given attention. The student is taught to question the values and views that he or she has (which, of course, were gained in the home environment). They are encouraged to respect peers rather than parents. This builds up an extremely powerful influence because it is based upon one of our most basic instincts—the social instinct. So-called "peer-pressure" can be almost irresistible for many young people. These things are being used with maximum effect in the education field today—it is used in business to sell clothing—it is used and manipulated by sociologists and educationists to create a society in which all think and act alike, and in harmony with the spirit of our age. It affects attitudes of mind, moral behaviour and social values.

Another method that is used to induce people to conform is the subtle feeding of human pride. The achievements of man are held high; the knowledge possessed by our modern world is often made to belittle and depreciate the values and thinking of past generations. All these various things (we have only considered some briefly) combine to form a certain spirit in the individual. Resulting characteristics may include:

- \* *Self confidence and sufficiency.*
- \* *Lack of respect for parents, past leaders.*
- \* *A spirit which challenges values and foundations.*
- \* *A failure in moral judgement, no abhorrence of that which is sinful.*
- \* *Human knowledge, wisdom and thinking is over-valued.*
- \* *A Socialist and multi-cultural ("Babylonian") spirit is manifested.*

The methods briefly described here have been used with devastating effect upon our society. Among those who have been at the fore-front of this conditioning process are the renowned Jesuit order. According to a *Sunday Telegraph* article (Nov. 22: 1992).

"...the Jesuits, especially through education, were the principal instrument behind the Counter Reformation which reversed the all-conquering tide of Protestantism."

## WHAT EDUCATION PROVIDES...



\* *Self confidence and sufficiency.*

\* *Lack of respect for parents and past leaders.*

\* *A spirit which challenges the established values and foundations of society.*

\* *Attacks upon moral judgement; no abhorrence of that which is sinful.*

\* *Human knowledge, wisdom and thinking is over-valued.*

\* *A Socialist and multi-cultural spirit is manifested.*

Think what that is saying! The Protestant thought patterns of a whole society (largely anglo-saxon) have been reversed by Jesuit activity in the field of education. A frog-like spirit out of the mouth of the false prophet is now operating in the same sphere and through the same Jesuit Order—and we should be awake to the fact.

The changing attitude of our community towards education has been noticed by Charles H. Lippy in his book *The Christadelphians in North America*.

"Until about a half century ago, Christadelphians in North America...tended to discourage pursuit of higher education at a college or university. The rationale was largely the same as that which brings

apprehension about the character of public education in general. Simply put, higher education would necessitate exposure to ideas and theories perceived as false. More recently, as a college degree became a cultural passport to many kinds of employment, there has been less of an aversion to higher education, and many Christadelphians now boast of graduate degrees in numerous disciplines.” (pages 259, 260).

So the scholarships and the degrees have been won—the true cost may not be fully appreciated until the Lord returns to reveal those who have kept their garments, and those who have walked naked, sporting their shame.

### *The Media*

The same forces are at work in the media as in education, for media people are trained in the same colleges and universities. The difference here is the sheer power and mass coverage involved. Few of us today would completely deny the prominent role that has been played by the media—and particularly television—in spreading moral corruption and violence in society. What may not be so well recognized is the media role in forming public opinion generally.

Media people know what they are doing—and appreciate just how powerfully they are doing it. A scientifically calculated process is used which, again, is designed to form public opinion—or in other words, create a unitary mind throughout society. Three statements taken from the 1991 *Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication* (Catholic Truth Society) will illustrate this:

“...the power of propaganda is increasing. And its power is being augmented by the growth of behavioural sciences like that of psychology and of the technical resources at the disposal of the communications media.”

“Broadcasters have access to the minds and hearts of everyone...Television, especially...”

“Communicators have therefore a most important part to play in forming public opinion.”

With such statements before us, and the warning given to us in Scripture, we must ask ourselves whether we can expose ourselves to these media-men without suffering spiritual harm. It is highly unlikely that we shall be unaffected by them. In fact, it is true to say that most brethren and sisters today have been affected by these things in one way or another, and in varying degrees.

Surely brethren and sisters we must realize that our thinking, our minds, our “opinion” must be formed by Scripture, and not by the television set or the school classroom.

### *A Way Preparing*

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”—1 John 5:4.

In the sixth vial period our attention has been drawn to the great sign of the drying up of the Euphratean power. As that has taken place we have seen the emergence of modern Israel—a way being prepared for Christ and the Saints. This has been given to strengthen our faith in “the Truth” that we hold.

The importance of our community’s long-held understanding of Israel’s

significance cannot and must not be lost sight of. The miracle of modern Israel is not merely a convincing way for us to show that the Bible is true (though it does that); it is real evidence that the hand of God is preparing the way for the Kingdom to be set up.

Let us refresh our minds as to what our earlier brethren expected:

“The restoration of Israel is a most important feature in the divine economy. It is indispensable to the setting up of the Kingdom of God; for they are the kingdom, having been constituted such by the covenant of Sinai, as it is written, “Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” The apostles understood this well enough, and so do all who understand the Gospel of the Kingdom...

“The truth is, there are two stages in the restoration of the Jews, the first is before the battle of Armageddon; and the second, after it; but both pre-millennial. God has said, “I will save the tents of *Judah first*.” *This is the first stage of restoration. Jesus has already been “a stone of stumbling and rock of offence” to Judah and his companions for 40 years, that is, from the day of Pentecost to the destruction of the temple, so that they need not to be subjected to a like process any more. But the word saith, “He shall be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel;” now it is well known that this has not been fulfilled in relation to the ten tribes...*

“There is, then, a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-adventual colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth...”

*Elpis Israel, 1849.*

It is difficult to find fault with that expectation of 140 years ago. Yet we find that some today say that we Christadelphians are too absorbed with Israel. It is pointed out that the nation of Israel remains faithless, that they are disobedient to God’s commands, that they trust in their own strength and refuse to recognize God’s hand in their affairs. Such sentiments are expressed because many of us have lost our understanding of the prophetic word. The fact that this situation in Israel is *exactly what was expected* is overlooked and the whole point is missed. Israel, at present, is in that *condition of unbelief that was anticipated*; but she is not to remain in that state for very much longer. In the not too far distant future the spiritually dead carcase of the nation will be revived, just as Ezekiel foresaw (Ezekiel 37:8-10). According to Scripture this will be the work of pastors or shepherds (i.e. teachers) who will feed Israel with a knowledge of God’s truth. We find this stated in Jeremiah 3:14-15.

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will

bring you to Zion. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

One of a city, two of a family, is a partial restoration— not everyone is taken. This is the pattern seen in Ezekiel’s prophecies of the restoration. When this happens Israel will be seen to be walking in the way of the kings of the east, or sun’s rising.

Let us consider: What is Israel back in the Land for? To suggest that she is the Beast or Harlot of Revelation (as some have done) is not only unscriptural, it is the manifestation of a most dreadful spiritual darkness that is descending upon us. We regret to have to say that it is positive proof that many of us have lost our way.

The Euphratean power is being dried up for a purpose. That purpose is stated to be—“that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” (Revelation 16:12). That “way” is the way of holiness and requires that a process of instruction must be implemented, the end result of which will be a turning away of ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26).

If we lose sight of the real significance of Israel being in the Land today—and there are signs that this is happening—we will lose our bearings completely. It would ultimately lead us away from the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is “The Hope of Israel”. It involves the very way of salvation itself. For us Israel’s national existence in the Middle East today is equal to the announcement of Revelation 16:15, “Behold, I come as a thief”.

For 70 years prior to 1917 our brethren witnessed to the coming partial restoration of Jews in a condition of unbelief. They pointed to the drying up process of the Ottoman empire as proof of what was going to happen. All of this was seen as a preliminary to the coming Kingdom of Christ—the restored Kingdom of Israel.

For well over 70 years *since* 1917 we have seen Jews returning in unbelief of the Truth—and we still see it happening—Falasha Jews in the 1980’s, Soviet Jews from Russia since 1990. Having “watched” this sign occurring for many years, it hardly causes a stir amongst us any more, we are dozing off to sleep

“We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long” (Psalm 74:9).

Brethren and sisters beloved in the Lord; we must wake up! This is the last lap; let us encourage one another to wakefulness. Let us hear what the Spirit says to our ecclesias—Let the word spoken from heaven ring in our ears:

“Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

**A Post Script:** There is a great deal more material that could be placed before the reader — the subject matter of the book of Revelation is vast, and we have not covered it all here by any means. There is much of interest in Revelation chapters 17, 18 and 19 that we have not touched upon — matters which concern our time also (this belongs to the period of the vials, as is seen in Revelation 17:1). These things must now await another opportunity, should the Lord remain away and should he see fit to provide us with time and means for it. Meanwhile it is hoped that the foregoing will have helped some to grasp the relevance of this prophecy for us today. We hope that we shall have no further need of explanations, but that the Lord himself will soon be here amongst us to make known all things. We pray earnestly for his speedy coming and for the great blessings promised to be delivered to those who love his appearing. May the Lord, in his great mercy, send us relief.

# THE ROMAN EMPIRE

LX111

ROME

JANUS X

## Christianity Becomes State Church of Rome!

EXCLUSIVE  
Romano Publius



**New Medal: The above medal showing the Labarum of Emperor Constantine victorious over Lysinius’ Dragon, struck yesterday.**

It has been revealed that the Holy Catholic Church is now recognized officially within the Roman Empire. The Church has the full authority of the State with Ceasars house at the head. The Catholic Church will replace the former ecclesiastical Organization of the empire.

For many years there has been within the Christian Church a growing political influence. Under Emperor Diocletian this was severely dealt with, and much pain was inflicted upon the community so that she cried out for justice. Under Maxentius the government was determined to devour any organized military leadership that might emerge as a champion of the Christian cause. However, the swift manner in which Emperor Constantine was caught up to the throne of Caesar, and his identification with the Christian cause by publishing the Edict of Milan, forestalled any immediate action. Some Christians, not in agreement with the newly formed State Church alliance, chose to disassociate themselves from the deal—an action which effectively puts them in the political wilderness.

The fierce war that was fought for the mastery of the Empire has resulted in the defeat of Lycinus and the disestablishment of the old ecclesiastical system, which is now recognized as an adversary — a system that

has deceived the whole world. In government circles it is now being openly stated that the Kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ—as this is seen in the Emperor—has arrived. As one source described it: “Our Christian brethren which were accused before Caesar day and night, have been vindicated at last.”

Three main reasons have been given for the success of the Christian cause: the example of Christ to his followers, the sustained Christian witness throughout the Empire, and the fact that they loved not their lives unto death. After such a long struggle, there is now much rejoicing in Rome following the official recognition of Holy Catholic Church.

On the level of local government, which still remains in the hands of civil servants faithful to the old establishment, there is reported to be great anger over changes that are seen as inevitable within a short time (ie.

### Christian Victory Causes Political Earthquake

Tremendous shockwaves have reverberated throughout the Empire following the fall from power of many leading lights in high places in the wake of Constantine’s victory. It is as though the whole political firmament had been rolled up as scroll, said one spokesman.

within the next 20 years it is believed that Catholic officials will replace present ones at all levels of government). There have been some reports of persecution at this level, but it appears to be aimed mainly at those Christians who disassociated themselves from the deal with the State, they are therefore unable to appeal to the Emperor for protection. Some of these communities (sources name as examples, the Novations, the Donatists and Paulicans) are reported to be emigrating to distant parts of the Empire in order to escape the rising tide of persecution. However, in some parts there is an apparent groundswell of public opinion which seems ready to offer protection to the fleeing fugitives.

The Supreme Civil authority (its seat is shortly to be moved to Constantinople) appears to be disinterested in offering any protection to those remnants of the Christian community who have refused to recognize the new position of the Holy Catholic Church. There are even fears in some quarters that rigorous persecution against the heretics could soon be instigated by the new Christian authority itself.

**HOW JOURNALISTS MIGHT HAVE TOLD THE STORY OF REVELATION 12**

