

# APOCALYPSE:

## FOUR HORSEMEN

## THREE WOES

*The Four Horsemen  
And First Two Woes,  
Fulfilled in A.D. 27 Through 70;  
The Third Woe Fulfilled in  
A.D. 131 Through 135,  
And The Reign of Christ's  
Church Thereafter.*

Maurice A. Williams

Copyright 2005

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this book to people very important to me: my children, Cheryl, Mark, Dennis, Michelle;

My grandchildren: Mark, Michael, Braeden, Meaghan, Brooke; My deceased wife, Arlene, who endured long hours of research; My wife, Marian, who encouraged me to seek publication.

# Contents

<u>CHAP</u>	<u>PG</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
1	1	Introduction
2	7	The Baptist's Vision of Christ
3	19	Christ Unleashes The Horsemen
4	27	Separation of Believers
5	39	The Four Winds: Tribulation
6	69	The First Woe: Civil War
7	85	The Second Woe: War With Rome
8	107	Glimpses of the Temple Site
9	131	The Third Woe Announced
10	145	Judea Gives Birth To The Church
11	157	The Sea Beast: The Roman Empire
12	173	The Land Beast: A New Caesar
13	185	The Lamb with the Elect
14	197	The Vials: The Great Tribulation
15	217	Third Woe Done: Judea's Demise
16	227	Why Judea Was Brought Down
17	247	Christ Reigns: Defeats Satan
18	253	The Church's 1000 Year Reign
19	279	The Final Days Before Eternity
20	327	Overview of Prior Interpretations
21	377	Bibliography

<< end of title pages >>

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

**T**he farther we get from the Apocalypse's composition, the more conflicting the interpretations. No need to describe the four major schools of interpretation: preterist, futurist, spiritual, and allegorical. The futurist interpretation, the most widely accepted today, has been popularized by Hal Lindsey in the 1980's then Tim LaHaye, who's twelve-volume series "Left Behind" has sold millions of books. LaHaye's adding fictional characters and presenting the interpretation as historical fiction very effectively popularized the futurist interpretation.

But is it correct? The notion that righteous people are suddenly taken during the proposed rapture, no matter what they are doing, even flying airplanes or driving cars, exposing those left behind to plane crashes, train wrecks, and highway accidents makes one wonder. How many righteous pilots do we have? How many unrighteous would die in crashes while the righteous are raptured? Infants and young children are raptured because they are too young to sin, but those left behind have children who are just as innocent but are not raptured. The description of locusts as huge mechanical grasshoppers seems far-fetched. Might the original visions be more symbolic and not written to be understood so literally? LaHaye's futurist interpretation presents problems right at the beginning.

On the other hand, preterists think many of the predicted visions were meant for people who first heard them preached. I think this makes more sense. To recognize this, we would have to be as familiar with the events of that time period as we are with our own "current events." Curious, I spent many years studying the "current

events” of the early Christian era to see if there is a connection between what happened then and the visions. I think I found a connection to the four winds and the three woes. In 2004, Hank Hanegraaff and Sigmund Brouwer came out with “The Last Disciple,” published by the same publishing house that published the “Left Behind” series. “The Last Disciple,” the first in a series of historical fiction novels that propose a preterist interpretation, has generated much interest and debate among readers over which interpretation makes more sense.

In this book, I want to describe what I think the Apocalypse predicted. I will have to tell you the conflicting opinions of highly trained Biblical scholars and tell you which theory captured my imagination. We will look at Scripture verses that bear on what might have been the original intent of the Apocalypse. We will look at available historical documents.

Some Biblical scholars believe that John the Evangelist did not compose chapters 4 through 11. These scholars believe the visions in those chapters came from John the Baptist. J. M. Ford explains this in *The Anchor Bible's* commentary on Revelation (Ford, pp. 3, 28). These scholars believe chapters 4 through 11 were not composed after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, but were composed before Christ began his ministry (Ford 50). One of their points is that the Greek writing style in the Evangelist’s Gospel and his epistles is different from the Greek style in chapters 4 through 11. The writing style in the first three chapters (the letters to the churches) is also different. The writing style is much more similar to John’s Gospel and epistles (Ford 43). They think John the Baptist preached chapters 4 through 11 before the ministry of Jesus Christ to help the Judean people recognize Christ. The Baptist’s visions explained who Christ is and warned his listeners what would happen should anyone oppose Christ

and try to stop his God-given mission. Many of the Baptist's disciples became Christian (one was John the Evangelist) and continued preaching the Baptist's visions, repeating the visions in their original form, for approximately thirty years. Then, around A. D. 65, chapters 12 through 22 were added.

Finally, around A.D. 96, John the Evangelist added the letters to the seven churches and put the combined text into writing (Ford, p. 3). This was twenty-six years after the Temple's destruction, thirty-eight years before Judea's final, disastrous defeat. The possibility that chapters 4 through 11 originated with John the Baptist before Christ began his ministry is the key I used to relate those visions to events when Christianity first started. If chapters 4 through 11 were preached to the Judean people before Christ began his ministry, then, obviously, the visions were meant for the Judeans.

What an eye-opening insight! If this is true, then these visions were meant for Judeans before they heard Christ's preaching. They are the final revelation of the Old Testament, given by the last Old Testament prophet. Christ said the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets. We know the Baptist was the last Old Testament prophet. These chapters tell us how the Baptist preached, and what he prophesied. The warnings seem stern, but the Messiah is already on earth. It's too late to reject the Messiah. This is last call to accept the Messiah. This is the last warning to accept what God has sent. Within a few years of the Baptist's ministry, the Messiah will appear in person. These visions in chapters 4 through 11 (the four winds and three woes) weren't meant for latter-day Christians. They were meant for first-century Judeans.

I read many history books to see if the Apocalypse could compare to historical events of first and second-century Judea. I believe I found a point-by-point relationship

for chapters 4 through 16. I think chapters 17 through 20 predict what Christ's Church will experience from its inception to the final judgment. I believe chapters 21 and 22 describe how the Church and God's heavenly kingdom will be in eternity. When John the Evangelist put all the visions into writing, many events and disasters the Baptist warned about had already taken place. John the Evangelist was an eyewitness to them.

I think these visions also warn us Gentile nations that we will face similar disasters if our nations are not ready when Christ comes the second time just as the Judean nation was not ready when Christ came the first time. That does not, however, diminish the primary application of the four winds and three woes to first-century Judea.

I think the real tribulation started when Christianity started. The real tribulation struck the Judean people who tried to destroy Christianity. That tribulation literally destroyed the Judean nation. With Judea no longer a threat, Christianity survived. I think the four winds and three woes took place during the first and second centuries. Nero sent Vespasian to subdue Judea. His son, Titus, destroyed the Temple. I quote Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius showing historical texts describing this. This destruction, and the events preceding it, fulfills the four winds and two of the three woes. The third woe takes place in A.D. 131-5 when Bar Kochba is accepted as the Messianic King. He liberates Judea, and establishes "The First Jewish Commonwealth." The present Israeli government, incidentally, is "The Second Jewish Commonwealth."

Hadrian assigned Severus to crush the revolt. Severus invaded Judea and utterly destroyed Bar Kochba's army and the nation of Judea. The Judeans not killed were deported to other lands and foreign people are brought in. For many centuries, the Jews were a small minority in their ancestral homeland. For example, in 1856, only 10, 500 Jews resided



in their ancestral homeland (Harel, in Oesterreicher, p. 147). I contend that Judea's destruction by Severus was the historical fulfillment of the Third Woe.

If we start with John the Baptist, let us imagine him when he began his ministry. Coming from the hot desert, he might seek the cooler areas along the Jordan. He would, perhaps, set down his walking staff, motion to attract attention, and start describing his visions. This last prophet of the Old Testament provided vivid clues showing the relationship between the people God created and their creator. God sent an angel, even before John's birth, to announce John's special mission. After his birth, when John was still a child, he went to the desert. There he began preparation for his mission. His preparation could, I think, include visions that clarified what he should proclaim. Symbols and images can easily teach concepts that are true about God, not as the concepts are themselves because John would not have understood them that way, but in a symbolic way that John could understand. Like, for example, the way we represent water by the symbol  $H_2O$ .

Everyone knows that  $H_2O$  is a molecule of water; yet, the visual symbol only partly resembles a molecule of water. One could go further and draw a symbol showing the nucleus of an oxygen atom surrounded by eight electrons. The oxygen nucleus lies between two nuclei of hydrogen atoms, each with one additional electron. All three nuclei share the ten electrons, which align to form two orbits around the oxygen. Two electrons are in the inner orbit, eight in the outer orbit. Now we have a more meaningful visual symbol that shows more detail about a molecule of water. Even if it is more meaningful, however, this new symbol is still not exactly like a molecule of water because the human eye cannot see a molecule of water. This is a limitation of our human nature. We cannot see things that are that small. Even if we became small enough to see

them, a molecule of water would still not look like the visual symbol. It would look more like the solar system with immense space between the electrons and the nuclei of the atoms.

In spite of our human limitations, however, God has no problem infusing knowledge into prophets' minds. Nor do prophets have problems getting the knowledge across to their listeners. All we need do is listen with an open heart. John the Baptist is the Messiah's herald, the one sent to make the Messiah's arrival known so that people might recognize him. This voice in the wilderness, speaking with Elijah's spirit, saw visions similar to what earlier prophets had seen. John's visions made it clear that the Awaited One had finally arrived. The visions showed John what the Awaited One's arrival portends for the Judean people and for the whole world. Let us examine the Baptist's first vision, a magnificent mental image, showing what God is like and the relationship between God and the promised Messiah.

## Chapter 2

### The Baptist's Vision of God and Christ

#### APOCALYPSE 4:1-11

- 1 *After these things I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me, said: Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter.*
- 2 *And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting.*
- 3 *And he that sat, was to the sight like the jasper and the sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*
- 4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats, four and twenty ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold.*
- 5 *And from the throne proceeded lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there were seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.*
- 6 *And in the sight of the throne was, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and*

*round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.*

7 *And the first living creature was like a lion: and the second living creature like a calf: and the third living creature, having the face, as it were, of a man: and the fourth living creature was like an eagle flying.*

8 *And the four living creatures had each of them six wings; and round about and within they are full of eyes. And they rested not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.*

9 *And when those living creatures gave glory, and honor, and benediction to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever;*

10 *The four and twenty ancients fell down before him that sitteth on the throne, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honour, and power: because thou hast created all things; and for thy will they were, and have been created.*

**T**his is the first vision the Baptist describes. He sees a throne with someone seated on it. In a circle around the throne John sees twenty-four kings. Alongside the throne, he sees four living creatures. What the

Baptist sees is a vision of the Most High God showing who and what God is. It is a theophany, a manifestation of God through visible symbols to show what is not visible. The Father is the central person and appears in imagery already familiar to the Judean people as one whose face gleams like precious stones. Surrounding the Father is the Holy Spirit, shown symbolically as a group of kings who wear gold crowns. From the central throne comes flashes of lightning, voices, and peals of thunder.

This vision is a mental image of God using symbols to get the details across. It is not actually what God looks like, because God does not look like anything. There is nothing visible about God. The Father does not look like a man seated upon a throne served and adored by heavenly beings. But there is something about the concept of a king who is worshiped and served by other kings that shows the dignity and majesty of the Father. The flashes of lightning, voices, and peals of thunder that come from the central throne show the Father's power. Many years earlier, lightning, thunder, and voices showed the Israelites God's power when God spoke on Mt. Sinai:

*And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared; and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounding exceeding loud, and the people that was in the camp, feared.*

(Exodus 19:16)

Using more imagery familiar to Judeans, the vision shows the Son or the Word as four living creatures that stand between the Father and the twenty-four kings. The four living creatures stand around the central throne, one on each corner. They are covered front and back with eyes and

have six wings. Each one looks different: one looks like a lion, another like an ox, the third like a man, the fourth like a flying eagle.

The Word does not look like four living creatures that seem so powerful, but there is something about the concept of such beings that shows the Word's power and ability. The ancient Hebrews, as well as other Middle-East peoples, had adapted the imagery of four mythical beings to represent their concept of unlimited power. There are four beings to show that the power extends to the four corners of the earth.

The faces show the nobility, strength, wisdom, and agility behind that unlimited power; the wings show its speed; the ubiquitous eyes, its all-seeing and ever-present knowledge. These are the attributes of God. This is what comes out in the concept of the beings: the awesome majesty and power of God that resides in the Word.

Here is similar imagery used hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Ezekiel:

*And I saw, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north: and a great cloud, and a fire infolding it, and brightness was about it: and out of the midst thereof, that is, out of the midst of the fire, as it were the resemblance of amber: And in the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures: and this was their appearance: there was a likeness of a man in them. Every one had four faces, and every one four wings . . . . And as for the likeness of their faces: there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four: and the face of an ox on the left side of all the four: and the face of an eagle over all the four . . . . And the living creatures ran and returned like flashes of lightning . . . . And over the heads of the living creatures was a*

*likeness of the firmament, as the appearance of crystal terrible to behold, and stretched out over their heads above . . . .. And above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of the sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne, was a likeness as of the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as it were the resemblance of amber as the appearance of fire within it round about: from his loins and upward, and from his loins downward, I saw as it were the resemblance of fire shining round about. As the appearance of the rainbow when it is in a cloud on a rainy day: this was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And I saw and I fell upon my face . . . . .*  
(Ezekiel 1:4-28 & 2:1)

This vision shows the Father who rules, carried about by the Son, or the Word, the person who has unlimited power, knowledge, and swiftness to do the father's will with the speed of lightning. Most of us know from our Christian faith that they are both the same God. But God's nature is so far superior to ours that we cannot understand how one being can be more than one person. The mystery of God's true nature is what makes both these visions so difficult to interpret. It makes sense that the prophet who paved the way for God's chosen Messiah understood this relationship.

But there is more. The Holy Spirit is present in John's vision. The twenty-four kings praising the Father and the Son is a mental image of the holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not look like twenty-four kings because the Holy Spirit is a single person, but the mental image of many kings voicing homage and love for a superior king who has

unlimited power and knowledge is a useful image. It gives clues about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit loves and serves the Father and the Son. They in turn love and serve the Holy Spirit. The boundless love and happiness within them permeate all creation through the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves humans to express the same love, happiness, praise, and adoration that flourishes within God.

The image of twenty-four kings points out this influence upon humans. The symbolism stems from the Israelite tradition of appointing twenty-four priests to represent Israel in the Temple service (1 Chron. 24:19). It could reflect also the twelve tribal fathers of the first-covenant through circumcision plus the twelve apostle-fathers of the second covenant through baptism.

The Son was promised to Israel, so Ezekiel saw a vision showing the Son's relationship to the Father. The Holy Spirit will shortly be promised to the baptized, so John (the baptizer) sees a vision showing the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Father and to the Son.

The Son loves the Father and never stops singing songs of: "glory, and honour, and benediction to him that sitteth on the throne, (and he adores him) *who liveth for ever and ever.*" And as he sings, the Holy Spirit joins in to worship the Father who is worthy: "*to receive glory, and honour, and power: because thou hast created all things; and for thy will they were, and have been created.*"

#### APOCALYPSE 5:1-7

- 1     *And I saw in the right hand of him  
that sat on the throne, a book written  
within and without, sealed with seven  
seals.*
- 2     *And I saw a strong angel,  
proclaiming with a loud voice: Who*



- is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*
- 3 *And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, nor to look on it.*
- 4 *And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it.*
- 5 *And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*
- 6 *And I saw: and behold in the midst of the thrones and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes: which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.*
- 7 *And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne.*

The king representing the father holds a book in his right hand, a book written within and without and sealed with seven seals. This must be an important document because it is sealed. That is the way contracts or covenants were documented in biblical times. I think this document is a symbol of God's intentions in creating the human race and what God expects from us in return. Since it is a contract, someone else must open it and comply with its conditions. We should be able to do that. But as it turns out no one on earth, in heaven, or under the earth can open it. No angel,

no human, no one can meet the conditions. But the lamb can. The lamb is Jesus.

Jesus is the "*the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David.*" He is the Word made flesh. In our human flesh, Jesus will be slain. John sees him "*standing as it were slain.*" After his death, Jesus, the lamb, will be taken bodily to heaven and will sit--in our flesh--at the Father's right hand, the rightful position of the Son, the executor of the Father's will.

The lamb, Jesus, will, even in our flesh, be given what belongs to God: power, divinity, wisdom, strength, honor, and benediction. He lives in intimate union with God, so intimate that it is impossible to separate him from God, so much so that, in fact, he is God. John recognizes this in the lamb's seven horns and seven eyes, which he understands to be the seven spirits of God.

#### APOCALYPSE 5:8-14

8     *And when he opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints:*

9     *And they sung a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,*

10    *And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.*

11    *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of*

*many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands.*

12 *Saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction.*

13 *And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them: I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever.*

14 *And the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty ancients fell down on their faces, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever.*

Jesus, the lamb that is worthy to open the book, is so highly worthy that the twenty-four kings and the four living creatures worship him and repeat to him the prayers of saints. This shows that he is somehow united with the divinity of God. The sealed book, as I briefly mentioned, covers the conditions of God's gifts to us humans. We exist. We have immortal souls. We are created in God's image. And we have one superlative thing outranking everything else God gave us: the gift of freedom. Freedom gives us the ability to act without compulsion to obey God, if we choose, or--God help us all--to disobey.

The human race could have been created to share in

God's good works and yet be incapable of disobedience. People would be happy under those circumstances, but they would be different from us. If we freely and deliberately choose to obey God, we have a dignity unattainable by those who cannot choose. This is a priceless gift: probably the main reason we can claim that we are created in God's image. The sealed scroll symbolizes the terms and conditions of this precious gift.

We may choose to disobey. If we choose to disobey, our choice will unleash horrors upon ourselves and our fellow humans because disobedience to God has horrifying effects. Once these horrors are set free, no human, no angel, no one in heaven (other than God), on earth, or under the earth can undo the resulting damage. No one, that is, except the Lamb. The Lamb is the promised Messiah, David's descendant, a human being like ourselves.

At the same time, he is also the Word of God, the one who has power to do anything God cares to do. Together--but how could you separate them? They are both the same person. This person, the Son, through his human nature, which John had already recognized before both of them were born (Luke 1:44), meets God's conditions. So at the beginning of human history, this person through his divine nature opens the contract and makes everything ready for us humans to obey or disobey as we exercise our freedom.

Our disobedience will set into motion events that are contrary to God's decrees. Once in motion, these events will cause chains of additional events that have widespread, long lasting, and horrifying effects. As the scroll is opened and humans exercise their freedom, the Word calls forth the famous four horsemen. These are symbolic mental images used to personify the flow of natural consequences set in motion as humans exercise their private wills during the term of the contract.

This all started at the beginning, for in the beginning

the first human beings God created disobeyed. It will run through this present life from the beginning to the end of time. God will then remake the world, rewarding and punishing all persons according to how they used their freedom during the term of the contract.

What I am driving at in this chapter is that this vision described by the Baptist sets the background identifying whom the Baptist is announcing. It is not necessary for his listeners to understand all of it, any more than it is necessary for us to understand all the implications of H<sub>2</sub>O to realize that H<sub>2</sub>O stands for water.

<< end of chap two >>

## Chapter 3

### Christ Unleashes the Four Horsemen

#### APOCALYPSE 6:1-8

- 1 *And I saw that the Lamb had opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures, as it were the voice of thunder, saying: Come, and see.*
- 2 *And I saw: and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and there was a crown given him, and he went forth conquering that he might conquer.*
- 3 *And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying: Come, and see,*
- 4 *And there went out another horse that was red: and to him that sat thereon, it was given that he should take peace from the earth, and that they shall kill one another, and a great sword was given to him.*
- 5 *And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying: Come, and see. And behold a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand.*
- 6 *And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying: Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not*

*the wine and the oil.*

7 *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature, saying: Come, and see.*

8 *And behold a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with the sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

**T**he horrors symbolized by the horsemen are fourfold. First is the horror of human ambition that refuses to serve God and demands to be served by others. It rides out of the human heart, like the white horse, in a spirit of conflict and envy, conquest and tyranny, exploitation and greed. The second horror is the reaction of humans who, not willing to serve God, are hardly likely to accept servitude to other humans. Their resentment will speed through the world, like the red horse, in a wave of rage calling for resistance and war.

The third horror is the result of such activities. The tasks God requires us to do remain undone, and what we have already accomplished is attacked and destroyed. Ruin results and famine, blind terror, and despair. These spread behind the combatants like a black scourge that afflicts the innocent as well as the guilty and ruins everyone's happiness.

In the wake of these three comes the fourth horror: sickness and death, the pale horse. This is the worst horror of all: humans seemingly abandoned by God, torn from the joys of this life and thrust into the unknown terror of death.

Such are the immediate risks of granting humans



freedom, but there are more. Many will die; all will suffer if humans abuse their freedom. And God will punish the abusers.

The lamb's opening of the seals, unleashing each horseman, represents the Son's divine nature. The Son, as God, created all of us and keeps us in existence as we disobey and spread havoc. The ability, the power for anyone to do anything comes from God. This sort of makes God our accomplice. It is our will that chooses to act but God's power that keeps us in existence and functioning as we actually carry out our deeds. This power comes through the Son, who unflinchingly carries out the Father's will that we have genuine freedom.

In a very real sense, the Son's divine nature is crucified against each person's freedom. The Son is immobilized from enforcing God's will by a perfect compliance with the free will given us, even our will to disobey. If the Son, clothed with God's divine nature, were to refuse cooperation with our freedom, then we might want to disobey, but we would not be able to carry it out. We have the guilt for all our sins because we willed to disobey, but Jesus in his divine nature is involved because we draw upon his power when we carry out our disobedience.

In his divine nature, therefore, Jesus is somehow implicated in our sins, but he is not guilty of sin. We are. In his human nature Jesus, the Lamb, will accept our guilt as well, and will suffer the same penalty we must suffer: conflict, persecution, hunger, hatred by others, abandonment by the Father, and physical death. He will merit forgiveness for all, not so much by the magnitude of his own sufferings but by his perfect and flawless acceptance of his Father's will.

#### APOCALYPSE 6:9-11

9     *And when he had opened the fifth*

*seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*

10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying: How long O Lord, (holy and true) dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

11 *And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said to them, that they should rest for a little time, till their fellow servants, and their brethren, who are to be slain, even as they, should be filled up.*

There have been many martyrs. The prophets sent preaching obedience met resistance, persecution, and murder. God's own Son, when sent, will meet the same. Many whom the Son will later send will also be martyred, sacrificed, that God might not have to withdraw human freedom. In the end God will have to anyway. Those individuals who do not wish to obey will, in the fullness of time, be forced to obey by God's unyielding and everlasting power. Until then, those who have been martyred must wait while even more are martyred until the time given the human race has reached its full.

Anybody who suffers because of another person's sin is a sacrifice. This sacrifice is not unacceptable to God. If it were unacceptable, God would prevent it, and all human suffering as well, by refusing to tolerate any disobedience. Do you wonder why God exposes so many people to martyrdom, and why God tolerates so much human suffering? This is the enormous price we all pay for the preservation of freedom.

APOCALYPSE 6:12-17

- 12 *And I saw, when he had opened the sixth seal, and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair: and the whole moon became as blood:*
- 13 *And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casted its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind:*
- 14 *And the heavens departed as a book folded up: and every mountain, and the islands were moved out of their places.*
- 15 *And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains:*
- 16 *And they say to the mountains and the rocks: fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb:*
- 17 *For the great day of the their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"*

When the Lamb opened the sixth seal, John looked and saw the whole world in turmoil. There was a great earthquake. The sun became black. The moon looked red as blood. Stars fell from the sky. Everything in nature shook when God revealed what was yet to come as the debt

for human freedom mounted. People screamed in terror when they saw it. If it were possible, they would have burrowed under mountains to hide from the face of him that sits upon the throne and from his wrath.

The havoc caused by the continued misuse of freedom will escalate until it becomes intolerable. It will ruin all nature if it continues; but more important, it will, if people do not stop, move beyond the bounds God placed upon human disobedience. At that point, God will stop it, for the great day of wrath will have come.

In this and the preceding chapter, I tried to interpret the vision of the ancient one. He is surrounded by twenty-four kings and four living beings that appear to have unlimited power. I claim that this vision represents God. It uses symbols people can understand, similar to the way a molecule of water is represented by symbols. It shows the three persons in the one God and some activity of the three persons. And it uses symbols the Judean people should have understood, since many of the symbols had already been used in previous revelations.

The Lamb is in the visions. The Lamb is related to the three persons, especially to the four living creatures. The four living creatures represent the second person, the Word, the Son of God. The Lamb is worshiped within the Godhead because the Lamb is the Word's incarnation. John the Baptist was the Lamb's herald, so it is not surprising that the Baptist would open his ministry describing who the Lamb is. The Lamb is ready to begin his ministry. John's mission was to prepare the Lamb's way.

The Lamb will be accepted by some and rejected by others, who will kill him. Why is that? The vision provides an insight into this when the scroll is opened to release the four horsemen. The four horsemen symbolize the horrors unleashed upon the world if humans abuse the freedom God gave them. This freedom is dependent upon the Son. In his

divine nature, the Son grants every person existence and provides the ability and the continued existence for every person to perform deeds, even if those deeds be disobedience.

Disobedience brings suffering to humans and to God, if God could suffer. But how could God suffer? Jesus Christ is truly God, and yet he is fully human as well. In his human nature, he really did suffer, for his crucifixion and death really happened. He suffers today also in the extension of his human nature through those who have been baptized. They are a part of him, as branches are part of a vine. They suffer. He suffers. All humans suffer because of the abuse of freedom by those who do not obey God as they should.

This suffering is symbolic of the underlying relationship that the Son, in his divine nature, has with each person. He is crucified against our will by his own perfect and flawless obedience to his father's will that we all be granted genuine freedom.

As a human being, he was willing to endure suffering and death rather than call us to judgment. But in his divine nature, he will not accept our disobedience forever. God always revealed from the very beginning that we would be held accountable. Each of us will be brought to judgment. That warning is in these visions. God will requite all people according to their deeds. It will be a terrible day then, the day God makes retribution for each person's disobedience.

These visions were preludes to Christ's ministry. They nudged people who were already seeking God. The visions drew upon biblical traditions, using symbols already used by Old Testament prophets, to clarify who Christ is and what relationship Christ has with God.

Even David, long before Christ's time, had been inspired to comment that the promised one, though to be a descendant of his, was still his own Lord. He wrote in

Psalm 109:1 *"The Lord said to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" Jesus will affirm this during his ministry when he asks his critics: "If David then call him Lord, how is he David's son? They couldn't answer and didn't dare ask any more questions after that."* (Matt. 22:45-6).

Jesus will say the same thing about Abraham when he tells his critics that their father Abraham *"rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad."* (John 8:56). It is this Lord, the Lord of David and Abraham that the Baptist announced.

In the next chapter, I will show how the elect being marked with God's seal relates to the time following Pentecost when many Judeans believed Jesus and were baptized. They were afterward joined by a great multitude. These were the Gentiles who also believed and were baptized. These Gentiles, the others, will in time become a truly great multitude from all nations.

## Chapter 4

### Separating Believers from Unbelievers

#### APOCALYPSE 7:1-8

- 1 *After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor on any tree.*
- 2 *And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,*
- 3 *Saying: Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads.*
- 4 *And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel.*
- 5 *Of the tribe of Juda were twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Ruben, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand signed:*
- 6 *Of the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand signed:*
- 7 *Of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thou-*

- sand signed: Of the tribe of Levi,  
twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe  
of Issachar, twelve thousand signed:*  
8 *Of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thou-  
sand signed: Of the tribe of Joseph,  
twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe  
of Benjamin, twelve thousand signed.*

**T**he whole purpose of the covenant God made with Abraham was to prepare the way for the savior God promised to Adam and Eve. The savior is Eve's seed. He will repair the damage caused by Adam and Eve's disobedience.

God called Abraham to cooperate in fulfilling this promise. Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob (later renamed Israel) would become a chosen nation, the progenitors of the Savior. They were to abide by a covenant that they sealed with blood through circumcision. To fulfill their part, they were to live according to God's precepts. To fulfill God's part, God would bless them and make them a holy nation, a light, an example of holiness to the other nations. In the fullness of time, God would bring out of their nation the promised one, the savior of all. There was great blessing attached to obedience to this covenant and dire consequences threatened for disobedience.

Now is the fullness of time. The Messiah is about to make his impact on history. He will go first to the descendants of Israel. He will call out of the twelve tribes all who will follow him. John describes a vision relating to this. Four angels stand at the four corners of the earth. They hold back the four winds while another angel marks God's servants with a seal. A voice calls from the twelve tribes those who want to serve, twelve thousand from each tribe.

Filled with Elijah's spirit, John the Baptist spoke to all Judeans to prepare them to believe. He announced not just



the coming of the promised one, but the fact that he is here. He is already at the door. He will start his ministry before the Baptist is finished. Shortly after that, God's judgment will fall upon those who do not believe. I can imagine the urgency with which the Baptist preached. The time is now! Turn away from your sins! Repent and accept baptism! Be ready when he comes!

This portion of the Apocalypse was part of the Baptist's earliest preaching. His bold and imaginative words struck a chord deep in the minds of those who were pious. He cited biblical prophecies to show them how to recognize the Messiah. To those who were not pious, he warned what will happen should they reject the Messiah. The things he warned about are direct consequences of humanity's abuse of freedom. All humans must face those warnings, but he spoke first to the Judeans.

God had already called their ancestors through the covenant made by Abraham and ratified in every household by circumcision. They were to be a light to the other nations. They were expected to live as examples of God's holiness and to prepare, not only in their mentality, but even in their bloodlines, for the Messiah, the king and redeemer of everybody.

It was not likely that all Judeans would accept Jesus Christ. Like other nations, they had never agreed unanimously in the past. But this is Judea's moment of decision. If the Judeans choose right, they will experience the blessings God promised. If they choose wrong, they will experience the punishment the prophets, and John also, prophesied.

The punishment will be due when the Messiah is rejected and slain, but it will be postponed for a short time. This will insure that all Judeans will have had enough time to hear the Messiah's call, ponder it in their hearts, and decide whether they can believe. The forces bent upon

destroying Judea: the rivalry of hostile pagans, Rome's oppression, the resentment and hatred of Zealots ready to start war--all are halted. God is doing this to allow Judeans sufficient time to make their choice to become sealed with the Lamb's sign, the Lord's baptism.

Not all Judeans will recognize the promised one and accept baptism, but John predicts that many would. John's vision uses a traditional way of expressing a large number. Not merely a thousand from each tribe, No! The traditional way the Judeans expressed a large but unspecified number was to say there would be twelve times a thousand from each tribe. One hundred and forty-four thousand will be sealed. This merely means that many descendants of Israel will believe.

I now compare events that occurred in Judea following Christ's death and the Church's birth to certain visions in the Apocalypse. I want to show how the warnings of the early visions come true when the unbelieving Judeans oppose the Messianic kingdom set up by Judeans who do believe.

The Judean believers began their mission to preach the good news at Pentecost. That was when the Holy Spirit descended as a wind and hovered above each apostle as a tongue of fire. Peter, strengthened by the spirit, went outside and talked to people who had been attracted by the commotion. He converted three thousand. After that, the apostles boldly went to the Temple and preached the good news. Every day, they baptized more converts.

The Temple leaders opposed them from the first. One day the leaders arrested them. That same night, an angel helped them escape. The next day they went back to the Temple. They were again arrested. This time the Temple leaders wanted to execute them, but Gamaliel talked them out of it (Acts 5:33).

In spite of this opposition, Christianity spread rapidly in Jerusalem. By A.D. 35, Saul, leading those who did not

believe, tried to end Christianity through a persecution. He had Stephen stoned. He then arrested the followers of Jesus, even within their homes, and brought them to trial. Those, who could, fled Jerusalem looking for safety throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. Their example and preaching spread the Gospel to all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob everywhere they went.

During this time, Philip the Apostle went to Samaria where, among other things, he converted Simon, the pagan magi. When the other Apostles heard of it, they sent Peter and John to pray that the Samaritans might also receive the Holy Spirit. Philip then went south to Gaza then worked his way back north to Caesarea. He baptized everyone who would believe.

At this time, around A.D. 37, the unbelieving Judeans authorized Saul to go to Damascus and arrest Judean Christians who had fled there. Half way there, Saul met the resurrected Jesus who asked him to explain what he was doing. This miraculous encounter caused Saul to believe. He then tried to convince others. For this he, himself, became ostracized and persecuted by those who continued in their unbelief.

Four years later (around A.D. 42) King Herod Agrippa moved against the Apostles. He ordered James executed. Encouraged by the approval of those who did not believe the apostles, Agrippa ordered Peter arrested. Again an angel released Peter, and the harvest of Judea continued until all who would believe were marked by baptism.

#### APOCALYPSE 7:9-17

9 *After this I saw a great multitude,  
which no man could number, of all  
nations, and tribes, and peoples, and  
tongues, standing before the throne,  
and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with*

*white robes, and palms in their hands:*

10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.*

11 *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients, and the four living creatures; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God,*

12 *Saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honour, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

13 *And one of the ancients answered and said to me: These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they?*

14 *And I said to him: My Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me: These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

15 *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell over them.*

16 *They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat.*

17 *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall*

*lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

When the harvest from Judea is completed, there still will not be the full number of those who should follow Jesus because not all the circumcised accepted him. They all were invited, not only from Judea but even their ancestors from all twelve tribes. They were all expected to prepare the Messiah's way and embrace him when he comes. But the descendants of ten tribes were already lost to history because of their ancestors' unfaithfulness. Of the tribes that remained, some individuals accepted Jesus and some did not. So just like the parable of the supper feast (Luke 14:21), God will send his servants to invite everyone they see so that there might be full attendance.

In his vision, John saw not only the elect, but others joined to the elect. These others are too many for anyone to count. They are from every nation and from all tribes, peoples, and tongues. They are, therefore, not Judeans. They are believers from the Gentile nations.

This vision was fulfilled by St. Paul's ministry. He openly claimed that Jesus inspired him to convert Gentiles. But Jesus also inspired St. Peter to convert Gentiles. St. Peter first understood this when God sent a vision to advise Peter that, contrary to the dietary laws given Moses, the Christians may now eat all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds.

Immediately after this vision, Cornelius, a Gentile, sent word for Peter to come and talk about God. Peter went. While there, he gave the first recorded missionary sermon to Gentiles. He saw evidence that the Holy Spirit moved his Gentile listeners. This convinced him that the Spirit given the circumcised is also given to the uncircumcised when they believe (Acts 11:17).

During the first Judean persecution, the one that started in A.D. 35 when Stephen was martyred, many believers had fled Judea. When they settled down in foreign countries, they told the "good news" to Judean people who had previously gone to those countries. One group, however, which had gone to Antioch, told the good news to everybody. They won enough pagan converts that within several years their congregation had many Gentile as well as Judean Christians. When news of this reached Jerusalem, the apostles sent Barnabas to investigate. He rejoiced to see what had happened and then went to Tarsus to fetch Paul.

This is an irony of history because it was Paul who, before his conversion, caused the Judean Christians to flee Jerusalem. When he pursued them, he met the risen Christ and was converted. He then went to Jerusalem to preach Christ, and encountered the hostility of those who did not believe. They thought him a traitor. Peter advised Paul to return home and wait for further instructions. This same Paul is now asked to minister to a unique congregation that resulted from his conduct before his conversion. He accepted, of course, and began his ministry to the Gentiles.

With the Antioch congregation firmly rooted, Paul then started his missionary journeys. His first journey, around A.D. 43, took him to Greece, Cyprus, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. He made many Gentile converts in those areas, bringing pagans directly into the Church. This caused confusion among the Judean Christians and outrage among the unbelieving Judeans. Both groups were concerned about the status of circumcision and the law regulating food and daily customs. Does the Church believe they are no longer binding?

The Council at Jerusalem resolved this question in A.D. 49. This is mentioned in Acts 15. The council's decision of what should be binding upon Christians is also mentioned:

*For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well.'* (Acts 15:28-29)

This settled matters for the Judean Christians but not for the non-Christian Judeans. Their indignation and hostility grew as they saw those who had accepted Christ freely associating with Gentiles and bringing them into the synagogues. At that time, Christianity was still a sect of Judaism; the Christians still attended meetings in the synagogues.

Paul then converted more Gentiles in Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. He, more than any other apostle, spread the gospel directly to the uncircumcised, the others who through baptism were joined to the elect.

This is how the others came to join the elect, the others who are too numerous to count. This gathering of a great multitude from all nations, tribes, and tongues is still in progress.

The above visions came originally from John the Baptist. He preached, before Jesus had started his own ministry, to announce the Messiah and warn what would happen if the Messiah were rejected. The balance of John's visions, the seventh seal followed by the seven trumpets (Apoc. 8) signify the carrying out of those warnings.

#### APOCALYPSE 8:1

*1 And when he hath opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as if it were for half an hour.*

All is silent now as the Lamb opens the seventh seal. The destiny of the circumcised who would not accept the promised one passes the decisive moment.

APOCALYPSE 8:2

- 2     *And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God; and there were given to them seven trumpets.*

Seven angels are given trumpets. When they blow their trumpets, God's wrath, previously restrained by four angels, will descend on the unbelievers permitting a series of calamities described later as the four winds and three woes.

APOCALYPSE 8:3-5

- 3     *And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.*
- 4     *And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.*
- 5     *And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth, and there were thunders and voices and lightnings, and a great earthquake.*

The elect who do believe, especially those martyred,



offer prayers to God. Their prayers, like Abel's prayers, are accepted. An angel adds incense to signify that angel's prayers are added. The angel then casts the fire of God's wrath upon the earth. Then seven other angels begin one by one to release the four winds and three woes.

In the previous chapters, I discussed how the Apocalypse describes God and describes the Lamb's relationship with God. The Lamb is the promised one, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. I discussed what it cost God to grant us freedom and why our abuse of freedom caused Jesus to suffer.

In this chapter, I discussed how certain visions, the visions of the elect and others being marked, correspond to the earthly ministry of Jesus and of John the Baptist. Both told the elect to believe the Lamb. Many elect believed and were marked, both before and after the Crucifixion. Beginning with St. Paul's ministry, many Gentiles believed and were also marked.

In the next chapter, I will show how the four winds relate to the buildup of problems in and for Judea. These problems are caused by the continued unbelief of those elect who were not marked with the sign of faith.

<< end of chap four >>

## Chapter 5

### The Four Winds: Tribulation for Judea

#### APOCALYPSE 8:6-12

- 1     *And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound the trumpet.*
- 7     *And the first angel sounded the trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and it was cast on the earth, and a third part of the earth was burned up, and a third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*
- 8     *And the second angel sounded the trumpet: and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and a third part of the sea became blood:*
- 9     *a third part of those creatures died, which had life in the sea, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.*
- 10    *And the third angel sounded the trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, burning as it were a torch, and it fell on a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water:*
- 11    *And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And a third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*
- 12    *And the fourth angel sounded*

*the trumpet, and a third part of the sun was smitten, and a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened, and the day did not shine for a third part of it, and the night in like manner.*

These verses describe angels blowing the first four trumpets, notifying other angels to release, one by one, the four winds. The angels had been restraining the four winds while other angels gathered and sealed the elect as I described in the previous chapter.

Now the four winds are set loose. Through graphic visual symbols, we can see their effects on earth. The first wind drops flaming hail mixed with blood to scorch the earth. The second wind hurls a burning mountain into the sea, turning the sea into blood. The third wind drops a flaming star named "wormwood" from the sky. It poisons the water. The fourth wind darkens part of the sun, part of the moon, and a third of the stars.

These images of physically dangerous things are really symbols of invisible dangers. They symbolize the dangers facing people who do not believe and are fighting against those who do believe. The unbelievers did not recognize their day of visitation, and this bears consequences. The four winds describe those consequences as coming from four symbolic sources. I believe they can be understood as:

(1) Affliction from fallen human nature arising from human injustice. This is symbolized by hail and fire mixed with blood.

(2) Affliction from fallen angels, involving their conceits and their temptations of humans. This is symbolized as a burning mountain cast into the sea.

(3) Affliction from Judea's subversion of the high destiny given it by God. Judea diverted inward toward human self-interest and poisoned toward God's interests. This is symbolized as the fallen star "wormwood."

(4) Afflictions from ignorance of God's Will as Judeans drift further and further from understanding what God, through their cooperation, wants to do. This is symbolized as a darkening of heaven.

In this chapter, I will highlight historical events between the crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem, and compare them to the four afflictions. These four afflictions build up simultaneously as the Judeans react to the situation in which they find themselves. The afflictions intensify as the Judeans rebel against Rome. Then the afflictions (the four winds) give way to the three woes, which bring disaster.

Many popular interpretations cite the four winds as the "great tribulation." They predict it will come just before Christ returns to establish the millennial kingdom. I believe the kingdom is already here. It is Christ's reign with the righteous already in heaven guiding and protecting us struggling on earth. The heavenly souls already possess power and authority over Satan and the fallen angels. Christ will return to earth again, probably soon, not to start the millennial kingdom, but to conclude it and judge everyone God created.

When that time comes, I doubt that the Christian nations will be ready for his return. I see a profound rejection of Christianity by the western world. When the Lord does come, our Gentile nations are not likely to be any more ready than Judea was the first time he came. Then we Gentile nations will experience our own "great tribulation." But the Judeans experienced it first. And their experience is itself a prophecy of what we are likely to experience. Part of it is described as a darkness caused by diminished light

from the sun, the moon, and the stars. This I believe is symbolic of spiritual darkness.

A darkening of the spirit was the first problem the unbelieving Judeans faced after the crucifixion of Jesus. Their leaders who had rejected Christ bribed the soldiers guarding the tomb. They wanted the soldiers to say they fell asleep and, while they slept, someone took Christ's body. This false witness is against the Commandments. It leads to alienation from God--and spiritual darkness.

The Temple leader's insistence that Jesus is an impostor leads to an argument with the Apostles Peter and John. This happened shortly after Pentecost when Peter and John healed a lame man and then said Jesus did the healing. The Sadducees brought them before the Sanhedrin. During the trial, Annas and Caiaphas said: "*What shall we do to these men? For indeed a known miracle hath been done by them, to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: it is manifest and we cannot deny it*" (Acts 4:16). The Temple leaders warned Peter and John not to speak in the name of Jesus.

The Temple leaders' refusal to deal openly and sincerely with an obvious "miracle" will alienate them from God. It is exactly the way unbelievers dealt with the prophets.

The darkness intensifies.

Two years later, the Temple leaders jailed some apostles, but an angel released the apostles that night. Arrested again the next day, these apostles went to trial. In their testimony they offended the Sanhedrin by referring to Jesus as the man "you killed." Some members of the Sanhedrin demanded death. Gamaliel, a highly respected Rabbi, advised against it: ". . . *for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it . . .*" (Acts 5:33-9). Other Judeans, in contrast, were able to believe, priests as well as ordinary people.

Around A.D. 35, some men from the Judean sect of "freedmen" argued with the Christian Stephen. Others soon joined, but none could refute Stephen. So they lied that they heard Stephen curse Moses and God. The Temple leaders then brought Stephen to trial. In his testimony, Stephen described the history of Israel's relationship with God. In the middle, seeing that they disagreed, he accused them of resisting the Holy Spirit, disobeying God, and betraying and murdering the Messiah. Enraged, they covered their ears to hear no more, took Stephen outside, and killed him.

The darkness spreads.

The Sanhedrin then ordered the arrest of all believers. The Christians fled Jerusalem and went to Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. When the persecution caught up with them there, they fled even farther into Syria, Phoenicia, and Cyprus.

Saul of Tarsus, as dedicated a Pharisee as he will later be as a Christian, set off for Damascus to arrest Christians who had infiltrated the Judean groups there. He was converted on the way, and the persecution lost its driving force. By A.D. 38, the Church had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

During the next few years, many Judeans believed the apostles and accepted baptism, but some pagans did also. This raised the question of circumcision and the dietary laws, as I discussed earlier. In A.D. 41, Peter's vision made him realize that Christians could now eat all animal flesh. This encouraged Peter to recognize that the old custom regulating what could not be eaten was no longer binding. He brought this up during the Council at Jerusalem. The other apostles recognized it also.

Their decision angered the Judeans who did not believe. They saw it as an example of how far this new sect had deviated from their traditions. As Paul begins his witness, he will emphasize that the Messiah came to fulfill

and end the old covenant. The Messiah started a new covenant. The Judeans who could not accept Jesus as Messiah naturally could not accept the end of the Mosaic covenant (the civil and dietary laws, not the Commandments). Faith in Jesus had become the stumbling block to understanding what God is doing. Those who did not believe Jesus plunged deeper and deeper into spiritual darkness as they insisted that God had not made a new covenant through Jesus.

The Second trumpet describes a burning mountain cast into the sea. I believe this alludes to afflictions caused by fallen angels who tempt humans into serving them as gods. I want to provide some background on the Roman Empire before I try to explain this.

Legend has it that Romulus and Remus founded Rome in 753 B.C. This is three hundred years after David centered his kingdom in Jerusalem. Before the founding of Rome, David's kingdom already fell apart because the Israelites were not faithful to God. Twenty-two years after the founding of Rome, the Assyrians destroyed most of the Israelite nation. A minority, a remnant (only two of twelve tribes) remained to bring forth the Messiah. History might have dealt differently with David's kingdom. It did deal differently with the Romans.

Starting in 753 B.C., the people who founded Rome gradually extended their influence into their surrounding areas. In 510 B.C., they changed the government from a monarchy to a republic, and the government remained a republic until Caesar's time. Though a pagan people, they brought a fair-minded and sensible system of law and justice to the peoples they conquered. Roman law became so well accepted that even today much of European law is based on Roman law.

The mountain spoken of in the second trumpet has been built.



Scripture sometimes refers to human societies as mountains. For example: *"Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zorobabel? Thou shalt become a plain: . . ."* (Zacharias 4:7). *"And thou son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: 'Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: . . .'"* (Ezekiel 36:1).

I believe "mountain" cast into the sea is used this way. I believe the mountain is the Roman Empire. I have already outlined the development of the Empire from its humble beginning as a small city-state to its vast expanse of power as an empire, a "mountain" compared to other human societies.

The mountain of Rome developed problems with the Most High God. Those problems involved the religion of the Roman people. They believed Rome had a spiritual patron in a goddess they named Roma. Roma guided Rome through kings in the old days. Then Rome became a republic, then ruled by three men, then two, and finally by Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar assumed full control of the Empire and ruled as dictator, influenced and guided by Roma, for four years until his assassination in 44 B.C.

His successor, Augustus, at first said he wanted to restore the republic, but once in power he decided to rule as dictator, just like Julius Caesar. He then did something new. He proclaimed that Julius Caesar was a god. This gave Julius Caesar a status similar to the status of the goddess Roma. Augustus then took the title "Caesar," and ruled the empire in Caesar's name. It seems an interesting coincidence that the head of the Roman Empire should dare to claim that a human being is divine at the same time God is preparing to send the divine Son into the world as a human being.

This conflict between the aspirations of the Roman Empire and the aspirations of God is the reason God cast the "mountain" into the sea. I am sure it involved fallen angels

who tempt the Roman people, especially the chief fallen angel, Satan.

Behind the scenes, in the spiritual realm, God disciplined Satan and the fallen angels worshiped by the pagan empire. This is part of the binding of Satan described in the Apocalypse. This was a long process, but it reached one crisis point in A.D. 41 during the reign of Caligula. This was fourteen years after Pentecost; the day the followers of Christ first began their mission to spread Christ's teachings. It is logical to expect that Christ was active behind the scenes at this time. He began the binding of Satan so that his teachings could take root.

Tiberius reigned after Augustus and, in A.D. 37, Caligula reigned after Tiberius. Caligula was a young man, twenty-five years old. He ruled with wisdom and benevolence his first year, then he fell ill. When he recovered, he seemed a different person. His actions were so bizarre and so cruel that many believed him insane. He was convinced he was a god already. He had a life-size, gilded statue of himself placed in a Roman temple and authorized a priestly cult to lead public homage to it. Instead of discouraging him from pursuing this folly, many influential Romans encouraged him. They wanted appointments as priests to gain political advantage.

The emperor Caligula was the first Caesar to proclaim his own person as a god. He was the first one the Roman people worshiped as a god while he was yet alive.

The mountain is now ignited.

Though Caligula seemed benevolent his first year as emperor, he always had a vile character. Many Romans feared and hated Caligula. His Uncle, Tiberius, raised him. The first century Roman historian, Suetonius, quotes Tiberius as saying that he: "*was nursing a viper for the Roman people and a Phaethon for the world*" (Suetonius II, p. 419). The Roman historian Suetonius describes

Caligula's character this way:

*So much for Caligula as emperor; we must now tell of his career as a monster (Suetonius II, p. 419). He lived in habitual incest with all his sisters, and at a large banquet he placed each of them in turn below him, while his wife reclined above. Of these he is believed to have violated Drusilla while she was still a minor, and even to have been caught lying with her by his grandmother Antonia . . .*

(Suetonius, II, p. 441).

Suetonius also reports that Caligula was fascinated by torture. When he was young, he often ate his meals watching the torture of prisoners. As an adult, he liked to watch criminals fed to wild beasts. He had so little self-discipline that even pagans considered him depraved. During banquets, he flirted with his guest's wives. If he could entice one out of the hall, he would come back later with no attempt to conceal the seduction or how he compared her to other women.

In A.D. 41, shortly after Caligula authorized the worship of his own person, the people of Jamnia, a pagan city in the Judean heartland, built a sacrificial altar to honor him. The Judeans, offended by this blatant idolatry, tore it down. This angered Caligula. In retaliation, he ordered a large statue with his facial features to be placed in the Jerusalem Temple within the Holy of Holies. The Judeans resisted. They resolved never to allow this desecration. They were ready to risk war to prevent it.

This claim of divinity shows that something is wrong in the collective mentality of the empire. That collective mentality, previously like a mountain among the nations, is

now ignited with the insane claim to be the Most High God.

Caligula ordered Petronius, the military governor of Syria, to march troops into Jerusalem and forcibly place the statue in the Temple. When Petronius arrived, some Judeans stood in his path and shouted that they preferred death rather than let him pass. Petronius turned back. This shocked Caligula. He ordered Petronius to commit suicide. Before Petronius could comply, however, Caligula was assassinated.

So in A.D. 41, Caligula, a young man ignited with ambition to be equal with the Most High God, was torn from his place and cast, still flaming with that ambition, into the common death all mortals must endure. I propose that Christ increased the binding of Satan at this time.

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? How art thou fallen to the earth, that didst wound the nations? And thou sayest in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the Pit.*

(Isaiah 14:12-15)

Caligula lived twenty-nine years and ruled Rome for three years, ten months, and eight days. His death ends this crisis over his statue. His actions, however, made emperor worship an accepted practice in the empire. This paved the way for subsequent emperors to insist that they are divine. This caused serious tensions for all Judeans, including those who were Christian.

Shortly after Caligula's death, the next emperor appointed Herod Agrippa I as king of Judea. Agrippa was born around 10 B.C. His grandfather, Herod the Great, ordered the Christ-child killed. His uncle, Herod Antipas, ordered John the Baptist killed. Agrippa's father, Aristobulus, was murdered by order of Agrippa's grandfather, Herod the Great. Agrippa, himself, will try to destroy the Church. God will strike him dead.

When Agrippa was six, his mother took him to Rome to be raised in the imperial court. When he was a young man, he made friends with Caligula who was fourteen years younger. When Caligula was twenty-five, the emperor Tiberius heard that Caligula plotted for the throne. Tiberius blamed Agrippa and put Agrippa in prison. A few months later Tiberius died. When Caligula became emperor, he released his friend Agrippa and sent him home as king of northern Palestine and southern Syria. Agrippa's uncle, Herod Antipas, feeling he was the legitimate heir, went to Rome to protest. Agrippa also went to Rome to present his case. Caligula sided with Agrippa. He deposed Herod Antipas and allowed Agrippa to annex Galilee.

Later, when Caligula was assassinated, the Roman senate planned to abolish the imperial throne and restore the old republic. Agrippa spoke before the senate and convinced the senators to accept Claudius as Imperial Caesar. This averted a civil war and made Claudius his friend. Claudius then rewarded Agrippa by adding Samaria and Judea to his kingdom. This now made Agrippa king of all Palestine and placed under his rule many Judeans and practically all Christians.

Agrippa proved more popular than his uncle or grandfather. His zealous observance of the Law and support for the Temple won him the people's admiration. His promotion of traditional Judean practices and repression of any violations won their love and loyalty as well. Later

historians will refer to his reign as the last "golden age" of the Jewish people (Potok, p. 210). However, he was engulfed in the spiritual darkness of his times. He did not recognize his nation's day of visitation. Instead of believing that Christ is the promised one, he could only see that Christianity deviated from tradition; so, he suppressed it.

While Agrippa defended tradition (A.D. 41-42), the apostles, especially Paul, were saying that traditional customs (the religious rituals and dietary law--but not the Ten Commandments) have been abolished. The Messiah's followers could now eat foods their ancestors could not eat. They could accept pagans for baptism without first requiring circumcision. This increased the wedge between the Judeans who did believe Jesus and those who did not.

Agrippa tried to force Christians to follow the old customs. In A.D. 42, he ordered James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, arrested for violating the old Law. Found guilty, James was executed. Public sentiment favored this action. Agrippa then ordered St. Peter arrested. The Lord sent an angel to release Peter (Acts 12:7 ff.).

The Church's future in Agrippa's kingdom looked bad. The Judean people, with Agrippa as their visible head, misunderstood the high destiny God had given them. They diverted their energies inward toward their own goals and became poisoned toward God's goals, as symbolized by the fallen star "wormwood."

Soon after, in A.D. 44, Herod Agrippa fell dead, struck by God:

*And he (Herod) was angry with the Tyrians and the Sidonians. But they with one accord came to him, and having gained Blastus, who was the king's chamberlain, they desired peace, because their countries were nourished by him. And upon a day appointed, Herod being arrayed in*

*kingly apparel, sat in the judgment seat, and made an oration to them. And the people made acclamation, saying: It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God: and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost.*

(Acts 12:20-23).

Josephus tells the story in more detail:

*Now when Agrippa had reigned three years, over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honour of Caesar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principle persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out . . . that 'he was a god;' and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto reverence thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as a superior to mortal nature'. Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery . . .*

..

(Antig. XIX, VIII, 2) (Josephus, II, p. 102).

Josephus goes on to say that Agrippa looked up and saw an owl (some translators say the word was "angel" not "owl") at any rate, it reminded Agrippa of a prophecy about himself that he had heard years ago and: *A severe pain . . . arose in his belly, and began in the most violent manner.* Five days later *"quite worn out by the pain in his belly . . . he departed this life . . . ."* (ibid.).

The fall of the first chosen and the elevation of those not chosen first is a common theme throughout Scripture. Cain's sacrifice was rejected. Abel's sacrifice was accepted. In a fit of poisonous jealousy, Cain murdered Abel. Esau traded his birth right as first-born to his younger brother for a bowl of porridge. When Esau realized that he forever lost his right as first-born, he was poisoned with rage against his brother (Gen. 27:41).

King Saul was God's choice as king of Israel. When Saul continually disobeyed, God told Samuel to anoint David and inform Saul that Saul is no longer king. Saul refused to step down. He burned with envy of the new king. Seeing how the people loved David, Saul often tried to kill him. Saul came to a sad end. Even his heirs were killed because of what he did (2 Sam. 21:1-9).

When he heard of Christ's birth, Herod the Great sent men to murder him. Herod also came to a sad end. Every one of his heirs that dared to sit on David's throne came to a sad end as well.

The angels who disobeyed God, Lucifer and the devils, were God's firstborn and were first in knowledge and ability compared to human beings. Satan's name "Lucifer," "bearer of light" designates Satan as the first of the first, probably the most splendid angel God created. Because of



their disobedience, God drove the devils from heaven. So it is not without precedence that Israel (God's first-chosen) should lose place to another (the followers of Christ) because of disobedience.

The affliction that propelled Judea into political disaster was caused by the injustice of her neighbors. Like hail, their injustice pounded the self-esteem of the Judeans. This injustice incited some Judeans into unjust reprisals of their own.

There had been much friction between the Judean and the pagan peoples within Judea. The Judeans wanted to be free of pagan influence. The pagans wanted one religion throughout the empire. Rome's use of vassal Judean kings instead of Roman administrators served to minimize the strife. When Agrippa died, Claudius sent a procurator to place Agrippa's kingdom under direct Roman administration. Claudius gave the new procurator more power than Pontius Pilate had. This ended any semblance of self-rule for the Judeans. In desperation, they turned to armed revolt.

The new procurator, Cuspius Fadus, began his relationship with the Judeans by using military force to crush the revolt. The term of office was two years. Rome replaced Fadus in A.D. 46 with Tiberius Julius Alexander. Alexander was a Judean, but he had rejected Judaism and became a pagan. Rome replaced him two years later with Ventidius Cumanus. These new procurators used their appointments to enrich themselves and as stepping stones to better assignments. This helped to create constant tension and political unrest.

Some unbelieving Judeans, bristling with nationalism and religious fanaticism, drew the uncommitted in one direction, while the apostles appealed to them from the opposite direction. Some extremists among the unbelievers claimed that God would bless any effort, endorse any method used to establish an independent Judea. Liberation

of Judea could spread into Galilee, Samaria, and the surrounding nations. The entire area, they felt, the former kingdom as David and Solomon ruled it, might reassert itself under the leadership of a free Judea.

In this state of political tension, even a small spark can start a riot. A Roman soldier in Jerusalem insulted some Judean men by obscenely thrusting his breech toward them. Their reaction spread like fire. Before the riot was quelled, soldiers had killed many Judeans.

Another time, also in Jerusalem, a Roman soldier unrolled a Torah scroll in public and burned it. Outraged Judean leaders went to the procurator's home in Caesarea and protested this blasphemy. After thinking it over, the procurator ordered the soldier beheaded rather than chance another riot.

Around A.D. 50, a terrorist group formed within the Zealot party. The Zealots sought Judean independence. They organized shortly after Herod the Great's death when Rome increased direct control over Judea. Simon the apostle was a former Zealot. This new group, unlike the original Zealots, used terrorism. They assassinated any prominent Judean sympathetic to Rome. Drawing small daggers, they, without any warning, stabbed their victims, even in public, and quickly vanished. The Latin word for dagger is "sica," so these terrorists became known as "Sicarri." Scripture calls them "the murderers"(Acts 21:38).

The Sicarri justified their killing by claiming that any means, including terror tactics, may be used to help establish God's kingdom. Their motto was "terror may be used to oppose terror" (Zeitlin, III, p. 149). Though they claimed concern for the Judean people, they killed many Judeans, especially rich Sadducees.

The Sadducees did not believe in life after death, so they did nothing to prepare for the next life. All their hopes focused on worldly success. To preserve their wealth and

social position, they were willing partners with Rome. Within twenty years, the Sicarri will have destroyed the entire Sadducee class--a telling example of affliction by fallen humans against those who did not recognize their day of visitation.

Agrippa's son was the last king of Herod's dynasty. The son was born in A.D. 17. Agrippa had his son educated in the imperial court in Rome. When Agrippa died, Rome bypassed his son, who was then twenty-seven, and annexed his kingdom. But six years later, in A.D. 50, the emperor Claudius let Agrippa's son (known to history as Herod Agrippa II) succeed his uncle, Herod of Chalcis, who died in 48. Chalcis was a small kingdom in north Palestine.

Three years later, Claudius allowed Herod Agrippa II to exchange that kingdom for the one previously ruled by his great uncle Philip (whose wife lived with Herod Antipas). This new kingdom was northeast of the Sea of Galilee. A year later, A.D. 54 (I am getting ahead of myself now), the new emperor Nero will add Galilee and Perea. Galilee was to the north (above Samaria) and Perea was south along the Jordan's east bank and the northeast shore of the Dead Sea. Agrippa II will, by then, rule over many Judean people but not over the whole nation. He will never rule the whole nation. The Acts of the Apostles mentions him. He and his sister, Berenice, listened to St. Paul's testimony (Acts 25:23).

A few years later, in A.D. 55, Judeans and pagans rioted in Caesarea. Herod the Great had built the city and named it Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus. Rome used it as the administrative seat of Palestine. All the procurators made their headquarters there. It attracted a large Roman, and therefore, pagan population.

The pagans and Judeans began to quarrel about whether Caesarea should be administered as a pagan or as a Judean city. Street riots erupted. The procurator Antonius

Felix appealed to Rome. Nero decreed that it was a pagan city. Nero's decision made Judeans second-class citizens in their own country. Resentment spread throughout Judea.

Throughout these years, the Judeans heard this early portion of the Apocalypse along with the oral Gospels and the Apostle's sermons. The Christians tried to convert as many Judeans as possible. They felt the Lord would return in their lifetime, so there was urgency in their witness: Believe! Believe now, and escape the wrath to come!

Simultaneously, a different messianic hope spread among the Judeans who did not believe Christ. They expected the promised one to come, but not like Jesus. They expected him to come with power and glory. He would restore the Judean kingdom and usher in a new golden age. Many messianic leaders, or what the Christians would call "false messiahs," formed splinter groups at this time. Here are Josephus' words about one:

*But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him: these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison, and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his who were to break into the city with him. But Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his attack upon them, insomuch that, when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, whilst the*

*greater part of those that were with him were either destroyed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed every one of them to their own homes, and there concealed themselves.*

(Wars II, XIII, 2) (Josephus, II, p. 260).

This messianist was mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles when Paul, during his trial by Felix, was asked if he were:

*. . . that Egyptian who before these days didst raise a tumult, and didst lead forth into the desert four thousand men that were murderers*  
(Acts 21:37-8).

In A.D. 61, the Sadducees chose a new high priest. He judged cases according to Sadducee law. He had James the lesser, cousin of Jesus, brought before the Sanhedrin because James did not follow traditional customs. Found guilty, James was executed. The Sadducees then started a new persecution of Christians.

In A.D. 63, the Sicarri kidnapped a rich Sadducee as hostage for the release of an imprisoned Sicarri. Albinus, the new procurator, for a fee, helped negotiate. With success in this first effort, the Sicarri kept on kidnapping Sadducees to get other prisoners released. It is said that Albinus got rich releasing men imprisoned by former procurators. The wealthy Sadducees suffered greatly from this injustice.

The above events happened within twenty-eight years of the Crucifixion and happened to the same generation that witnessed the Resurrection. God is dealing severely with them; but then, millions of future people will doubt that Christ rose because so many people of this generation denied it.

Supernatural events warned this generation also. Both the Judean historian, Josephus, and the Roman historian, Tacitus, report unusual sights in Jerusalem. They saw armies battling in the skies:

*. . . (They saw) . . . the Temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds . . . (and later) . . . when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eight day of the month . . . and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright daytime; which light lasted half an hour. . . . before sunseting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. . . .*

*Moreover, at the feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said, that in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard the sound as of a multitude, saying 'Let us remove hence'.*

There was also a young man who came to the Temple during a feast and: *began on a sudden to cry aloud 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against this whole people!' This was his cry as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city.*

People tried to make him stop saying these things, but he wouldn't stop, even when they beat him: *but he everyday uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his*

*premeditated vow. 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!'.... This cry of his was loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months.*

This kept up even during the war. One day as he was on top of the wall surrounding the city: *going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force 'Woe! woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!' And just as he added at the last 'Woe, woe to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately: and as he was uttering the very same presages, he gave up the ghost.* (WARS VI, V, 3) (Josephus, II, pp. 431-2).

The conflict between the Judean and the pagan populations kept getting worse. The government officials, most of whom were Roman pagans, were growing rich through graft and corruption. They heavily taxed the Judeans. Because of the tax, many small farming families lost their land. This produced a new class of Judean: the landless poor. The gulf between this class and the aristocracy that sided with Rome, particularly the Sadducees, became wider and more explosive.

The expectation of a Messiah encouraged many who did not recognize Christ to follow several messianic cults, all politically minded and ready to fight for an independent Israel. All that was needed now was a spark to ignite the holocaust.

Badly as events progressed under the four winds, they nevertheless proceeded slowly enough that all Judeans had time to hear and respond to the Gospel. The Christians also had time to gain new members. I outlined this above when I described the four winds as held back.

In A.D. 64, Nero began a new persecution against Christians, the first formal persecution by the Roman government. Christianity had grown for thirty-seven years

by then. Due to persecution by unbelieving Judeans, Christianity had already spread throughout the Empire. Peter and Paul planted Christianity in Rome. Christianity became a strong enough force that even Nero felt its presence.

Nero revived the so-called "Imperial Cult" and made it a test of Roman allegiance throughout the empire. This test required a sacrifice to Caesar. Judeans alone, because they believed in only one God, were exempt from it. Due to prior agreements with Rome they had always been exempt from observing the Imperial Cult.

Up to that time an outsider looking at Christianity would judge it to be a sect within Judaism. Both groups, in the holy land at least, consisted mainly of Judeans. In Jerusalem, both groups worshiped in the Temple. The Christians also had a Eucharist service, which they celebrated after the Temple service in a separate ceremony they usually held in a private room.

The Judeans wanted to preserve their exemption. They wanted also to be rid of Christians. So they denied Christians access to the Temple. They wished to make it clear that Christians were not adherents of their faith. This prevented Christians from claiming exemption from the Imperial Cult even though they worshiped only the one true God of Israel.

Until now, the four winds had been held back (as described in the visions). I believe, now with the Christians no longer safe in Judea, the angels released the winds. I believe so because from here on Judea's afflictions will rapidly build to a climax, so rapidly that within one year, Judea will be at war with Rome.

The final spark flared out of Caesarea. For a long time, there had been tension between the Judeans and the pagans. The Judeans owned a synagogue next to property owned by a pagan Gentile. The Judeans tried often to purchase the property, offering a generous price for it. The



pagan said he would never sell. Instead, he began building workshops close by, so close that the work prevented free access to the synagogue. Some hotheaded Judeans then attacked the workers. They hoped this would stop construction. The pagans appealed to the procurator, Florus. Florus ruled in their favor and ordered the Judeans not to interfere.

The Judeans then offered Florus a bribe to stop the construction. Florus took the money; but, instead of stopping construction, he went to Sebaste, about twenty miles to the southeast. The next day, a Sabbath day, in late April or early May, A.D. 65, a pagan man, "*. . . a certain man of Caesarea, of a seditious temper*" as Josephus puts it (Wars, II, XIV, 5) (Josephus, II, p. 262) went in front of the synagogue and set up a makeshift altar on an overturned pot. He sacrificed a bird to the pagan gods.

Outraged Judeans rushed at him. Pagan observers came to his assistance. Soon a full-fledged race riot erupted. News of this spread to other cities and sparked race riots there also. Seeing things rapidly get out of hand, some well-to-do Judeans who were sympathetic to Rome, went to Sebaste to ask Florus to return and stop the rioting. Florus had them arrested.

When news of the riots reached Jerusalem, which was about fifty miles to the southeast, the people there grew tense and apprehensive. Florus took advantage of the situation and had his men raid the Temple. They stole seventeen talents from the Temple treasury. Florus claimed the emperor needed it. This happened on May 16, A.D. 65. Of all the procurators who oppressed the Judeans, Florus was the most unprincipled. He worried that the Judeans would ask the emperor to look into his conduct. Historians think he deliberately goaded the Judeans into rebellion to discredit their complaints.

When news of the Temple robbery reached Jerusalem,

a crowd gathered around the Temple. They passed a collection basket so, as they put it, the impoverished Procurator need not resort to robbery. This offended Florus. He ordered extra troops, cavalry and infantry, to march from Caesarea to Jerusalem and punish those who mocked him.

The next day he held court and demanded those responsible be surrendered to him. When the people refused, he punished them by allowing his troops to take whatever they wanted from a neighborhood called "the upper market" and to kill anyone who resisted. The looters slaughtered three-thousand and six-hundred men, women, and children. Some they scourged and crucified, even Roman citizens. No Judean procurator ever before dared do the brutal things that Florus did that day.

The Judeans were ready to revolt, but the priests talked them out of it. The Romans will kill them all, the priests argued. Hoping to end this crisis by a public gesture of submission, the people agreed to salute the Roman troops when they arrived from Caesarea. It is customary for troops to be saluted on their arrival and for them to acknowledge the salute. Florus, still angry, advised the troops not to acknowledge the salute. If any Judeans taunt them, they may retaliate.

When the soldiers ignored the salute, some Judeans insulted them. The soldiers attacked. After dispersing the crowd, they tried to storm the Temple. The Judeans blocked the way. The Judeans then destroyed the walkway between the Temple and the fortress, thus isolating the Temple. When Florus saw that he could no longer get access to the Temple and, therefore, could not easily rob its treasury, he sent for the Temple leaders. He told them that he would leave Jerusalem and take most of his troops with him if they, in turn, restored order.

Florus then sent a report to Cestius Gallus, a Roman governor with higher authority. Florus falsely accused the

Judeans of revolt. The Judeans also sent their report accusing Florus. To learn the facts, Cestius sent a man to investigate. The man happened to meet King Agrippa II on the way. Agrippa II had no authority over Judea but was concerned. He decided to go to Jerusalem also.

The facts supported the Temple leaders. Cestius then reported Florus' misconduct to Nero. Agrippa II advised the Judeans to repair the walkway and continue paying the Roman tax. This would show good faith when Nero investigates.

Agrippa thought Nero would replace Florus. He encouraged the Judeans to continue respecting Florus as procurator until Nero sends a replacement. This the Judeans refused to do. Furious that he would ask such a thing, they would not listen to him anymore. Agrippa II then returned to his own kingdom. Later when war did break out, he went to Rome.

Soon after, Eleazar ben Jairi and some Sicarri captured Masada. Masada is thirty-five miles south of Jerusalem in the mountains near the Dead Sea. Later, the new High Priest refused to accept any request for sacrifice from Gentiles. This was an open break with Rome. Ever since their first contact with Pompey, the Temple authorities always made a daily sacrifice on Rome's behalf. This conveyed the Empire's respect to the God of Israel. The Temple authorities in the past always accepted gifts to God from foreign kings. Josephus counts this refusal as the war's real beginning. The upper-class Judeans, the rich ones who cooperate with Rome, including most of the Sadducees, but also including many rich Pharisees, priests, and well-educated Judeans, were against the war. Those for war were mainly the less well-off and, of course, the Zealots and Sicarri. The middle-class tried to remain neutral.

The upper-class urged resumption of the daily sacrifice on Rome's behalf. They wanted to avoid any action that

might lead to war. Opposed by Zealots and Sicarri, they then advised Florus and Agrippa to send troops to restore order. Florus already had a detachment in Jerusalem. Agrippa II sent some of his troops. Together they quickly recaptured the upper city, where the well-to-do Judeans lived, but the lower city and the Temple area remained under control of those who wanted war.

For seven days, both sides attacked each other without gaining any headway. On the eighth day the revolutionaries, taking advantage of a religious ceremony, caught the upper city by surprise. They defeated the well-to-do Judeans, burnt their homes, and massacred many. The survivors fled for their lives. The revolutionaries then burnt the public archives where all credit records were stored. This prevented the rich from collecting debts. The revolutionaries did this to win support from those who had debts. The revolutionaries then beat back the foreign troops and cornered them. After some negotiations, they agreed to safe conduct out of Jerusalem if the soldiers lay down their arms. When the soldiers did, the revolutionaries let Agrippa's troops leave but killed the Romans.

When the pagans in Caesarea heard what happened--the soldiers were their own relatives--the pagans killed twenty-thousand Judeans. This prompted Judeans in other cities to attack and kill Gentiles. This led to further retaliation by Gentiles in other cities. Bloodshed and violence spread throughout Judea. Even outside Judea, as far away as Alexandria, Egypt, the Gentiles killed fifty-thousand Judeans. All this happened in summer of 65, three months after the pagan man's bird sacrifice in Caesarea.

Cestius Gallus, without waiting for Rome's directive, brought in the Syrian-based XII Legion to crush the revolt. He conquered many small Judean towns on his way to Jerusalem. He subdued most of Jerusalem by October 30, but reached a stalemate when the Zealots fought their way

inside the Temple mount and shut the gates. Afraid that the whole population would attack from all sides if he attacked the Temple, he decided to withdraw from the city. The Zealots pursued him. With their greater number, the Zealots caused the Romans to break rank. Before the rout was over, the Zealots killed five thousand foot-soldiers and more than four hundred cavalry.

This unprecedented and humiliating defeat of a full-scale Roman army filled the Judeans with confidence. They cheered Simon bar Giora, who led the attack, calling him their hero. This man will play an important role later in the war. Judea was now, in late November 65, in open rebellion against Rome.

The people planned their defense against Rome's retaliation. On January 28, A.D. 66, they formed a provisional government led by the middle class, who up to that time had been neutral. Now that war was inevitable, the middle class felt they should control the revolution. They appointed Simon, son of Gamaliel, and Joseph, son of Gorion, as joint heads of the new government, and Ananus, a Sadducee, as High Priest. The well-known and influential Ananus wound up as the real head.

Ananus organized the country into military defense zones. One was Galilee. He placed Galilee under the command of Josephus, son of Matthias. Josephus will later become the Judean historian who will give an eyewitness account of this war.

The government's policy was more of organizing a defense and secretly longing for a peaceful settlement rather than taking the offensive. Josephus, then, as military commander of Galilee, openly urged a plan against invasion, but, privately, tried to defuse the revolution. He soon had a rival, a Zealot extremist named John from Gischala in Galilee. John was very keen to fight the Romans.

Another extremist was Simon bar Giora, who defeated

the XII Legion. Simon opposed the provisional government. He lost the political infighting and was forced to leave Jerusalem. He and his followers joined the Sicarri at Masada. After a while, he quarreled with the Sicarri also. He then took his men to the hills. There he recruited runaway slaves to build up an army, and furnished it by raiding nearby towns. His indiscriminate raids on Judeans as well as Gentiles alarmed the provisional government. The government sent armed men out to destroy him, but he eluded them.

It was at this time (A.D. 66), that the apostles Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome.

No one knows how Nero would have dealt with Florus, had the Judeans not revolted. Faced with open rebellion, Nero sent a fresh army commanded by Vespasian to crush it. Vespasian's army entered Palestine from the north, and began a systematic conquest, city by city. Within a year he conquered Jotapata, the headquarters of Josephus, and took Josephus prisoner. Later Josephus became an interpreter for Vespasian. In his service as interpreter, Josephus tried, many times, to get the Judeans to give up their hopeless revolt against Rome.

Vespasian's army then conquered Joppa on July 12, A.D. 66, causing 11,600 fatalities. By October Vespasian had conquered Gischala. John of Gischala, the rival of Josephus, fled with many followers to Jerusalem. Many refugees from other areas conquered by Vespasian also went to Jerusalem. The city could not hold so many people. Overcrowding and the new political ambitions of the refugees weakened the provisional government.

What will happen to law and order if the government falls?

### APOCALYPSE 8:13

*13 And I beheld, and heard the voice of*

*one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice: Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth: by reason of the rest of the voices of the three angels, who are yet to sound the trumpet.*

<< end of chap five >>



## Chapter 6

### The First Woe: Civil War in Judea

#### APOCALYPSE 9:1-12

- 1 *And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and I saw a star fall from heaven upon the earth, and there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit.*
- 2 *And he opened the bottomless pit: and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit.*
- 3 *And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth. And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power:*
- 4 *And it was commanded to them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree: but only the men who have not the sign of God on their foreheads.*
- 5 *And it was given unto them that they should not kill them; but that they should torment them five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.*
- 6 *And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.*
- 7 *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle:*

*and on their heads were, as it were,  
crowns like gold: and their faces  
were as the faces of men.*

8 *And they had hair as the hair of women;  
and their teeth were as lions:*

9 *And they had breastplates as breastplates  
of iron, and the noise of their wings  
were as the noise of chariots  
and many horses running to battle.*

10 *And they had tails like to  
scorpions, and there were stings in  
their tails; and their power was to  
hurt men five months. And they had  
over them*

11 *A king, the angel of the bottomless  
pit; whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon,  
and in Greek Apollyon; in Latin  
Exterminans.*

12 *One woe is past, and behold there  
come yet two woes more hereafter.*

**T**hese verses describe an angel blowing the fifth trumpet. When the trumpet sounds, John sees a star fall from heaven onto the earth. The star has a key to the bottomless pit and uses it to open the pit. Smoke issues from the pit, enough to darken the sky, and a swarm of locusts come out. They have stings like scorpions. They are told to sting people who are not marked with God's seal. They are not to kill these people. They are only to torment them for five months.

Many authors try to find a line-by-line interpretation of these eleven verses. Most of them compare the locusts to fallen angels that tempt humans to sin. These fallen angels had been confined to the bowels of the earth; now they are released. They will flood humans with a new wave of

diabolical inspirations. Humans who do not recognize God's ways will not know how to choose. This new wave of temptation is permitted both as a punishment and as a means to make more obvious to humans the folly of abandoning God's ways.

Some authors have tried to identify more concretely this plague of locusts. The loosening of the restraints God placed upon the fallen angels is still proposed. But different authors have tried to identify a particular event and some particular person as the trigger that released the locusts.

A commentary popular in Catholic circles cites the events of the Reformation as the unleashing. Martin Luther is cited as the trigger. Father Herman B. Kramer argues this in *The Book of Destiny* (see Bibliography).

A commentary, popular with Protestant Evangelicals, places all these events in the future, just after the proposed rapture of the Church. Hal Lindsey popularized this approach in: *There's a New World Coming*, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and other titles. Both approaches assume that The Apocalypse predicts events in the far future (from John).

The events I describe as the fulfillment of the four winds and three woes occurred approximately forty years after John the Baptist predicted them. A short-term fulfillment seems to me more believable than one projected fifteen to nineteen centuries later. Judea was the nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through whom the Messiah was promised. The Judeans were supposed to recognize and accept the Messiah, but many did not. It seems logical that those who did not accept the Messiah would experience the disasters the Baptist predicted.

When John the Evangelist penned the final wording of The Apocalypse (in A.D. 96), some disasters I described had already taken place. John saw them. Perhaps he incorporated the Baptist's visions into the final text to warn

our Gentile nations that we will face similar disasters (if we are not prepared when Christ comes the second time) as Judea faced (unprepared) when Christ came the first time.

A star falls from heaven upon the earth. The high destiny inherited by Judea, a destiny to recognize the promised one and focus on heaven, on what God can do, descends toward earth, attracted to what humans can do. This subverted destiny then draws upon lower forces. As a result, the powers of hell are unleashed. Those Judeans not recognizing Christ did not understand how God could will anything less than political independence of the chosen people. So they strove to be independent.

This political desire to be free nurtured some human--centered ambitions that were plainly against God's Laws. Ambitious Judeans vied with each other for leadership. They justified any means expedient to attain their goals: betrayal of friends, terror tactics, assassinations, and open rebellion. Like a plague, they preyed upon their fellow Judeans, motivated not by lofty ideals of God, but by what is base and ignoble, from what is dredged from deep within the psyche of fallen humanity: hatred, rivalry, pride, selfishness, cruelty. The very sins devils tempt people to commit.

These ambitious Judeans draw their power from the uncommitted. If they win popular support, they can direct the nation. The uncommitted Judeans, those who do not know what to believe, are caught between the Messiah's call and the lure of the world. If they support those opposed to the Messiah, they are headed for disaster. Let us see if historical events bear this out.

The year is A.D. 66, autumn. Thousands of Judean refugees flee toward Jerusalem. They come from Galilee and other areas attacked by Vespasian. I wonder what the weather was like on that autumn day. I wonder if the refugees anticipated more than the onset of winter as they

made their way. Was an eagle in the sky? Did it cry at them as they passed? If so, did they remember the words of the eagle in John's vision as they trudged on? The eagle in John's vision cried: "*Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth . . .*" (Apoc. 8:13).

These people seek refuge in Jerusalem. They will add their sorrows to a city overwhelmed with sorrow. They will bring with them, also, a new political awareness. It will sweep through the Zealot party shifting the party's goals. New leaders will vie for control. Two contenders are Eleazar, son of Simon, and John of Gischala. John previously had opposed Josephus for control of Galilee.

The Zealots are not the only ones interested in controlling the city. The Sicarri are powerful in both Jerusalem and at Masada. The Sicarri in Jerusalem are led by Judas the Galilean; the Sicarri at Masada, by Eleazar ben Jairi.

There is also a peace movement by the Judean middle class. The leader is Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, a Pharisee priest. He will later escape Jerusalem and set up a rabbinical school at Yabneh (Grayzel, p. 195). There he will preserve the Judean heritage for future generations. But the strongest political group is the Zealots. They seized control of the central government, which collapsed under the influx of refugees. Then they tried to depose Ananus, the High Priest and de-facto head of government. Then they start a reign of terror to neutralize all influence of the fallen government:

*There were, besides these, other robbers that came out of the country, and came into the city, and joining to them those that were worse than themselves, omitted no kind of barbarity; for they did not measure their courage by their rapines and plundering only, but proceeded as far as murdering men; and this not in night-time or*

*privately, or with regard to ordinary men, but they did it openly in the daytime, and began with the most eminent persons in the city; for the first man they meddled with was Antipas, one of the royal lineage, and the most potent man in the whole city. . . . This caused a terrible consternation among the people; and every one contended himself with taking care of his own safety, as they would do if the city had been taken in war.*

(WARS IV, III 4) (Josephus, II, pp. 335-6).

To justify replacing Ananus, the Zealots said that the High Priest be chosen by drawing lots. The lot fell to an unsuspecting priest, unconnected to families with prior High Priests. The Zealots easily made him their pawn.

As the coming disaster took shape, charismatics warned the Christians to leave the city and go to Perea (Jordan). This was early in A.D. 68, January through March.

Knowing the Zealots would abuse their control of the High Priest, Ananus urged the people to help him regain his position. While he spoke, the Zealots attacked him and his listeners. His enraged listeners then attacked the Zealots. After a bloody street battle, the Zealots were beaten. They sought safety in the Temple's inner courts, surrounded by strong, high walls, so the Zealots could easily defend themselves. They could even withstand a siege because of ample grain supplies and water in underground cisterns.

John of Gischala then asked Ananus to call a truce so he could talk the Zealots into surrender. When Ananus sent him, John told the Zealots that Ananus planned to surrender to Rome. He urged the Zealots to ask the Idumeans to help depose Ananus before the Romans come. This appealed to the Zealots.

The Idumeans sent a twenty-thousand-man army. Ananus refused to let them enter Jerusalem. That night, some Zealots snuck out of the Temple and secretly opened the gates. The Idumeans resented having been denied entry into the holy city of their common faith (the Idumeans had recently been converted to Judaism). They pillaged the city and killed Ananus and 8,500 of his supporters.

*But the rage of the Idumeans was not satiated by these slaughters; but they now betook themselves to the city, and plundered every house, and slew everyone they met: and for the multitude they esteemed it needless to go on killing them, but they sought for the high priests, and the general-ity went with the greatest zeal against them: and as soon as they caught them they slew them. . . . I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall and the ruin of her affairs. . . . And I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction as a polluted city, and resolved to purge his sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these their great defenders and well wishers. . . . Now after these were slain, the Zealots and the multitude of the Idumeans fell upon the people as upon a flock of profane animals, and cut their throats; and for the ordinary sort, they were destroyed in what place soever they caught them. . . . Those whom they caught in the daytime were slain in the night, and then their bodies were carried out and thrown away, that there might be room for other prisoners; and the terror that was upon the people was so great, that no one had courage*

*enough either openly to weep for the dead man  
that was related to him, or to bury him. . . .*

(WARS IV, V, 2-3) (Josephus, II, pp. 347-8).

Pleased with the victory, the Zealots accepted John of Gischala into the ruling circle. By spring of 68, Gischala dominated the party. By spring also, the Idumeans, ashamed of the misery they caused, left the city. When they did, the Zealots imposed a new reign of terror:

*. . . After which these Idumeans retired from  
Jerusalem, and went home . . . while the Zealots  
grew more insolent, not as deserted by their  
confederates, but as freed from such men as  
might hinder their designs, and put some stop to  
their wickedness. Accordingly, they made no  
longer any delay, nor took any deliberation in  
their enormous practices, but made use of the  
shortest methods for all their executions; and  
what they had once resolved upon, they put into  
practice sooner than anyone could imagine. But  
their thirst was chiefly after the blood of valiant  
men, and men of good families; the one sort of  
which they destroyed out of envy, the other out of  
fear; for they thought their whole security lay in  
leaving no potent man alive.*

(V, VI, 1) (Josephus, II, p. 350).

While the Zealots were strengthening their hold on Jerusalem, Nero was weakening his hold on Rome. Sickened by Nero's abuse of power, the Roman Senate finally deposed him. They sent loyal troops to arrest him. They planned to execute Nero by the "old method"; that is, order soldiers to hang him by the head from a forked branch and beat him to death. Nero fled, but was tracked down. As



the soldiers entered his hiding place on June 9, 68, he committed suicide.

After his death, the senate could not pull the rival factions together. The Empire began to break apart. Three Generals within a year boasted that they were Emperor. Rival generals defeated them. Vespasian halted his attack in Judea and waited for Rome to stabilize.

Taking advantage of this lull, Simon bar Giora led his men to conquer the towns and villages around Jerusalem. This destroyed Zealot power outside Jerusalem. We now have Simon bar Giora master of Judea and the Zealots master of Jerusalem. Not happy with this, the Zealots sent out an army to destroy Simon. Simon defeated the soldiers and made them retreat to Jerusalem.

If Simon felt strong enough, he would have attacked Jerusalem. He chose, instead, to attack the Idumeans. Aided by treachery of Idumean traitors, he and his army fought their way into Idumaea.

His success alarmed the Zealots. They kidnaped Simon's wife to hold as hostage. Simon then withdrew from Idumaea and besieged Jerusalem. He killed or maimed every Judean his army captured. He tortured some, cut off their hands, and sent them back to warn the Zealots that he would do the same to all his enemies if anything happened to his wife.

Frightened by this, the Zealots released their hostage. Simon then left and continued his conquest of Idumaea, causing many Idumean refugees to flee to Jerusalem. When he conquered Idumaea, he came back and again besieged Jerusalem.

The Judeans are in a terrible situation now. They hated the Romans. They feared Simon. But even more than Simon, they feared the Zealots:

*Now this Simon, who was without the wall, was a*

*greater terror to the people than the Romans themselves, as were the Zealots who were within it more heavy upon them than both of the others; and during this time did the mischievous contrivances and courage [of John] corrupt the body of the Galileans; for these Galileans had advanced this John and made him very potent . . .*  
 . . . (WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362).

John had been supported in his bid for power by the Zealots and now, seemingly in gratitude for their support, he allowed them to do anything they wished:

*. . . for he permitted them to do all things that any of them desired to do, while their inclination to plunder was insatiable, as was their zeal in searching the houses of the rich; and for the murdering of men and abusing of the women, it was sport to them.*

WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362).

*They also . . . indulged themselves in feminine wantonness, without any disturbance, till they were satiated therewith; while they decked their hair, and put on woman's garments, and were besmeared over with ointments; and, that they might appear very comely, they had paints under their eyes, and imitated not only the ornaments, but also the lusts of women, and were guilty of such intolerable uncleanness, that they invented unlawful pleasures of that sort; and thus did they roll themselves up and down the city, as in a brothel house, and defiled it entirely with their impure actions; nay, while their faces looked like the faces of women, they killed with their right*

*hands; and when their gait was effeminate, they presently attacked men and became warriors, and drew their swords from under their finely-dyed cloaks, and ran everybody through whom they alighted upon. However Simon waited for such as ran away from John, and was the more bloody of the two: and he who had escaped the tyrant within the wall, was destroyed by the other that lay before the gates; so that all attempts of flying and deserting to the Romans were cut off as to those who had a mind to do so.*

(WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362).

Some Zealots then tried to oust Gischala. The Judean masses joined in and so did the Idumean refugees. John's men retreated again into the Temple where, because of its impregnable construction, there was again a stand off.

Looking for new allies, the Judean people invited Simon bar Giora to help. So in April of 69, Simon and his men entered Jerusalem. But he also was unable to penetrate the Temple. Simon then tried to control the city. When the people resisted, Simon defeated them and ruled by force. He became an even worse tyrant than John of Gischala.

Later, within the Temple walls, another mutiny erupted against John of Gischala. This mutiny was led by Eleazar ben Simon. His men seized the Temple's inner courts. This is the first time that the inner courts have been occupied by any of the combatants. For a while, this three-sided battle raged around the Temple: the mutineers in the inner courts, John of Gischala's forces in the rest of the Temple complex, and Simon bar Giora's forces surrounding the Temple.

On April 15 in the year 69, General Vitellius took control of the Roman government. He was the third successor of Nero within a year. His unpopularity caused a

civil war. A few months later, the armies of the east asked Vespasian to rule. Vespasian agreed but felt he should finish the conquest of Judea. On June 5, he resumed the offensive and easily re-conquered all of Judea except Jerusalem and the three fortifications of Herodion, Machaerus, and Masada. Herodion was ten miles south of Jerusalem near Bethlehem. Machaerus, where John the Baptist was beheaded, was forty miles east of Jerusalem in the mountains of Perea on the other side of the Dead Sea. Masada was a mountain fortress on the west side of the Dead Sea, about forty miles south of Jerusalem.

On July 3, Vespasian accepted the army's offer. He left his son, Titus, to finish the war while he restored order in Rome. He will be crowned Emperor on December 20, A.D. 69.

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, during summer and early fall, the forces of Gischala and Bar Giora continued fighting. The fighting caused the city terrible misery. In their mad assaults against each other, these two rival factions burnt and destroyed all the stored grain in the city. Before summer was over, both sides had run out of food. By early fall, the city faced starvation.

*. . . he [Gischala] sallied out with a great number upon Simon and his party; and this he did always in such parts of the city as he could come at, till he set on fire those houses that were full of corn\*, and of all other provisions. The same thing was done by Simon, when, upon the other's retreat, he attacked the city also: as if they had on purpose done it to serve the Romans, by destroying what the city had laid up against the siege, and by thus cutting off the nerves of their own power. Accordingly, it so came to pass, that all the places that were about the temple were*

*burnt down, and were become an intermediate desert space, ready for fighting on both sides of it; and that almost all that corn was burnt, which would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. So they were taken by the means of famine, which it was impossible they should have been unless they had thus prepared the way for it by this procedure.*

*\*This destruction of such a vast quantity of corn and other provisions, as was sufficient for many years, was the direct occasion of that terrible famine which consumed incredible numbers of Jews in Jerusalem during its siege. [Whiston's footnote] (WARS V, I, 4) (Josephus, II, p. 372).*

Think about what the unbelieving Judeans have done. They are at war with the most powerful empire on earth. They had small chance of victory at best. Now they have no chance. With unimaginable madness, those who seek power fought a civil war in their capital while their common enemy conquered the rest of their country. The uncommitted Judeans must have been horrified to witness the destruction of their resources, even their stored grain.

This is reminiscent of what Moses long ago said about the blessings God would bestow upon these people if they remain faithful and the curses God would bring against them if they became unfaithful:

*If you walk contrary to me, and will not harken to me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you for your sins: And I will send in upon you the beasts of the field, to destroy you and your cattle, and make you few in number, and*

*that your highways may be desolate. And even so if you will not amend, but will walk contrary to me: I will also walk contrary to you, and will strike you seven times for your sins. And I will bring in upon you the sword that shall avenge my covenant. And when you shall flee into the cities, I will send the pestilence in the midst of you, and you shall be delivered into the hands of your enemies, after I shall have broken the staff of your bread: so that ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and give it out by weight: and you shall eat, and you shall not be filled. But if you will not for all this harken to me, but will walk against me: I will also go against you with opposite fury, and I will chastise you with seven plagues for your sins, So that you shall eat the flesh of your sons and of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, and break your idols. You shall fall among the ruins of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. Insomuch that I will bring your cities to be a wilderness, and I will make your sanctuaries desolate, and will receive no more your sweet odours. And I will destroy your land, and your enemies shall be astonished at it, when they shall be the inhabitants thereof. And I will scatter you among the Gentiles, and I will draw out the sword after you, and your land shall be desert, and your cities destroyed.*

(Lev. 26:21-33)

Their leaders acted like locusts and stripped all of them of everything they needed to withstand their common enemy. Bad as the power struggle was, however, it did not kill the nation. It only tormented the nation and wasted its resources--just like a plague of locusts.

Now a worse woe faces the Judeans. The Romans are revamping their forces, calling for more troops, and planning a final assault with the sole objective of total surrender or total defeat. This will be a worse disaster for the Judeans than the one they just experienced. This woe, the second woe, will destroy their independence. Worst of all, it will destroy the Temple.

<< end of chap six >>



## Chapter 7

### The Second Woe: War With Rome

#### APOCALYPSE 9:13-19

- 13 *And the sixth angel sounded the trumpet: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before the eyes of God,*
- 14 *Saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet: Loose the four angels, who are bound in the great river Euphrates.*
- 15 *And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year: for to kill the third part of men.*
- 16 *And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. And I heard the number of them.*
- 17 *And thus I saw the horses in the vision: and they that sat on them, had breastplates of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions: and from their mouths proceeded fire, and smoke and brimstone.*
- 18 *And by these three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*
- 19 *For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. For, their*

*tails are like to serpents, and have heads: and with them they hurt.*

These verses describe an angel blowing the fifth trumpet. A voice tells the angel to free four other angels who are bound at the Euphrates river. Those angels gather an army of 200,000,000 soldiers who kill one-third of humanity.

As with the locusts, many authors have tried to find a line-by-line interpretation of these verses. Some authors compare this army to the followers of Communism. Others point to a future army that the antichrist will lead against Jesus Christ when Christ returns to establish the millennial kingdom.

This vision is symbolic, so I am not going to look for a literal fulfillment of it. I will instead look for a historical event involving an army and a disastrous defeat. So far, I have found that the Apocalypse is more relevant to first and second-century Judea than it is to our twentieth-first-century Gentile nations.

I did not have to look far for a logical fulfillment in the first century. The army coming up against the unbelievers is, I believe, the reorganized army under Titus.

When Vespasian put Titus in charge, Titus took steps to insure that he could not fail. Six months, he spent, reorganizing his army. Adding to the three legions that had been under the command of his father: the fifth, the tenth, and the fifteenth, Titus summoned the twelfth legion from Syria. This is the same legion the Judeans defeated when the rebellion started. One can wonder about the legionaries' sentiments as they came in for the kill. Titus also requested troops from the confederate Kings of the East who were allied with Rome. From these sources, he organized a sixty-thousand man army.

The combined forces of Simon bar Giora and John of

Gischala counted 23,400 fighting men. These fighting men controlled a total population of several hundred thousand, all crowded within the city's walls.

By spring of 70, Titus was ready. By April, he and his army reached Jerusalem. Seeing the Romans setting up camp, Bar Giora and Gischala quit fighting each other. They sent men to raid the closest camp. The Romans retreated at first; but, when reinforcements arrived from their other camps, they forced the Judeans to retreat. Confined again within the city, the Judeans resumed their civil war.

It is now Passover. Instinctively the Judeans stopped their civil war so they could celebrate Passover. Pious people carry wood to the Temple in a traditional ceremony to restock the Temple's supply for the sacrificial fire. Eleazar ben Simon's men, barricaded in the inner courts allowed the pilgrims to enter. John of Gischala noticed this. He sent some of his men disguised as pilgrims. Once enough of them slipped in, they overpowered Eleazar's men. This occurred on April 14.

Titus by now is ready to attack the city. High walls surround the city, and another, interior set of high walls surround the Temple. The walls to the south and the east are on the crests of steep valleys that run along the city's southern and eastern edge. It would be suicidal to send an army up from the valley to scale the walls.

The walls to the north and west are on ground that slopes down toward the city. There is ample room for battering rams and siege equipment. The downward slope makes it easier to shoot arrows and boulders down into the city.

Titus chose the western wall. His men cleared an area and built level ramps that went straight to the wall. These provided level surfaces upon which to roll their heavy war machines. They planned to use their battering ram to knock

down the wall, their catapults to hurl boulders into the city, and their siege towers to provide high platforms for archers to shoot down into the city.

They finished the work in late April. When the Judeans heard the battering ram pounding the wall, they finally stopped their civil war and, for the first time, planned a joint offensive against the Romans. They thought a sneak attack might take the Romans by surprise. A group of Judeans opened a gate and ran out. They shouted to the Romans not to fire. They said they were tired of civil war and wanted to surrender. Other Judeans on top the wall flung rocks and arrows at them. The Romans rushed to help the victims. On signal from the leader, all Judeans turned on the Romans and killed many of them.

The Judeans then withdrew into the city and began to reinforce a second, older wall, which was about a quarter mile behind the first wall. The Romans broke through the first wall on May 7 and captured part of the city after heavy fighting. Five more days of pounding opened the second wall, and more of the city fell into Roman hands. A third wall protected the oldest sections of the city and still another wall protected the Temple.

The Fortress Antonia also protected the Temple. The fortress was an enlargement of the northwest corner of the Temple wall. Entering it, one could pass through the wall into the Temple courtyard. Titus decided to storm Antonia and, simultaneously, knock an opening in the wall some distance south from Antonia. His men built new ramps to provide a level approach for his equipment: two against Antonia, two against the wall.

While the men worked, Josephus urged the Judeans to surrender. He told them how in the past God had always defended them when they were obedient and let them be punished by their enemies when they were disobedient:

*Thus it appears, that arms were never given to our nation, but that we are always given up to be fought against and to be taken; for I suppose that such as inhabit this holy place ought to commit the disposal of all things to God, and then only to disregard the assistance of men, when they resign themselves up to their arbitrator who is above. As for you, what have you done of those things that are recommended by our legislator? and what have you not done of those things that he hath condemned? How much more impious are you than those which were so quickly taken! You have not avoided so much as those sins that are usually done in secret; I mean thefts and treacherous plots against men, and adulteries. You are quarrelling about rapines and murders, and invent strange ways of wickedness. Nay, the temple itself is become the receptacle of all, and this divine place is polluted by the hands of those of our own country; which place hath yet been revered by the Romans, when it was at a distance from them, when they have suffered many of their own customs to give place to our law. And, after all this, do you expect him whom you have so impiously abused to be your supporter?*

(WARS V, IX, 4) (Josephus, II, p. 398).

The revolutionaries (the seditious as Josephus calls them) refused to listen, but many other Judeans wanted to surrender:

*As Josephus was speaking thus with a loud voice, the seditious would neither yield to what he said, nor did they deem it safe for them to*

*alter their conduct; but as for the people, they had a great inclination to desert to the Romans: accordingly, some of them sold what they had, and even the most precious things that had been laid up as treasures by them, for a very small matter, and swallowed down pieces of gold, that they might not be found out by the robbers; and when they had escaped to the Romans, went to stool, and had wherewithal to provide plentifully for themselves: for Titus let a great number of them go into the country, whither they pleased. And the main reasons why they were so ready to desert were these, that now they should be freed from those miseries which they had endured in that city, and yet should not be in slavery to the Romans: however, John and Simon, with their factions, did more carefully watch these men's going out, than they did the coming in of the Romans; and, if anyone did but afford the least shadow of suspicion of such an intention, his throat was cut immediately.*

(WARS V, X, 1) (Josephus, II, pp. 399-400).

The starving people, crazed with hunger, stalked each other like animals searching for hidden food:

*Some of the revolutionaries were the most brutal of all in their quest for food: They also invented terrible methods of torments, to discover where any food was, and they were these: to stop up the passages of the privy parts of the miserable wretches, and to drive sharp stakes up their fundaments; and a man was forced to bear what was terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread, or that*

*he might discover a handful of barley-meal that was concealed; and this was done when these tormenters were not themselves hungry; for the thing had been less barbarous had necessity forced them to it; but this was done to keep their madness in exercise, and as making preparations of provisions for themselves for the following days.*

(WARS V, X, 3) (Josephus, II, pp. 400-1).

Realizing the Judeans were not going to surrender, Titus ordered all new captives crucified in front of the wall. He hoped this would terrify the Judeans into surrender:

*He [Titus] then sent a party of horsemen, and ordered they should lay ambushes for those that went out into the valley to gather food. Some of these were indeed fighting men, who were not contented with what they got by rapine; but the greater part of them were poor people, who were deterred from deserting by the concern they were under for their own relations; for they could not hope to escape away, together with their wives and children, without the knowledge of the seditious; . . . the severity of the famine made them bold in thus going out: so nothing remained but that when they were concealed from the robbers, they should be taken by the enemy; and when they were going to be taken, they were forced to defend themselves, . . . [and] after they had fought, they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy: so they were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city.*

(WARS V, XI, 1) (Josephus, II, p. 402).

John of Gischala sent some of his men to dig tunnels under the ramps by Antonia and shore up the tunnels with wooden pillars and beams. On May 29, when the Roman equipment was on the ramps, John's men set the wooden supports on fire. The tunnels collapsed. The fire spread to the equipment, and destroyed all of it. Two days later Simon bar Giora sent his men to torch the Roman equipment on the other ramps south of Antonia.

Titus' hope for a quick victory was gone. He ordered a siege wall around the city to prevent access to any kind of food. The Judeans had been foraging for food at night, especially along the southern and eastern valleys.

With the siege wall completed--it was five miles long and circled the entire city--Titus concentrated on Antonia. His men built new ramps and new war machines. This took twenty-one days. The logs for rebuilding were hauled nine miles. All nearby lumber had been used or destroyed during the war.

During this construction, the people within the city suffered terribly. Most were sick; many were dying. Those who had strength fought for whatever food they could find. Those who could, snuck out of the city to surrender, even climbing over the siege wall:

*So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; . . . As for burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it; and those that were hearty and well were deterred from doing it by the great multitude of those dead bodies, . . . Nor was there any lamentation*



*made under these calamities, nor were heard any mournful complaints; . . . A deep silence also, and a kind of deadly night, had seized upon the city; while yet the robbers were still more terrible than these miseries were themselves; for they brake open those houses . . . and plundered them of what they had; and . . . went out laughing, and tried the points of their swords on the dead bodies; and in order to prove what mettle they were made of, they thrust some of those through that still lay alive upon the ground . . . Now every one of these died with their eyes fixed upon the temple, and left the seditious alive behind them. Now the seditious at first gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, as not enduring the stench of the dead bodies. But afterwards, when they could not do that, they had them cast down from the walls into the valleys beneath.*

(WARS V, XII, 3) (Josephus, II, pp. 406-7).

Somehow the Romans found out that rich Judeans swallow their gold and jewels before they left the city. Just when these Judeans thought they had escaped the miseries of the city, they wound up butchered by Roman soldiers in search of gold:

*Yet did another plague seize upon those that were thus preserved; for there was found among the Syrian deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews' bellies; for the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold, as we told you before, when they came out; and for these did the seditious search them all; for there was a*

*great quantity of gold in the city, insomuch that as much was now sold (in the Roman camp) for twelve Attic (drams) was sold before for twenty-five. But when this contrivance was discovered in one instance, the fame of it filled their several camps, that the deserters came to them filled with gold. So the multitude of the Arabians, with the Syrians, cut up those that came out as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night's time about two thousand of these deserters were thus dissected.*

(WARS V, XIII, 4) (Josephus, II, p. 409).

Antonia fell on July 1. Two weeks later, amid fierce counterattacks, the Romans demolished it. The Judeans no longer had sufficient able-bodied men to maintain the daily sacrifice. When Josephus heard that the sacrifice had ceased, he again encouraged surrender. He pleaded with John of Gischala who was watching him from the wall. When John refused to surrender, Josephus blamed him for bringing misery to Jerusalem:

*But still, John, it is never dishonorable to repent, and amend what hath been done amiss, even at the last extremity. Thou hast an instance before thee in Jechoniah, the king of the Jews, if thou hast a mind to save the city, who, when the king of Babylon made war against him, did, of his own accord, go out of this city before it was taken, and did undergo a voluntary captivity, with his family, that the sanctuary might not be delivered up to the enemy, and that he might not see the house of God set on fire; on which*

*account he is celebrated among all the Jews in their sacred memorials, and his memory is become immortal, and will be conveyed fresh down to our posterity through all ages. This John is an excellent example in such time of danger; and I dare venture to promise that the Romans shall still forgive thee . . . .. As Josephus spake these words, with groans and tears in his eyes, his voice was intercepted by sobs. However, the Romans could not but pity the affliction he was under, and wonder at his conduct. But for John and those that were with him, they were but the more exasperated against the Romans on this account, and were desirous to get Josephus also into their power . . .*

(WARS VI, II, 1-2) (Josephus, II, p. 418).

Titus next chose to attack the Zealots within the Temple. There were huge wooden doors in the Temple wall next to the ruins of Antonia. The Romans built two ramps leveling out the approach to the doors. For a second front, they built two additional ramps leading to the wall some distance from Antonia. So many trees had already been felled that the Romans had to travel eleven miles to find lumber.

While the Romans built the ramps, Jerusalem remained under siege. Terrible tales of woe came out of the city:

*Now of those that perished by famine in the city the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did any where appear, a war commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell a fighting one with another*

*about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food, but the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest any one should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying: nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew everything, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they, at length, abstain from girdles and shoes, and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some, and some gathered up fibres, [of hay] and sold a very small weight of them for four Attic . . . .*

(WARS, VI, III, 3) (Josephus, II, p. 424).

One woman, a daughter of the wealthy Nakdinion ben Gorion, ate barley grains out of horse manure. Another woman killed her infant son, roasted him, and ate him:

*There was a certain woman . . . eminent for her family and her wealth, . . . [when] . . . it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food . . . . attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said--'Oh thou*

*miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? . . . . Come on: be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a byword to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.' As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one-half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed . . .*

(Wars VI, III, 4) (Josephus, II, pp. 424-5).

These horrifying tales shock a person into recognizing the magnitude of the tragedy that has come upon the city. Even battle-hardened Roman soldiers were horrified by them. But Moses predicted exactly such a tragedy when he warned Israel, more than a thousand years earlier, the curses that would come upon their descendants who do not serve the Lord their God:

*But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep and do all his commandments and ceremonies, which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . . . The Lord will bring upon thee a nation from afar, and from the uttermost ends of the earth, like an eagle that flyeth swiftly, whose tongue thou canst not understand. A most insolent nation, that will show no regard to the ancients, nor have pity on the infant. And will devour the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruits of thy land: until thou be destroyed, and will leave thee no wheat, nor wine, nor oil, nor herds of oxen, nor flocks of sheep: until he destroy thee. And consume thee in all thy cities, and thy strong and high walls be brought down, wherein thou*

*trusted in all thy land. Thou shall be besieged within thy gates in all thy land which the Lord thy God will give thee: And thou shall eat the fruit of thy womb, and the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, in the distress and extremity wherewith thy enemy shall oppress thee.*

(Deut. 28:15-53)

With the ramps completed, the Romans moved in their battering ram. The doors proved too heavy to be knocked down, so on August 8, the Romans stacked wood against the doors and set them ablaze. The fire burned all night. It spread to the roofs of structures within the Temple complex. The next morning, August 9, the same date the Temple fell to the Babylonians, the Romans burst through the smoldering doors and stormed the Temple courtyard (Josephus, II, pp. 426-7).

During the battle, some Romans torched the Temple. Titus had given prior orders not to harm the Temple. When Titus saw it burning, he tried in vain to quench the fire. Meanwhile, other Romans, seeing the Temple ablaze, torched everything in sight. The whole Temple complex, with all its buildings, lay in ruins. Everything that could burn perished in the fire: the wood interiors, the Temple curtains, the candles, the wood brought in for the fire, the scrolls, everything. Except, while the fire was spreading, the Romans looted whatever valuables they could carry away. Besides the gold and silver utensils and the Temple treasury, they took the master copies of the Torah scrolls. These were later presented to Vespasian at his palace in Rome.

During their looting, the Romans slaughtered every Judean that fell into their hands:

*And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places, as also the remains of the cloisters and the gates, two excepted; the one on the east side and the other on the south; both which, however, they burnt afterward. They also burnt down the treasury-chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there reposed; and, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together, while the rich people had there built themselves chambers (to contain such furniture). The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters that were in the outer (court of the) temple, whither the women and the children, and a great mixed multitude of the people, fled, in number about six thousand. But before Caesar had determined anything about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them, the soldiers were in such a rage, that they set that cloister on fire; by which means it came to pass, that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of these escape with his life. . . . (WARS VI, V, 2) (Josephus, II, p. 430).*

The Romans then attacked the lower section of the old city. This part of the city lay on the south slope of Mt. Moriah and on the summit of Mt. Ophel. Mt. Ophel was seventy-five feet lower than Mt. Moriah. After four weeks of heavy fighting, the Romans captured the lower section. It fell on September 8. Those who survived fled to the upper

section and barricaded themselves inside King Herod's heavily-walled palace. This upper section of the city lay west of the lower section and on top of Mt. Zion. The tops of these mountains are not high compared to the lowest valleys in Jerusalem; they are more like hills, but the mountain range itself is several-thousand feet higher than the surrounding plains.

Jerusalem lies on the upper levels of the mountain range. The summits of the two main mountains are half-a-mile from each other. The area of each summit is not much larger than several city blocks. The summit of Mt. Zion is about two hundred and seventy-five feet higher than Mt. Ophel in the city's lower section. Because of this uphill climb, the Romans decided not to attack Mt. Zion from the lower city.

Titus, therefore, moved his troops to the opposite side of Mt. Zion where they could attack from level ground. They attacked the wall at a point next to Herod's palace. They broke through and stormed the palace on September 26. Simon bar Giora and some of his men escaped into ancient tunnels under the city, but John of Gischala was captured. John asked the Romans for mercy, so Titus sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Meanwhile, Simon and his men vainly tried to find an underground passage that led away from the city. They even dug tunnels of their own. The best they could do was wend their way underground from Herod's palace to the Temple on Mt. Moriah. Not many days later, before the startled eyes of Roman guards, Simon emerged through the Temple ruins. The guards arrested him. The rest of his men surrendered as they came out of the tunnels.

The Roman army then demolished every building in Jerusalem except a few saved to house a small occupying force. According to Josephus, 97,000 Judeans were captured and 1,100,000 died during the four years of war



(Josephus, II, p. 440). The Romans crucified some on the spot as a warning against future rebellions. They set other prisoners aside to be executed in the sports arena in combat with wild animals or in gladiatorial contests. They executed some prisoners this way during the trip back to Rome.

Titus held a victory celebration in Caesarea early in October. He held two more to honor his brother, Domitian, and his father, Vespasian on October 24 and November 17. During these three celebrations, gladiators killed prisoners in combat contests. Most of the prisoners, however, were sold into slavery.

Sometime in A.D. 71, Titus led a "triumph," a formal procession of his army past cheering crowds in Rome. The soldiers wore their best uniforms. They held the loot from the Temple high over their heads so all could see it. They marched their prisoners so the people of Rome could see them also.

Complying with a long-established tradition, Simon bar Giora, the conquered chieftain, walked past the spectators with his hands tied and a noose around his neck. When the procession reached Jupiter's temple, it halted and, according to custom, Simon, while being whipped, was pulled by the noose to a nearby traditional spot where he was strangled. The crowd applauded his death while Jupiter was honored with sacrifices. The procession then continued its triumphant march past the Emperor.

Over the next two years (71 and 72), the Romans crushed the last Judean resistance at Herodion and Machaerus. Eleazar ben Jairi and his 960 followers held out for another year at Masada. Faced with certain defeat, they all committed suicide. A few aftershocks of resistance by Judeans rocked Alexandria and Cyrene and a few other large cities in the Empire, but, by A.D. 79, the rebellion had ended.

APOCALYPSE 9:20-21

- 20 *And the rest of the men, who were not slain by these plagues, did not do penance from the works of their hands, that they should not adore devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*
- 21 *Neither did they penance from their murders, nor from their sorceries, nor from their fornication, nor from their thefts.*

The Judean defeat was disastrous. Hundreds of thousands perished. But the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple did not destroy the Judean nation. It still remained, ruled by Rome through a procurator, but still a recognizable ethnic community that was predominantly Judean. It will still practice many of its own traditional civic and religious customs. It will still, for example, carry on with the priestly offices it exercised before the war. In spite of the casualties during the civic disorders (first woe) and during the war with Rome (second woe), Judea survived.

The Judeans got into trouble in the first place because, when God's works were performed in their midst, too many Judeans failed to recognize them. The unbelievers had their own ideas of what God's works ought to have been, ideas that were really the works of their own hands, what they expected and what they wanted. They convinced the uncommitted to follow them rather than the apostles.

Even though biblical prophecies were fulfilled in front of their eyes, the unbelievers were not moved to change their ways or to repent and embrace the way ordained by

God. Instead, they continued recruiting the uncommitted, promising them the political and military triumph of their nation. And they opposed everything that led away from that triumph.

APOCALYPSE 10:1-7

- 1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.*
- 2 *And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.*
- 3 *And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth. And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.*
- 4 *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me: Seal up the things which the seven thunders have spoken: and write them not.*
- 5 *And the angel, whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,*
- 6 *And he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things which are therein; and the earth, and the things which are in it; and the sea, and the things which are therein: that time shall be no longer.*

- 7 *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets.*

A mighty angel clothed with God's majesty, stands with one foot on land, the other on the sea. Later, two powerful beasts will rise, one from the land, the other from the sea. Both beasts will cause much trouble. This mighty angel is more powerful than both beasts. The angel stands with both their domains underfoot.

The angel shouts in a voice sounding like a lion's roar and is answered by seven thunders. John understands what the thunders say, but he is not allowed to record it. Then the angel, with right hand lifted to heaven, swears that there will be no more delay. When the seventh angel sounds the trumpet, the mysterious working of God shall be finished: *"as he hath declared by his servants, the prophets."*

The mystery declared to the prophets was the messianic kingdom of God's chosen one. Through that mystery, the entire world will be offered salvation. This messianic kingdom is exactly the kingdom foretold by John when he said: *"Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 3:2). It is the same kingdom described by Jesus when he told how it would arrive: *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you."* (Luke 17:20-1).

#### APOCALYPSE 10:8-11

- 8 *And I heard a voice from heaven again speaking to me, and saying: Go, and take the book that is open, from the hand of the angel who*

*standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.*

- 9 *And I went to the angel, saying unto him, that he should give me the book. And he said to me: Take the book, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey.*
- 10 *And I took the book from the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth, sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.*
- 11 *And he said to me: Thou must prophesy again to many nations, and peoples, and tongues, and kings.*

<< end of chap seven >>

## Chapter 8

### Glimpses of the Temple Site

#### APOCALYPSE 11:1

*I And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and it was said unto me: Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that adore therein.*

**A**t this point in the Apocalypse, John has been asked to measure the Temple and see who worships there. Judea has just suffered a terrible tribulation through the four winds and two of the three woes. I have shown that the four winds compare very well with historical events between the crucifixion of Christ and late A.D. 66, when Vespasian conquered all Judea except Jerusalem.

The Judeans trapped in Jerusalem suffered even more acutely during the first woe when their three-year civil war destroyed all the stored food in Jerusalem, stripping them of their sustenance, just like a plague of locusts would. Disaster came during the second woe when Titus reinforced the Roman army with local allies. In A.D. 70, he brutally conquered the starving people. His soldiers destroyed the Temple and most of Jerusalem.

There is still another woe coming, the third woe, which will extinguish Judea as an independent nation when Bar Kochba leads the Judeans to total defeat and exile. In the following chapters, I will provide more information about Bar Kochba and the war of A.D. 131-5 than any other

book interpreting the Apocalypse.

All of this is so harsh on Judea that I want to move some distance away and view Jerusalem through the eyes of history. Then you and I both can place these sad events into a wider perspective, a perspective that offers more hope to Judea than the four winds and three woes did.

Imagine that you are hovering above Jerusalem, high enough that you can see the whole city. Imagine your head pointed north, your feet south, and you are looking straight down on the city. Today is the morning after the birth of Jesus. The sun's first rays slowly creep from your right but have not yet swept across Jerusalem. The rays will, in a few moments, illuminate the Temple's front wall. Covered with gold leaf, this wall will shine almost as bright as the sun. Right now, nothing is illuminated. The Temple, the homes, the streets are all clothed in darkness, too dark to see any details. But in your imagination you can clearly see anything you want to look at.

You can see that there are several sets of walls enclosing the city. There is an outermost wall enclosing the whole city. Within it are more walls that divide the city into sections. On your upper right, in the extreme northeast corner of the city, stands one section. This is the Temple site. In the center of this section stands the Temple. In front of the Temple, facing away from you toward your right is the sacrificial altar and a large basin filled with water. The Temple, the altar, and the basin are surrounded by buildings and open spaces that divide this section into several sets of concentric, rectangular courts.

The innermost court contains the Temple, the altar, and the basin. It is called the Court of Priests. No one other than a priest can enter it. The Court of Priests connects on the eastern edge with the Court of Israel, so named because only the male descendants of Israel can enter it. Priests, incidentally, are the male descendants of Aaron, the brother



of Moses, both of whom descended from Levi, one of Israel's sons.

The Court of Israel opens into the Court of Women just east of it. The Court of Women got its name because all descendants of Israel, including women, can enter it. These inner courts are surrounded by a fence that opens into the largest court, the Court of Gentiles, so named because anybody, even Gentiles, can enter that court.

The walls surrounding the Court of Gentiles are lined with booths and shelters, all open on the side facing the Temple. They serve as gathering places for prayer or discussion. Vendors also use them, selling lambs and doves or changing foreign coin into Temple coin.

The Temple complex is large. It spans a quarter mile from north to south and one-seventh of a mile from east to west. It covers thirty-four acres, an area the size of eighteen football fields. The Temple itself is ninety feet long, thirty feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Attached to the eastern end is a larger front. The front is 115 feet wide by 165 feet high. The Temple stands almost in the center of the Temple complex between north and south, but much closer to the western edge than to the eastern edge.

The rest of the city is west and south of the Temple section. East of the city is the steep valley of Kidron; south is the Hinnom valley. If you look down toward your feet, you will see the Hinnom valley running east and west at the southern edge of the city. If you look to your right, you will see the Kidron valley running along the eastern edge. The valley looks like it continues northwards past the Temple site, but the Judeans gave this northern part a different name. It is not as steep as the Kidron. They call it the valley of Jehoshaphat. On the opposite side of this valley, directly on your right, is the Mount of Olives.

Jerusalem itself consists of two main parts, each part resting on a hill with another valley running north and south

between them. One part rests on a hill almost directly south of the Temple. This is the Lower City. King David made it his capital after he conquered the city from the Canaanites. Left of the Lower City, on a higher hill, is the Upper City. The buildings are not as old as those in the lower city.

There is still another walled section north of the Upper City. Its wall starts at the northwest corner of the city wall, and it travels northeast toward your upper right on a diagonal until it meets the north west corner of the Temple area wall. This encloses the city's newer section. There will be another wall built later (after Christ's death) that will enclose a future section of the city. The future wall will run across the entire northern edge of the city on a diagonal line roughly parallel to the northeast wall we just looked at but several hundred yards north of it. You can see that the city has already grown north of the present walls. The future wall will enclose all these structures north of the present wall. This future wall will be built in about fifty years. It will be the first wall that stops Titus and his army when he besieges Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Beyond the walls on the north and west are lands used for vegetable gardens and for temporary cottages when people want to get away from the crowded city. The city itself, within the walls, including the area that will be enclosed by the future wall, is about twelve times the area of the Temple complex.

The city rests on top of a mountain range. The lower section of the city is built on Mt. Ophel. The Temple rests on Mt. Moriah, seventy-five feet higher than the lower city. Neither mountain is high compared with the valleys. Moriah is only three hundred feet higher than the Kidron valley on its east side.

The entire city is on the higher elevations of a mountain range that is about thirty-seven hundred feet higher than the Dead Sea, which lies ten miles southeast in

the direction of your right foot. The upper city rests on Mt. Zion, two hundred feet higher than the Temple.

On the other side of the Kidron valley is the Mount of Olives. It is one hundred and fifty feet higher than Mt. Zion, three hundred and fifty feet higher than the Temple.

In Jerusalem, when Christ was born, God dwelt within the Temple, inside the Holy of Holies, on top of the place where the Arc of the Covenant would be, had the Israelites not lost possession of it. Ever since the days of Moses, God dwelt in a special way with this people. Sometimes God's presence was made visible as a cloud of smoke (Isaiah 6:1-4).

Even before the Temple was built, when the Israelites still used the Covenant Tent, God dwelt in a special way above the Tabernacle, or Arc, between the outstretched wings of two angels built on the Arc.

The Tent, just like the Temple, was divided into two chambers: the Holy of Holies, and the Holy Place. A curtained enclosure surrounded the tent and formed a courtyard, similar to the Court of Priests in the Temple below you. Within this courtyard were the altar and the basin of water.

Out of respect for God no one was allowed to enter the Holy Place except a priest and, as mentioned before, to be a priest was a hereditary matter: one had to be born a male descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Both Aaron and Moses were of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Israel. When God gave Moses the law, God told Moses to set aside the tribe of Levi. This tribe is to serve God by constructing and maintaining the Covenant Tent and its utensils, by recording and copying all sacred literature, and by assisting at religious services.

God also told Moses to set aside the descendants of his brother Aaron. They will be priests. No other Levite, not even a descendant of Moses, could be a priest.

When David consolidated his kingdom, he selected Mt. Moriah as the site for God's permanent house. His son, King Solomon, built it. In this house, the Temple, the Holy of Holies was treated with such reverence and awe that everyone, even priests, were forbidden to enter it. Only the High Priest, only once a year, was allowed to enter.

He asked God's pardon for his personal failures and also for the failures of his people. Miracles sometimes occurred when the High Priest sought God's forgiveness. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zachary (Zechariah in *The Good News Bible*) when he was High Priest and told him his son would precede the Messiah and would speak with the spirit and power of Elijah.

Imagine yourself closer now. It is almost sunrise the morning following Christ's birth. The Levite on morning watch just sighted the sun's first light illuminating the east behind the Mount of Olives. "It's becoming light!" he shouts down to the others, "The East is bright!"

Someone shouts, "Is the East bright as far as Hebron?" He looks to his right. "Yes!" he shouts back, "The light has risen."

Then the priests and Levites who were waiting for that moment begin the morning sacrifice.

As the lamb is sacrificed, the front of the Temple begins to glow with the reflected light of the rising sun. The Temple is the city's tallest structure. Part of its outer surface is plated with gold. It shines brilliantly, a symbol of those marked by the covenant, that they should reflect God's glory because their ways should reflect God's ways.

This day, the day you are watching, the savior God promised to restore all things has finally arrived. He is the Eternal Word become flesh and blood, a descendant of David. He is a member of the Israelite race, the son of a Judean woman.

He was promised to our first parents. He will make

remedy for the bondage our first parents took upon themselves and their offspring by their sin. He is the one predicted to the serpent, the one who will subdue the spirit behind the serpent. He will accomplish the mandate given our first parents to subdue and dominate everything that moves upon the earth (Gen 1:28).

He is a child of the last-born children of God. His destiny is to triumph over the powerful firstborn sons of God. He will win for the rest of humanity, the little ones who have authority to rule but not the power, victory over the fallen angels who have power but no authority.

It will be a glorious accomplishment. It will be accomplished, not merely by God's command, but by someone who is fully human. This fully human, and fully divine, Messiah will involve other humans in it as well, especially the Judeans. They were called through their ancestors to recognize the promised one and respond to him the way the betrothed would when the bridegroom arrives for the wedding.

The priest and Levites who are conducting the sacrifice this morning are, of course, unaware of his birth. If they were aware of it, they might have conducted the ceremony with more fervor and joy. If they realized the prophetic implications of the sacrifice they just made, they might wonder why God would allow such things to happen. And they would be apprehensive over the choices they must make as they and their fellow Judeans interact with the promised one now that he is here.

Now imagine yourself moving higher. All of Jerusalem comes into view, then the surrounding area, as you go still higher. To the southwest of Jerusalem, five miles from the Temple, is Bethlehem. The shepherds are talking to one another, awed by what they saw. If you look to your upper right you can see, not far away, the Magi's caravans heading toward Jerusalem. They will soon call on

Herod to ask him about the new king whose star they saw in the east.

Continue moving upwards and see Jerusalem in relation to Judea and Judea in relation to the neighboring countries, they in relation to the whole world. Then come back again.

As you come down, you can see ground detail getting larger. Everything blurs as you pass through the depths of time as well as space. Then you can see clearly again. You recognize that you are coming in to the same spot but at a different age. It is now one thousand years before Christ's birth. David is king, and the Temple has not yet been built. All that exists of Jerusalem at this age is the first part of the Lower City atop Mt. Ophel. You can see it there under your knees. It looks quite different than it did when Christ was born.

North of Mt. Ophel is Mt. Moriah where you remember the Temple standing, but Moriah is a farm at this time. A pagan Canaanite is using the rocky top as a threshing floor. He beats his freshly-harvested wheat to loosen it from the chaff. Then he throws it high in the air to let the mountain breeze blow away the chaff while the purified kernels fall upon the rock.

David is in his dwelling on Mt. Ophel to the south. He recently offended God by ordering a census to count his subjects the way pagan kings do. He had been told not to do it, but he did it anyway. He was given a choice of punishments for his arrogance. The people whose number he impiously learned will be reduced in size to a number unknown to him. This can be done through an enemy attack or through a famine or through a contagious disease. David had chosen a contagious disease. A disease is under God's direct control, and David knew that God is merciful.

Today while we are looking down upon Jerusalem, David is looking up. He sees a vision. He sees an angel of

the Lord approaching Jerusalem with sword unsheathed to continue the punishment already started in the other cities:

*When the angel of the Lord had stretched his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord had pity on the affliction, and said to the angel that slew the people: It is enough. Now hold thy hand. And the angel was by the thrashingfloor of Areuna the Jebusite.*

(2 kings [2 Sam] 24:16)

Imagine David's relief that God called the angel back. Imagine David's gratitude that God had manifested mercy for his ease of mind through this spectacular vision here at this spot already sacred to the Israelites. David resolves that this spot, the threshing floor of the Canaanite on top of Moriah, shall become the site for God's holy house that David long wanted to build.

Now imagine yourself moving higher. All Jerusalem comes in view again, then the surrounding area, just as it did last time as you moved away. Continue upwards till Jerusalem fades in the mists of time and you can again see the whole hemisphere containing Judea and the neighboring countries. Then come in again.

Everything blurs once more as time recedes ahead of you. Then you notice the smell of fresh mountain air as your vision clears. The first things that catch your eyes are the abundance of wildlife on and around the mountain. You realize that this is a very early stage in the history of the Temple site. There are no structures on Mt. Moriah, not even a threshing floor. The highest points of the mountain, the points that will later become the foundation for the altar and the Holy of Holies, are bare rock and are plainly visible.

As you come in closer, you can see a man and a boy approaching the top of the mountain. The boy has a bundle

of wood on his shoulders. As they ascend, he asks the man: "Father, we have the fire and the wood, but where is the victim for the holocaust?" The father, very much concerned and sorrowful, says: "God will provide himself a victim for the holocaust, my son" (Gen. 22:8).

The time is two thousand years before Christ's birth; the man is Abraham; the boy, his son Isaac. They are on their way to the spot where Abraham will make the sacrifice God asked. Abraham solemnly stops at the bare rock and sorrowfully spreads wood for the holocaust. His sorrow will soon turn to joy because God will not require that he make the sacrifice:

*And behold an angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying: Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. And he said: Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him: now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake. Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers sticking by his horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son. And he called the name of that place, "The Lord seeth" Whereupon even to this day it is said: In the mountain the Lord will see. (Gen. 22:11-14)*

You are watching the first event Scripture records as taking place on Moriah. It is a sign of the sacrifice God made by granting humans genuine freedom. Isaac was the child that God promised Abraham, the child with whom God would establish the covenant. From his seed would spring "kings of peoples." He was in fact the child who was to become the direct ancestor of Jesus, the incarnation of God's own Son, the Son whose sacrifice God really will



accept.

God's own Son was promised to the first woman after she and her husband sinned. He will be her seed and will crush the pride of the one who tempted her. He will make remedy for her sin and her husband's sin and for the sins of all her offspring.

Abraham did not know all these things that would happen in the future, of course. He did know that God promised him a child in his old age. For some reason unknown to Abraham, God had asked that the child be offered as a holocaust, a victim to make remedy for sin. And Abraham was willing to accept God's command.

Abraham was rewarded for his faith. God promised that Abraham's offspring would multiply and be as numerous as stars in the sky or sand on the beach, not only from his son Isaac but also from his first son Ismael:

*And as for Ismael I have also heard thee. Behold, I will bless him, and increase, and multiply him exceedingly: he shall beget twelve chiefs, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bring forth to thee at this time next year.*  
(Gen. 17:20-21)

*I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies.*  
(Gen. 22:17)

God also told Abraham: "(I will) be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7).

Now back away; and, as you back away, watch in your imagination the descendants of Abraham as they increase

and multiply. First there were Ismael and his branches of Abraham's seed passing down through Ismael's twelve sons.

Then there were Isaac and his two sons Esau and Jacob who passed down Abraham's seed through Jacob's twelve sons and Esau's fourteen grandsons. Then there were more branches through Abraham's six additional sons by his wife Cetura whom he married after Sarah's death.

Watch as his progeny multiplies. They become whole tribes and whole nations, not only the twelve tribes of Israel, but tribes and nations of Arab and other Semitic peoples as well. Imagine them as numerous as sand on the beach or as stars in the sky, and wonder how can God be God to so many peoples with so many conflicting ideas.

Now imagine yourself coming back again. Just hold your arms close to your body and fall. When you feel close enough, spread your arms to slow your descent. As you get closer you can see that Mt. Moriah is much different than it was during Abraham's time. It is now A.D. 638. The whole Temple site is ruined. The platform marking the outer courts that King Herod improved is still intact, but not one building is standing.

As you draw closer you can see, and smell, that the platform is being used as a refuse dump. Where the Temple once stood now stands a deep layer of human excrement. The excrement was piled there by the Byzantine Christians in a misguided attempt to humiliate the Jews.

Just outside the city, you can see a caravan approaching. When it gets close, two men with one camel break off and approach the wall. One man is Omar, Caliph and successor to Mohammed. Only twenty-eight years before this occasion, Mohammed led the Arabs from paganism into faith in the Most High God, the God who spoke directly to their common father Abraham. Mohammed told his followers to accept circumcision, marking themselves as descendants of Abraham and, like Abraham, to be submis-

sive to God's will.

Thus far, most Arabs had embraced pagan religions even though they were Abraham's descendants. Their neighbors to the east, the Persians, also worshiped pagan gods. The Persians had fought often with the Byzantines. Their success pushed Christian influence away from the Arabs, thus abandoning the Arabs to paganism.

In A.D. 533, after many fruitless wars, proving that both empires, the Persian and the Byzantine, were too strong to defeat the other, they signed an "Eternal Peace Treaty" (Cooke, p. 51). The two empires agreed to accept the status quo. This gave Persia a free hand to dominate all Arabs.

Thirty-seven years later Mohammed was born. Forty years later, in 610, Mohammed called the Arabs out of paganism. Thirty-four years after that, only about one hundred years since the eternal peace had been signed, Mohammed's followers launched a holy war against the Persian empire and conquered it.

A few years later, the Moslems attacked the Byzantines and forced the surrender of Jerusalem. This day, the day we are looking down on Jerusalem, is 105 years after the eternal peace was signed. Omar ibn-Khattab, Caliph of all Islam, is approaching Jerusalem to accept the city's surrender from the Christian Bishop Sophronius. He is walking. The other man, a man who is subordinate to him, is riding the camel. Omar is doing this humble act in accord with Mohammed's teaching. He also wants to show his profound respect for the city where the Most High God spoke to Abraham. He wants to emulate the ancient prophets and patriarchs who were submissive to God's will.

When Omar reaches the bishop, he will accept the surrender. He will pledge not to mistreat the inhabitants. He will then ask to see the holy shrines made sacred by the God of Abraham. He especially wants to see the rock where Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac.

In your imagination, watch the bishop's face as he realizes the rock his conqueror reveres so much lies buried under tons of human excrement. Imagine also Omar's shock and disbelief when he realizes what the Byzantines have been doing. He immediately gets on his knees. With his own hands, using his own cloak, he begins cleaning this holy place where Abraham expressed faith and where David and Solomon built the Temple (Klein, *Temple Beyond Time*, p. 135).

How inscrutable is God's Providence. How quickly and inexplicably prophecies come true. And how difficult it is for us to understand why God lets history unfold the way it does. And yet most of us, like the Byzantines of that age, so disgrace what God has already done that we are not entitled to understand why and how God brings prophecies to fruition. This day, the day we are watching, and every day afterward, all the tribes descendant from Abraham, be they Jew, Christian, or Moslem, will at least recognize the God Abraham worshiped.

Now back away. As you back away, catch a glimpse of the Moslems down through the succeeding years revering the rock upon which stood the altar: clearing it, washing it, anointing it every day with perfume. They will build a beautiful dome over it. They will care for it until such a time as the Most High in an unfathomable way shall decree what will happen next.

In the early days of Islam, the Moslems would lie prostrate facing Mt. Moriah during their prayers. Later, Mohammed had them face the Kaaba in Mecca instead. As you get farther and farther away try to imagine those first Moslems prostrate, all their heads pointed toward Mt. Moriah. Try to imagine what Abraham must think, if God will allow him to look, to see hundreds of millions of Moslems all over the world today prostrate in prayer. In addition, Abraham would see hundreds of millions of

Christians, also claiming descent from him and following the teachings of Jesus. And he would see millions of Jews, who also pray facing Mt. Moriah. All these people are his seed. They all worship the God he worshiped.

Now come in again. When you are close enough to make out the city's outline, you can see that it is much larger. As you get closer you can see that it is modern times. It is 1917, December 9, 1917. Several months earlier, Arthur Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, declared Britain's intention to support Jewish claims for Palestine as their national home. Five years in the future, the League of Nations will accept their claims. But, today, December 9, 1917, the British are still conquering Palestine from the Ottoman Turks.

As you come closer, you can see British warplanes flying over the Temple mount. The Turks have prepared for the British assault, but they do not have antiaircraft artillery. The British bombers fly over the city to encourage surrender.

The Turks do not want the holy shrines damaged during a bomber attack. Cognizant that their resistance cannot stop the bombing, they will retreat without firing a shot and allow the city to fall unharmed into British control (Rimmer, pp. 27-8). As you hover over Jerusalem, the Turks watching the warplanes are coming to that realization.

Isaiah predicted something like this sixteen centuries earlier: "*As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem, protecting and delivering, passing over and saving*" (Isaiah 31:5). This is the first step ending Gentile control of the city--and of Palestine.

For almost thirteen-hundred years, the Moslems controlled the temple site, save for a few brief periods during the Crusades. When John wrote about measuring the Temple, he prophesied that the outer court was not to be measured. It had been given to the Gentiles (Apoc. 11:2).

Moses spoke of a proviso in God's law concerning land. The land that God gave the twelve tribes was not to be taken away from them or their descendants. Even if their descendants sold it, or otherwise lost possession of it, it was to revert to the original heirs within fifty years:

*And thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of the land: for it is the year of jubilee. Every man shall return to his possession, and every one shall go back to his former family . . . . In the year of jubilee all shall return to their possessions. When thou shalt sell anything to thy neighbor, or buy of him: grieve not thy brother: but thou shalt buy of him according to the number of years from the jubilee . . . . The more years remain after the jubilee, the more shall the price increase: and the less time is counted, so much the less shall the purchase cost . . . . The land also shall not be sold forever: because it is mine, and you are strangers and sojourners with me. For which cause all the country of your possession shall be under the conditions of redemption . . . . . the buyer shall have what he bought, until the year of the jubilee. For in that year all that is sold shall return to the owner, and to the ancient possessor. (Lv. 25:10-28)*

Now as you move away, let your imagination span through the next fifty years from 1917 to 1967. They are years of bitter conflict as the Arab nations insist the Jews shall not possess the land. Arab nations once allied with Britain, now chaff against British control of the Holy Land. They helped the British defeat the Turks. They felt Britain

should have placed the land in their hands.

Repatriation of Jews becomes more serious, and for the Jews more desperate, as Nazi Germany murders six million Jews during the Holocaust. Repatriation turns Palestine into a powder keg as Arabs and Jews struggle for control when the British prepare to leave in 1948. When the British do leave, the surrounding Arab nations attack the new Jewish Commonwealth. But by incredible, almost impossible, victory for the Jews, they defeat the Arab armies and maintain their independence.

There are more confrontations, even another war, but the new Jewish Commonwealth cannot be extinguished. Finally in 1967, a serious war erupts as the surrounding Arab nations, again in a concerted effort, try to extinguish Jewish independence. This war will last six days. The Arab armies will be defeated. The Temple site will be conquered from Jordan. Fifty years after Britain publicly promised that the Jews could possess their ancestral homeland, Jerusalem and much of Palestine will fly the Israeli flag. Jeremiah, 2580 years ago, prophesied that something like this would happen (Jer. 23:7-8).

Think what this might mean as you move farther and farther away. Could this be the end times of the Gentile era? If so, then the Gentile nations who resist God will face similar disasters as the Judean nation faced at the beginning of this era.

During the Gentile era, God's word was brought to the entire world. Some individual people accepted it wholeheartedly, but not one Gentile nation, as a nation, at least today, is doing so. This must break God's heart to watch so many people of all nations disobey. They disobey because they love to do what God commanded them not to do. If God had a heart it would break with hurt and sorrow. God does have a heart--or at least the Incarnation of God into Jesus Christ provided God with a heart.

Let us move back in time to the beginning of this era. We will see how Jesus responded in his heart when he reached his ultimate confrontation with his enemies. We will see how he chose to deal with those who did not want to obey and whom he did not want, not yet anyway, to force into obedience.

The years flee away as you come closer. Then you see the city clearly on that Friday when Jesus came face to face with his opponents. He had God's power at his disposal. He could easily have forced all of them into absolute and total obedience, against their will, merely by himself willing that they obey. But he did not want to do that. To do that would destroy their freedom. If he forces them against their will, he would get obedience, but what a sorrowful experience it would be for him. Their bodies would do what he wants because he has the power to make it so. On their faces would be the expressions he wants; through their lips would flow his words; in their minds would be his thoughts.

Only in their wills could they resist. They would will what they want, and he would instantly flood them with the force he possesses to compel obedience. Their defiance would never get put into thought, much less into words and deeds. Their determination to disobey would immediately be stifled by an overpowering compulsion to do what they do not want to do. Their complaints would be drowned with words they do not want to speak. Their resentment would be smothered with thought control of unimaginable magnitude, the degree of magnitude that only God can generate. It would be infinite, untiring, everlasting. What agony for God to deal this way with individuals who are totally dependent upon God. What unimaginable hell for those individuals who experience it.

If God so wanted, God could forever postpone using force, but why should that be done? Sin, disobedience, cannot go on forever. From the beginning of God's



revelation through Moses even to the revelation through Jesus, God always made it clear that human disobedience will not be tolerated forever.

If God were human, God would risk life itself, if humans were minded to take it, rather than use force. God's Word did become human. In the human confrontation Jesus had with the people of his own generation, he did refrain from using force. He did so right up to his death. After his death, he need not suffer anymore. So after his death would be the time to use force. Jesus hinted at this when he answered Caiaphas:

*And the high priest rising up, said to him: Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said to him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (Matt. 26:62-64)*

Some newer translations get his last statement over more forcibly. It is tantamount to telling Caiaphas that the next time you deal with me I will be clothed with divine power. I will sit at God's right hand. I will rule in his name.

Do you wonder why God does not encourage us to do anything we please, and why God insists that we obey? It is because God created everything that exists and holds every bit of it in continued existence. Everything we do, even what we think, affects what God has created. Our disobedience ruins it. Somebody or something is always hurt by our disobedience.

The very person who holds us humans in existence is

the person who became Jesus Christ. He, in his divine nature throughout our lives, had been crucified against our will. He has used his sustaining power to hold us in existence to grant us ability to do as we choose, even though we might choose to disobey.

As you come closer, you can see him hanging on a cross on a small hill just outside the city walls. People surround him. They taunt him saying: "If you really are God's son, come down off the cross." How can he control his human emotions so effectively? Almost anyone else, if he could, would come off the cross. But if Jesus comes off that cross, then he will come down off the cross of our wills, the crosses you and I have given God. That would be the end of our ability to disobey, ours and everyone else in the whole world.

The Father wanted the events in Christ's life to reflect the important aspects of our relationship to God. One of them is that God is granting sufficient time for every created person to act in freedom to decide whether to serve God or to continue disobeying.

Scripture prophesied the important events in the Christ's life long before his birth. He was to be the Pascal lamb. Many things the Israelites were told about the Pascal lamb have some bearing on Christ. They were told not to break the Pascal lamb's bones (Exodus 12:46). The Pascal lamb was offered as a sacrifice to make recompense for sin, to stay God's hand poised in retribution. It was the Pascal lamb's blood that spared the Israelites when God disciplined the Egyptians.

As you look down into the city you can see that it is getting late. The Temple officials observing the crucifixion are impatient because Jesus is not yet dead. They send men to ask Pilate to order Christ's legs broken to hasten his death. If you look closely, you can see the men going northeast toward the Praetorium outside the north wall.

Jesus could endure his sufferings forever. He has the power to lay down his life and the power to pick it up again (John 10:18). But his mission was to fulfill Scripture. The lamb's bones are not to be broken if the sacrifice is to be acceptable. It is time now for him to die before the men return. He stirs one more time on the cross. The people become silent. You can hear his words: "It is consummated. Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." His heart, already filled with sorrow, literally breaks as the muscles rupture with the intensity of his sorrow, and he dies.

Back away now, and for the last time move away from Jerusalem. As you move away, try to get a wider perspective on this day's events. What do they mean for the people of that city? What do they mean for all people? As you leave, you can see that things are happening down below. It is getting dark, as a storm moves in. The Temple mount shudders from an earthquake. Everyone in the city had all day been nervous because of the trial and crucifixion. Now their anxiety turns to terror because of the storm and the earthquake.

In the sky, brilliant flashes of lightning illuminate the clouds. On the ground, tombs are opened by the earthquake. The dead mingle with the living amid frightening peals of thunder and cries and moans of people convinced that the world is ending. If God were like you and me, this would have been the end. Two or three megafash thunderbolts and a massive earthquake, and all would be finished. After all, the Son of God has been killed. It is time to judge all humanity.

But this is not the end. It is a new beginning: the beginning of the end times, assuredly, but a new beginning anyway. With this new beginning, there will be a new temple. It will not be like the old, built by human hands. God will build this temple. It will be built of people marked by baptism. It will span through time and through space, in

heaven and on earth. Jesus will regulate this temple as a head regulates the body. He will nourish it and bind it together, giving it identity and unity as the vine gives the grapes. It will be wonderful to behold.

As you move away, try to see the New Jerusalem as John saw it descending from heaven. It is too large to fit in one place. It is a four-dimensional thing but viewed from three dimensions. John describes it as cubic in shape, billions of cubic miles in volume, if such a thing can be measured, but it cannot be measured. It cannot even be imagined visually because it spans through time. It is splendid beyond description, too splendid for words, although John tried to describe it with words.

It is like a jewel descending upon the earth, composed, as it is, of human beings, in which each person is literally the arc of the covenant, containing within themselves the presence of Jesus. Jesus charges them to continue his work to apply the sacrifice he made for the world's salvation. Within his New Jerusalem, all persons can find truth and peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

As you catch your last glimpse of this holy place, let your mind's eye look through the ages and see how this new temple spans time and place. Imagine people through the ages that have followed Jesus. Start with the apostles at the last supper. Imagine Mary's fifteen lonely years after her son died.

Imagine the approach of his disciples. At first they were a small gathering, about one-hundred individuals. Thousands joined them on Pentecost, the day the Church got its official start. Their gathering grew rapidly as it spread among the Judeans. It was a Judean Church then, almost exclusively Judean. They were the elect allowed now for the first time to enter the "Holy of Holies" and eat at God's table.

They were joined later by Greeks, Romans, and

Gentiles from other nations. These are the others that join the elect, the others who are too many to count. These others come from all nations and all strata of society, following Christ despite disapproval and opposition from those who do not believe. They grow and spread until ten times twenty-four years later the elders of the Roman Empire, and the emperor himself became Christian. Under them, and after them, the Roman Empire will be remade into a Christian society.

And in the years since then, look and see the banquet table, the altar, and the temple. They reach across distance and time, seemingly through many different altars and churches and sacrifices. But there is only one sacrifice now, offering heavenly food to anyone who has the faith to accept it.

The banquet table within this temple reaches through time and space onto thousands of tiny portions of the same table. This is the table where the sacrifice of the Son, the sacrifice that was accepted, is continuously renewed in atonement for all who seek reconciliation.

The sacrifice is offered to all persons without prejudice to race or color or sex or nationality or, for that matter, for past sins. It is offered on a table where prejudice against the product of God's own handiwork would be unthinkable and illogical. For we are what God intended each of us to be: not equal in the sense that we are indistinguishable, but equal in God's eyes, having equal protection under the Commandments. Yet we are different. Each of us is unique, the one and only one like ourself, the indispensable one that is ourself.

God created each of us as we are. God gave us the form and shape, color and size, talent and weakness that we need to work out the destiny God has set before us. We are all invited to follow the promised one, to accept baptism, and to participate in the divine life made available at God's table.

Imagine that you see those who have left this life before you and now reign with Jesus. They passed from death into the first resurrection. They reign with him right now in a spiritual way. They already have been given dominion over everything that moves upon the face of this earth. They strengthen us in our struggle, for the struggle is in this life. They are now worshiping the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son through the Incarnation of the Lamb that was slain but now lives.

They, and all the angels with them, even before you began imagining it, have been singing beautiful songs of praise and joyful happiness and eternal gratitude in the heavenly counterpart of the new temple.

< end of chap eight >>

## **Chapter 9**

### **The Third Woe Announced: The Coming Final War With Rome**

#### APOCALYPSE 11:1-14

- 1     *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and it was said unto me: Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that adore therein.*
- 2     *But the court, which is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not: because it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city they shall tread under foot two and forty months:*
- 3     *And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.*
- 4     *These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, that will stand before the Lord of the earth.*
- 5     *And if any man will hurt them, fire shall come out of their mouths, and shall devour their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, in this manner must he be slain.*
- 6     *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will.*

- 7 *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that ascended out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*
- 8 *And their bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which is called spiritually, Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified.*
- 9 *And they of the tribes, and peoples, and tongues, and nations, shall see their bodies for three days and a half: and they shall not suffer their bodies to be laid in sepulchres.*
- 10 *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry: and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwell upon the earth.*
- 11 *And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. And they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them.*
- 12 *And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying to them: Come up hither. And they went up to heaven in a cloud: and their enemies saw them.*
- 13 *And at that hour there was made a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell: and there were slain in the earthquake names of men seven thousand: and the rest were cast into a fear, and gave glory to the God of*



*heaven.*

14 *The second woe is past: and behold  
the third woe will come quickly.*

A voice tells John to measure the Temple and observe those who worship there. But John is not to measure the Temple courtyard. The courtyard now belongs to the Gentiles, who will trample the holy city for forty-two months. John then sees two witnesses who will prophesy forty-two months. Enemies rise against the witnesses and kill them. Their bodies lie in the street. Three days later God raises them.

As I described earlier, John the Baptist first preached this portion of the Apocalypse around A.D. 27. John's disciples kept his preaching alive throughout the years 27 to 70. It was a message to Israel encouraging faith in the promised one. It was put in its final written form, the text that we received, in A.D. 96, twenty-six years after Jerusalem's destruction.

All during the public ministry of Jesus and forty-two years following it, the remnant of Israel watched as events prophesied by the Baptist, one by one, came true. Our review of these events is now in the year 70. The Temple is gone.

Forty-two months signifies a time of tribulation. Its origin stems from the Seleucid conquest of Judea. After the death of Alexander the Great, the original Greek empire separated into four sections. Alexander's strongest generals ruled three of them. Antigonos Gonatas ruled Macedonia and Greece. Seleucus ruled an area including Syria with his capital at Damascus. Ptolemy ruled Egypt and nearby areas with his capital at Alexandria. The fourth section divided into many small autonomous city-states in Greece and Turkey.

One hundred and twenty-five years after Alexander's

death, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a descendant of Seleucus, began expanding his empire southward toward Egypt. Judea, caught in the middle, decided to oppose the advance. In April 167 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes conquered Judea. Thinking he could strengthen his empire's unity if all his subjects practiced the same religion and lived the same culture, Epiphanes outlawed all other religions.

He made circumcision a capital crime. He abolished the Temple sacrifice. His priests desecrated the Temple by sacrificing pigs to Zeus. He converted Temple rooms into brothels for sacred prostitution to honor Athena. Sacrificing pigs to Zeus (this is the same god the Romans worshiped as Jupiter) in the Temple of the Most High God is an abomination. It deeply offended the Judeans. They never forgot the day it started.

The Temple remained desecrated until a Judean family, the Maccabees, led a war of liberation. When Jerusalem was liberated, the Judeans re-consecrated the Temple. The length of time between the desecration of the Temple and its rededication was three and one-half years, from April 167 to Oct. 16, 164 B.C.

Three and one-half years are forty-two months or 1260 days. Since this experience involved the triumph of unbelievers followed by God's retribution, the Judeans began to look at it in a broader sense. They considered the desecration as God's rejection of them because of their infidelity. The loss of the Temple led to their repentance. The rededication showed God's acceptance of a repentant and forgiven people. This process took three and one-half years. The Judeans then used this duration of time in apocalyptic literature to recall when God allowed the forces opposed to righteousness to triumph over God's chosen people.

"Three and one-half years" becomes "a time, [two] times, and a half time" (Apoc. 12:14). The same number is

sometimes expressed as days rather than years, for example: The forces opposed to God will triumph over the two witnesses for three and one-half days. Sometimes the same duration is given differently as, for example, 42 months or 1260 days. The Gentiles will trample the outer courts for 42 months.

Following the Temple's destruction, two witnesses will appear, clothed in sackcloth. They will prophesy. This is a difficult passage to interpret. Are the two witnesses actual individuals or are they symbolic of something else? The most widespread interpretation is that two individual men will prophesy during the last times. The prevailing view is that they will be Elijah and Henoch or Elijah and Moses.

Elijah did not die. God sent a chariot to take him while he was still alive (2 Kings 2:11). Elijah is mentioned in Holy Scriptures as one sent to restore all things (Matt. 17:11) in the great day of the Lord (Mal 4:5). Henoch did not die either; God took him from this life in a special way (Gen. 5:24 & Heb. 11:5). Both men were witnesses of God's goodness, and both were prophets.

Some believe that, unlike people who die in the usual way, these two men are present, body and soul, in paradise (Heydock, note for Gen, 5:24). Their bodies are similar to what they had been when still in this world; they do not have resurrected bodies. At some point in history, these men will come back to make their final witness and will be martyred by their unbelieving listeners. Then their souls will enter the traditional heaven. At the end of the world, they will rise with resurrected bodies.

The reason Moses is also proposed is because, during his time on earth, he was both a special witness for God and an extraordinary prophet. During his face-to-face meetings with God on Mt. Sinai, God in some way changed the appearance of Moses. The Israelites saw God's glory shining through the face of Moses:

*And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."*

(KJV Exodus 34:29-30)

When Moses died, an angel hid his body so Satan could not claim it. This is unusual. This is another reason some think God has set Moses aside for a return in the end times. Now this popular interpretation may be true; that is, in the end times, two Old Testament saints will come back. However, it could be that the two witnesses are not historical persons at all but symbols of something else. In the Mosaic code, there is a rule concerning witnesses in a court of law. For a serious accusation, two witnesses are required (Dt.17:6 & Dt. 19:15). God is accusing Judea. The two witnesses can mean that God has sufficient witnesses.

God sent prophets throughout the first covenant to encourage the Israelites to follow the Commandments and to point out their crimes when they refused. The same happened during the new covenant when Jesus and the apostles made their witness. The two witnesses could be a symbolic reference to the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament prophets. The greatest Old Testament prophet is John the Baptist (Matt. 11:11). The greatest New Testament prophet is, naturally, Jesus Christ. The chief representatives, therefore, of both testaments were present when the Apocalypse was first preached. Unbelievers killed both of them.

Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven (Acts

1:9-11). When Christ's soul ascended into heaven immediately after his death, he took the souls of those who died righteous before him. This would include John the Baptist. Forty days later, the resurrected Jesus ascended bodily into heaven in full view of his apostles and disciples.

Humans cannot perceive individual souls, but angels and the fallen angels can. Jesus took the soul of John the Baptist to heaven in a way that does not escape detection by Satan and the fallen angels. The souls of those marked by baptism who die righteous after the resurrection of Christ are also taken to heaven.

One last parallel: when this occurred, minutes after the death of Jesus, a strong earthquake terrified the city. Dead people really did rise from their tombs and appeared to many (Matt. 27:51-3).

#### APOCALYPSE 11:15-18

- 15 *And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet: and there were great voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.*
- 16 *And the four and twenty ancients, who sit on their seats in the sight of God, fell on their faces and adored God, saying:*
- 17 *We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and thou hast reigned.*
- 18 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and*

*that thou shouldest render reward to thy servants the prophets and the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great, and shouldest destroy them that have corrupted the earth.*

These verses describe the seventh trumpet, which announces the third woe. Nothing is said in Apoc. 11 of what the third woe will be. That will be covered in Apoc. 16 under the seven vials. Then the third woe, under the symbolism of seven vials of God's wrath, will pour upon the earth. The third woe is even more threatening to unbelievers than the first and second woes. But then, the unbelievers were not moved by the first and second woes. They remained adamant in their rejection of Christ. The third woe will bring defeat to the Messiah's rivals.

David had a similar experience. The position of king given David had previously been Saul's, but Saul was not faithful. That is why God gave it to David. Saul should have humbly accepted God's will and looked to David as king. Instead, Saul opposed David. He tried often to kill David. Finally, God allowed Saul's enemies to destroy his pretensions to the throne.

Faced with ruin, Saul committed suicide. He died in a way some think glorious, but it is really an inexcusable and pathetic violation of God's Commandments. To his greater shame, many Israelites believed his claims rather than David's. They met disaster along with Saul. The kingdom then became David's, not overnight it is true, but in God's good time. After that, for the rest of his life, David remained the only king of all God's chosen people.

Jesus is God's chosen to be the Messianic King. He came to the circumcised. They all should have accepted him, for God made Jesus king of all circumcised. Instead

some opposed him and killed him. He did, however, start his kingdom among the circumcised. His word inspired Gentiles to join his kingdom. They replaced the first-chosen who had rejected him. Many Gentiles joined. Though chosen second, God gave them equality with those who had been chosen first.

The first-chosen who did not yet believe heard many appeals to come to faith. Some of them did, but others would not listen. Instead, those who did not believe tried to destroy Christ's kingdom. So God allowed their enemies to destroy their pretensions to the kingdom, first by internal strife (the first woe), then by a Roman invasion and siege (the second woe), and finally by a worse disaster (the third woe). I propose to show that this worse disaster is the Judean defeat by Septimius Severus in A.D. 131-5.

This happened sixty years after the fall of Jerusalem. The Judeans who still did not believe Christ rallied behind Simon bar Kochba, whom they thought to be the Messiah. Under his leadership, they started a war of liberation. They fought so wholeheartedly that defeat would mean collapse of the Judean state, and that is exactly what happened. With that collapse, and the widespread dispersion of survivors, the unbelieving Judeans were no longer able to oppose the Church. The whole Judean nation was brought low, almost to extinction.

The baptized inherited the messianic kingdom, the whole kingdom, because it all belongs to Jesus now. The kingdom will be, not what humans expect, but a more glorious thing. It will bring salvation to all through the sufferings of Jesus and through the ministry of his followers. His followers act in union with him for the salvation of all. This is what God treasures most: the salvation of those who repent and seek forgiveness.

APOCALYPSE 11:19

19 *And the temple of God was opened in heaven: and the arc of his testament was seen in his temple, and there were lightnings, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

The Israelites believed that the Temple had its counterpart in heaven. God resides on earth dwelling with the chosen people in the earthly Temple they built. God also dwells in heaven in a heavenly counterpart, an unimaginably glorious counterpart, of the earthly Temple.

At this point in our journey through history, the earthly Temple lies ruined, but the heavenly temple is unharmed. When the earthly Temple had been standing, very few people could enter or even look into it. Only those few born into the priesthood could enter. In this vision, the Baptist (whom God did not place by birth into the priesthood) can see the heavenly temple. It is opened so that he can look inside. He sees the arc of the covenant.

The Israelites lost the earthly arc of the covenant 656 years earlier. Maccabees describes the prophet Jeremiah hiding the arc of the covenant on Mt. Sinai to keep it safe from the Babylonians (2 Mc. 2:5-6). The Old Testament predicts the arc's rediscovery shortly before the world's end (2 Mc. 2:7).

During the old covenant, only males of Levi's tribe could approach the Temple, and only males descendant from Aaron could enter the Temple. To enter the Holy of Holies was even more restricted. Only one descendant of Aaron, the one who was high priest--and only one day of the year--could enter the Holy of Holies. This is the sacred place where the arc would have been kept were it still with the Judeans. Now that the Messiah is here, anyone who believes and accepts baptism is eligible to approach the heavenly holy of holies.



These visions complete the earliest portion of the Apocalypse. John the Baptist first preached this portion a few years before Jesus began his public ministry. It started with a vision of God: the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son. Then the Baptist described a vision of the Lamb, then the scroll, the opening of the scroll, the four horsemen, the martyrs under the altar, nature in upheaval, the four winds, and two of the three woes. These visions helped the Judeans understand what was about to take place, and many responded. Others, who did not respond at first, responded later when what was prophesied began to happen. All this time, the Baptist's words were repeated by his disciples, many of whom became Christian, one of whom became the apostle, John the Evangelist.

This first portion of the Apocalypse covers events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. Forty-five years, these prophecies echoed through the streets of Jerusalem and other cities. Many Judeans listened, but not all. Those who listened changed their ways and accepted Jesus. Those who did not listen tried to remain as their ancestors had been, but the appointed time had passed. What they thought they could keep was taken away from them.

That these visions were preached before Christ began his ministry is a very important consideration. It's a central point in the theory that they came from John the Baptist. The Baptist started preaching the visions a couple years before Christ began his ministry and kept on preaching them until the Baptist's murder by Herod Antipas. Christ had by then already started his ministry. These visions were the Baptist's announcement that the Messiah was coming soon. His visions showed who the Messiah is and what relationship the Messiah has with God. Most importantly, his visions warned what would happen to those who reject the Messiah and try to destroy the Messiah's God-given

ministry. The initial visions cover the four winds and two of the three woes. Apoc. 11:15-18 alludes to the third woe, but does not provide much detail.

During the latter days of the war, shortly before the fall of Jerusalem, the second portion of the Apocalypse was added to the first portion. The theory holds that a disciple of Jesus who had previously followed John the Baptist composed the second portion. The combined portions were then preached anew (Ford, p. 3).

The second portion starts with a series of "signs" or "portents":

- (1) A woman about to give birth confronted by a dragon and defended by Michael.
- (2) A beast rising from the sea.
- (3) Another beast rising from the land.
- (4) A vision of the Lamb and his elect.
- (5) Three angels each with a message.
- (6) Three more angels each with a command, followed by an intermediate vision of seven angels with seven last plagues.
- (7) Then a vision of those who had overcome the beast standing before God's throne

*(The Jerusalem Bible, p. 429).*

And, of course, they added much more detail on the third woe "The end is here." This newly added portion starts off with chapter 12, the seven signs. These seven signs give more insight into why events are happening as they are. After the seven signs, seven angels will pour seven vials of God's wrath upon the earth, which complete the third woe. The new section then continues with seven more visions, the seven sights, explaining why the Judeans

who refused to accept the Messiah and fought the kingdom he established, were exposed to such severe penalties. This second portion then ends by affirming why the third woe happened (the end of opposition by God's chosen people). In some detail, it describes why the chosen nation was brought down. Then follows a description of the glorious reign of Christ and his new kingdom on earth.

There will be a final reworking of the Apocalypse in A.D. 96 by John the Evangelist (*The New American Bible*, pp. 301-2) at Patmos. He will add further detail on why God abandoned the unbelieving Judeans to their own resources and what God's new kingdom will be like. In addition, John will compose letters to seven churches and place them at the beginning of the Apocalypse. The letters will warn us Gentile and Jewish Christians of later ages that we must also be submissive to God's will and remain faithful until Jesus returns.

I now continue by explaining the first "sign," the woman with child.

<< end of chap nine >>

## **Chapter 10**

# **JUDEA GIVES BIRTH TO THE CHURCH**

### APOCALYPSE 12:1-6

- 1     *And a great sign appeared in heaven:  
A woman clothed with the sun, and  
the moon under her feet, and on her  
head a crown of twelve stars:*
- 2     *And being with child, she cried  
travailing in birth, and was in pain to  
be delivered.*
- 3     *And there was seen another sign in  
heaven: and behold a great red drag-  
on, having seven heads and ten  
horns: and on his heads seven  
diadems:*
- 4     *And his tail drew the third part of the  
stars of heaven, and cast them to the  
earth: and the dragon stood before  
the woman who was ready to be  
delivered; that when she should be  
delivered, he might devour her son.*
- 5     *And she brought forth a man child,  
who was to rule all nations with an  
iron rod: and her son was taken up to  
God, and to his throne.*
- 6     *And the woman fled into the wilder-  
ness, where she had a place prepared  
by God, that there they shall feed her  
a thousand two hundred sixty days.*

John describes a woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon. Twelve stars shine around her head. She is pregnant. Her son will rule all nations with an iron rod. A large red dragon stalks the woman, waiting to devour the newborn child. She gives birth, but God rescues the child. The woman flees to the wilderness where God will protect her for 1260 days.

This vision shows how the promised Savior interacts with the human source of the Savior, and to an opposing force bent on destroying the Savior. They, all three, can be represented by individual persons. The Savior is, of course, Jesus Christ. The human source of his flesh is his mother Mary. The opposing force is Satan.

One can go further, though, and visualize the opposing force as King Herod, who sent men to kill the newborn Jesus. But to interpret this vision in terms of three individual human beings is to miss its wider implications. The vision really shows larger-than-human groups even though Jesus and Mary are the heads of two groups.

What is being born is the Church, the flesh and blood sisters and brothers of Jesus. They have been marked by baptism as members of his body. This body is being generated from the authentic Israel composed of those who lived the Mosaic covenant.

They built the society that nurtured the biological bloodline of Jesus, starting with Abraham and continuing to Mary and Joseph. But Israel is more than the genealogical tree of direct ancestors and blood relatives of Jesus. Israel is a nation. Israel is all the descendants of Abraham's grandson, the grandson God named Israel (Gen. 32:29).

Humanity's earliest ancestors, Adam's children, gradually plunged into darkness due to their personal sins plus Adam's original sin. But they also contained the savior's bloodline. God called the bloodline out of darkness through Abraham's descendants. The descendants of

Abraham's grandson, Israel, were expected to live according to God's precepts. They would then provide the correct environment from which the savior would come. This environment, the nation of Israel, is the woman giving birth.

Israel is the woman in the vision; the Church is the child. Both are collective entities not visible in all their dimensions. One can see some individuals who are members of each community, but one cannot see the whole community. For one thing, each community comprises too many people to be seen at once. For another, each community spans through time reaching far back into the past, in Israel's case, and far into the future, in the Church's case. The most important reason they are not visible is that the relationship among the individual members, the relationship that gives each community its unity, is the very thing that human eyes cannot see.

Waiting for the child's birth is the dragon. The dragon is Satan with all those who follow Satan. The whole group is imaged as a dragon. The name "Satan" is a title telling who the dragon is. It is the title held by the fallen angel named "Lucifer."

God created Lucifer a high-ranking angel, a "first born" son of God, but Lucifer sinned. God demoted Lucifer to await punishment. Jesus mentions this to his apostles: *And he said to them: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven.* (Luke 10:18)

*Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* (Matt. 25:41)

The English poet John Milton, in 1694, described the fall of Lucifer in unforgettable terms in his poem: *Paradise Lost*:

*... Him the Almighty Power  
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Sky  
With hideous ruin and combustion down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In Adamantine Chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to Arms.*  
(Book I, vrs. 44-9)

Lucifer, Satan, encouraged Eve to disobey God. She encouraged her husband. They both disobeyed. God punished all three. When God told Eve her punishment, God gave her a promise. That promise was also a threat to Satan: "The woman's seed shall crush your head" (Gen. 3:15).

The conflict between Satan and humans goes further than Eve's succumbing to temptation. God told Adam and Eve to populate the earth and subdue it. They and their progeny should rule over all living creatures that move upon the earth:

*... fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the  
fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all  
living creatures that move upon the face of the  
earth."*  
(Gen. 1:28)

Satan, after deciding to tempt Eve, took the form of a living serpent and moved upon the earth. With that act alone, even before tempting Eve, Satan had willingly entered Adam's dominion.

God disciplined Satan for bearing false witness and cursed Satan above all cattle and all wild animals that God placed under Adam's dominion. Moreover, God said there would be enmity between Satan and the woman, between Satan's seed and her seed.



*. . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed . . . it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.*  
(Gen. 3:15 KJV)

From the very beginning, there has been conflict between Satan and humans. God called Israel out of the human race so that Israel could bring forth the promised one, the woman's seed. Lucifer calls out of the human race those who will follow Satan, the Devil's seed. Between the Devil's seed and the woman's seed there is an enormous power struggle.

The dragon represents a larger-than-human image. It is Lucifer as Satan along with those who follow Satan. The whole group, all fallen angels and all fallen humans, is personified in the image of the dragon.

#### APOCALYPSE 12:7-9

- 7 *And there was a great battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels:*
- 8 *And they prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven.*
- 9 *And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduced the whole world; and he was cast down unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

Michael and God's angels fight against the dragon and the angels that follow the dragon. This struggle is similar to an earlier struggle in the angelic heaven when Michael led the good angels against Lucifer and the disobedient angels

when Lucifer first sinned. Lucifer's boast was "we will be like gods!" Michael's response was the question, "Who is like to God?" Michael is named for this thought. "Mikha'el?"--"Who is like to God?"

The angels rallied around these two opposing thoughts, and their test was done. Those who wanted to be as gods fell from grace because they chose against God's will. Those who insisted that no one is like God retained God's grace because they freely accepted God's will. Scripture alludes to these events, (Ex. 29:12-19, Is. 14: 9-29, Matt. 25:11, & Hebrews 1:1-6), but does not fully clarify them.

Michael and the good angels then forced Lucifer and the rebellious angels out of heaven. No longer permitted access to the angelic heaven, these fallen angels were exiled to earth (or maybe, more correctly stated, to the physical universe).

God next created humans and placed them on earth within reach of fallen angels. Right away Satan tempted the humans. Our first parents might have resisted temptation as Michael did. If they had, the fallen angel's powers would have been further limited. But our first parents did not resist. Instead, they themselves fell from grace.

God later established within the human race the Israelites and offered them the opportunity to accept a freely chosen covenant. They were to recognize and obey God's laws, serve God wholeheartedly, and provide the bloodline for God's own Son to enter history. God blessed the Israelites and resided with them in a special way. The Israelites saw God's special presence as a cloud hovering above the Arc (Ex. 40:15-33). The Israelites were to honor, praise, and adore God on earth similar to the way the angels honored and adored God in heaven. In this sense the covenant with Israel provided for a kind of heaven on earth.

Abiding by this freely entered covenant with God had

its consequences. It brought the Israelites into a new sphere of conflict with Satan. Satan tried to tempt them to abandon their covenant. They were sidetracked often, but in the end, Satan failed. Some Israelites, the Judeans (a remnant), did bring forth the savior. The savior survived all the early plots against his life. In the fullness of time, he completed the mission given him and crowned it by willingly accepting the martyrdom his father already accepted.

After his death, his apostles spread his teaching throughout Judea, beginning with Peter's speech at Pentecost. As the apostles convinced people and baptized them, the newly-born Church grew. During the same time, a spiritual war developed in Judea. It separated those who believed Jesus from those who did not. One side proclaimed, in so many words, that all Israel should know that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and God's anointed one (Acts 2:36). The other side warned the apostles that they should not talk about Jesus (Acts 5:28).

Like the angels who responded to Lucifer and Michael, each Judean during this period freely chose to believe or not believe. The climax of this choice caused an irreparable division of Judea. The believers inherited a new heaven on earth, the Church. God now maintains a special presence with the Church rather than the Temple. Members of the Church now continue the worship of God with prayers of praise, honor, and glory similar to the worship in the angelic heaven. The Judeans who did not believe were excluded from this new heaven. They found their customary sphere of activity more restricted to worldly considerations than before.

The Temple's destruction is an earthly sign of this restriction. From now on, God no longer maintains a special presence among the circumcised. That is why God allowed the Temple's destruction. There is to be no more daily sacrifice offered by the Temple authorities in atonement for

sins. But the Church would continue to honor every day the ultimate sacrifice that Christ made for sin on Calvary.

Even when the old Temple was standing, the Judeans had very restricted access to God's presence. Most could not even enter the inner courtyard surrounding the Temple much less enter the Temple itself. Now that the Temple is gone, they can only get as close as the outermost courtyard. This is as close as God had always allowed the Gentiles to approach.

The unbelieving Judeans will continue to expect the Messiah, but no longer a Messiah that would bring righteousness to all nations. The unbelievers will expect one that would primarily serve Judean interests. Jesus warned them that they would soon accept someone who claims to be the Messiah, but he will come in his own name.

*I am come in the name of my father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. (John 5:43)*

This will happen sixty years after the Temple's destruction, as I describe in this book.

The Judeans, the remnant of Israel, therefore, experienced a spiritual war. Michael and those who follow Michael (Michael is the patron angel of Israel) fought against the dragon and those who follow the dragon. Michael defeated the dragon and cast the dragon down to earth.

#### APOCALYPSE 12:10-13

10 *And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: because the accuser of our brethren*

- is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night.*
- 11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.*
- 12 *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell therein. Woe unto the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.*
- 13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman, who brought forth the man child:*

When the dragon realized that it again had been cast down and could no longer grasp the child, it went after Israel, the woman who bore the child.

APOCALYPSE 12:14

- 14 *And there were given to the woman two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert unto her place, where she is nourished for a time and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*

The Lord protected the woman as promised. The remnant of Israel still left on earth was given wings (so to speak) to fly into the desert, desert meaning a place in the ordinary world. The ordinary world has always been parched for God's living waters. She, the Israel remaining on earth, will be preserved there throughout the times of the

Gentiles. Here is how I understand this.

After the Church was born, those Judeans who could not accept Jesus re-examined their faith. There were two conflicting schools of thought in Judaism. The Pharisees believed that there was life after death with a place of bliss and happiness for the righteous and place of punishment for the wicked. The Sadducees did not believe there was life after death. During the Judean civil war, the Zealots exterminated the Sadducees.

Because Christians quoted Scripture to prove their claims, the Pharisees decided to consolidate their faith upon Scripture they felt was long established and already widely accepted as God's word. Accordingly, they fell back to Scripture originally written in Hebrew. Anything not originally written in Hebrew they did not accept. This included much Scripture the Christians used to prove that Christ is the Messiah.

The unbelieving Judeans fell back to an earlier stage in their religious development. What they retained is still true, but it is not all that had been revealed to Israel. Whatever their accountability for the way they responded to the Gospel, these individuals have already made their account with the Lord of Israel, so it is not for me to judge them. Their descendants did not see what they saw. Their descendants have few alternatives but to base their faith in Judaism upon the testimony and Scripture passed down to them. Their descendants continue to this day as the remnant of Israel. They include many sincere people who do not recognize Christ. My point is that the remnant of Israel will remain unmoved by faith in Christ until the end times. God has revealed this and has provided the circumstances whereby this can take place.

#### APOCALYPSE 12:15-16

15 *And the serpent cast out of his mouth*

*after the woman, water as it were a river; that he might cause her to be carried away by the river.*

16 *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river, which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

God's word has been compared to living waters that come from heaven that people might have spiritual life. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that if she drank the water he would give her, she would never again thirst (John 4:15). The water symbolizes God's truth. I think the water spewed by the serpent symbolizes false inspirations that bring not life but death. The earth rescued the woman by swallowing this water so it could not sweep her away.

The devil inspired lies, persecutions, bigotry, and violence against the woman to destroy her. This flood of hatred made her existence miserable throughout her exile, but it did not destroy her.

The most recent and worst persecution was the Nazi Holocaust. Hitler's inspiration was to eliminate the Jewish people, and the Nazis went to frightening lengths to accomplish it. But other people, entirely independent of the Jews and for national security reasons of their own, destroyed the Nazi regime at a time when the Jews were absolutely helpless to defend themselves. The woman, the remnant, survived.

#### APOCALYPSE 12:17

17 *And the dragon was very angry against the woman: and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

At the beginning of the Church age there was no Nazi Germany to be mobilized against the woman, but there was the Roman Empire, so the dragon went to mobilize the Roman Empire.

APOCALYPSE 12:18

*15 And he stood upon the sand of the sea.*

The sea is the Mediterranean. The Judeans would, from their perspective, recognize that Rome lies directly opposite them across the Mediterranean Sea.

<< end of chap 10 >>



## Chapter 11

### The Sea Beast: The Roman Empire

#### APOCALYPSE 13:1-4

- 1 *And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.*
- 2 *And the beast, which I saw, was like to a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his own strength and great power.*
- 3 *And I saw one of his heads as it were slain to death: and his death's wound was healed. And all the earth was in admiration after the beast.*
- 4 *And they adored the dragon, which gave power to the beast: and they adored the beast, saying: Who is like to the beast? and who shall be able to fight with him?*

**A** great beast rises from the sea. This beast has seven heads and ten horns, and a crown rests on each horn. One head has a mortal wound, but the beast still lives.

This sign is similar to the previous signs. It represents a collective entity too big to be seen by human eyes. This beast is the Roman Empire. Judeans would visualize it

rising from the sea because Rome is across the Mediterranean from Judea. It looks like a leopard but has a mouth like a lion and feet like a bear. This shows how powerful Rome is. Most strange, the beast has seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns refer to vassal kings allied with Rome. The ten horns are described again in Apoc. 17:9-13 under the first sight. The beast just received the dragon's strength and great power.

The beast has seven heads to show the seven divine heads that ruled the Roman Empire starting when it, with its heads, dared to presume that it was divine. The first five of the seven divine Caesars were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Nero is the head with the mortal wound.

I earlier mentioned the divine Caesars when I discussed Gaius Caligula. Gaius Caligula seriously abused the power and authority given him as Caesar. Thinking he really was a god, he tried to depose the Most High God from the Judean Temple and impose Caesar worship there. He met disaster, but it was a personal disaster. A man he insulted murdered him. His death did not end the dynasty of Julius Caesar. His uncle, a distant nephew of Julius Caesar, succeeded him.

Nero was the next member of Caesar's dynasty to seriously abuse his power and authority. He made so many enemies in Rome that finally the Roman Senate conspired to kill him. He committed suicide. This time the Empire almost died when the head died. I now cite historical events to show how Nero fits this vision as the head with the mortal wound.

First I will show how his blatant immorality and cruelty shocked even the pagan Romans:

*Although at first his acts of wantonness,  
lust, extravagance, avarice and cruelty were*

*gradual and secret, and might be condoned as follies of youth, yet even then their nature were such that no one doubted that they were defects of his character and not due to his time of life. No sooner was twilight over than he would catch up a cap or a wig and go to the taverns or range about the streets playing pranks, which however were very far from harmless; for he used to beat men as they came home from dinner, stabbing any who resisted him and throwing them into the sewers. He would even break into the shops and rob them, setting up a market in the Palace, where he divided the booty which he took, sold it at an auction and then squandered the proceeds. In the strife which resulted he often ran the risk of losing his eyes or even his life, for he was beaten almost to death by a man of the senatorial order whose wife he had maltreated. Warned by this he never afterwards ventured to appear in public at that hour without having his tribunes follow him at a distance and unobserved. Even in the daytime he would be carried privately to the theater in a sedan, and from the upper part of the proscenium would watch the brawls of the pantomimic actors and egg them on, and when they came to blows and fought with stones and broken benches he himself threw many missiles at the people and even broke a praetor's head. Little by little, however, as his vices grew stronger, he dropped jesting and secrecy and with no attempt at disguise openly broke out into worse crime.*

(XII, Nero, 26-7) (Suetonius, II, pp. 129-31).

His adulteries and homosexuality are notorious. We

still hear today of his immorality:

*Besides abusing freeborn boys and seducing married women, he debauched the vestal virgin Rubria. The freedwoman Acte he all but made his lawful wife, after bribing some ex-consuls to perjure themselves by swearing that she was of royal birth. He castrated the boy Sporus and actually tried to make a woman of him; and he married him with all the usual ceremonies, including a dowry and a bridal veil, took him to his house attended by a great throng, and treated him as a wife. And the witty jest that someone made is still current, that it would have been well for the world if Nero's father Domitius had had that kind of wife. This Sporus, decked out with the finery of the empress and riding in a litter, he took with him to the assizes and marts of Greece, and later at Rome through the Street of the Images, fondly kissing him from time to time. That he even desired illicit relations with his own mother, and was kept from it by her enemies, who feared that such a relationship might give the reckless and insolent woman too great influence, was notorious, especially after he added to his concubines a courtesan who was said to look very like Agrippina. Even before that, so they say, whenever he rode in a litter with this mother, he had incestuous relations with her, which were betrayed by the stains on his clothing.*

(XII, Nero, 28) (Suetonius, II, pp. 132-4).

Nero murdered many innocent people who got in his way. Within his own family he poisoned his stepbrother

Britannicus. He thought Britannicus, the natural son of Claudius and, therefore, the true heir, would be a rival to the throne. He ordered the murder of his mother when she became meddlesome. He ordered a physician to overdose his aunt's medication to kill her. He had his first wife, Octavia, executed. He kicked to death his second wife, Poppaea, who was pregnant with his child. He even had people murdered on a whim:

*It chanced that a comet had begun to appear on several successive nights, a thing which is commonly believed to portend the death of great rulers. Worried by this, and learning from his astrologer Balbillus that Kings usually averted such omens by the death of some distinguished man, thus turning them from themselves upon the heads of the nobles, he resolved on the death of all the eminent men of the State; but the more firmly, and with some semblance of justice, after the discovery of two conspiracies. The earlier and more dangerous of these was that of Piso at Rome; the other was set on foot by Vinicius at Beneventum and detected there. The conspirators made their defense in triple sets of fetters, some voluntarily admitting their guilt, some even making a favor of it, saying that there was no way except by death that they could help a man disgraced by every kind of wickedness. The children of those who were condemned were banished or put to death by poison or starvation; a number are known to have been slain all together at a single meal along with their preceptors and attendants, while others were prevented from earning their daily bread. (XII, Nero, 36) (Suetonius, II,*

pp. 151-3).

This shows how easily Nero complied with Satanic temptation, even to harm his own family.

There was no check against his immorality. His subjects were afraid to admonish him. Many flattered him, telling him he was doing right. For example, here is how flatterers consoled Nero after he had his mother murdered:

*But the emperor, when the crime was at last accomplished, realized its portentous guilt. The rest of the night, now silent and stupified, now and still oftener starting up in terror, bereft of reason, he awaited the dawn as if it would bring with it his doom. He was first encouraged to hope by the flattery addressed to him, at the prompting of Burrus, by the centurions and tribunes, who again and again pressed his hand and congratulated him on his having escaped an unforeseen danger and his mother's daring crime. Then his friends went to the temples, and, an example having once been set, the neighboring towns of Campania testified their joy with sacrifices and deputations.*

(Annals 14:10) (Tacitus, *The Annals*, p. 326).

This fifth head of the "divine" Empire meddled in God's relationship with the chosen people. Nero was asked whether Caesarea should be a pagan city or a Judean city. I can imagine how the dragon would influence Nero's decision. Nero said it should be pagan. I mentioned this earlier. His willingness to make a Judean city pagan interfered with the city's obligation to serve only the one God. The Judeans, faced with this injustice, took to the streets. The Pagans fought back.

Nero showed little concern for Judaism. He ignored prior concessions granted to Judaism by previous Caesars who respected the God the Judeans worshiped. These concessions amounted to religious liberty for the Judeans. Nero's renegeing on Rome's commitments fanned hatred, anger, and frustration. It helped push the Judeans to revolt. When they revolted, Nero authorized maximum force to gain control. Although it was unbelieving Judeans who revolted, Rome fought all Judeans. So Nero's openness to temptation brought the Empire to fight both the woman and the child.

Nero admired large and beautiful buildings. He wanted to rebuild Rome, but he could not do it as long as the old structures remained. Someone's chance remark gave him the opportunity he was looking for:

*When someone in a general conversation said: 'When I am dead, be earth consumed by fire,' he rejoined 'Nay, rather while I live.' and his action was wholly in accord. For under cover of displeasure at the ugliness of the old buildings and the narrow, crooked streets, he set fire to the city so openly that several ex-consuls did not venture to lay hands on his chamberlains although they caught them on their estates with tow and firebrands, while some granaries near the Golden House, whose room he particularly desired, were demolished by engines of war and then set on fire, because their walls were of stone. For six days and seven nights the destruction raged, while the people were driven for shelter to monuments and tombs. At that time, besides an immense number of dwellings, the private houses of leaders of old were burned, still adorned with trophies of victory, and the*

*temples of the gods vowed and dedicated by the kings and later in the Punic and Gallic wars, and whatever else interesting and noteworthy had survived from antiquity. Viewing the conflagration from the tower of Maecenas and exulting, as he said in 'the beauty of the flames,' he sang the whole of the 'Sack of Ilium [Troy],' dressed up in his regular stage costume. Furthermore, to gain from this calamity too all the spoil and booty possible, while promising the removal of the debris and dead bodies free of cost he allowed no one to approach the ruins of his own property; and from the contributions which he not only received, but even demanded, he nearly bankrupted the provinces and exhausted the resources of individuals.*

(XII, Nero, 38) (Suetonius, II, pp. 155-7).

When he realized that the people suspected him, he blamed the fire on the Christians. He withdrew protection of Christians so the Romans could vent their fury on them. The fire destroyed ten of Rome's fourteen sectors. Outraged victims beat Christians and dragged them through the streets. Some they threw into the Tiber River. Seeing that the Romans did blame the Christians, Nero declared the Christians public enemies and authorized their execution. This is the first Roman persecution of Christians:

*But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiation of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations,*



*called Christians by the populace.*

(Annals 15:44) (Tacitus, *The Annals*, p. 380).

In front of angry Romans, gladiators strangled Christians or stabbed them. Wild animals, half starved, stalked Christians across the arena and ate them amid the roar of cheering Romans. Crucified Christians died a slow and pitiless death. Others, covered with flaming tar, served as lights for night games. Old men, young women, even boys and girls were slaughtered.

It was worse for those Nero caught. Applauded by his flatterers, he unveiled his cruelty and sadism as he helped torture the victims.

*He so prostituted his own chastity that after defiling almost every part of his body, he at last devised a kind of game, in which, covered with the skin of some wild animal, he was let loose from a cage and attacked the private parts of men and women, who were bound to stakes, and when he had sated his mad lust, was dispatched by his freedman Doryphorus; . . .* (XII, Nero, 29) (Suetonius, II, p. 133).

*It is even believed that it was his wish to throw living men to be torn to pieces and devoured by a monster of Egyptian birth, who would crunch raw flesh and anything else that was given him. Transported and puffed up with such successes, as he considered them, he boasted that no prince had ever known what power he really had, . . .* XII, Nero, 37) (Suetonius, II, p. 153).

At the same time, Nero sent Vespasian to crush the

Judean revolt as I described earlier under the first and second woes. So Nero is fighting the woman and all her children. Gradually Nero's cruelty and murders alienated the Roman Senators. They finally decided to depose him. First they conspired with the nobility to assassinate Nero and replace him with the nobleman Piso. Nero got wind of it. He launched a murderous purge that killed Piso and many others.

Resentment over his ruthless reprisal led to an army revolt in Gaul. Nero assumed dictatorial power. He threatened a second purge against the conspirators in Gaul. More army revolts broke out in Spain and Africa. Then, frightened for his life, Nero went into hiding. He still tried to control the government by sending messengers to the Senate.

Seeing their clandestine plots fail, the Roman Senate took formal action. They declared Nero a public enemy and sentenced him to death. When troops loyal to the Senate found Nero and were ready to seize him, he committed suicide:

*While he hesitated, a letter was brought to Phaon by one of his couriers. Nero snatching it from his hand read that he had been pronounced a public enemy by the senate, and that they were seeking to punish him in the ancient fashion; and he asked what manner of punishment that was. When he learned that the criminal was stripped, fastened by the neck in a fork and then beaten to death with rods, in mortal terror he seized two daggers which he had brought with him, and then, after trying the point of each, put them up again, pleading that the fated hour had not yet come. Now he would beg Sporus to begin to lament and wail, and now entreat someone to*

*help him take his life by setting him the example; anon he reproached himself for his cowardice in such words as these: 'To live is a scandal and a shame - this does not become Nero, does not become him - one must be resolute at such times - come, rouse thyself!' And now the horsemen were at hand who had orders to take him off alive. When he heard them he quavered: 'Hark, now strikes on my ear the trampling of swift footed coursers!', and drove a dagger into his throat, aided by Epaphroditus his private secretary. He was all but dead when a Centurion rushed in, and as he placed a cloak to the wound, pretending that he had come to aid him, Nero merely gasped: 'Too late!' and 'This is fidelity!' With these words he was gone, his eyes so set and starting from his sockets that all who saw him shuddered with horror. (XII, Nero, 49) (Suetonius, II, pp. 177-9).*

This "wounded head's" death in A.D. 68 ended the dynasty started by Julius Caesar. The Romans had a premonition this would happen:

*The race of the Caesars ended with Nero. That this would be so was shown by many portents and especially by two very significant ones. Years before, as Livia was returning to her estate near Veii, immediately after her marriage to Augustus, an eagle which flew by dropped into her lap a white hen, holding in its beak a sprig of laurel, just as the eagle had carried it off. Livia resolved to rear the fowl and plant the sprig, whereupon such a great brood of*

*chickens was hatched that to this day the villa is called 'Ad Gallinas' [The Hen Roost], and such a grove of laurel sprang up, that the Caesars gathered their laurels from it when they were going to celebrate triumphs. Moreover it was the habit of those who triumphed to plant other branches at once in the same place, and it was observed that just before the death of each of them the tree which he had planted withered. Now in Nero's last year the whole grove died from the root up, as well as all the hens. Furthermore, when shortly afterwards the temple of the Caesars was struck by lightning, the heads fell from all the statues at the same time, and his scepter too was dashed from the hand of Augustus.*

(XII, Galba, I) (Suetonius, II, p 191).

The Roman senate intended to appoint a new emperor from a different family, but lost control of government when other families revolted. Within ten months, there were three military coups under Galba, then Otho, then Vitellius. The mortally wounded empire was in danger of falling apart as did the Greek empire when Alexander the Great died:

*When Vitellius was dead, the war had indeed come to an end, but peace had yet to begin. Sword in hand, throughout the capital, the conquerors hunted down the conquered with merciless hatred. The streets were choked with carnage, the squares and temples reeked with blood, for men were massacred everywhere as chance threw them in the way. Soon, as their license increased, they began to search for and drag forth hidden foes. Whenever they saw a*

*man tall and young they cut him down, making no distinction between soldiers and civilians. But the ferocity, which in the first impulse of hatred could be gratified only by blood, soon passed into the greed of gain. They let nothing be kept secret, nothing be closed; Vitellianists, they pretended, might be thus concealed. Here was the first step to breaking open private houses; here, if resistance were made, a pretext for slaughter. The most needy of the populace and the most worthless of the slaves did not fail to come forward and betray their wealthy masters; others were denounced by friends. Everywhere were lamentations, and wailings, and all the miseries of a captured city, till the license of the Vitellianist and Othonianist soldiery, once so odious, was remembered with regret. The leaders of the party, so energetic in kindling civic strife, were incapable of checking the abuse of victory. In stirring up tumult and strife the worst men can do the most, but peace and quiet cannot be established without virtue. (Histories, IV, 1) (Tacitus, *The Histories*, p. 191).*

Rome found a savior in Vespasian, a well-respected general. He was then still battling the Judeans. Patriots in Rome and elsewhere asked Vespasian to head a fourth (and final) coup and save the Empire.

The Romans also had a premonition that there would come from Judea men destined to rule the world. The Judeans, of course, prophesied the Messiah, but the pagan Romans misunderstood. The Roman historians Suetonius and Tacitus both mention it, and both took it to mean that Vespasian and his sons were the men:

*There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judea to rule the world. This prediction, referring to the emperor of Rome, as afterwards appeared from the event, the people from Judea took to themselves; accordingly, they revolted, and, after killing their governor, they routed the consular ruler of Syria as well, when he came to the rescue, and took one of his eagles. Since to put down this rebellion required a considerable army with a leader of no little enterprise, yet one to whom so great power could be entrusted without risk, Vespasian was chosen for the task, both as a man of tried energy and as one in no wise to be feared because of the obscurity of his family and name.*

(XII, Vespasian, 4) (Suetonius, II, p. 289).

*Prodigies had occurred, which this nation [Judea], prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice . . . . Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth.*

(Histories, V, 13) (Tacitus, *The Histories*, p. 665).

If the prophecies of the Messiah were now applied to Vespasian, the new head of the wounded beast, is it any wonder that the earth admired the beast and said: "*Who is like to the beast?*" and "*Who shall be able to fight with him?*"

Vespasian's family formed a new dynasty. He is the sixth head. His son, Titus, is the seventh head. This dynasty retained the title "Caesar" and encouraged the Romans to continue worshiping the current Caesar as they had been doing. Titus reigned as "Caesar" when the Judeans first heard this portion of the Apocalypse.

Apoc. 17 also describes a second vision of the sea beast, this time providing more detail about the seven heads.

*And the beast which was, and is not: the same also is the eight, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction.* (Apoc. 17:11)

It reveals that there will be an eighth head that is one of the first seven and is also the beast. This eighth head will be Vespasian's youngest son, Domitian, who will succeed Titus. He, more so than Titus or Vespasian, will abuse the Empire's claim to divinity. He, just like Nero before him, will enforce Caesar-worship. But I am getting ahead of myself. When the early Church and Judea first heard this prophecy, Domitian was not yet emperor.

#### APOCALYPSE 13:5-10

- 5 *And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies: and power was given to him to do two and forty months.*
- 6 *And he opened his mouth unto blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and*

*his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

7 *And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation.*

8 *And all that dwell upon the earth adored him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world.*

9 *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

10 *He that shall lead into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that shall kill by the sword, must be killed by the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Remember when John saw the dragon running to the shore? The dragon was looking for help in a new fight against the woman and her child. When the dragon arrived at the shore, this vision of the Roman Empire emerged from the sea.

<< end of chap eleven >>



## **Chapter 12**

### **The Land Beast: A New Caesar Against the Child Born Of Judea**

#### APOCALYPSE 13:11-18

- 11 *And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.*
- 12 *And he executed all the power of the former beast in his sight; and he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose wound to death was healed.*
- 13 *And he did great signs, so that he made also fire to come down from heaven unto the earth in the sight of men.*
- 14 *And he seduced them that dwell on the earth, for the signs, which were given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and lived.*
- 15 *And it was given him to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak; and should cause, that whosoever will not adore the image of the beast, should be slain.*
- 16 *And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freedmen and*

*bondmen, to have a character in their right hand, or on their foreheads.*

17 *And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the character, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

18 *Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man: and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six.*

**T**his vision shows a beast rising from the earth. The beast resembles a lamb. But Jesus is a lamb, or as the Baptist put it, a lamb is the symbol of the human Incarnation of Jesus. This beast rose from the earth. In a similar genesis, the human flesh of Jesus rose from the earth. It arose through the human descendants of Adam who rose from the earth, for God created Adam from the dust of the earth.

This beast that resembles a lamb, therefore, is a man. He will become the next divine head, the eighth head, of the sea beast. The same spirit that motivates the sea beast will motivate this man, and this man will speak like the dragon. He will wield the first beast's power and will make the earth and all the earth's inhabitants worship the first beast. I propose that this man is the emperor Domitian, the second successor of his father, Vespasian.

Domitian got his first taste of power when he was eighteen. Troops loyal to his father had just defeated the short-lived coup of Vitellius. They wanted Vespasian as emperor, but Vespasian and his eldest son, Titus, were still in Judea. In spite of Domitian's youth, he was the logical figurehead to rule until his father returned to Rome.

*It was only after victory that he [Domitian] ventured forth after being hailed as Caesar, he assumed the office of city praetor with consular powers, but only in name, turning over all the judicial business to his next colleague. But he exercised all the tyranny of his high position so lawlessly, that it was even then apparent what sort of man he was going to be. Not to mention all details, after making free with the wives of many men, he went so far as to marry Domitia Longina, who was the wife of Aelius Lamia, and in a single day he assigned more than twenty positions in the city and abroad, which led Vespasian to say more than once that he was surprised that he did not appoint the emperor's successor with the rest.*

(XII, Domitian, 1) (Suetonius, II, pp. 341-3).

Vespasian and both his sons revived emperor worship. They authorized a religious cult with a priesthood. Noble-men vied for position as priests and built new temples. In this way, the divine Caesars of the Flavian family were worshiped, same as the divine Caesars of the family of Julius Caesar had been.

Domitian was jealous of his brother Titus, and many times plotted against him when Titus succeeded his father:

*On the death of his father he hesitated for some time whether to offer a double largess to the soldiers, and he never had any compunction about saying that he had been left a partner in the imperial power, but that the will had been tampered with. And from that time on he never ceased to plot against his brother secretly and openly, until Titus was seized with a dangerous*

*illness, when Domitian ordered that he be left for dead, before he had actually drawn his last breath. And after his death he bestowed no honor upon him, save that of deification, and he often assailed his memory in ambiguous phrases, both in his speeches and in his edicts.*

(XII, Domitian, 2) (Suetonius, II, pp. 343-5).

When Domitian succeeded Titus in A.D. 81, the priests of this cult, the "College of the Flaviales," wore crowns that had borne the image of Vespasian and would now bear Titus as well. Domitian told the priests to include his image also:

*He presided at the competitions in half-boots, clad in a purple toga in the Greek fashion, and wearing upon his head a golden crown with figures of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, while by his side sat the priest of Jupiter and the college of the Flaviales, similarly dressed, except that their crowns bore his image as well.*

(XII, Domitian, 4) (Suetonius, II, p. 349).

This implied that Domitian was already divine while yet alive. The sea beast now, in A.D. 81, has a head that thinks like he thinks, a head that has an unscrupulous character ready to follow any selfish temptation.

The sea beast, as described earlier, is the Roman Empire. The land beast is a human being serving as the living head of the Empire. A human head is visible to other humans and can talk to them. When Domitian follows the whims placed in his mind by the dragon, he allows the dragon to influence both him and the Empire. Domitian will then--he actually did--cause people to worship the image of the beast that was slain but now lives. He did this by

encouraging and, later, enforcing emperor worship.

As divine emperor, Domitian abused his power, his throne, and his vast authority in many ways. He was cruel and sadistic:

*After his victory in the civil war he became even more cruel, and to discover any conspirators who were in hiding, tortured many of the opposite party by a new form of inquisition, inserting fire into their privates; and he cut off the hands of some of them . . . . His savage cruelty was not only excessive, but also cunning and sudden. He invited one of his stewards to his bed-chamber the day before crucifying him, made him sit beside him on his couch, and dismissed him in a secure and gay frame of mind, even deigning to send him a share of his dinner . . . . To abuse men's patience the more insolently, he never pronounced an unusually dreadful sentence without a preliminary declaration of clemency, so that there came to be no more certain indication of a cruel death than the leniency of his preamble.*

(XII, Domitian, 10-11) (Suetonius, II, p. 363).

He had many people murdered:

*A householder who said that a Thracian gladiator was a match for the murmillio, but not for the giver of the games, he caused to be dragged from his seat and thrown into the arena to dogs, with this placard: 'A favourer of the Thracians who spoke impiously.' He put to death many Senators, among them several ex-consuls . . . [some of them] . . . on the ground*

*of plotting revolution, the rest on any charge however trivial. He slew Aelius Lamia for joking remarks . . . Salvius Cocceianus, because he kept the birthday of the emperor Otho, his paternal uncle; Mettius Pompusianus because it was commonly reported that he had an imperial nativity and carried about a map of the world on parchment . . . Sallustius Lucullus, Governor of Britain, for allowing some lances of a new pattern to be called 'Lucullean,' after his own name . . . Flavius Sabinus too, one of his cousins, because on the day of the consular elections the crier had inadvertently announced him to the people as emperor elect instead of consul. (XII, Domitian, 10) (Suetonius, II, pp. 359-63).*

He was sexually immoral:

*His constant sexual intercourse he called bed-wrestling, as if it were a kind of exercise. It was reported that he depilated his concubines with his own hand and swam with common prostitutes. After persistently refusing his niece, who was offered him in marriage when she was still a maid, because he was entangled in an intrigue with Domitia, he seduced her shortly afterwards when she became the wife of another, and that too during the lifetime of Titus. Later, when she was bereft of father and husband, he loved her ardently and without disguise, and even became the cause of her death by compelling her to get rid of a child of his by abortion.*

(XII, Domitian, 22) (Suetonius, II, p. 383).

He robbed the Roman people:

*Reduced to financial straits by the cost of his buildings and shows, as well as by the additions which he had made to the pay of the soldiers . . . he had no hesitation in resorting to every sort of robbery. The property of the living and the dead was seized everywhere on any charge brought by any accuser . . . . Estates of those in no way connected with him were confiscated, if but one man came forward to declare that he had heard from the deceased during his lifetime that Caesar was his heir. Besides other taxes, that on the Jews was levied with the utmost rigour . . . . I recall being present in my youth when the person of a man ninety years old was examined before the Procurator and a very crowded court, to see whether he was circumcised.*  
(XII, Domitian, 12) (Suetonius, II, pp. 365-7).

He believed he was a god privileged to do anything he desired:

*When he became emperor, he did not hesitate to boast in the senate that he had conferred their power on both his father and his brother, and that they had but returned him his own; nor on taking back his wife after their divorce, that he had 'recalled her to his divine couch.' He delighted to hear the people in the amphitheatre shout on his feast day: 'Good fortune attend our Lord and Mistress.' Even more, in the Capitoline competition, when all the people begged him with great unanimity to restore Palfurius Sura, who had been banished some*

*time before from the senate, and on that occasion received the prize for oratory, he deigned no reply, but merely had a crier bid them be silent. With no less arrogance he began as follows in issuing a circular letter in the name of his procurators, 'Our Master and our God bids that this be done.' And so the custom arose of henceforth addressing him in no other way even in writing or in conversation.*

(XII, Domitian, 13) (Suetonius, II, pp. 367-9).

His abuse of his vast authority as the Empire's divine head grew so great that:

*In this way he became an object of terror and hatred to all, but he was overthrown at last by a conspiracy of his friends and favorite freedmen, to which his wife was also privy. He had long since had a premonition of the last year and day of his life, and even the very hour and manner of his death. In his youth astrologers had predicted all this to him, and his father once even openly ridiculed him at dinner for refusing mushrooms, saying that he showed himself unaware of his destiny in not rather fearing the sword. Therefore he was at all times timorous and worried, and was disquieted beyond measure by even the slightest suspicions. It is thought that nothing had more effect in inducing him to ignore his proclamation about cutting down the vineyards than the circulation of notes containing the following lines:*

*'Gnaw at my root, as you will; even  
then shall I have juice in plenty  
To pour upon thee, O goat, when*



*at the altar you stand.*

(XII, Domitian, 14) (Suetonius, II, pp. 369-71).

*For eight successive months so many strokes of lightning occurred and were reported, that at last he cried: 'Well, let him now strike whom he will.' . . . Yet there was nothing by which he was so much disturbed as a prediction of the astrologer Ascleparion and what befell him. When this man was accused before the emperor and did not deny that he had spoken certain things which he had foreseen through his art, he was asked what his own end would be. When he replied that he would shortly be rent by dogs, Domitian ordered him killed at once; but to prove the fallibility of his art, he ordered that besides that his funeral be attended to with the greatest care. While this was being done, it chanced that the pyre was overset by a sudden storm and that the dogs mangled the corpse, . . .*

(XII, Domitian, 14) (Suetonius, II, pp. 373-5).

Finally he, himself, became a victim of violence:

*The day before he was killed he gave orders to have some apples which were offered him kept until the following day, and added: 'If only I am spared to eat them'; then turning to his companions, he declared that on the following day the moon would be stained with blood in Aquarius, and that a deed would be done of which men would talk all over the world. At about midnight he was so terrified that he leaped from his bed. The next morning he conducted the trial of a soothsayer sent from Germany, who*

*when consulted about lightning strokes had foretold a change of rulers, and condemned him to death. While he was vigorously scratching a festering wart on his forehead, and had drawn blood, he said: 'May this be all.' Then he asked the time, and by pre-arrangement the sixth hour was announced to him, instead of the fifth, which he feared. Filled with joy at this, and believing all danger now passed, he was hastening to the bath, when his chamberlain Parthenius changed his purpose by announcing that someone had called about a matter of great moment and would not be put off. Then he dismissed all his attendants and went to his bedroom, where he was slain.*

(XII, Domitian, 16) (Suetonius, II, pp. 375-7).

This beast from the earth has a name. The numerical value of the name is 666. This is a clue for Christians to recognize the beast when he comes. Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic lacked symbols to show numbers as we have today with Arabic numerals. These languages simply used letters for numbers. The ancient Latins and Greeks did the same. We are familiar today with some Latin letters used as Roman numerals.

In those days any word could be converted to a number by adding each letter's numerical value. This was frequently done with people's names to give a kind of code name. We do something similar today when we use the first letters of long titles to spell a shorter substitute word. UNESCO for "United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization" is a good example.

The English equivalents of the Hebrew letters for "Caesar Nero" have the following values:

Q	=	100
S	=	60
R	=	200
N	=	50
R	=	200
W	=	6
N	=	<u>50</u>
		666

The words stand for QAESAR (Caesar) NERWN (Neron) (Scullion, pp. 1278-9). In Hebrew, vowels are not written as letters but as vowel marks above or below each syllable, much as we use accent marks today. The vowel marks are frequently omitted. Therefore: QSR NRWN.

The results are similar if we use Latin rather than Hebrew. In Latin the letters spelling NERON have the following values (Barclay, II, p. 102):

N	=	50
E	=	6
R	=	500
O	=	60
N	=	<u>50</u>
		666

This beast from the earth has a name. The name is the number of a man. The number is 666. This is the number that Nero's name had. The new emperor will be another Nero. He will try to destroy the woman and her child just like Nero tried.

This portion of the Apocalyose was first preached before Domitian became emperor. Nero's memory was still fresh in people's minds. Rumor had it that Nero had not really died. He escaped and was hiding, planning vengeance against his enemies. The rumor found ready ears.

After all, Nero spent his latter years already hiding. Perhaps the Christians worried about these rumors and what would happen to them if Nero did return--or someone just like Nero.

Domitian seemed to be another Nero. He had a similar character. Both were immoral, even by pagan standards. Both were cruel. Both insisted upon emperor worship. Both claimed they were divine. Both persecuted the Church. Both authorized death for anyone refusing to humor them as gods. Both were killed while yet young.

One final similarity: both were the last members of their dynasties.

<< end of chap twelve >>

## **Chapter 13**

### **The Lamb With The Elect: Jesus With The Judeans Who Follow Him**

#### APOCALYPSE 14:1-5

- 1 *And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.*
- 2 *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps.*
- 3 *And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures; and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth.*
- 4 *These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb.*
- 5 *And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God.*

**T**his lamb is the same lamb described in Apoc. 5:6, the lamb standing as if slain. The lamb is Jesus. Jesus the Lamb stands on Mt. Zion with 144,000 souls who have followed him. These souls are the first fruits, the first ones that were redeemed from the earth. They are the elect in Apoc. 7:4, the Judeans who recognized Christ, who were faithful to him unto death, and who have reached his heavenly gathering.

Their number is shown in the traditional way the Israelites took their census: a roll call of tribes, so many persons from each tribe. To use round numbers showing that an adequate number is considered rather than make an actual count, the Israelites had a convention of squaring the number of the tribes and then multiplying it by one thousand. Twelve squared times one thousand is 144,000 persons. This is presented as an estimate of souls harvested as Israel gave birth to the Church.

In the previous chapters, the Dragon recruited the sea beast and land beast to help pursue the woman. She fled to the desert. The dragon wanted the beasts to fight the woman and her child (the Christians) and the rest of her seed (the still unbelieving Judeans). When these two beasts attacked, people, both Judean and Gentile, made their choice to accept Jesus or accept Rome. There was a big persecution. Those who refused to accept Rome were killed. They are the first fruits of the harvest.

#### APOCALYPSE 14:6-7

6 *And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue,*

*and people.*

- 7 *Saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come; and adore ye him, that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

The time has come for God to separate unbelievers from those who do believe, like a shepherd would separate goats from sheep. Angels will announce God's intentions and warn how serious God is. This is a "gospel" in the original meaning of the word. The time has also come to take the eternal gospel to the Gentiles.

"Gospel" is the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of "euaggelia," a Greek word meaning "good news," but more accurately it means "official and authentic news." It is "good" in the sense that it is accurate and reliable. The word was used in Roman times to denote the "authentic announcements" sent ahead by imperial officials to the people they were about to visit (Ford, p. 28). A messenger would arrive beforehand and tell the people how to prepare for the visit and what to expect. In the same way, the first angel proclaims God's authentic announcement: "*Fear the Lord, and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come; and adore ye him, that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water.*"

#### APOCALYPSE 14:8

- 8 *And another angel followed saying: That great Babylon is fallen, is fallen; which made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

"Babylon" refers to the unbelieving Judeans who still

control the nation. The word really refers to the city of Babylon, a city traditionally cited as an example of people resisting God until God disciplined them.

Shortly after the flood, Noah's descendants founded a city rather than disperse as God told them. They named the city Babylon. There they started to build a tower that would reach heaven. They did this to bring glory to themselves. Because of the people's defiance, God confused the languages. Since then "Babylon" has become a byword signifying any wholesale defiance of God by a human society.

The Judeans who control the nation and the Temple priesthood are resisting God. They are choosing their will rather than God's will. This self-will is evident in many strata of Judean society, even the highest strata. The ruling strata, Herod and his heirs, Judean aristocrats, and other influential persons who supported Herod had pursued their own agenda for many years.

Herod the Great's father, Antipater, had seized the throne by force from the Hasmoneans. He had no legitimate claim to rule Judea, but he found enough support from enough Judeans that he could take the throne from the legitimate king. He then allied himself with Rome to help him defeat the legitimate king's defenders. When Antipater's son, Herod the Great, heard that the promised Messiah had arrived, instead of accepting the promised one, he and his supporters tried to murder the child.

"Herod" is derived from a Greek word meaning "descendant of heroes" (Ricciotti, p. 10). Antipater was so much influenced by Greek culture (rather than traditional Judaism) that he wanted his son to be ranked as a Greek hero. All rulers of this dynasty bore the name "Herod." There was Antipater's son "Herod," the first named as Herod, known to history as "Herod the Great"; Antipater's grandson "Herod Antipas"; Antipater's great-grandson



"Herod Agrippa I"; and Antipater's great-great-grandson "Herod Agrippa II."

The priestly class was no better. The Judeans argued about legitimate succession of high priests ever since the days of Jonathan Maccabeus (Freedman, p.77 & Cornfield, p. 25) Jonathan ignored the traditional procedure and, on his own authority, named himself High Priest. This disrupted the traditional procedure and weakened the legitimacy of all subsequent high priests. When Rome conquered Judea, Pompey required that the High Priest be validated by Rome. This encouraged some candidates to seek Rome's favor beforehand. Many unworthy men became High Priest simply because Rome accepted them. These men were more interested in politics than in serving the Most High God.

Priests were divided into two camps: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees believed in life after death; the Sadducees did not. Being more worldly-minded than the Pharisees, the Sadducees readily cooperated with Rome, so the high priests validated by Rome were almost exclusively Sadducees. What a paradox! Men who do not believe in an afterlife are appointed to lead public worship of the God who rules the afterlife.

The Sadducees focused everything on success in this life. They wanted to comply with God's expectations, but they could not understand what God wanted because they did not believe in life after death. Many of them were also hypocrites. They faked piety. Many Pharisees did also. Jesus often warned the Sadducees and the Pharisees about this.

The lower strata, the common people, were no better. The Zealots wanted God to liberate Judea, and they tried to help God. Zealot methods violated the Commandments, yet many Judeans supported the Zealots. The whole nation was drifting away from God.

Simultaneously, Judea gave birth to the Christians.

People who understood what God had promised, who recognized Christ as the one foretold in Scripture; they accepted baptism. Actually, the Holy Spirit was drawing people of good will to believe and accept baptism. The Holy Spirit really tried to draw every Judean to believe, but many, for various reasons, did not believe.

Those who did believe formed one group, the Church. Those who did not believe stayed as they were. They, the unbelievers, became post-Church Judea. These unbelievers controlled the nation, the Temple, the priesthood--they controlled Judaism.

The four winds had been held back while the elect were marked. Now the four winds are released, and the unbelievers will fall from the preeminence their ancestors once had. Their ancestors were "*a light to the nations*" (Isaiah 42:6). The unbelievers, intoxicated with their own ambitions, had subverted their nation's mission. They brought not enlightenment but bad example before the Gentile nations.

#### APOCALYPSE 14:9-20

- 9 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: If any man shall adore the beast and his image, and receive his character on his forehead, or in his hand;*
- 10 *He shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of his wrath, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb.*
- 11 *And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever: neither have they rest day nor night, who*

*have adored the beast, and his image,  
and whoever receiveth the character  
of his name.*

12 *Here is the patience of the saints, who  
keep the commandments of God, and  
the faith of Jesus.*

13 *And I heard a voice from heaven,  
saying to me: Write: Blessed are the  
dead, who die in the Lord. From  
henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that  
they may rest from their labours; for  
their works follow them.*

14 *And I saw, and behold a white cloud;  
and upon the cloud one sitting like to  
the Son of man, having on his head a  
crown of gold, and in his hand a  
sharp sickle.*

15 *And another angel came out from the  
temple crying with a loud voice to  
him that sat upon the cloud: Thrust in  
thy sickle, and reap, because the hour  
is come to reap: for the harvest of the  
earth is ripe.*

16 *And he that sat on the cloud thrust his  
sickle into the earth, and the earth  
was reaped.*

17 *And another angel came out of the  
temple which is in heaven, he also  
having a sharp sickle.*

18 *And another angel came out from the  
altar, who has power over fire; and  
he cried with a loud voice to him that  
had the sharp sickle, saying: Thrust  
in thy sharp sickle, and gather the  
clusters of the vineyard of the earth;*

- because the grapes thereof are ripe.*
- 19 *And the angel thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth, and cast it into the great press of the wrath of God:*
- 20 *And the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press, up to the horses bridles, for a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

The harvest of souls is about to begin. It is shown as a reaping of fields and vintage of grapes. "One like the Son of Man" will do the reaping. An angel will do the vintage. God wills the harvest to be made. Humans and angels will do it, fallen humans and fallen angels included. The whole thing will be the natural consequences of what all of us, good and bad, are pursuing.

#### APOCALYPSE 15:1

- 1 *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having the seven last plagues. For in them is filled up the wrath of God.*

Judgment is about to begin upon the circumcised who oppose Jesus Christ. When the seven last plagues pour upon the earth, all things prophesied by the Baptist will happen. This will be the "great tribulation" for Judea. Judeans will be caught in the confrontation between the Empire's religious errors and God's truth. All Judeans, both those who believe Christ and those who do not, will be hated for not accepting the Empire's beliefs. Both groups will be persecuted. Many will be killed.

The Judeans, who believe Christ, will enter a spiritual sphere previously closed to humanity. This sphere tran-

scends death and brings a fuller life after death. It brings them into God's presence. The next vision of the sea of glass is symbolic of standing in the presence of God.

APOCALYPSE 15:2-4

- 2 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had overcome the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God:*
- 3 *And singing the canticle of Moses, the servant of God, and the canticle of the Lamb, saying: Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of ages*
- 4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only are holy: for all nations shall come, and shall adore in thy sight, because thy judgments are manifest.*

These believers conquered the beast. They are victorious. They have successfully passed through the three basic steps of growth in faith. They were successful in the attention they paid to the Gospel. They were successful in their response to it. By choosing it they, themselves, became chosen. And they were victorious because they remained faithful, even when persecuted, even to death. They stand in God's presence because they have conquered "the beast, and his image, and the number of his name." They sing the song of Moses, God's servant, and the Lamb's song. They sing like the four living beasts, the elders, and the angels in Apoc. 4.

The above describes the intermediary visions between the second and third woes. Their purpose was to explain why the destiny of those who do not believe will proceed as it does. Now the unbelieving will experience the third woe. With the events of the third woe, "*. . . the kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's. He shall reign for ever and ever.*" (Apoc. 11-15). Judea will cease to exist as an independent nation.

For the entire Christian age, the first-chosen will not be able to frustrate the mission of him who was last but now is first. He will ride forth with his saints, those who have died for his name and have entered the first resurrection. Their souls now reign with him in heaven (Apoc. 20:4-5). As spirits, they will confront Satan and the evil spirits that rule this world. They will fulfill the mandate given Adam "*to fill the earth and rule over . . . all living creatures that move upon the face of the earth.*" (Gen 1:28).

This titanic struggle will also involve humans in this life, for we in this world cannot avoid the spiritual clash between the inspirations we receive from God and the temptations we receive from the Devil. During this struggle, lasting throughout the Church Age, all nations will hear the Gospel's call to repentance. Every nation that refuses will be brought, through the wrath of God and the Lamb, to ruin and impotence, just like Judea was. At the end of the Church age, all persons and all nations will obey Jesus by personal choice--or face God's judgment.

At the end of the Church age, Christ will return. The descendants of the Judeans will look upon him their ancestors had pierced and will recognize the truth. They will proclaim him "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords."

The other nations too, after having gone through a similar chastisement, will suddenly meet the resurrected Christ. They will look upon him their ancestors tried to ignore and will quickly see the truth. He really does sit at

God's right hand. He really is "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords."

The third woe is bad news for the unbelievers who must experience it. Sobering as it is, the unbelievers (as we also) must face an even more sobering confrontation with God when they leave this life. It is then that each of them (as us) must face their final, irrevocable judgment.

How difficult it is for humans intent on having their own way in this life to pay attention to what is waiting for them the minute they leave it. It would be better for them if they experience intense terror and hardship before they die. They might then abandon their willfulness and throw themselves on God's mercy. After they die, when they can plainly see the facts, it will be too late for mercy.

Perhaps that is why God threatened them with the third woe.

<< end of chap thirteen >>



## Chapter 14

### The Vials: The Great Tribulation

#### APOCALYPSE 15:5-8

- 5 *And after those things I looked; and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:*
- 6 *And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed with clean and white linen, and gird about the breasts with golden girdles.*
- 7 *And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.*
- 8 *And the temple was filled with smoke from the majesty of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

**T**he last vision showed seven angels poised in heaven ready to strike the earth. Now John sees each angel receiving a golden vial. The vials contain God's wrath.

Time has run out for Judea. The Lord is already here. He is knocking at the door. The promised one, the beloved, like a gazelle, came: "*leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.*" (Song of Solomon 2:8). Those within Judea who respond will become the betrothed, the spouse, of the

promised one. Those who fail to respond, who do not recognize their day of visitation, will experience the great day of Almighty God. *"His threshing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* (Matt. 3:12). They will experience what all nations will experience, each in their own time--but Judea first--as they make their choice. Will they believe? Or will they not believe?

These verses were first preached in A.D. 50-70 by a disciple of John the Baptist. But even if, as some believe, John the Evangelist composed them as late as 96 A.D., the events I am about to describe would still be future events. They start in A.D. 100 and reach a climax in 135. So they are revelations of future events, but not, as commonly supposed, of the distant future.

These future events will happen soon. The first verse in the Apocalypse says so. *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants the things which must shortly happen . . . ."* (Apoc. 1:1). The last chapter repeats it: *"And he said to me: These words are most faithful and true. And the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show his servants the things which must be done shortly."* (Apoc. 22:6).

Christ founded the Church during his lifetime. The reaction against his followers mounted as the Christianity grew. It came first from the unbelieving Judeans, and later, as The Apocalypse predicted, from Rome. It was not merely the opposition of humans; fallen angels opposed the Christians. The Devil opposed the Christians.

The Devil tried to devour the child then tried to drown the mother. That is, the Devil spewed a flood of false inspirations and temptations to entice the Judeans not to believe and not to cooperate with the promised one. It did not work. The Devil then incited the Roman Empire,

including the visible head of the Empire, to attack the woman and all her children.

This enormous struggle questioned deep truths of human well-being, truths about the final goal of human destiny. This spiritual struggle (between those who will listen to God's word, and those who will not) reached a climax when Christianity was born. Jesus established a new way humans are to worship and serve God. It set aside, or really fulfilled, the old way. The Apocalypse describes it as a new heaven and a new earth (Apoc. 21:1).

The new "heaven," Christianity, will receive a new covenant through Jesus. Membership will be available to a new "earth" comprised of all humans without regard to tribal or racial lineage. The old "earth" involved the descendants of Israel.

The new covenant will bring a new sacrifice with a new high priest and a new temple. The new temple will serve a similar function, but will differ from the old Temple. It will not be as confined as was the old Temple. Its dimensions will pass through time and space and manifest itself wherever Christ's sacrifice is commemorated.

The mandate of the new covenant will be fulfilled at the end of time by Christ and his triumphant followers. *"Every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."* (Phil. 2:10-1).

During the early phase of this monumental struggle, the old Temple built of stone fell to the ground. The daily sacrifice held in the old Temple ceased. The old Temple gave way to the new temple, built--not of stone and not by humans, but built of humans. The old sacrifice, repeated each day, gave way to the new everlasting sacrifice of Calvary.

When the Christians embark on their mission, the

whole Judean nation will dissolve. The surviving Judeans, a remnant, will scatter throughout the world. The Gentiles will trample the holy city (Jerusalem) until the Messiah's followers complete his mission.

Jerusalem's downfall is the other half of the coin of Christianity's rise. The prophets had often warned what would happen if Jerusalem (and the whole nation) was not ready when the promised one came:

*For who shall have pity on thee, O Jerusalem?  
or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go to  
pray for thy peace? Thou hast forsaken me,  
saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: and I  
will stretch out my hand against thee, and I will  
destroy thee: I am weary of entreating thee. And  
I will scatter thee with a fan [threshing fork] in  
the gates of the land: I have killed and destroyed  
my people, and yet they are not returned from  
their ways. Their widows are multiplied unto me  
above the sands of the sea: I have brought upon  
them against the mother of the young man a  
spoiler at noonday: I have cast a terror on a  
sudden upon the cities. She that hath born seven  
is become weak, her soul hath fainted away: her  
sun is gone down while it was yet day: she is  
confounded and ashamed: and the residue of  
them I will give up to the sword in the sight of  
their enemies, saith the Lord.*

(Jeremiah 15:5-9)

And Isaiah:

*In that day shall this canticle be sung in the land  
of Juda. Sion the city of our strength a savior, a  
wall and a bulwark shall be set therein. Open ye  
the gates, and let the just nation, that keepeth the*

*truth enter in. The old error is passed away: thou wilt keep peace: peace, because we have hoped in thee. You have hoped in the Lord for evermore, in the Lord God mighty for ever. For he shall bring down them that dwell on high, the high city he shall lay low. He shall bring it down even to the ground, he shall pull it down even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.*

(Isaiah 26:1-6)

Jerusalem is the strong city in Juda. The just nation is Christianity. Instead of opening its gates that the just nation might enter, Jerusalem tried to destroy the Christians. Jerusalem, that high city, was brought to the ground.

#### APOCALYPSE 16:1-4

- 1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels: Go, and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*
- 2 *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a sore and grievous wound upon men, who had the character of the beast; and upon them that adored the image thereof.*
- 3 *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and there came blood as it were of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.*
- 4 *And the third poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of waters; and there was made blood.*

This is just retribution. The angel of water affirms it. So does the angel of the altar:

APOCALYPSE 16:5-7

- 5 *And I heard the angel of the waters saying: Thou art just, O Lord, who art, and who wast, the Holy One, because thou hast judged these things:*
- 6 *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.*
- 7 *And I heard another, from the altar, saying: Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments.*

It was the unbelieving Israelites who shed the prophets' blood. And their unbelieving descendants persecuted and killed the Messiah's followers.

APOCALYPSE 16:8-11

- 8 *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire:*
- 9 *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, neither did they penance to give him glory.*
- 10 *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their tongues for pain:*

*11 And they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pain and wounds, and did not penance for their works.*

An angel poured God's wrath on the sun. Another angel poured God's wrath on the beast's throne. The beast's kingdom, the Roman Empire, plunged into darkness.

Whatever true revelation once inspired the Roman pagan religion is now shut off. There were at least some true revelations made to pagans, for God had spoken directly to pagans in the past. Before God's covenant with Moses, God sent Melchizedek, king of Salem, a pagan, and yet a priest of the Most High God, to bless Abraham (Gen. 14:18). God spoke to the pagan Balaam when the King of Moab sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites (Num. 22:7-14).

The three wise men were pagans, but God spoke to them and revealed that the savior would soon be born. Cornelius, a devout Roman pagan who feared God and gave liberally to the needy, received a revelation through an angel: "*Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God. And now send men to Joppa, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter . . . . He will tell thee what thou must do.*" (Acts 10:4-6).

These pagans cooperated with God's revelations, but when the Gospel was brought to the Roman people, too many of them rejected God's revelation. The unbelieving Romans preferred to live their lives their own way, so God will now allow them to plunge into darkness and human folly until they learn to appreciate the value of what they had rejected. Here is how I relate these five vials to historical events between A.D. 70 to A.D. 128.

It took a full generation after their defeat in A.D. 70 before the Judeans could again exert any real influence in

their own homeland. So until A.D. 96, all Palestine was peaceful enough for economic prosperity to return. Nerva and Trajan, the first two of the five so-called "good emperors," helped nurture this prosperity. When King Herod Agrippa II died in Rome around A.D. 100, Rome annexed the areas he ruled into Palestine. Palestine was then annexed into Syria, a Roman province ruled by Roman procurators.

Right away conditions in Judea worsened. The new procurators, just like their predecessors thirty-five years earlier, found dishonest ways to enrich themselves. The Judeans resented this. Their resentment fueled a new desire for national independence. Like their fathers before them, they decided to fight for independence.

Trajan wanted to avert rebellion. To woo Judean loyalty, he promised to rebuild the Temple. This pleased the Judean leaders. They planned a feast day to commemorate it. They named the new feast "Trajan's Day." They planned to combine it with Purim and Nicanor's Day to make a three-day annual festival (Finkelstein, p. 219). They then found unexpected opposition to rebuilding the Temple.

The Judean Nationalists did not want the Temple rebuilt. They thought it would diffuse their argument for independence. The Samaritans did not want it rebuilt because they never had full access to the Temple. The Christians, too, did not want it rebuilt. The fall of the Temple had confirmed their understanding that the new covenant had replaced the old one.

Christian opposition caused Trajan to realize that Christianity was different from Judaism. At this time, Christians were persecuted in Rome. Trajan's realization that Christianity was a rival religion encouraged him to deal harshly with Judean Christians. He did this to please the unbelieving Judeans.

Also at this time, Rome had border problems with



Parthia on the eastern frontier. Parthia (modern Iran) had never been conquered by Rome. They had always been a menace on the eastern frontier. Trajan decided to invade Parthia. The Parthians let his armies penetrate as far as their Capitol, Ctesiphon, in A.D. 115. The Parthians then counterattacked behind the front lines in areas Trajan had already conquered. This sparked revolts elsewhere in the empire. With his initiative destroyed, Trajan retreated to Antioch in A.D. 116.

He kept his army in Antioch over the winter. That winter, a severe earthquake struck the city. The Judeans took this as a sign that the Messiah was coming. They began at once to prepare for the Messiah's arrival.

Judean hopes, and the nationalistic sentiments that fueled the hopes, were fanned into open rebellion by the Judean Nationalist Party. This was a new political party. It was similar to the Zealot party that was active during the last war.

The Judeans thought that the Temple would rise again in A.D. 120 because that would be the jubilee year after its destruction. So the time seemed ripe for the Messiah. The jubilee year, according to Mosaic law, occurs every fifty years. All real estate, even if it had been sold, was to be returned to its original owners in the Jubilee year. This was mentioned earlier when viewing the Temple mount.

Around this time, Loukuas Andreas, a Judean in Cyrene, electrified the Judeans with his conviction that now is the time. They accepted him as "king" and revolted, even in cities far from Palestine. They attacked everything pagan.

Since these attacks occurred in pagan cities outside Judea, the pagans retaliated against the Judeans. It quickly escalated into racial war.

Some fighting spread into Palestine, but the bulk of this war was fought by Judean populations outside Palestine. Trajan abandoned his war against Parthia and

used his armies to restore order within the Empire. History calls this the "War under Trajan."

Trajan appointed Marcius Turbo to suppress the rebellion in Africa, and Lucius Quietus, a Moorish general, to crush rebellion in Palestine. Trajan died in 117. Hadrian succeeded him.

Hadrian spent two years trying to stop the insurrection. He tried not to be as harsh as Trajan. One of his first acts was to replace the brutal Lusius Quietus. The insurrection was finally put down in 119. More than a hundred thousand Judeans died. The beautiful synagogue in Alexandria lay in ruin. Some Judean cities also lay ruined.

Hadrian then decided to rebuild Jerusalem. He renamed the city "Aelia Capitolina." He did not plan, however, to rebuild the Temple. This frustrated Judean hopes again, and the uneasy peace imposed after so much bloodshed fell apart.

Again the Judeans yearned for independence. Nationalistic fervor revived. Judeans formed underground resistance groups. By 125, tensions had risen high enough that Rome reacted against any show of nationalist sentiment.

Among other things, Rome forbade public readings of any Scripture judged to foster nationalist bias--the book of Ester, for example. The book of Ester always had been read during the public celebration of Purim. Now it cannot be read. Judean resentment grew because of this.

Rome also outlawed circumcision. Rome claimed that circumcision violates a Roman law against mutilation. The key words cited against circumcision were that people should not mutilate the genitals (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 21).

The Roman law really banned castration and was already enforced by Nerva. Hadrian banned both castration and circumcision. He made both punishable by death.

Hadrian's new law, whatever his motive, amounted to religious persecution. This is the first time Judaism had

been persecuted since Antiochus IV Epiphanes three-hundred years earlier. During that earlier persecution, the Maccabees led a revolt that eventually won Judean independence.

That persecution and revolt had a profound influence on apocalyptic literature. It came to serve as the framework for prophecies, even Christian prophecies, about the end times. To the Judeans of 125, it did seem as though it were the end times. Almost all Judeans expected the Messiah. Those who did not believe Jesus looked for someone else. Overzealous men all over Judea pointed out would-be Messiahs.

Into this turmoil, Hadrian stirred one blunder after another. In the year 128, word got out that Hadrian now planned a temple to Jupiter rather than rebuild the Judaic Temple. This galvanized the Judeans. Two respected leaders, Ishmael and Simeon, who up to this point were pacifists, now talked rebellion. Rome executed them.

These two men had restrained the extremism within the Nationalist Party. With their death, the leadership passed to the militant wing, to a man with extraordinary charisma. He was an up-and-coming leader with his own guerrilla army. He had already shown his brilliance as a military strategist. His name was Simeon ben Kosiba. He will lead Judea to disaster.

#### APOCALYPSE 16:12-16

- 12 *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and dried up the water thereof, that a way might be prepared for the kings from the rising of the sun.*
- 13 *And I saw from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false*

*prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.*

- 14 *For they are the spirits of devils working signs, and they go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, to gather them to battle against the great day of the Almighty God.*
- 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.*
- 16 *And he shall gather them together into a place, which in Hebrew is called Armagedon.*

An angel pours the sixth vial on the Euphrates river. The river runs dry, allowing passage for an invading army. Three unclean spirits gather the nations for the final onslaught.

I believe this final onslaught is the war of A.D. 131-5. The Roman army destroyed all Judean resistance and deported the survivors. Very few commentaries mention this war. There was no eyewitness historian to report it like Josephus reported the earlier war. In that earlier war, Rome destroyed the Temple and the Holy City. But the Judean nation survived. In this war, Rome literally destroyed the Judean nation.

Simon ben Kosiba appealed to the Judeans. They thought he was the Messiah, but he led them to disaster. Jesus had already warned the Judeans: *"I am come in the name of my father, and you receive me not: If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive."* (John, 5:43). The unbeliever's rejection of Jesus, their acceptance of a false messiah, and their total destruction fits very well this third and final woe: "The end is here!"

The first mention of Kosiba dates to A.D. 128, right after the execution of Ishmael and Simon. Kosiba led one group of partisan fighters. When the Judeans looked to him for inspiration, he encouraged all the separate groups to unite. Each separate group had already fought the Roman tenth legion, but none could defeat the legion. The tenth legion, stationed near the ruins of Jerusalem, was there to enforce Roman rule in Judea. Tinius Rufus, the procurator, finally told the tenth legion to destroy all the partisan groups. This helped encourage the partisans to unite under Kosiba.

Kosiba spent most of 129, training this army, organizing its chain of command, and planning an offensive. Then he attacked and defeated the tenth legion. The Judeans hated the tenth legion because it provoked the first war, and because it destroyed the last Judean resistance at Masada. They also resented the tenth legion's choice of a wild pig for its emblem. Kosiba's victory won him wild enthusiasm and made him a national hero.

A year later, many Judeans compared Kosiba to Judas Maccabeus, the Judean patriot who led the revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Others thought he might actually be the Messiah come to liberate Israel. Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph wondered about this. Akiba was a famous Judean leader. He started his schooling late in life (when he was forty). Forty years later, he dominated the intellectual thinking in Judea. His influence on the Judaism that survived the destruction of Judea has been substantial. Some present-day Jewish historians consider him a second Moses (Finkelstein, p. 156).

Akiba expected the Messiah during these turbulent years, just as other Judeans did. Kosiba first caught Akiba's notice when Kosiba molded the various resistance groups into a unified army and led that army into stunning victories.

As Kosiba attracted more men into his army, even

Gentiles, Akiba became convinced that Kosiba must be the Messiah. This would be around 130. After that, when speaking of Kosiba, Akiba quoted Num. 24:17: "*A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel . . .*" He also, more than once, publicly stated his conviction that "This is the Messianic king!"

The Judeans then began to call Kosiba "Bar Kochba." This was a word play to have his name mean "Son of the Star." Kosiba later assumed the title "Nasi" which means "prince" or "president" of Israel.

Another spiritual leader who supported "Bar Kochba" was Eleazar the Priest. A well-respected spiritual leader, he held a high position in the priestly hierarchy. Convinced that Kosiba, "Bar Kochba," was the Messianic prince' he served Bar Kochba as High Priest throughout the war.

Recent excavations in Israel reveal the name of Rabenu Botniya Bar Miasa as another priest allied with Bar Kochba (Mansoor, p. 180). His name is not mentioned in history, so nothing is known about him. But he must have been an important religious leader. The title "Rabenu" means "Our master par excellence." It was rarely given. It was previously given to Moses and Judah. A similar title was given to Rabbi Gamaliel, the man who trained Paul the apostle around A.D. 40.

There were other rabbis, however, who did not believe Bar Kochba. Rabbi Jonathan ben Tortha, a highly respected rabbi and close friend of Akiba, is quoted in rabbinical lore: "*Akiba, grass will grow out of your jaw and the Messiah will not yet have come!*" (Finkelstein, p. 269). But enough people believed that Bar Kochba was the promised one that he soon had widespread support in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. By the year 131, Bar Kochba's fame reached all over Palestine. The tenth legion, which could no longer control him, was replaced by the renowned sixth legion "Ironsides."

Bar Kochba set his administration headquarters in Ein Gedi, a small city twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem near the Dead Sea's west shore. By this time, his army had grown to 400,000 fighting men. His men stockpiled all the provisions they could find. They built emergency shelters and food caches in caves on steep cliffs where the Roman army could not attack. They built forts and strongholds all over Palestine, complete with strategically-placed tunnels, giving them the advantage should fighting begin.

To make sure they had enough weapons, they asked Judean craftsmen who sold weapons to the Roman army to deliberately make weapons with minor flaws. They hoped the Romans would send them back for repair--just in time to be seized for the offensive. They planned their offensive for fall, right after harvest. By October, 132, they were ready.

They struck the sixth legion at Lod (near the modern airport at Lydda) (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101). Bar Kochba easily defeated the sixth legion. When the twenty-second legion rushed in to help, he defeated it also. A few months later, Bar Kochba freed all Palestine from Roman control.

Bar Kochba then set up military posts at Herodion and Qumran and other strategic places (but not Masada). He administered the newly liberated nation from Ein Gedi because Jerusalem still lay in ruins. There remained standing only seven synagogues, a Christian church (the "Upper Room" where Christ celebrated the Last Supper), and a few blocks of houses. He resumed the daily sacrifice on the Temple ruins. And he ordered coins struck, late in 132, with the inscription "*Year one of the redemption of Israel.*" (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 21).

Who is this man playing such a decisive role in Judean destiny? Why did so many Judeans, and many Gentiles as well, look to him as the single, unchallenged leader? Only seventy years earlier, their great-grandfathers would not

unite under a single leader. What does this man have that other leaders before him did not have?

History provides only hints to answer these questions. Practically all information known about Bar Kochba came through folklore. Much of it sounds more legendary than factual. Some of it is contradictory. He was hero and patriot to some. While to others, he was bandit and murderer.

Rumor had him a descendant of the Hasmonean-Maccabean family. These leaders had, three centuries earlier, won freedom from the Seleucid Empire. Rumor claimed his ancestry reached to King David. This helped reinforce popular belief that he was the Messianic Prince. It was a factor in his widespread acceptance. He also had charisma, that ability to radiate manliness and charm, intelligence, and leadership. He projected his charisma onto other men the way popular and successful leaders have always done when they lead men who admire them. Full of action and energy, he was a military genius who led his men into brilliant victories.

No one has passed down a description of his appearance. He was rumored to have been very strong, feared by battle-hardened Roman warriors. He was able, somehow, to kick back the Roman stone ballistae flung at him (Klein, *Israel, Land Beyond Time*, p. 118). His men said he killed several Roman soldiers this way. Being brave himself, he demanded bravery from his men. To test their personal bravery, he made them endure the pain of having a finger amputated. Four hundred thousand men lost a finger to prove their loyalty (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101).

An old legend from Midrash Lamentations shows his poor respect for God. As he advanced with his men to engage the Roman army, an old man shouted to him, "*May the Creator be your help against them!*" Bar Kochba's reply was this prayer: "*Oh God! You needn't bother to help us.*"



*Just don't help our enemies."* (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101). The Midrash quotes Ps. 59:12 as a judgment against Bar Kochba. "*Hast not Thou, O God, cast us off? And go not forth, O God, with our hosts?*"

Christian historians also criticized Bar Kochba. Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, described Bar Kochba as a murderer, an impostor who hid behind the word play of his name, as though he were dealing with slaves. Bar Kochba had claimed to be like a star come from heaven to redeem his suffering people. He instilled awe and fear into the people by somehow breathing fire. St. Jerome wrote that Bar Kochba blew burning tow from his mouth to make it look as though he breathed fire.

After his acceptance as Prince of Israel and while the die was cast in the rebellion against Rome, Bar Kochba demanded all Judeans pledge loyalty to his government. History does not record exactly what he expected, but Church fathers resented it. Whatever it was, Church fathers considered it blasphemy and a rejection of Jesus. St. Justin, a martyr who lived during the Bar Kochba era, said Bar Kochba demanded that Christians fight with him against Rome. Bar Kochba killed all who refused.

New information has come from Yigael Yadin's excavations in Israel. Documents from this dig show that Bar Kochba habitually issued brief and direct orders. He demanded obedience. "*From Shimeon ben Kosiba to Yeshua ben Galgoul . . .*" (the military chief at Ein Gedi), "*I take heaven to witness against me that unless you mobilize the Galileans who are with you, every man, I will put fetters on your feet as I did to Ben Aphlul.*" (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 137). "Galileans" might refer to the followers of the Galilean Jesus. This would bear out the comments of Justin Martyr.

Mobilization must have been difficult for Christians. To side with the rebels meant to accept Bar Kochba for what

he claimed to be. He claimed he was the prophesied prince, the one whom God had chosen to restore Israel. But it would be an Israel separated from Jesus Christ. The Christians had no alternative. They had to choose allegiance to Bar Kochba or allegiance to Jesus Christ. The followers of Bar Kochba would not have tolerated allegiance to both.

The contradiction between Bar Kochba and Jesus Christ, and the realization of what was at stake when Christians made their choice, is what drove the final wedge between the Judeans who believed Christ and those who did not (Avi-Yonah, p. 163 & Zeitlin, III, p. 375). Until that time, there had been a strong Judaizing influence in the Church. All Bishops of Jerusalem, for example, had been Judean. From here on, Judean dominance in the Church, even in Jerusalem, ended.

We are now in A.D. 132. Judea is finally free of Roman control. The Judeans can manage their own affairs, pursue their own interests. I can imagine their joy and enthusiasm. I can see the unbelievers convinced that this is what the Messiah was supposed to accomplish, not what Jesus Christ did, but what Bar Kochba did. And, of course, I can see them firmly convinced that Jesus Christ is a false messiah. One can wonder what Bar Kochba's followers would have done to the remembrance of Jesus Christ, had they remained victorious. But Providence did not allow it.

While Bar Kochba pondered over management of his government, Hadrian pondered over his problems if he accepted Judean independence. If Judea can gain freedom by force, other provinces might try the same. If they do try, that would destroy the Empire's stability. Hadrian decided to preserve the Empire at all cost. He appointed his best general, Julius Severus, to reconquer Judea. Severus had just crushed a German revolt on the northern frontier. Severus put together an army of thirty-five thousand

fighting men and sixty-thousand auxiliaries.

He entered Palestine from the north, and swept through Galilee, the valley of Jezreel, through Ephraim and the Judean hills and finally arrived at Jerusalem in the winter of 133-4. Though Bar Kochba had a much larger army, he avoided large-scale fights that might have defeated Severus in a decisive battle. Instead, Bar Kochba struck with small hit-and-run forces, a guerrilla war launched from many villages and strongholds throughout Israel. Severus for his part simply surrounded any village or fort used as a rebel sanctuary. One by one, he attacked the strongholds, killed the defenders, burnt the buildings, and leveled the rubble.

In less than one year's time, Severus smashed most of Bar Kochba's strongholds. He slaughtered women, children, and livestock along with Bar Kochba's fighting men. In his relentless sweep through Palestine, Severus destroyed over nine-hundred towns and villages and fifty forts (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 102). The survivors of Bar Kochba's fighting forces kept retreating to safer ground. Now, in 133, most of them are in Jerusalem and the high hills southeast of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem would not do because it had not been rebuilt since the first war. So in early spring 134, Bar Kochba retreated to Ein Gedi, twenty-four miles southeast of Jerusalem, where he already had his administrative center. Ein Gedi had abundant spring-fed fresh water, making it better suited to withstand a siege.

Severus lay siege in spring, 134. By summer it was obvious that Ein Gedi would soon fall. So Bar Kochba's men retreated to the smaller but better-fortified city of Bethar. Bethar is twenty miles northwest of Ein Gedi and about seven miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is close to Bethlehem, only a few miles away. Joshua 15:59 mentions Bethar, so it is an ancient city. It still exists today under the

modern name of Bittir (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 193).

Bethar contained a strong fortress built on a hill. Walls enclosed the city, running a total length of 3280 feet. The walls protected twenty-five acres, including the fort. Deep chasms outside the walls on the east, west, and north made access impossible. The south side, however, faced level ground. A moat sixteen feet deep, forty-nine feet wide, and two hundred and sixty feet long protected this side against assault.

Bar Kochba then moved his headquarters to Bethar. He still had two hundred thousand fighting men, each marked with a missing finger. He stationed them between Ein Gedi and Bethar along the valley of Murabba'at.

Severus followed. On August 9, 134, he lay siege to Bethar.

<< end of chapter fourteen >>

## Chapter 15

### Third Woe Done: Judea's Demise

#### APOCALYPSE 16:17-19

- 17 *And the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple from the throne, saying: It is done.*
- 18 *And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such an one as never had been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great.*
- 19 *And the great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the Gentiles fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath.*

**T**he seventh angel pours the last vial, and "*It is done!*" This is the downfall of the first-chosen, the fall of Judea. It is the rise of the last-chosen. It is God's vindication over those who rejected God's anointed one.

There was an earthquake, and as a result, "*The great city was divided into three parts . . .*" An earthquake did strike Jerusalem during the crucifixion. The bedrock under Calvary split. Even today, pilgrims visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulcher reach down through the opening which anchored Christ's cross and touch the separations in the rock.

In a metaphorical sense, the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants split into three parts: Judaism, Christianity, and, at a later date, Islam. There are similarities in the three religions. The followers of all three worship the God Abraham worshiped and claim at least spiritual descent from Abraham. The followers of All three are marked by a covenant sign: circumcision for Judaism and Islam, and Baptism for Christianity. All three accept the Ten Commandments given Moses, indeed all three accept Moses as God's prophet. And all three advocate lives of submission to God's will. But each is divided from the others regarding its understanding of God's will. That division looks like it will persist throughout the Church age.

" . . . and the cities of the Gentiles fell." This is a clear reference to the Gentiles (the *Revised Standard Version* uses the word "nations" rather than "Gentiles.") This phrase points directly to the end of the Church age when all the Gentile nations will face the consequences of their own rejection of the Messiah. But Judea comes first, and what happens to Judea at the beginning of the Church age is a sign, a preview, of what will happen to all nations at the end of the Church age.

When the angel pours the seventh and final vial, "*It is done!*" Judea, the first chosen, has fallen. I think Bar Kochba's disastrous defeat and Rome's destruction of Judea is the logical fulfillment of this vision. Here is how it happened.

Severus had just placed Bethar under siege (August 9, 134). August 9 is a fateful day in Judean history. Titus stormed the Temple on August 9, A.D. 70. Before that, on August 9, 586 B.C., the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple. Bethar will endure this siege by Severus for exactly one year. Bethar will fall on August 9, 135 (Mansoor, p. 181).

Just before Bethar's fall, when Hadrian could taste

victory, he enforced harsher laws against the noncombatants in the re-conquered areas of Judea. He did this to quench any expression of nationalist hopes the Judeans might still have. Previous laws forbade the public reading of certain books of Scripture, like the book of Ester, which the Romans felt was fanning nationalist hopes. Now Hadrian forbade the Torah. No one could teach the Torah. Rabbi Akiba, who up to this point did not actively support the rebellion, now openly defied this law. As he put it, if the Torah is abolished, there is no further purpose in living (Finklestein, p. 272). The Romans executed him.

Bar Kochba's men in Bethar and their families suffered terribly during the siege. The Romans wanted to kill all the rebels. The rebels, in desperation, fought to the end. The city had already run out of food. By August 9, when the Romans stormed the city, the people were starved.

Because the city ran out of food, some people wanted to surrender. Bar Kochba would not allow it. Somehow, Bar Kochba suspected Eleazar the Priest of plotting a surrender. No reliable source supports this, but folklore has it that a Roman spy told Bar Kochba that Eleazar was negotiating with them. He lied, but hoped it would divide Bar Kochba and his chief advisors. Bar Kochba believed it.

On August 9, Bar Kochba confronted Eleazar, but Eleazar denied it. Unable to control his temper, Bar Kochba beat Eleazar to death. That was the day Severus stormed Bethar. Bar Kochba himself died that day. Folklore has it that a scorpion or poisonous snake bit him. He was dead or dying when Severus found him.

When the Romans fought their way into Bethar, they killed almost the entire population. They cut down men, women, and children. They lifted infants by their feet and dashed their heads against rocks. The Midrash claims three hundred lay dead near a single rock, the rock covered with spilled brains (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256). Roman soldiers

wrapped school-age children in their school-scrolls and set them afire. Other students, as well as their teachers, fell to Roman spears and arrows, as did Bar Kochba's fighting men.

*How should one pursue after a thousand, and two chase ten thousand? Was it not, because their God had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?* (Dt. 32:30).

*He hath broken in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy . . . .* (Lam. 2:3).

Bar Kochba's defeat calls to mind the curses Moses warned the Israelites about if they or their descendants forsake the Lord:

*But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep and to do all his commandments and ceremonies, which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field. Cursed shall be thy barn and cursed thy stores. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, the herds of thy oxen, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be coming in, and cursed going out. The Lord shall send upon thee famine and hunger, and a rebuke upon all the works which thou shalt do: until he consume and destroy thee quickly, for thy most wicked inventions, by which thou hast forsaken me. May the Lord set the pestilence upon thee, until he consume thee out of the land, which thou shalt go in to possess.*



*May the Lord afflict thee with miserable want, with the fever and with cold, with burning and with heat, and with corrupted air and with blasting, and pursue thee until thou perish. Be the heaven, that is over thee, of brass: and the ground thou treadest on, of iron. The Lord give thee dust for rain upon thy land, and let ashes come down from heaven upon thee, till thou be consumed. The Lord make thee to fall down before thy enemies, one way mayst thou go out against them, and flee seven ways, and be scattered throughout all the kingdoms on the earth.*

(Dt. 28:15-25)

#### APOCALYPSE 16:19-20

- 20 *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*
- 21 *And great hail, like a talent, came down from heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God for the plague of the hail: because it was exceeding great.*

Human nations can be compared to islands and mountains in the sense that they stand out in humanity as islands and mountains do in an inanimate landscape. Prophets spoke this way:

*Son of man, set thy face towards the mountains of Israel, and prophecy against them. And say: Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God: Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, and to the rocks, and to the valleys: Behold I will bring upon you the*

*sword, and I will destroy your high places.*

(Ezekiel 6:2-3)

*Fear not, thou worm of Jacob, you that are dead of Israel: I have helped thee, saith the Lord: and thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel. I have made thee as a new thrashing wain, with teeth like a saw: thou shalt thrash the mountains, and break them in pieces: and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them . . . .* (Isaiah 41:14-16)

*. . . This is the word of the Lord to Zorobabel, saying: Not with an army, nor by might, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zorobabel? Thou shalt become a plain . . . .* (Zech. 4:6-7)

"Mountain" was also used this way when Daniel interpreted the King's dream. A stone cut out of a mountain shall break the statue's clay feet. The stone then will grow into a mountain and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2 :34-5). The stone, of course, is Jesus Christ taken from the mountain of Israel and growing into the Church, which will stand like a mountain and fill the whole earth.

Even translators understand "mountain" this way. Isaiah 45:2 in the *Douay-Rheims* is: "*I will go before thee and will humble the great ones of the earth.*" The *Revised Standard Version* uses "mountains" in place of "great ones".

Enough blood spilled during the assault that the river flowing through the city turned red. The Midrash claims the river became one part blood, two parts water (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256). The surrounding soil absorbed enough blood that, after the war, it served the Gentiles as fertilizer

for their vineyards (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256).

Bodies choked the river. Picture the Roman calvary charging across the river with blood-red water splashing the horse's bellies. Another source describes the horses up to their nostrils in blood-red water. Apoc. 14:20 paints a similar scene: ". . . and the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press, up to the horses' bridles for a thousand and six-hundred furlongs."

All that remained now were Bar Kochba's forces barricaded in caves along the Murabba'at. Any survivor who managed to escape Bethar fled to the caves. The caves were accessible through openings in the vertical walls of steep cliffs that rose one thousand feet above the valleys below. Bar Kochba had chosen them as strongholds because the Roman army could not reach the caves without exposing themselves. The cave openings connected into large cavities in the bedrock along the cliffs. These caves once sheltered David and his men from King Saul eleven hundred years earlier (1 Sam. 24:1-7).

Bar Kochba's men had stocked the caves with food before the war. They had also built cisterns to collect spring rain. A cistern found near the opening of one cave measured four by sixteen feet (Mansoor, p. 190).

Severus, when he saw the openings in the cliffs, recognized the impossibility of a frontal attack. So he tried to confine the Judeans within the caves. He thought hunger would drive them to surrender. The Roman army pitched camps in the valleys below the caves and on the highlands above the caves to insure that no one could escape. This was partially successful. The Judeans did go hungry, but they would not surrender. However, the siege confined the Judeans to an area that could not support their numbers. So, in time, they gradually lost their ability to take any initiative.

Many did die of starvation. Others died in desperate raids against the Roman camps. But they never surrendered.

They and their descendants lived in the caves for several generations. The caves were still occupied one hundred years later when Severus Alexander was emperor.

Conditions in the caves were terrible at first. Too many people sought shelter there. They soon ran out of food. Some starved. Some in desperation ate anything that seemed edible. The Midrash reports that some even ate the remains of their fallen comrades.

One story tells of a young man sent to find a nearby corpse. He found the body of his father, but could not bring himself to desecrate his father's corpse. He concealed it and went back empty handed. A second man went out. By smell alone, he found the concealed corpse. He cut parts of flesh from it and returned. After the men had eaten, the first young man asked where the body was. When he heard the answer and realized what they had done, it sickened him (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 65).

The Romans finally left the survivors alone in their caves. The survivors no longer attacked the Romans. The war was over. Fifty Judean forts and 985 Judean towns and villages lay ruined, and 580,000 Judeans were killed (Mansoor, p. 167). Hunger and disease raised the toll to 700,000. Almost half the Judean population of 1.5 million perished (Klein, Israel, *Land of the Jews*, p. 107).

The Judeans killed at Bethar remained where they lay, their bodies rotting in the sun. The surviving Judeans were not allowed to bury them. Rome did this to punish the survivors and to warn other provinces against revolt. Rome sold many survivors into slavery, so many that the price for slaves dropped throughout the Empire. Many other Judeans, if they could afford it, left Judea and settled elsewhere.

After this mass slaughter and deportation, Rome encouraged foreign peoples to settle in Judea. Rome wanted the remaining Judeans to be a minority among other racial stocks. From then until the nineteenth century, the Jewish

people remained a minority. In 1856, for example, there were only 10,500 Jews in Palestine (Harel, in Oesterreicher, p. 147). In the late 1860's, Jewish people in Europe began to return, but at a slow pace. In 1897 there were 50,000 Jewish people in Palestine. In 1914, there were 90,000 (Grayzel, p. 683).

Freed of Judean pressure, Hadrian could now make his own decisions about rebuilding Jerusalem. He decided to make Jerusalem a pagan city. He appointed Aquilla, a Greek interpreter related to him by marriage, to supervise the work. Workmen cleared the ruins as best they could, and plowed the exposed ground to level it.

On August 9, 136, the first anniversary of Bethar's defeat, Hadrian used the same plow to mark the outlines of his new city. Judeans could not enter the new city under pain of death. They could not even approach the city. They could only stare at it from afar. Later they received permission to buy safe passage to visit the Wailing Wall. But they could do this only once a year.

Rome annexed Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (all of Israel) into the province of Syria. It was called "Syria Phillistina" or, later, "Palestine." Jerusalem was renamed "Aelia Capitolina" after Hadrian's middle name "Aelius" and after Jupiter, whose temple in Rome was called "Capitolinus." Where the Judean Temple once stood now stands a pagan temple. Inside, where the Holy of Holies once stood, now stands Jupiter.

The name "Aelia" caught on. By the fourth century the city was seldom called by its old name (Finklestein, p. 271). By the seventh century when the Moslems conquered the city, they arabacized the name into "Iliya." So total had been the defeat of Judea that, for hundreds of years, the name "Iliya" rather than "Jerusalem" echoed through the streets of the ancient homeland.

This is not the end of this people, however. God

warned the Israelites that their children would betray the covenant, and God would make an example of them (Dt. 31:24-9). But God will call them again when the Gentiles have had their day. Then God will show all nations the folly of disobedience.

It will be a great day then, when the righteous shall live in peace and the wicked experience God's own righteousness. In that day the nations shall no longer say: *"The Lord liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: But, The Lord liveth who hath brought out, and brought hither the seed of the house of Israel from the land of the north, and out of all the lands, to which I had cast them forth: and they shall dwell in their own land."* (Jer. 23:7-8).

Our generation has seen this happen.

## Chapter 16

### Why Judea Was Brought Down

#### APOCALYPSE 17:1-18

- 1 *And there came one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials, and spoke with me, saying: Come, I will shew thee the condemnation of the great harlot, who sitteth upon many waters,*
- 2 *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and they who inhabit the earth, have been made drunk with the whine of her whoredom.*
- 3 *And he took me away in spirit into the desert. And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*
- 4 *And the woman was clothed round about with purple and scarlet, and gilt with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abomination and filthiness of her fornication.*
- 5 *And on her forehead a name was written: A mystery; Babylon the great, the mother of the fornications, and the abominations of the earth.*
- 6 *And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the*

*blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And I wondered, when I had seen her, with great admiration.*

7 *And the angel said to me: Why dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

8 *The beast, which thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall come up out of the bottomless pit, and go into destruction: and the inhabitants on the earth (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) shall wonder, seeing the beast that was, and is not.*

9 *And here is the understanding that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings:*

10 *Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he is come, he must remain a short time.*

11 *And the beast which was, and is not: the same also is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction.*

12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive power as kings one hour after the beast.*



- 13 *These have one design: and their strength and power they shall deliver to the beast.*
- 14 *These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him are called, and elect, and faithful.*
- 15 *And he said to me: The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and nations, and tongues.*
- 16 *And the ten horns which thou sawest in the beast: these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire.*
- 17 *For God hath given into their hearts to do that which pleaseth him: that they give their kingdom to the beast, till the words of God be fulfilled.*
- 18 *And the woman which thou sawest, is the great city, which hath kingdom over the kings of the earth.*

**T**hese verses are a harsh condemnation of “woman” who committed “harlotry” with the world, co-operating with the beast with seven heads that sits on seven hills.

Read these verses carefully. They are speaking of the same beast from the sea (Roman Empire) and the king who is yet to come (Domitian -The Land Beast) who will make war on Christ and Christ’s saints (Apoc 17:10). Think for a moment whom Jesus Christ really is. He is the Savior

promised by God to our first parents, announced again to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This Savior is the reason why God made a public revelation through Moses so that Jacob's descendants might become a holy nation, knowing God's precepts and living them so that other nations could perceive what God is like and what God can do.

The Israelites, Jacob's descendants, were to be a light to all nations, a source of divine illumination to others not yet selected by God to knowingly participate in the Savior's work. From within their nation, God would place the Messiah, the one and only Messianic king and savior of all persons. This is a tremendous privilege given the Israelites (the great harlot in verse 1 of Apoc. 17 because, when the promised Messiah came, those in controlling the Israelites would not accept him).

Our thinking is limited because we cannot deal with individual persons as persons regardless of what larger groups they belong to. God does not have that limitation. We speak of people in terms of collective nouns, like "Americans," "Chinese," "Jews." "Gentiles," "saints," "sinners," "angels," "devils." We can't deal with every individual person as individuals. That's why all languages have collective nouns. Collective nouns are mental abstractions. They do not exist in the real world. Individual persons do; individual things do. God deals with all persons and all things simultaneously, without the slightest confusion, without the slightest error. I wish I could write that way. I can't. I have to use collective nouns. When I do, please understand that I do not intend to lump persons into arbitrary categories and impute to each one of them anything any of them have done. That would be prejudicial. That is not the way God is. If I were able to avoid appearing that way, I would, but I don't know how. When I use collective nouns, remember that I said they are non-

existent mental abstractions. God deals with the real world and all real persons based on what those individual persons do or have done.

The tremendous privilege given the Israelites was also a serious challenge because, once God is ready, you had better be ready. The salvation of all persons depended upon the Israelite acceptance of the promised Messiah. God had Moses tell the Israelites: *"If therefore you will hear my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession above all people: for all earth is mine. And you shall be to me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."* (Ex 19:5-6). No wonder God is so harsh with their failure to believe and their willingness to abandon God's precepts and follow the ways of the powerful, but spiritually ignorant, strong nations, including the Roman Empire.

During World War II, Maria Valtorta, an Italian woman who bore the wounds of Christ, received lengthy visions about Christ's life. The visions were so detailed that she wrote a five-volume biography of Christ (*The Poem of The Man God*) that includes most of what is in the Gospels, but adds much more detail. Presuming that the apparitions are authentic, I would like to quote three explanations Valtorta got from Jesus to help amplify what I am saying.

Maria Valtorta quotes Christ saying: *"I have God with me. I am His Word. I was prophesied by the prophets, promised to the Patriarchs, expected by the people. . . It is from Israel that the plant of eternal life is to come, and with Israel it to be formed, the plant, the sap of which will be the Blood of the Lord, the plant that will spread all over the earth, until the end of time."* (Valtorta Vol. I, pg. 344)

When Jesus cleansed the Temple, Valtorta heard him say: *"Who wants to know the Light, the Truth, the Way, who wants to hear once again the voice of God speaking to his people, let him come to me. . . . The time of grace has come."*

*The Prophets expected it and died waiting for it. The Prophets prophesied it and died in that hope. The just have dreamt of it and died comforted by that dream. It is now here. Come. The Lord is about to judge his people and have mercy on his servants, as he promised through Moses.”* (Valtorta Vol. I, pg. 289)

Valtorta also heard Christ say: “. . . let the weakling say: ‘I am strong.’ But strong in what? In the Law of the true God to be among those whom in the Valley of Decision He will judge to be His saints. But the judgment is already near. Not in the Valley of Decision, but on the Mountain of Redemption. There the sun and the moon will grow dark with horror, the stars will tremble and shed tears of mercy, and the children of light will be judged and separated from the children of darkness. And the whole of Israel will know that its God has come. Happy will be those who have recognized Him. Honey, milk, and fresh water will descend into their hearts and thorns will become eternal roses.”

(Valtorta Vol. I. pp. 271-2)

Christ, the one and only savior promised by God, was the person announced by the Baptist. Christ also announced it himself, and so did his apostles. Christ did not come to start his ministry twenty centuries after the persons he spoke to heard his words. God doesn’t do things that way. Christ is the promised Savior, the one promised to Eve and promised again through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the person for whom God formed the Israelite nation and gave the Israelites laws of conduct through Moses, warning them and their descendants what to expect if they are not ready when God is ready.

The disbelief and opposition of some of Christ’s contemporaries does not compel God to reschedule God’s plan of salvation. God does not make mistakes. When God

was ready, they should have been ready. The idea many people adhere to today, that the early Church founded by Christ betrayed Christ in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and Christ cannot continue his ministry until that apostate church is destroyed, is simply not correct. The Church founded by Jesus Christ is still here. Hell's gates never prevailed against the church Christ founded on Peter. Isn't that what Christ promised Peter? *"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matt. 16:17-18)

One very important insight into the church is that all baptized persons become part of Christ's body, as I describe later in this book (p. 256), quoting St. Paul (1 Cor. 12: 12 & 17). With baptism, the old human nature dies, and a new nature replaces it. We literally become wedded to Jesus Christ, like two in one flesh, or really, many in one flesh. Jesus is our bridegroom. All of us, male and female, are the spouse. As long as we remain free of personal sin, Jesus lives within us. What we experience, he experiences. The good that we do is the good that he does. We are like his hands and feet, bringing him to everyone we encounter.

Continuous temptation makes casualties of us. There were many casualties among Christ's followers, some, like Judas, deliberately betraying him. However, there always was, and still is, a core of faithful followers who kept themselves free from sin or sought forgiveness if they did sin. These people form the core of Christ's Church, his body, through which he maintains a physical presence on Earth. This core has always remained intact. It is still with us today. It will still be on Earth when Christ returns at the end of time.

The mission of Christ's church is to bring Christ's salvation all persons, all nations, and all tongues. This mission will literally bring those who were spiritually dead back to life again. This is far too important a mission to fail merely because some people don't believe what the prophets had said all along and what Christ undeniably proved by the way Christ lived his life and by the way he was willing to die rather than disappoint his father. The final proof: he rose from death after he was killed.

No! The persons singled out in the Apocalypse who tried to destroy Christ are not persons who lived twenty or more centuries after Christianity was firmly rooted. Those persons were some of Christ's own fellow Judeans. They tried to destroy Christ's church when it was weak and vulnerable. Those people allied themselves with Rome (they are the harlot on the Beast). As I have shown in previous chapters, they had Christ killed and then tried to destroy Christ's church. Shall God permit that? Shall everything God has done in previous centuries come to naught?

If it all comes to naught, then what will become of the billions of human beings who never heard any of God's public revelation through Moses and the prophets? What would happen to the millions of persons today who never heard God's public revelation? Their lives would be incomprehensible to them. They would have no idea why they experience sorrow and grief. They would remain like their ancestors; lambs led to the slaughter, knowing no rhyme nor reason until after they die. They are victims put in harms way by God so that, as I described earlier, all persons have the opportunity to chose, even if they chose wrong. The willingness of God to allow innocent persons to suffer, because of the wrongs done by others, buys time for the oppressor so that those oppressors can reflect, when

faced with the consequences of their disobedience, and hopefully come to genuine repentance and find salvation. That's why people suffer in this life. It's clearly explained in Job and the story of Cain. Maria Valtorta quotes Christ explaining it: *"Mary, we must always be steps so that other people may ascend to God. It does not matter if they tread on us, providing they are successful in reaching the Cross. It is the new tree that has the knowledge of Good and Evil, because it tells man what is good and what is evil so that he may choose and live and at the same time it is a medicine that cures those who are intoxicated by the evil they wanted to taste."* (Valtorta Vol. I, pg. 89)

The book of Job clearly explains why even innocent people suffer.

Job 1:6-12

- 6 *Now on a certain day when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, Satan also was present among them.*
- 7 *And the Lord said to him: Whence comest thou ? And he answered and said: I have gone round about the earth, and walked through it.*
- 8 *And the Lord said to him: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, and fearing God, and avoiding evil?*
- 9 *And Satan answering, said: Doth Job fear God in vain?*
- 10 *Hast not thou made a fence for him, and his house, and all his substance round about, blessed the works of his*

*hands, and his possession hath increased on the earth?*

11 *But stretch forth thy hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and see if he blesseth thee not to thy face.*

12 *Then the Lord said to Satan: Behold, all that he hath is in thy hand: only put not forth thy hand upon his person. And Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

When Satan learned that Job pleased God, Satan wanted to show God that Job would rebel, if Job experienced sorrow. God gave Satan permission to afflict Job, but not harm Job's body. Satan then caused Job to lose his property to thieves and his family through murders. Job was beside himself with grief. He didn't know why God would permit such things. Job spent his days praying that God might hear his plea and explain what happened. Sometime later . . .

#### JOB 2:1-7

1 *And it came to pass, when on a certain day the sons of God came, and stood before the Lord, and Satan came among them, and stood in his sight,*

2 *That the Lord said to Satan: Whence comest thou? And he answered and said: I have gone round about the earth, and walked through it.*

3 *And the Lord said to Satan: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a man*



*simple, and upright, and fearing Cod,  
and avoiding evil, and still keeping  
his innocence? But thou hast moved  
me against him, that I should afflict  
him without cause.*

4 *And Satan answered, and said: Skin  
for skin, all that a man hath he will  
give for his life:*

5 *But put forth thy hand, and touch his  
bone and his flesh, and then thou  
shalt see that he will bless thee [not]  
to thy face.*

6 *And the Lord said to Satan: Behold  
he is in thy hand, but yet save his life.*

7 *So Satan went forth from the presence  
Of the Lord, and struck Job with a  
very grievous ulcer, from the sole of  
the foot even to the top of his head:*

Since Satan still believed that Job would blaspheme God if more harm came to him, God gave Satan permission to afflict Job's body, but not to kill him. Satan then destroyed Job's health. Covered with sores, Job continued to ask God "Why?"

Finally God spoke. God reminded Job that God is sovereign and has made all things, but God would not answer Job's question "Why did this evil happen to me?" We know why the evil has happened because we have read the verses about Satan. Job did not know, nor does any human being know why they suffer (unless God reveals the reason). Most human beings God created never know. Only the few who become aware of God's revelation know. Once we die, everyone will know, but, in this life, only a few, those who fully believe, know.

Job's friends began to tell Job that he must have offended God in some way, otherwise God would not have punished Job. Much of the book is their arguments. Job was not aware of any offense against God. His friends added considerable mental anguish to what Job already was suffering.

Finally, at the end of the book, God tells Job that his friends have offended God by saying things not true about God. Job can save them from God's punishment by offering a sacrifice for them. God still did not explain to Job why Job, even as innocent as Job is, suffered so much. We who read the book know because the book is part of the public revelation about God's nature and what God has done and why.

A good point to remember: If God has revealed something, do not doubt it and substitute your own opinion. None of us human beings can understand God's nature. The only source of knowledge we have about God is God's public revelation given through Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles. Notice how God is offended by what Eliphaz and his two friends have said.

JOB 42: 7-8

7     *And after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Themanite: My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends, because you have not spoken the thing that is right before me, as my servant Job hath.*

8     *Take unto you therefore seven oxen, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust: and my servant Job shall*

*pray for you: his face I will accept,  
that folly be not imputed to you: for  
you have not spoken right things  
before me, as my servant Job hath.*

This contest between humans and fallen angels was revealed all the way through Scripture. The very first human being born from parents, Cain, was jealous of his younger brother. God told Cain that sin stands before his door. It lusts for him, but he must resist.

#### GENESIS 4:3-7

- 3 *And it came to pass after many days,  
that Cain offered, of the fruits of the  
earth, gifts to the Lord.*
- 4 *Abel also offered of the firstlings of  
his flock, and of their fat: and the  
Lord had respect to Abel, and to his  
offerings.*
- 5 *But to Cain and his offerings he had  
no respect: and Cain was exceedingly  
angry, and his countenance fell.*
- 6 *And the Lord said to him: Why art  
thou angry? and why is thy  
countenance fallen?*
- 7 *If thou do well, shalt thou not  
receive? but if ill, shall not sin  
forthwith be present at the door? but  
the lust thereof shall be under thee,  
and thou shalt have dominion over it.*

The New English Bibles states it more clearly: “*If you do well, you are accepted; if not, sin is a demon crouching at the door. It shall be eager for you, and you will be*

*mastered by it.*” NEB Gen 4:7). Other translations say “You must conquer it.” The sad sequel to this revelation is that Cain, instead of resisting temptation, caves in and murders his brother.

The persons who tried to destroy what God wanted got destroyed themselves, as I’ve shown earlier in this book. Apoc. 17 rubs it in as a warning to them. The text of the Apocalypse handed down to us was preached around sixty years prior to the downfall of Judea, so, as severe as it sounds, it really is an effective warning to those who still have time to reflect. If you think the Apocalypse was composed in its entirety for the first time by John the Evangelist at Patmos in A.D. 96, it still preceded the downfall of Judea (in A.D. 135). It’s sorrowful that those who tried to destroy the Messiah’s mission did not heed it.

Since God did not want Christ to fail in establishing his church, all peoples who were capable and willing to destroy his church were themselves destroyed. Read Chapter 17 again and see if it doesn’t apply more to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century Judea than it applies to us or our children (or grandchildren) twenty or more centuries later. We are much closer to the end of the Church age, the final judgment, than we are to the beginning of Christ’s ministry. Some say Christ will return in the flesh and start his ministry over again. Christ will not return in the flesh until the last day when all of us, deceased or still living, will suddenly enter eternity.

#### APOCALYPSE 18:1-24

1     *And after these things, I saw another  
angel come down from heaven,  
having great power: and the earth  
was enlightened with his glory.*

- 2     *And he cried out with a strong voice, saying: Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen; and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit, and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird:*

The contemporaries of Christ who did not believe have fallen.

- 3     *Because all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; and the merchants of the earth have been made rich by the power of her delicacies.*

Their unbelief and unfaithfulness (compared to fornication with Christ's enemies) has misled other nations.

- 4     *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying: Go out from her, my people; that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.*

A heavenly voice calls the believes to depart from the unbelievers so as to escape their punishment.

- 5     *For her sins have reached unto heaven, and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities.*

- 6 *Render to her as she also hath rendered to you; and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup wherein she hath mingled, mingle ye double unto her.*
- 7 *As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her; because she saith in her heart: I sit a queen, and am no widow; and sorrow I shall not see.*
- 8 *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with the fire; because God is strong, who shall judge her.*
- 9 *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived in delicacies with her, shall weep, and bewail themselves over her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning:*

I would read this as the fallen angels who had molded the unbelieving Judeans into pursuing what they wanted. The fallen angels shall perceive Judea's downfall and realize their own downfall is coming soon.

- 10 *Standing afar off for fear of her torments, saying: Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city: for in one hour is thy judgment come.*
- 11 *And the merchants of the earth shall weep, and mourn over her: for no*

*man shall buy their merchandise any more.*

- 12 *Merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones; and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of precious stone, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble,*
- 13 *And cinnamon, and odours, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*
- 14 *And the fruits of the desire of thy soul are departed from thee, and all fat and goodly things are perished from thee, and they shall find them no more at all.*
- 15 *The merchants of these things, who were made rich, shall stand afar off from her, for fear of her torments, weeping and mourning.*
- 16 *And saying: Alas! alas! that great city, which was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and was gilt with gold, and precious stones, and pearls.*
- 17 *For in one hour are so great riches come to nought; and every shipmaster, and all that sail into the*

*lake, and mariners, and as many as work in the sea, stood afar off.*

18 *And cried, seeing the place of her burning, saying: What city is like to this great city?*

19 *And they cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying: Alas! alas! that great city, wherein all were made rich, that had ships at sea, by reason of her prices: for in one hour she is made desolate.*

20 *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.*

21 *And a mighty angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying: With such violence as this shall Babylon, that great city, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*

This is the end of the mission given to the Israelites. Christ, the appointed Messiah, will now give this mission to those who follow him. Actually, it's the same mission, but the unbelievers do not accept it.

22 *And the voice of harpers, and of musicians, and of them that play on the pipe, and on the trumpet, shall no more be heard at all in thee; and no craftsman of any art whatsoever shall be found any more at all in thee; and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more at all in thee;*



- 23 *And the light of the lamp shall shine  
no more at all in thee; and the voice  
of the bridegroom and the bride shall  
be heard no more at all in thee: for  
thy merchants were the great men of  
the earth, for all nations have been  
deceived by thy enchantments.*
- 24 *And in her was found the blood of  
prophets and of saints, and of all that  
were slain upon the earth.*

Notice how much more wordy chapters 17 and 18 (and the following chapters) are compared to chapters 4 through 11. This is one of the obvious differences in writing style. No Biblical scholar attributes these later chapters to John the Baptist.

<< end of chap sixteen >>

## **Chapter 17**

### **Christ reigns: defeats Satan**

#### APOCALYPSE 19:1-6

- 1     *After these things I heard as it were the voice of much people in heaven, saying: Alleluia. Salvation, and glory, and power is to our God.*
- 2     *For true and just are his judgments, who hath judged the great harlot which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and hath revenged the blood of his servants, at her hands.*
- 3     *And again they said: Alleluia. And her smoke ascendeth for ever and ever.*
- 4     *And the four and twenty ancients, and the four living creatures fell down and adored God that sitteth upon the throne, saying: Amen; Alleluia.*
- 5     *And a voice came out from the throne, saying: Give praise to our God, all ye his servants; and you that fear him, little and great.*
- 6     *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned.*

**T**he above shows rejoicing over the unbeliever's loss of power. Below comes the Marriage supper of the Lamb with his Church.

APOCALYPSE 19:7-10

- 7 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath prepared herself.*
- 8 *And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white. For the fine linen are the justifications of saints.*
- 9 *And he said to me: Write: Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith to me: These words of God are true.*
- 10 *And I fell down before his feet, to adore him. And he saith to me: See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

The Messianic Savior, the Lamb, who was described by the Baptist, now accepts those who believe him as his spouse. The White horse below is the Lamb riding forth to spread his Gospel to the whole world, assisted by those who believe him. Fallen angels are conquered and subdued so that they, for a while, can no longer easily seduce the nations and confuse people into not recognizing who Christ is.

APOCALYPSE 19:11-19

- 11 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and with justice doth he judge and fight.*
- 12 *And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems, and he had a name written, which no man knoweth but himself.*
- 13 *And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood; and his name is called, THE WORD OF GOD.*
- 14 *And the armies that are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*
- 15 *And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp two edged sword; that with it he may strike the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty.*
- 16 *And he hath on his garment, and on his thigh written: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

- 17 *And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that did fly through the midst of heaven: Come, gather yourselves together to the great supper of God:*
- 18 *That you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of tribunes, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all freemen and bondmen, and of little and of great.*
- 19 *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war with him that sat upon the horse, and with his army.*

This describes the War with Satan. The war is fought not only by human beings in the Roman Empire, but also by the fallen angels that tempt those human beings.

#### APOCALYPSE 19:20-21

- 20 *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, who wrought signs before him, wherewith he seduced them who received the character of the beast, and who adored his image. These two were cast alive into the pool of fire, burning with brimstone.*
- 21 *And the rest were slain by the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse, which proceedeth out of his mouth;*

*and all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Satan will eventually be cast into pool of fire, but notice in Apoc. 20:2, that Satan will first be bound for a thousand years.

APOCALYPSE 20:1-3

- 1 *And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.*
- 2 *And he laid hold on the dragon the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,*
- 3 *And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should no more seduce the nations, till the thousand years be finished. And after that, he must be loosed a little time.*

<< end of chap seventeen >>



## Chapter 18

### The Church's 1000 Year Reign

#### APOCALYPSE 20:4-6

- 4 *And I saw seats; and they sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them; and the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not adored the beast nor his image, nor received his character on their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*
- 5 *The rest of the dead lived not, till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*
- 6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. In these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

**N**ow that Judea has fallen, and Christianity has started--the fall of the first chosen, the rise of the last chosen--the world enters the beginning of the end times. In these end times, which began when Christ established his church, human beings, for the first time, can enter heaven when they die. This is the first resurrection. Actually, their souls were resurrected to spiritual aliveness when they were baptized. There is no longer a need to wait for the Savior. The Savior is already

active and has opened heaven, which had been closed ever since the sin of our first parents. All their offspring, for thousands of years, spent their entire lives in exile, in this earthly "valley of tears," never knowing how they came into existence, nor why. Only one nation was told, when God began the public revelation to the Israelites through Moses. A few patriarchs, previously, were given private revelations, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, through the years, a few people from other nations were given private revelations, like the three wise men when Christ was born.

There was only one public revelation, starting with Moses and embellished through the years with revelations given the prophets, including John the Baptist. Finally, the Savior arrived and completed the public revelation with what Jesus taught the Apostles. Since then, there have been some additional private revelations, but the public revelation meant for all people and sealed with God's truthfulness and authority, ended with what Christ taught his Apostles.

The end times are the times given to the Gentiles. They span the entire Church age from Pentecost to the end of the world. At the end of the end times, the Gentile nations will experience the same stern discipline that Judea experienced at the beginning. Perhaps the world is right now approaching the end of the end times. Probably, just like the Judeans before them, the Gentile nations will not read the signs of the times. They will not believe the end is upon them even when they experience it.

Many people anticipate a future "rapture," the snatching of the faithful while the unfaithful are chastised during the future "tribulation." After the "tribulation," the faithful will return to earth with the resurrected Christ, to help him start the future "millennial kingdom." They will then live and reign on earth with Christ in the flesh for one thousand years. Then God will bring the world to an end.

I do not believe this view. I do believe in the rapture,

the tribulation, and the millennium, but I believe they occurred differently. First the souls of those who were baptized and who died faithful to Christ were taken to heaven. Then, in A.D. 66-70 and again in 131-5, the unbelieving Judeans experienced the "great tribulation." Then Christianity replaced Judaism to motivate people to actively promote the fullness of God's revelation.

The Roman Empire tried to destroy Christianity but was, instead, swallowed by Christianity. This happened early in the fourth century when Constantine became Christian and made the Roman Empire a Christian state. I wonder if the Christian victims of Rome's early persecutions anticipated this spectacular conversion. The Empire in only 230 years would accept Christ as Savior. The Roman people would reject, outlaw, the old pagan religions. They would build a Christian empire--could the early Christians have imagined it--an Empire dedicated to Christ. Secular rulers would work with Christian leaders to build one Christian society ruling the then whole known world.

This, I believe, is the beginning of the 1000-year Christian political kingdom. The core of the Christian kingdom is the rule of saints with Christ in heaven as described earlier. That heavenly kingdom began when Christ rose from the dead. It spread at the grass roots level with individuals who believed and accepted baptism. A political dimension was added when the Roman Empire accepted Christianity. Now we have, besides the spiritual kingdom, the earthly rule of Christ's followers on Earth. This was not Christ's return in the flesh. Christ will return at the end of history similar to the way he left: visible to all. Christ, however, is present on the Earth through those who are baptized (and living Christian lives). Christ works through them, as St. Paul described, just as our heads (under our control) work through the other parts of our bodies.

*"For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. . . Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member."* (1 Cor. 12:12 & 27)

Jesus Christ is still on earth, present in his faithful followers, yet he reigns in heaven. Jesus starts the rapture. He is the first one. In like manner, the good thief's bodily remains are still on earth; yet his soul is with Jesus. The good thief is the second to experience the first resurrection, the rapture. The souls of the righteous, whose bodies lie yet on earth, have already ascended to meet Jesus.

The rapture started with Jesus who by his death opened heaven's gates. The rapture is still occurring as additional saints die, some as martyrs, and their souls join Jesus. The rapture will continue until: *"Their fellow servants and their brethren who are to be slain, even as they, should be filled up."* (Apoc, 6:11). This is the first resurrection, the reign of saints in the heavenly kingdom. These persons reign now with Jesus. Their reign is hidden from us who must live by faith. It is not hidden from angels and devils. Those raptured souls interact with people on earth. They inspire us humans and help us refute the influence of devils when we are tempted. They are the part of Christ that is already triumphant. They interact with us who are the part of Christ that is still struggling and suffering. Both parts belong to the body of Christ, one foot in heaven, the other on earth.

Satan's power was diminished (bound as Apoc. 20:3 and 20:7 puts it) so that Satan could not prevent the spread of Christ's teaching. Satan still had power to confuse people, and people were confused throughout the entire Church age. Even the apostles had to deal with people who contradicted what the apostles taught. Sometimes big ruptures occurred, as when the Arab nations followed Mohammed, and when the Church split into Eastern and

Western divisions. Christ's teachings, however, continued to spread. Both the Eastern and the Western divisions, incidentally, even though they were not united through leadership, still taught substantially the same Christian message.

The situation remained that way for approximately 1000 years. Then something happened that greatly confused the Christian message. I think this happened when Satan was fully released (Apoc 20:7) to, once again, attempt seducing entire nations. The predicted 1000-year Christian reign, I think, started off as the political Christianized Roman Empire, which continued, after the fall of Rome in the fifth century, as the Holy Roman Empire or Christendom. After the Eastern Schism in 1054, The Holy Roman Empire continued as European Christendom. This political Empire was one manifestation of the earthly foot of Christ's kingdom. This Christian political kingdom did last approximately one thousand years if one counts its inception as the year A.D. 321 when Constantine defeated Licinius (WHC 543) and its demise sometime in the fifteenth century.

After the barbarian invasions in the fifth through ninth centuries, when the Roman Empire finally became too weak to defend northern Europe or send Christian missionaries to the northern tribes, Charlemagne, of France, spent thirty years subduing Western Europe, France, Switzerland, Belgium, half of Italy and Germany, and parts of Austria and Spain. By A.D. 800, he was the undisputed leader of Western Europe. Pope Leo XIII crowned him Holy Roman Emperor or emperor of Christendom. This was prior to the Eastern Schism. The idea was that the pope would be the representative of Christ in spiritual matters and the emperor would be the representative of Christ in earthly matters. Charlemagne was succeeded by Otto I of Germany who was crowned by Pope John XII. By 1530 (after the Eastern

Schism) the Holy Roman Emperor was Charles V. The Western Christian political Empire, was comprised of Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary, Flanders, Pomerania, Schleswig, Hostein, France, Denmark, Poland and parts of North and South Italy.

The nations within the political empire did, at least for a time, try to govern themselves more or less in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Though no nation is without sin, many of the nations within the empire had at least one monarch who actually ruled the nation and whose Christian piety was outstanding enough that the memory of that person was held up before others as an example to be followed in leading Christian lives. Between the years 945 and 1326, which by my thinking would be during the later half of the Christian political empire, the following monarchs were held up, at that time, as examples of loyal Christians who now reign with Jesus in his heavenly kingdom with power to intervene in the lives of us still living on earth. In other words, they experienced the first resurrection and are active with Christ in protecting even us still on Earth today.

St. Olga, Duchess of Kiev, Russia, 945-57

St. Vladimir I, king of Russia, c. 989-1015

St. Stephen, King of Hungary, 975-1038

St. Henry, king of Bavaria, 972-1024

St. Ladislaus, king of Hungary, 1040-95

St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, 1050-93

St. Edward I, King of England, 1066

St. Ferdinand III, king of Castile and Leon,  
1198-1215

St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, 1207-1231

St. Louis IX, king of France, 1214-1270

St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, 1271-1336

(Foy, pp. 252-7)

In the fourteenth century, the political Western Christian Empire in Europe began to show signs of disintegration into separate and hostile nations. Later, during the fifteenth century, the European nations comprising the Western Empire began to express sentiments of nationalism. I think this coincides nicely with the release of Satan to deceive the nations. The nations who put their own interests ahead of everything else really were deceived, especially when they put their own interests ahead of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what many of the nations spun off from the Western Christian political Empire did, and still are doing.

As I mentioned before, our thinking is limited in not being able to deal with individual persons as persons regardless of what larger groups they belong to. When I use collective nouns for groups of people, please understand that I do not intend to lump persons into arbitrary categories and impute to each one of them anything anyone of them has done. That would be prejudicial.

The Reformation occurred at a time when the development of the printing press and worldwide exploration made possible the spread Christianity all over the world in response to Christ's request. No matter which side of the fence any of us are on the Reformation, if all European Christians had been faithful to Jesus Christ, the Western political Christian Empire (Christendom) would have grown and have become a powerful force in evangelization. Instead, because of the shortcoming of human beings, humans themselves destroyed the political empire and lost, for five centuries, the chance to evangelize the world with a clear idea of the Gospel that Jesus Christ announced. If I'm right and Christendom was meant to be the human, political, millennial kingdom, then we, today, are 500 years closer to the end of human history and the

final judgment.

In the sixteenth century, many European nations withdrew from the Holy Roman Empire, changed their religious convictions, and fought war after war, many over religious differences. Christians fighting Christians over the meaning of Christianity! What a scandal! What evidence of unbelief!

APOCALYPSE 20:7

7 *And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth, and seduce the nations, which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, and shall gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

In the fifteenth century, Satan is finally released so that Satan can try seducing whole nations. As I described above, I believe this seduction destroyed the Christian political empire and was the driving force behind the Reformation. The breakup of the political empire and the rupture of the Church coincided nicely with the release of Satan.

Ponder for a moment. Who would sow seeds of scandal and misconduct among Christians, seeds that tore apart the Christian political empire and confused the teachings of Christ? Would God do that? It makes sense that the great deceiver would do it, as was predicted in the Apoc. 20:3 & 7. The question is when did it happen? I think it happened during the Reformation.

The Reformation is a touchy subject depending which side of the controversy one finds oneself, but taken as a whole, everybody involved, when it started, it set the stage



for the dissolution of Christendom and the confusion of the Christian message. What potent credibility Christianity might have had in the eyes of other nations if the Reformation had not happened. It would not have happened had sufficient Christians, especially churchmen, been personally steadfast and loyal to Jesus Christ, the suffering Jesus, the Christ who acts through us human beings. He limits his reprisals against Satan to what he can do through our co-operation. He makes himself vulnerable to Satan's attacks through the sins we commit. He allows our disgrace and our defeat to become his disgrace and his defeat. This is his way of showing mercy to all his enemies and granting them time to reflect on what they are doing.

If Satan really was released to once again deceive the Christianized nations, let's contrast events happening in Europe to events happening in the newly discovered world across the sea where, from the beginning, Christ was not known. Satan was not bound in that part of the world.

Conflicting sects of Christians arguing with each other have not openly, as far as I know, considered a possible connection with events leading to the Reformation and events leading to the conversion of Aztecs in Central America and the first, widely known, public apparition of the Virgin Mary on her son's behalf.

I think these events are tied together. They seem to reflect a spiritual battle between some spirits who claims to be gods and what all Christians know to be the one and only manifestation of God, Jesus Christ, a human being in our flesh that we can easily comprehend, and yet, truly God, the incomprehensible being that none of us can comprehend, not in this life anyway.

While Satan is loosed in Europe to, once again, deceive the nations, people on the other side of the world, who never knew Jesus or his father, are liberated from different gods by human endeavors, just as brutal in

America as the sectarian wars were in Europe. However, behind the scenes, in the case of America, what God wants done gets done, no matter how unworthy the human beings are who accomplish it

While approximately five million Christians left the mother church in Europe and began the disintegration that led to at least 1500 and, possibly more than twenty thousand, conflicting sects we have today (The Internet), five to eight million human beings in Central America left worship of gods other than Jesus and his father and came into the mother church.

For those critical of the Spaniards, let it be conceded that the brutality and greed of the 1000-man invaders could easily have been overwhelmed by the vastly greater number of Aztecs led by Montezuma's successor as the Aztecs react to the less-than-perfect treatment they received from the invaders. There is no human way such a small number of soldiers could hold such a large number of people in subjugation.

But let us not overlook that the Spaniards overturned the Aztec gods and liberated the people serving those barbaric gods that demanded human sacrifice on an unprecedented scale. Whatever success Satan achieved deceiving the nations in Europe was more than offset by what Satan lost in America.

God's hand, without a doubt, entered into the conversion of the Aztecs and neighboring tribes in America. The Spanish, themselves, after the suppression and cruelty they had shown, would not have been able to encourage the Aztecs to embrace the religion of the Spaniards. God did the conversion. In the next few paragraphs, I will show the intermeshing of dates and events as the Reformation took place in Europe and the conquest of the Aztecs took place in America. I will also show that, at the date when the disruption of church unity and the Holy Roman Empire

became firmly established in Europe, the mother of Jesus was sent by Jesus to the Aztecs in the first-ever widely known apparition of Mary. Here are the details.

The Reformation, though brewing for a long time because of the bad example of many clergy, came to focus on October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg castle church (Grimm, p. 91). The clash of different points of view intensified in July 1519 when Luther defended all his views in the eighteen-day Leipzig Debate (The Internet).

The reigning Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian had passed away on January 12, 1519 (Grimm, p. 97). He had intended for his grandson, Charles V, to succeed him but failed to confirm his choice. Upon Maximilian's death, three candidates were then considered: Charles V, Francis I of France, and Henry VIII of England (Grimm, p. 98). Signs of the dissolution of the Christian secular empire were already manifest by the rivalry of the three and the sentiments of the European people. On June 28, 1519, Charles V was chosen and crowned Emperor (Grimm, p. 99). He was the last Emperor of a united Christendom. His career was so frustrating because of the political infighting that, near the end of his life, he retired in 1556 and spent his remaining days in the monastery of Yuste. Two years later, he died (Columbian Encyclopedia).

At the same time, in Mexico, a 52-year astrological cycle had ended (Burke, p. 34). The year 1519 was the year "Ce Acatl" (one Reed), the first year of a new cycle (DeAndelo, p. 12). The Aztecs had experienced frightening omens that confounded the Aztec chiefs from 1509 to 1519. Lake Texcoco suddenly boiled up despite fair weather and flooded Tenochtitlan (Mexico City), the Aztec capital. A fire destroyed the war god Huitzilopochtli's temple. Strange and frightening comets flew through the sky for days on end. Bright flaming lights arose from the East. Women's

voices were heard wailing at night warning their children to flee (Ruiz, p. 38). All of these were taken as signs of Quetzalcoatl's return (The Internet).

Aztec legend had it that Quetzalcoatl, meaning precious twin and dressed as a feathered serpent, a cultural hero king, was forced to leave his throne in A.D 890. He went to the Gulf and sailed east, promising to return in the year CE Acatl (1519) (Franciscan, p. 32).

In February 1519, Hernando Cortez sailed from Cuba to the Yucatan peninsula with a 500-man army, 16 horses, and 10 cannons in a fleet of 11 ships manned by 100 sailors (Franciscan, p. 35) (DeAngelis, p. 24). His purpose was to explore the mainland, look for fame and riches, bring the people into the Holy Roman Empire, and convert them to the true God. He marched toward Tenochitlan, conquering any tribe that tried to stop him. Tenochitlan, at that time, was the largest city in the world, at least 150,000 people (DeAngelis, p. 7). The city ruled an empire of 3,000,000 people (DeAngelis, p. 27). There were also several million more people in Central America not subjugated by the Aztecs.

The principle gods worshipped by the Aztecs, were Huitzilopochtli, the war god, and Tlaloc, the rain god (The Internet). These gods were served by human sacrifice on an unprecedented scale. Twenty to eighty thousand victims were sacrificed during a four-day celebration dedicating Huitzilopochtli's new pyramid in Tenochitlan (Franciscan, p.140). Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, was nourished by human blood (The Internet). Victim's hearts were removed and placed, still beating, in a bowl in front of the god. Priests ate the choice body parts. The torsos were thrown down the pyramid steps to be consumed by wild beasts. The attending priests also routinely practiced human sacrifice in their private homage, sometimes torturing a young boy before the sacrifice (The Internet). Such were the gods who

rules the Aztecs.

On November 8, 1519, Cortez began his march toward Tenochitlan. Montezuma was frightened of Cortez, believing Cortez might be the returned Quetzalcoatl. When Cortez arrived at Tenochitlan, Montezuma invited Cortez into the city. Cortez set up his headquarters within Montezuma's palace. Cortez tried to convert Montezuma and showed him a statue of the Virgin Mary explaining who she is. Montezuma then took Cortez to the pyramid housing Huitzilopochtli. Cortez, horrified by what he saw, struck Huitzilopochtli between its emerald eyes, toppled it down the steps, and placed a statue of Mary in its place (Franciscan, p. 38).

Meanwhile, in Europe, on December 10, 1520, Martin Luther burned the Papal bull criticizing his stance against the mother church and burned a copy of Canon Law (Bainton, p. 58). In the same year, Cortez built a fleet of ships so he could destroy the Aztec navy and besiege the city. The siege lasted 80 days. (The Internet).

On May 8, 1521, Luther was excommunicated by Pope Leo X and outlawed by the Emperor, Charles V (Grimm, p. 116). The excommunication document became official on May 28, 1521. In the same month, Cortez began his final Assault on Tenochitlan (Burke, p. 44). The city was conquered on August 13, 1521 (The Internet).

In 1530, Luther published "*The Confession of Augsburg*" consolidating his opposition to the mother church. In 1531, Protestant nobles in the Holy Roman Empire formed the Schmalkaldic League to oppose Charles V. This, in my opinion spelled the end of a unified 1000-year Christian political Empire. Vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire lingered on, but Christendom, as a unified European political kingdom was gone forever.

In the same year 1531, December 9, 1531, when the splintering of the church and Empire in Europe was beyond

repair, and the seething hostility of the abused Amerindians in America seemed ready to destroy the Spanish, the Virgin Mary appeared to the 57-year-old Aztec Juan Diego near a hill known as Tepeyac. She identified herself using a Nahuatl word that sounded like Guadalupe (a shrine in Extremadura, Spain), but was later (in 1666) identified as “Tlecuautlapcupeuh” meaning “She who proceeds from the region of light like the fire eagle” (Franciscan, p. 182). She had the appearance of an Aztec maiden and wore clothes with symbols and colors very meaningful to Aztecs but not so meaningful to Spaniards. She could have started a new religion, but, instead, asked Juan Diego to visit the Spanish bishop and ask him to commission a shrine where Juan Diego could bring his defeated people for healing and conversion. The bishop, not believing Juan Diego, asked for a sign.

Juan Diego was concerned about his uncle who was very ill. The next day, instead of returning to Tepeyac, Juan Diego headed straight for his uncle’s home. Mary intercepted him and said: “Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, I who am your mother?” (Franciscan, p. 200). Notice how Mary does not identify herself as part of the white people’s religion. She identifies with the Native Americans, same as she does in her later apparitions around the world. The Virgin Mary told Juan Diego to gather some flowers and take them to the bishop.

Juan Diego made a container by lifting the bottom of his tilma (cloak) and placing the flowers between the folds. On December 22, 1531, he opened his tilma in front of the bishop and let the flowers fall to the floor. To the surprise of the bishop, the flowers turned out to be flowers the bishop recognized as native to Spain, flowers that do not blossom in December. More to the bishop’s surprise, an image began to appear on the tilma (Franciscan, p. 56).

Over the next ten years, greatly assisted by Juan Diego's testimony and many miraculous cures, virtually all his people entered the mother church.

Early during the conversions, an Aztec nobleman, with the Christian name Antonio Valeriano, wrote a detailed history of this apparition in Nahuatl. It is known as "Nican Mopohua." from its first two words (Franciscan, p. 51). The original was lost, but a copy was found in 1649. An English translation of the document is in (Franciscan, pp., 193-204) and on The Internet.

Tilmas are made of cactus fibers and do not last more than 40 years. The fibers are coarse and do not accept paint very well. Nevertheless, Juan Diego's Tilma has lasted more than 400 years, and the image is as vivid now as when it first appeared. Scientists have examined the Tilma and can find no explanation of how the image was produced. It shows no evidence of being painted. X-ray analysis shows no brush marks or underlying sketch. It has an optical quality similar to colors of bird feathers and butterfly wings, something that cannot be achieved by painting (Franciscan, p. 84). It has amazing detail. One scientist enlarged the Virgin's eyes 2500 times and saw, reflected in the pupils, images of the people who witnessed the opening of the Tilma (Franciscan, p. 99). In a sense, the Tilma is like the Shroud of Turin. It defies scientific explanation. The world's best scientists, with the latest equipment available today, can not reproduce either the image on the Tilma or the image on the Shroud.

The Tilma has survived some potentially dangerous situations. In 1778, nitric acid was accidentally spilled on the Tilma but caused very little damage, (Franciscan, p. 60). In 1921, terrorists placed a bomb in front of the glass-enclosed Tilma in order to destroy it. The bomb severely damaged the church, but didn't even break the glass protecting the Tilma (Franciscan, p. 62). I saw the Tilma

myself when I visited Mexico City in 1981. Interesting historical parallels, aren't they?

Who can look upon the past four centuries and not see the divisions, hatred, contradictions in doctrine, and unchristian attitude by those who profess to be Christian? Their bad example has destroyed the mission of the baptized to convince the whole world that Christ's Gospel is true. Those divisions and contradictions developed along with nationalism. In fact, both movements, the division of the Church and the rise of nationalism, augmented each other. Neither one could have developed to the extent it did without the influence of the other.

How different might the world be today had all Christians remained steadfast. I think the Reformation, combined with nationalism, tore apart the Christian Political Empire and the Christian message. The political millennium, here on earth, would have lasted from the fourth century to the fifteenth century, approximately one thousand years.

Since then, what was once the Christian Empire fought war after war as its individual nations clashed. Christianity has steadily declined as a world influence due to contradictions and rebuttals of Christian doctrine by people within the Christian community. Today, all can see how little influence Christianity has on the nations, as nation after nation pursues its own rejection of Jesus Christ and his teaching. These same nations now tell us we are in the post-Christian Era.

Oh yes! The 1000-year reign started long ago. Christ bound Satan at the beginning to insure that Christ's Church becomes firmly established. Then will come the great seduction followed by the end of these end times, the end of the world. Following that, God will raise the bodies of all humans. God will reunite each soul with its resurrected body. The wicked will find damnation because of their refusal to obey God, but the righteous will find everlasting



blessedness. That will be the second resurrection. The righteous, the ones whose souls went to heaven, will have participated in two resurrections.

Christ released Satan, not to wreak havoc for us, but for us to subdue and frustrate Satan, for we all by now should be ready to subdue temptation and assert our own faithfulness to our king. If we fail in this great task given us, then we are the ones who--just like first and second-century Judeans before us--will bring tribulation upon our countries. Our failure will propel our own Gentile nations into history's great watershed when God will end all defiance and requite all persons according to their deeds.

The first books I read warned that Revelation predicts a nuclear war when the Soviet Union invades Israel. That caught my imagination. Today, the Soviet empire is gone, so a Soviet invasion of Israel is preposterous. It was possible, though, in the early seventies. The best-selling interpretations did predict that the Soviet Union would invade Israel. The Western nations would enter on Israel's side. Both sides would launch nuclear attacks. Among the many flaws in this interpretation, the most troublesome is the unlikelihood that civilization could survive the first nuclear exchange. Six were proposed.

The prediction that the European Economic Community will be the revived Roman Empire and that the Soviet Union will invade Israel was first voiced right after World War II (Hailey). During the war, a different pattern had developed, a pattern involving a new Roman Empire under Mussolini. When the Italian army conquered Ethiopia, Mussolini said he restored the Empire. In a May 1936 speech to his army he said: *"Legionnaires! In this supreme certitude raise high your insignia, your weapons, and your hearts to salute, after fifteen centuries, the reappearance of the Empire on the fated hills of Rome."* (Fermi, p. 327).

For those who then interpreted Revelation, this was the resurrected Roman Empire. Mussolini was the Roman dictator who revived the empire. Mussolini restored the fasces as his symbol of political power. The "fasces" was a cylinder of reeds, three feet by four inches, tied over an axe. Ancient Rome used it as a symbol of authority. Mussolini also restored the ancient Roman salute of the outstretched arm. Other leaders set up similar governments in their countries, notably Hitler in Germany.

Hitler started out admiring and imitating Mussolini. He soon surpassed Mussolini and wound up controlling the Axis coalition. Hitler's career abruptly ended when he lost the war. Knowing his character during the war, especially his conduct toward the Jews, he could, had he lived, easily have done many things expected of the antichrist.

Had the Axis won and Hitler continued his career until he was seventy, he would have controlled the Axis powers until 1959. This coalition of a victorious Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Finland, Japan, and the countries they conquered, would make a more believable revived empire than what might come out of the EEC.

The war, of course, destroyed the Axis coalition. I think the EEC nations found themselves in postwar interpretations as a substitute for the more believable Empire Mussolini revived. Later when the 1990's brought the Gulf War, and still later when the twentieth-first century brought the war against terror, we have "*The Left Behind*" interpretation presuming that the Moslem nations will form a coalition with the European nations to destroy Israel. As I described in my Introduction, no matter how the end comes, the final end eventually will come.

#### APOCALYPSE 20:8-15

These verses appear to be describing the final judgment.

- 8 *And they came upon the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city.*
- 9 *And there came down fire from God out of heaven, and devoured them; and the devil, who seduced them, was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast*
- 10 *And the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*
- 11 *And I saw a great white throne, and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them.*
- 12 *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*
- 13 *And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works.*
- 14 *And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death.*
- 15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire.*

I would compare today's problems of drug abuse, sex

abuse, murder, rape, robbery, and international and ethnic terrorism to a plague of locusts. These problems, if not stopped, will destroy the resources of all Gentile nations just like the Judeans destroyed their resources during the second woe.

I am delighted that we escaped nuclear war with the communist nations. But that does not mean we no longer face danger. We have moved into the post-Christian era. The Gentile nations have rejected Christ. They are fascinated with extraterrestrial lifeforms. They try to communicate with them by scientific space probes and ultra high-frequency radiation. They try also through occult means: spiritualism, channeling, hypnosis, seances. I wonder what we will do if God allows fallen angels to answer. Perhaps we face a more perilous danger than the one we escaped.

The Gentile nations doubt that God will respond to their apostasy. Even when prophecies come true before their eyes, they will not believe. Perhaps that is the way it should be. After all, God does not send prophets to tell the wicked how much more time they yet have to pursue their own pleasure. God sends prophets to warn the uncommitted to change their hearts. Hearing God's plans might shock them to seek God's mercy. God sends prophets also to those already faithful that they might retain their faith when these dreadful events finally arrive. The human race will then thresh and beat itself, as wheat is threshed, to separate chaff and impurities before the Lord arrives.

Over the past 150 years, there has been occurring a growing interest on the part of humanity in the occult: in non-Christian spiritualism, in extra-terrestrial life forms, and in astral powers that might influence humans or be controlled by humans. Much of it started off as seemingly harmless adventure stories, fiction, and make-believe entertainment; but all of it opened our minds to the

possibility of contact with non-human, extra-terrestrial intelligences. This, I view, as one of the signs of the end times. I wonder if we are not rapidly approaching a climatic confrontation, involving we human beings, between Jesus Christ, who claims to be God become human but still our Lord and God, and those spiritual beings who do not believe it or refuse to accept it. Such a confrontation was predicted in Scripture and was predicted to happen in the end times (Apoc. 20:7-9).

In the 1820's, there was intense missionary activity, especially from Protestant Communities, who felt the end of the world was near. In England alone, there were an estimated three hundred Anglican clergymen and six hundred clergymen of other Protestant sects preaching the imminent personal return of Jesus Christ (RIA 248). Around this time, the American, William Miller was very active in the Adventist movement. He predicted that the world would come to an end on March 21, 1843. He influenced a large following and caught the attention of many others due to the notoriety of his prediction not coming true.

Also in the 1820's, the Illuminati, a sect within the Freemasons, was developing plans to overthrow all European monarchs and destroy the Catholic Church. Adam Weishaupt formed the Illuminati on May 1, 1776. When their plans were discovered and the Illuminati suppressed, the members went underground in Masonic lodges already influenced by the Illuminati. They continued planning within some Grand Orient Lodges and formed more secret societies within those lodges (Flynn, p. A12).

In the 1830's, the Alta Vendita, the highest Italian Carbonari lodge, gained supreme control of the Masonic secret societies in France, Germany, and England. In 1834, Giuseppe Mazzini became the Illuminati's leader. He and his fellow Illuminati developed a plan they felt would take

generations to fulfill. These people, the Alta Vendita, through a subgroup, “The League of Just Men,” financed Karl Marx, who composed *The Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels. Their effort inspired the Communist Revolution in Russia. Lenin, the first Communist leader in Russia, said: “Atheism is a natural and inseparable portion of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific socialism. Our propaganda necessarily includes propaganda for atheism” (Flynn, p. A13).

The destruction of European monarchs was part “A” of the plan. Part “B” was the destruction of the Catholic Church. Doesn’t it seem like Satan is behind these inspirations? In the next chapter, I will describe messages sent by Jesus through his mother to three children in Fatima, Portugal. I will tell how the Catholic Church could have nipped both parts of this plan in the bud, but did not do it.

On March 31, 1848, the Fox sisters in New York claimed to have had contact with spirits. They later put on public demonstrations of communication with spirits. This marked the beginning of the modern interest in spiritualism, which is still in vogue today. Incidentally, everything I mention from now on is easily verified through the Internet.

In 1890, there was founded in England “The Order of the Golden Dawn,” an organization of people interested in the occult. In 1910, in America, interest in spiritualism grew due to the influence of Edgar Casey, who had a great many communications with spirits. His heirs have continued the public interest in Casey by popularizing his work after his death through the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), which they founded in 1932. Fueled by the above events and many others, interest in such matters continually increased. Today, who can ignore the obvious influence of spiritualism in our music, movies, television shows, fiction, computer games, and in various cults, and self-help programs that are so popular today.

Again in 1820, a young American began to experience visions of spiritual beings. Between 1820 and 1830, he was told that the church founded by Jesus Christ had long ago been destroyed by sinful men. But God was now, in these latter times, going to re-establish the church and had appointed this young American to select twelve men and re-institute the twelve apostles and set up The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The youth was Joseph Smith: the spiritual being was what Smith understood to be the angel "Moroni," who, along with other angels and Jesus, instructed Smith on what he was to do (Smith, *The Book of Mormon*, introduction) (Whalen, pp. 179-191). On April 6, 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) was formally established.

Thirteen hundred years earlier, a similar thing happened when Mohammed had visions of what he thought was the angel Gabriel telling him that the Christians had violated the covenant they made with God, just as the Jews had violated the first covenant, and God was choosing Mohammed to inaugurate a third (and final) covenant.

Mohammed had much difficulty, at first, getting people to accept his visions, but within his own lifetime he saw Islam become firmly established in Arabia. After his death, Islam spread rapidly. Within ten years, Islam had spread to into Syria, Iraq, Egypt, western Iran, and other nearby nations, some of which were, or at least had been, thoroughly Christianized. Egypt, for example, had given birth to the early desert fathers, men who established the first Christian monasteries. All of these nations, and later many more, accepted Islam, followed the call of Mohammed, and worshipped God in a new way.

In the 1820's, the situation in America and Europe was similar. Christianity had fragmented into hostile groups who were voicing unfair accusations against fellow Christians and were contradicting the convictions of their

rivals. In the three hundred years since the Reformation, these accusations and contradictions had reached a level where just about every tenet once held sacred by their ancestors was challenged by at least one sect of Christians. If an outsider were viewing Christianity at that time, who could blame him for not believing the Christian message? And how blameworthy are those who were reared within Christian families in subsequent years but grew up to reject Christianity for Deism, or Humanism, or Nazism, or Communism? Perhaps the disintegration of Church unity is what paved the way for the acceptance of these and other non-Christian ideologies.

The most militantly atheistic of these non-Christian ideologies, and one that found widest acceptance, was Communism. Communism had its birth in the mind of its formulators during the early 1800's. It was finally put into its finished form, *The Communist Manifesto*, in 1848.

One could present a logical hypothesis arguing that Satan was released five to six centuries ago, and attacked Christ's Church in a systematic way. First, during the fifteenth century, Satan tempted clerics to present scandal within the Church; then, Satan encouraged people to react to the scandal by rejecting the Church and dismantling it; then Satan fostered rival theological systems to replace the Apostle's concept of God; then, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Satan encouraged atheistic ideologies to motivate people not to believe that God made a public revelation; and then (I'm speculating about the future now) Satan enticed humans into a resurgence of spiritualism, paganism, occultism, and even witchcraft and Satanism to bring humanity back to the state it was before Christ came into the world.

Today, all the previously Christian nations tell us that we are in the "post-Christian" era. All governments of previously Christian nations try to separate themselves from



all connections to religion. In the United States, public religious symbols, like plaques and monuments depicting the Ten Commandments" are being removed by court order. Prayer and serious discussions about Christianity are forbidden in public schools.

Efforts are being made to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance" and "In God We Trust" from coins. At the same time, abortion, even partial-birth abortion, is legalized in every State. Homosexual activity, clearly described as sinful in Scripture, is now legitimized by homosexual marriages in many States. Homosexuality is portrayed approvingly in our movies, literature, and is promoted on TV as a wholesome and perfectly acceptable alternate life style.

These are the perils coming from every direction, even from within the Church that are confronting Christians in the nineteenth through twentieth-first centuries. I mention all this to drive home my main point: Satan is deceiving the nations and has been doing so, at an accelerating rate, ever since the events leading to the Reformation.

This confrontation and contradiction of Christ's teaching must disappoint Jesus Christ. He knows the truth. He revealed it. Why is it that so many Christians argue about it? This, I think, is Satan's work. The Devil sowed the seeds of dissension, and dissension now flourishes in our lives. I think this saddens Jesus Christ. Many of us now have "my religion" instead of "God's religion," and many of us will hold out against all hope that "my religion" will prevail.

No wonder such dire consequences are predicted in The Apocalypse.

end of chap eighteen >>

## **Chapter 19**

### **The Final Days Before Eternity**

**I**n the previous chapter, I outlined how Christendom had splintered and departed farther and farther from the Christian beliefs of our ancestors. I outlined the growing interest in the occult and spiritualism. Today, who can watch Media promotion of church and state separation, abortion, and same sex marriage and not realize how far the world has removed itself from Christianity? We are, they say, in the post-Christian era. How close does that bring us to the final confrontation between Christ and the Antichrist? I would like in this chapter to show that Christ is still working to warn us. I will list many extraordinary heavenly warnings that, sad to say, are generally ignored by the Media.

Over the past 150 years, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, there has been a growing interest in the occult: in non-Christian spiritualism, in extra-terrestrial life forms, and in astral powers that might influence humans or be controlled by humans.

To counteract this, I think, Christ has been sending messages from heaven, mostly through his mother, warning us where we are headed. Many people balk at the idea that Christ's mother plays any role in Christ's mission to save souls. I have posed these questions to some of them: "When you get to heaven, what do you expect to do? Will Christ have nothing for you to do? Won't Christ count you among his saints and angels to do his bidding and work with him to save souls? If you expect to serve Christ in heaven (and you should expect to do so. After all, Christ rules heaven) why would his mother not be at his service?"

Which one of us has a better relationship with Christ than his mother? She serves Jesus like we serve Jesus. Don't confuse respect for Mary as "worship." I, myself, know better than to worship Mary. I respect Mary. I respect everyone who is in heaven. I hope to get there myself someday. If I do get there, I hope people will respect me also. I also hope that Jesus will have something for me to do.

I believe that, in this life, Jesus wants me to serve him even though I'm not perfect. I'm sure Jesus wants all of us to spread HIS message to other people and to do whatever we can to help other people find salvation. We stumble around in this life because we are confused by all the arguments we hear. However, in heaven, we will not make any mistakes. We will, finally, be perfect.

If you and I expect to be perfect in heaven, why would Christ's mother not be perfect? Instead of balking at the messenger, why not examine the messages? Everything I say about the messages can easily be verified by surfing The Internet. In addition to The Internet, I also provide traditional references.

George Washington reportedly had an apparition at Valley Forge in 1777, showing him the future of the republic he just helped liberate from Great Britain. It may be folklore, but the story has been told over and over again. Here is the original publication of the vision from *The National Tribune*, Vol. 4, December 12, 1880 by the reporter, Wesley Bradshaw. Bradshaw had interviewed 95-year old Anthony Sherman on July 4, 1859 in Independence Square, Philadelphia, PA. Mr. Sherman had been with Washington at Valley Forge in 1777 when Washington had the vision.

"I do not know whether it is owing to the anxiety of my mind or what, but this afternoon, as I was sitting at this

table engaged in preparing a dispatch, something seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld standing opposite a singularly beautiful female. So astonished was I, for I had given strict orders not to be disturbed, that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the purpose of her presence. A second, a third, and even a fourth time did I repeat my question, but received no answer from my mysterious visitor, except a slight raising of her eyes. By this time I felt strange sensations spreading through me. I would have risen, but the riveted gaze of the being before me rendered volition impossible. I assayed once more to address her, but my tongue had become useless. Even thought itself had become paralyzed. A new influence, mysterious, potent, irresistible, took possession of me. All I could do was to gaze steadily, vacantly at my unknown visitant. Gradually the surrounding atmosphere seemed filled with sensations, and grew luminous. Everything about me seemed to rarefy; the mysterious visitor herself becoming more airy and yet more distinct to my sight than before. I now began to feel as one dying, or rather to experience the sensation, which I sometimes imagined accompanies dissolution. I did not think, I did not reason, I did not move. All, alike, were impossible. I was conscious only of gazing fixedly, vacantly, at my companion.

"Presently I heard a voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn'; while at the same time my visitor extended her arm eastwardly. I now beheld a heavy white vapor at some distance rising fold upon fold. This gradually dissipated, and I looked upon a strange scene. Before me lay spread out in one vast plane all the countries of the world: Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and America, the billows of the Atlantic; and between Asia and America lay the Pacific.

'Son of the Republic,' said the mysterious voice as before, 'look and learn.'

"At that moment I beheld a dark shadowy being, like an angel, standing, or rather floating, in mid-air between Europe and America. Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of each hand, he sprinkled some upon America with his right hand, while with his left hand he cast some on Europe. Immediately a cloud arose from these countries, and joined in mid-ocean. For a while it remained stationary, and then it moved slowly westward, until it enveloped America in its murky folds. Sharp flashes of lightning gleamed through it at intervals; and I heard the smothered groans and cries of the American people. A second time the angel dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the ocean, in whose heaving billows it sank from view. A third time I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.' I cast my eyes upon America and beheld villages and towns and cities springing up, one after another, until the whole land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, was dotted with them. Again I heard the mysterious voice say, 'Son of the Republic, the end of the century cometh. Look and learn.'

"And with this, the dark, shadowy figure turned its face southward, and from Africa I saw an ill-omened specter approach our land. It flitted slowly over every town and city of the latter. The inhabitants presently set themselves in battle array against each other. As I continued looking I saw a bright angel on whose brow rested a crown of light on which was traced the word 'Union,' place an American flag between the divided nation and say, 'Remember, ye are brethren.' Instantly, the inhabitants, casting from them their weapons, became fiends once more, and united around the National Standard.

"And again I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.' At this, the dark, shadowy angel placed a trumpet to his mouth and blew three distinct blasts; and taking water from the ocean, he sprinkled it upon Europe, Asia, and Africa. Then my eyes beheld a fearful scene: from each of these countries arose thick, black clouds that were soon joined into one. And throughout this mass there gleamed a dark-red light, by which I saw hordes of armed men, who, moving with the cloud, arched by land and sailed by sea to America; which country was enveloped in the volume of cloud. And I dimly saw these vast armies devastate the whole country and burn the villages, towns, and cities that I beheld springing up.

"As my ears listened to the thundering of the cannon, the clashing of swords, and the shouts and cries of millions in mortal combat, I again heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic look and learn.' As the voice ceased, the shadowy angel, for the last time, dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it upon America. Instantly the dark cloud rolled back, together with the armies it had brought, leaving the inhabitants of the land victorious.

"Then once more I beheld the villages, towns, and cities springing up where I had seen them before; while the bright angel, planting the azure standard he had brought in the midst of them, cried in a loud voice: 'While the stars remain and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Union last.' And taking from his brow the crown on which was blazoned the word 'Union' he placed it upon the Standard, while people, kneeling down, said, 'Amen!'"

"The scene instantly began to fade and dissolve, and I at last saw nothing but the rising, curling vapor I had first beheld. This also disappearing, I found myself once more gazing upon the mysterious visitor who, in the same voice I

had heard before, said, 'Son of the Republic, what you have seen is thus interpreted. Three great perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful for her is the third: but the whole world united shall not prevail against her. Let every child of the Republic learn to live for his God, his land, and his Union.' With those words the vision vanished, and I started from my seat and felt that I had seen a vision; wherein had been shown me the birth, progress, and destiny of the United States."

"Such, my friends," concluded the venerable narrator, "were the words I heard from Washington's own lips; and America will do well to profit by them." This and more is easily found on The Internet.

Another unusual, but well known apparition, was experienced by Marietta Davis, a twenty-five year old Baptist woman living in Berlin, New York. She fell into a coma for nine days. Doctors could do nothing to arouse her. Then, suddenly, she awoke and related to her family and her minister a detailed dream about what awaits all of us in the next world. Her dreams were recorded in a book entitled *Intro Murros*, published in 1858. Later the title was changed to *Scenes Beyond the Grave*. I have an 1870 copy of that title. Today, after many reprintings, it is still available from Amazon.com in a 1999 edition *Caught Up into Heaven* (Davis).

Marietta emphasized that the cross of Jesus Christ saves us. She stressed the divinity of Jesus in her visions, and warned that the fallen angels will fight against his divinity. Marietta felt that her dreams came from the Lord, not from her imagination. She stressed the need for repentance from sin and faith in God. Her visions quoted Scriptures frequently.

The editor's preface states: "Marietta was not a born again Christian when Jesus sovereignty took her up to



heaven and later down into hell. Her story focuses a great deal on what happens to stillborn children and children who die right after birth, about nurseries in heaven and how children are raised and educated by angels in heaven. She also describes the contrast between those unredeemed and the redeemed in the constitution of their makeup and why heaven for the lost is hell and why there must be forever a gulf fixed between the two. She explains the principle of violated law, how this affects man's nature now and in hell and in eternity. The story also talks about her experience of heaven and of hell." (written by Dale P. Kruse, Pastor-Evangelist).

The original publisher wrote: "The increasing demand for this work, with so little effort to call public attention to it, confirms our first impressions, that it is the Book for the age; one greatly needed to supply the deficiency intuitively sensed by the mind of the present generation. "Edition after edition has been published and passed silently into the hands of the reading public. Reports of an encouraging nature reach us from all sections where it has found its way; and the united testimony of those who avail themselves of the work is, that, to read is to be benefited.

"Its sound theology, purely religious sentiment, and thrilling descriptions of scenes enacted beyond the grave, as seen by the spirit of the young girl, while her body lay entranced, cannot, it seems to me, fail to strengthen the faith of the Christian in the truths of Revelation. More particularly is it adapted to the youthful mind of this age, to awaken in it a love of the Christian Religion as it unfolds so graphically the great plan of man's Redemption, "which things the angels desire to look into."

"I have witnessed its effect upon the youthful mind. They, while listening to the thrilling story of Marietta, seem borne along with her enraptured spirit, and with it to witness

the unfolding of visions, by which the Infants are being taught to know their Redeemer, that they too, might be able to realize and love Him, who was once a babe in a manger; then a man of sorrows acquainted with grief; then suffering death and triumphing over the grave, for the redemption of a ruined and forlorn race.

“I unhesitatingly state it as my firm and unwavering belief, that the spirit of Marietta Davis, like John, the Revelator, while his body was in the Isle of Patmos, visited scenes beyond the grave, and there saw and heard what she relates. However this may be, if the truth can be brought to reach the mind, and win the affections to the Christian Religion, all is gained that should be desired.” (written by the publisher Stephen Duel, Dayton, OH, September 1, 1856).

“The following testimonials from the mother and sisters of Marietta Davis; and from Emerson Hull, M.D., who had been a resident of Berlin for many years, and is a physician of eminence, are but a part of those in possession of the editor, but are considered sufficient to authenticate the narrative. Testimony of the Family, Berlin, New York, Nov. 15, 1855.”

Rev. J. L. Scott wrote: “Dear Friend: Since you have been publishing the trance of Marietta Davis, in the *Mountain Cove Journal*, some of the readers have written to us to ascertain its authenticity. Upon this account, and to relieve you from embarrassment, we submit the following for your disposal:”

Marietta’s family writes: “Marietta Davis was a member of our family. She was born in this town, where she lived until called by death from us. She was not of open religious habits; being disinclined to religious conversation. During the revival in the winter of 1847-48, her mind, as you well know, was religiously exercised; but she could not

realize what others professed, so as to enable her to unite with her young friends in the ordinances of the Gospel. In August following, she fell into a sleep, or trance, from which she could not be awakened. In that state she remained nine days; and when she awoke, she said she had been in Heaven; that she had seen there many of her old friends and relations who were dead; and Jesus the Redeemer. From that time her hope in heaven through Jesus, was strong; and she rejoiced in the prospect of a final admission into the Paradise of Peace.

“During her short stay with us, after she came out of the trance, she related what she said she had seen, heard, and learned during her sleep; but much of what she told us, she said she wished should not be mentioned then, for the world was not prepared to hear it. The trance, as you published it, as far as we can recollect, is correct; only you have omitted much. Marietta fell asleep in August 1848, and died the following March, and at the time and in the manner predicted by herself.

“Yours, Nancy Davis, Mother, Susan Davis, Sister, Sarah Ann Davis, Sister.”

The original printing, and many reprints had testimonials of the attending physician, and of three respected ministers who were familiar with Marietta's experience. All of this and more can be found on The Internet.

Another famous message from Christ was given to Sundar Singh, a young boy in India. His family lived in the Patiala state in northern India. They practiced the Sikh religion. His mother took him weekly to learn from a sadhu, a holy man in the Sikh religion. She also sent Sundar to a Christian missionary school to learn English. When Sundar was fourteen, his mother, whom he loved deeply, died. Sundar blamed the Christian God for his mother's

death. He harassed his Christian teachers during class and mocked Scripture. Still angry, he burned a copy of the Bible. In spite of all his rage, he could not stop grieving for his mother.

A few days later, December 19, 1903, Sundar prayed that, if the Christian God really existed, God should reveal himself. Sundar planned to throw himself in front of a train, which would arrive in the morning. After praying seven hours, his room suddenly glowed. A man appeared and said: "How long will you deny me? I died for you; I have given my life for you." Sundar recognized the man as Christ.

From that moment, Sundar believed in Christ. He met severe persecution from his people. The Sikhs had been persecuted early in their history and became staunchly loyal to their faith. Sundar's conversion to Christianity was considered treachery. His relatives tried to encourage or force Sundar to return to their ancestral faith. They mistreated Sundar. They attacked the Christian mission. They poisoned one of his friends.

Finally, Sundar broke with his people. He cut off the long hair he had worn like every Sikh. His angry family told him: "We reject you as if you had never been born. You will leave our home with nothing." They poisoned his last meal. Realizing he was poisoned, he went to a Christian hospital. After his recovery, he dressed in the traditional yellow robe of India's holy men, but, unlike many of them, he kept himself clean and did no physical mortification to his body. Sundar spent the rest of his life bearing witness to Christ. He won many converts, including his father. In 1929, Sundar traveled to Tibet. Nothing was heard from him again.

Here are some sayings attributed to Sundar: "Salt, when dissolved in water, may disappear, but it does not

cease to exist. We can be sure of its presence by tasting the water. Likewise, the indwelling Christ, though unseen, will be made evident to others from the love which he imparts to us.”

”It is not necessary that every single member of the body should become useless and weak before death occurs. A weakness of, or a blow upon, the heart or the brain will suffice to bring an end to life, however strong and healthy other parts of the body may be. Thus one sin by its poisonous effect on the mind and heart is sufficient to ruin the spiritual life not of one only, but of a whole family or nation, even of the whole race. Such was the sin of Adam.“

”Thou Thyself, O Creator, hast created this heart for Thyself, and not for any other created thing. Therefore this heart cannot find rest in aught but Thee: only in Thee, O Father, who hast made this longing for peace. So now take out of this heart whatever is opposed to Thee and abide and rule in it Thyself, Amen.“ All of the above is easily found on The Internet.

The following are some of the more important messages Christ delivered through his mother:

- (1) On July 18, 1830, Christ sent his mother to Zoe Catherine Laboure to warn that times are evil, that grave troubles are coming, and that there will be great danger. This marks the beginning of a long string of apparitions of Mary in modern times. They are similar to the very famous apparition of Mary to Juan Diego in Guadalupe, Mexico in 1531 (Johnson). That apparition happened at a time when the Church was disintegrating into Protestant sects during the Reformation. As the Reformation drew million of Catholics out of the Church in Europe, the apparition at Guadalupe drew more millions of Amerindians into the Church. There is

a very interesting point-by-point parallel between what was happening in Europe and what happened in Mexico. It's almost as if Satan were battling God, and God was counteracting step-by-step. Why did Christ send his mother again in 1830? What was developing at this time to warrant another intervention by the mother of Jesus? In the previous chapter, I tried to provide an answer.

- (2) Two and a half months after the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (covered in chapter 18), Christ sent his mother again to Zoe Catherine Laboure' in Paris, France. She told Zoe that the times are evil and people must pray, and that God's grace will be given to those who come to the altar. God's grace will be poured upon all who ask (Sharkey, p. 16).
- (3) Christ sent his mother to Zoe again on November 27, 1830, and told her that many do not receive God's grace because they do not ask (Sharkey, p. 19). The veneration of Mary as Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal came from these apparitions.
- (4) In 1836, Christ sent his mother to a French priest who dedicated his lax parish in her memory. From this apparition came the devotion of "Our Lady of Victories" (Sharkey, p. 22).
- (5) On January 18, 1840, Christ sent his mother to France to foster the "Green Scapular Devotion," a devotion that would be effective in helping with the conversion of those who have no faith and to procure for them a happy death (one without spiritual anxiety) (Sharkey, p. 24).
- (6) On December 24, 1841, Christ sent his mother to an Indian youth of the Flathead Tribe at Father de Smet's mission in Montana. She said she was glad

the mission was named “St. Mary’s” (Sharkey, p. 85).

- (7) On July 26, 1845, Christ sent his mother to Sister Apolline Andriveau in Troyes, France to warn that the world is bringing ruin upon itself because it doesn’t try to learn from the passion of Jesus. Mary asked that people think about the sufferings of her son on their behalf. From this apparition came the devotion of the “Red Scapular” (Sharkey, p. 86).
- (8) On September 19, 1846, two years before Karl Marx published *The Communist Manifesto*, Christ sent his mother to two children, eleven-year-old Maximin Giraud and fifteen-year-old Melanie Mathieu at La Salette, France, telling them that if people continue to disobey her son, she won’t be able to hold back his hand from chastising the world. She prays unceasingly to her son on behalf of the world, but people take no heed of it (Sharkey, p. 34).

Melanie was told a long message that consisted of thirty-three paragraphs when Melanie wrote it. Maximum was given a shorter message that consisted of ten points. Both messages are easily surfed on The Internet under “The Secrets of La Salette.”

One item that intrigued me was point four of Maximum’s message: “The pope who will come after this one will not be roman.” Most of the succeeding popes have been Italian, so I struggled with this for a while. I now believe I have the answer.

The messages were given during September 1846. Pius IX was pope at that time, elected pope on June 14, 1846. Something that most of us no

longer remember is that, at that time, the pope was not only the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, he was also the political leader of the Papal States, about one-third of present-day Italy. During Pius IX's pontificate, the people of the Italian peninsula wanted to establish a republic. After much quarreling and riots, Victor Emmanuel defeated the papal army and its allies and seized all of the territory ruled by the pope, including Rome, which was made the capital of a united Italy in September 1870.

Victor Emmanuel tried to grant the pope some territory within Rome and an annual remuneration of \$650,000 a year. This was known as the Law of Guarantees. It was offered on May 15, 1871. Pius IX and succeeding popes refused to accept it and preferred to remain as virtual prisoners within Rome. Finally, in 1939, Mussolini, acting on behalf of Victor Emmanuel III, and Cardinal Gasparri, acting on behalf of Pope Pius XII, signed the Lateran Treaty, which recognized Vatican City as fully sovereign and independent.

The point I discovered is that Pius IX was the last pope to exercise political power over the former Papal States. Most likely, that is why the popes who came after Pius IX were not considered Roman.

- (9) On February 11, 1858, Christ sent his mother to Bernadette Soubrius in Lourdes, France. During a series of apparitions, Mary asked that people pray for the conversion of sinners. She asked that a chapel be built at Lourdes and that people make pilgrimages there to promote prayers for sinners.



Lourdes quickly became world-famous because of the many cures that occurred there (Trochu).

- (10) In 1858, Christ sent his mother to Green Bay, Wisconsin. She identified herself as the Queen of Heaven praying for the conversion of sinners. She indicated that if sinners do not convert themselves and do penance, her son would be obliged to punish them. Adele then started a local chapter of the Third Order of St. Francis to help spread deeper belief in Jesus in America (Sharkey, p. 88).
- (11) On January 17, 1871, Christ sent his mother to twelve-year-old Eugene Barbedette at Pontmain, France. She said her son was moved by the prayers of people in response to the earlier apparitions (Richard) (Sharkey, p. 57).
- (12) On February 14, 1876, Christ sent his mother to Estelle Faquette in Pellevoisin, France, urging people to show more respect for Jesus when they receive the Eucharist and to be more attentive in their minds when they pray. Mary said that it is not sufficient merely to have the outward appearance of prayer while the mind's interior is occupied with other things (Sharkey, p. 65).
- (13) On August 21, 1879, Christ sent his mother along with St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist to fifteen people in Knock, Ireland (Coyne) (Sharkey, p. 77).
- (14) In a series of apparitions at Castelpetroso, Italy, on September 26, 1888, Christ sent his mother, who appeared weeping as the sorrowful mother of Jesus, pierced with seven swords of sorrow. Five hundred persons saw her (Sharkey, p. 91).
- (15) On April 20, 1906, a painting of Christ's mother appeared life-like and animated in Quito, Ecuador

and caught the attention of thirty-six students in a boarding school. The painting was moved to a chapel and later to a larger church where many people saw the painting become life-like. Mary's eyes moved. She seemed to stand out in relief against the background of the painting. She appeared almost on the verge of tears (Sharkey, p. 92).

- (16) First, some background on how the apparitions at Fatima, Portugal, intermesh with the advent of Communist rule in Russia. World War I was taking its toll on all the participants, especially in Russia, where, early in 1917, the first inklings of a communist revolution were taking shape. By February 1917, there were large-scale demonstration in Petrograd (present-day St. Petersburg). On February 25, 1917, the city worker's went on strike. Then next day, the Tsar abdicated. Russian troops mutinied and fired into the crowds. By February 27, 1917, virtually nothing was left of the Tsar's administration. This uprising was known as the February Revolution (The Internet) (Crozier, p.12). Lenin, at this time, was in a Swiss prison. He sent a message to the Germans saying that if they get him into Petrograd, he will do all he can to bring Russia out of World War I. The Germans agreed to smuggle Lenin, with a small group of well-trained revolutionaries, into Petrograd and finance them with millions of dollars (Crozier, p. 8). They arrived in April 1917. The Tsar had abdicated in March. Early in May 1917, Pope Benedict XV, concerned about these events and about the war, asked all the world's Bishops to

make recourse to the heart of Jesus through Mary for an end to the war and for world peace.

Soon afterward, on May 13, 1917, Christ sent his mother to three children in Fatima Portugal. She said: "I come from heaven. I have come to ask you to come here for six months, at this same hour. Later, I shall say who I am and what I desire" (Luchia) (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*) (Alonso) (Sharkey, p. 99) (The Internet).

In mid-May 1917, Kerensky becomes war minister. He starts a new Russian offensive against Germany, but it fails. (Crozier, p. 8)

June 13, 1917. About fifty people were present during the second apparition. Mary said the two younger children Francisco and Jancita will soon be taken to heaven, but Lucia, the oldest, must remain here for some time to come (Luchia) (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*) (Alonso) (Sharkey, p. 99) (The Internet).

July 3-5, 1917, When the Petrograd Soviet heard of the May defeat, it organized a demonstration, including armed soldiers and sailors and went to the Tauride Palace. The Congress of Soviets was in progress. The demonstrators demanded that the Soviets assume full power and eject the Duma government for once and for all. This was "The July Uprising" (The Internet).

July 13, 1917, during the third apparition, Mary said that in October there will be a miracle for all to see and believe. The children then saw a vision of hell. Mary said: "You have seen where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will

be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse war will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that the world is about to be punished for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

“To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, and various nations will be annihilated”(Luchia) (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*) (Alonso) (Sharkey, p. 99) (The Internet). Note that this is the second of the famous three secrets of Fatima. The first secret was the vision of hell. The third secret starts out with the words: “In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved . . .” leaving much speculation about the content of the third secret. The first two secrets were made public in 1942. The third secret was finally made public in July 2000. It is described below.

In July 1917, Lenin wrote: “In times of revolution, it is not enough to ascertain the “will of the majority.” No! One must be stronger at the decisive moment, in the decisive place, and win. . . . we see countless instances of how the better organized, more conscious, better armed minority

imposed its will on the majority and conquered it.” (Pipes, p. 32).

On August 13, 1917, to defuse wide interest in the apparitions, the mayor of Fatima put the children in jail so they cannot meet the virgin as asked. The Virgin appears to the children on August 19, 1917, after they are released. She told them that because the authorities had put them in jail, the October miracle will be less spectacular. Mary said: ”Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them.”

On September 15, 1917, for the fifth apparition, a very large crowd had gathered. Mary said: “In October, Our Lord will come as well as Our Lady of Sorrows, and Our Lady of Carmel. St. Joseph will appear with the child Jesus to bless the world.” (Luchia) (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*) (Alonso) (The Internet).

In mid-September 1917, Kerensky freed Trotsky and other jailed Bolsheviks leaders. By October, the Bolsheviks were a majority in the Petrograd Soviet, led by Trotsky. By November 6, 1917, the Bolsheviks seized power (Crozier, p. 10).

On October 13, 1917, at Fatima, a very large crowd had gathered. It had rained all night, and the ground was wet and muddy. Mary told the children a shrine should be built at Fatima. The children should continue praying every day. The war is going to end soon, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes. Then the miracle of the sun occurred. It began to tremble and appeared to dance in the sky. It gave off bright colors and

seemed to fall toward the Earth. At the last moment, the fall stopped, and the sun returned to its normal position. A permanent miracle was that the wet, muddy ground instantly dried, and the rain stopped. Eighty thousand people, many of them unsympathetic to the events of Fatima and present only to scoff and ridicule those who did believe, were present to see the miracle. Headline articles appeared all over Europe describing the mysterious disturbance of the sun and outlining the people's explanation of why it happened. The names of the three children and their recounting of what the Virgin Mary said were also publicized (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*) (Alonso) (The Internet). Savvy people, including those directing the German war effort and the Communist Revolution in Russia, could not have avoided becoming aware of what happened at Fatima.

On October 16, 1917, The Petrograd Soviet creates the "Military Revolutionary Committee for defense Against Counter-revolution" (Pipes, p. 31). On October 24-25, 1917, The "October Revolution" creates the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Kerensky flees to America. On October 24, 1917, "Lenin emerged from one of the hideaways in which he had taken refuge since early July to escape the police, who ordered his arrest. . . Had he been arrested, the Bolshevik coup might very well have never occurred" (Pipes, p. 10).

On June 18, 1918, Britain, France, and the United States sent troops into Russia to intervene against the Bolshevik army in the hopes that defeating them might allow the White Russians (non-Bolsheviks) to regain control from the Reds

(Bolsheviks) and resume its part in the war against Germany. It was a half-hearted attempt by the allies, and they pulled out shortly after the signing of the Armistice (Crozier, p. 22). On July 10, 1917, Kerensky is elected prime minister. In the November 25, 1917, elections, the Bolsheviks were heavily defeated (Crozier, p.10). The year 1918 marks the beginning of two-year Civil war between the Red Russians and the White Russians. On February 1, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed. The great Russian Civil War had already begun”) (Crozier, p. 20). On November 11, 1918, the Armistice is signed. The Americans, French, and British withdrew their troops from Russia before accomplishing anything other than solidifying the Russian people behind the central (Bolshevik) government that got the Russians out of the war in the first place. Thus the European allies, instead of heeding the requests of Fatima, actually carry out foreign policy decisions that helped consolidate the Bolsheviks in power.

By March 2, 1919, the Russian communist government established the Communist International (Comintern) to spread the revolution to other countries. This fulfills another part of the prophecies warning that an atheistic government would take control of Russia and spread her errors all over the world. Around this time, Russia abandons the Julian calendar and adopts the Gregorian calendar in use throughout Western Europe and America. This will make May 13 (Gregorian) become May 1 (Julian). The famous May Day (May 1) celebration of the triumph of

Communism, ironically, falls on the same day the apparitions began.

On December 30, 1922, The Bolsheviks won the Civil War (Crozier, p. 28). "In the space of sixteen years, from 1917 to 1933, the first three totalist regimes of a troubled century came into power. The first was Lenin's in Russia, in 1917; the second was Benito Mussolini's in Italy, in 1922; and the third was Adolph Hitler's in Germany, in 1933" (Crozier, p. 59). The policies of the latter two brought about World War II, which could have been avoided had people heeded the apparitions. These warnings of chastisements are easily misunderstood. It would be much more clear to state them as warnings that if we do not, of our own free wills, avoid sins, especially sins of injustice toward each other, like murder, rape, robbery, bigotry, violence, we will wind up experiencing the consequences of sins committed by others.

The spectacular miracle at Fatima lent authenticity to the messages. Unfortunately the world media did not believe the miracle because the sun was seen to move only over Fatima. It was not seen moving over the whole world. The media claimed it was mass hallucination.

Knowing what we know now about history, one wonders how three young children in Fatima could make such a preposterous prediction about Russia at a time when Russia was suffering terribly in World War I. Who would have believed that Russia could chastise the world in 1917? The mother of Jesus told the three children that if the Catholic pope, in union with all the bishops, would publicly consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart,



Russia would be converted into believing Christ. The Pope, I suppose, couldn't get all the bishops to comply. Perhaps not all of the bishops believed it. The consecration was not made. Russia then became Communist and struck terror into Europe and killed many, many persons, Christians especially, as Russia tried to enforce atheism in every country they captured. What a shame! There was a spirit behind Communism. God would have bound that spirit in 1917, had enough people, especially clergy, believed the children. Richard Pipes lends support to this assumption: "I have showed why tsarism need not have collapsed. Now the question arises, why did it collapse?" (Pipes, p. 13). Richard Pipes claims that the collapse of tsarism in March 1917 caught the world unawares (Pipes, p. 14). October 1917 was an overthrow rather than a revolution. It was a *coup d'état*. (Pipes, p. 33)

Had the consecration been made, both parts of the Illuminati's plan (mentioned on p. 269) would have been nipped in the bud. As mentioned before, Fatima is famous for three secrets revealed to the children. Two were made public soon after the apparitions, but the third secret was not made public until after the collapse of the Soviet Union, even though the surviving child advised her bishop to make the third secret public before 1960. Here is the third secret. Lucia saw an angel crying out "Penance! Penance! Penance!" Then she saw the pope with bishops, priests, monks, and nuns going up a steep mountain, on top of which was a huge cross. On the way up the mountain, the pope passed through city half in ruin and filled with

corpses. When the pope and those with him reached the top, they were all killed by soldiers firing bullets and arrows. Two angels gathered their blood and sprinkled their blood on souls making their way to God (Halfert, *Deadline: The Third Secret of Fatima*, p. 255) (Flynn, pp. 4-5). What do you make of it? What harm would have ensued if it were made public earlier?

The second secret predicted a great luminous sign in the sky warning that God is ready to let sin run its course through another World War, famine, and persecutions. The sign was seen on January 25, 1938. The media dismissed it as an unusually bright Aurora Borealis seen in Europe and North America. Six months later, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, which was the point of no return for World War II. You know the rest. The United States and its allies built up Russia so it was, after the war, able to become the superpower that challenged the West for fifty years.

On April 4, 1919, Francisco dies, bringing the attention of the world back to Fatima with all its warnings and predictions. Jancinta dies on February 21, 1920, adding another reminder. Two years later on July 11, 1921, Mongolia became the second nation to come under a communist government. Later, on December 30, 1922, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is formally established.

December 10, 1925, Lucy was told by Jesus in a vision to spread the five-first Saturday's devotion. Two months later on February 16, 1926, she was also told to spread devotion to the Immaculate

Heart of Mary--two more events to jog the world's memory about the predictions of Fatima.

On December 17, 1927, ten years after the apparitions, Jesus told Lucy that she could reveal two of the three secrets. This made Fatima a news item all over again. In retrospect, therefore, it can be appreciated that the world was constantly being reminded of the events at Fatima, giving the nations chance after chance to comply with them.

On June 13, 1929, the Virgin Mary told Lucy that she desires the formal consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart, and now is the time for the Bishops in union with the Pope to do it. It wasn't done.

On September 18, 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria. This is the start of the Great War in Asia.

On December 25, 1935, two years after Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany, Lucy is asked by her Bishop to write her first memoir on Fatima. Its publication reminds the world once again about the apparitions. It is mainly about Jancita.

On November 7, 1937, Lucy is asked to write her second memoir. It is finished on November 21. It adds a lot of details to what happened at Fatima, and heightens the world's interest in Fatima once again.

On January 25, 1938, Lucy recognizes the great sign that the war will start. This was observed all over Europe and even in America and brought great panic to many people who thought the flashing red sky flickering all night long was caused by huge fires or cataclysms on earth. A friend of mine witnessed this in Cleveland, Ohio, sitting on top of

his parent's garage. He said that it appeared as though neighboring cities were on fire. Lucy announced that this was the promised sign warning that the war was about to begin, but the secular press was convinced it was nothing more than an unusual Aurora Borealis. So the world once again ignored an opportunity to avert World War II. Two months later on March 11, 1938, Hitler occupied Austria. This is the point of no return for war in Europe.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. World War II breaks out immediately. The war is now upon the world, but at the moment only two nations are communist. With the outbreak of war, Russia, according to a prior treaty with Germany, takes advantage of the situation to annex by force the small nations Bessarabia, Buhovina, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. So there are almost immediately five more nations under the communist control.

On June 22, 1941, Germany invades Russia, widening the scope of the war. On July 26, 1941, Lucy is asked by Bishop Dom Jose to write her third memoir on Fatima. It was done on August 31. It discussed two of the three parts of the secret: the vision of hell, and the promise attached to devotion to the Immaculate Heart. Its publication is yet another reminder of the message of Fatima. On October 7, 1941, Lucy is asked to write her fourth memoir. It is the longest one and adds more detail about the apparitions and about Francisco. Two months later Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The war is now global. A year later Pius XII made the first of several partial compliances with the request of

Fatima and consecrated the entire world, rather than Russia alone, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but it was too late to avert the war. This is important. World War II was also predicted, and it could have been averted. Now that the World War II is upon the world, there are no more unusual events coming out of Fatima or out of the lives of the seers.

In December 1943, Lucy, fearing she might be killed during the war, wrote down the third part of the secret to be read by Pope. It was read but not made public. The most important warning was the spread of communism. Prior to 1943 only seven nations were communist, five of them falling under the power of the communists by force at the outbreak of the war. Before the Communist Empire collapsed, the following thirty-four nations came under communist rule: Russia (1917), Mongolia (1921), Bessarabia (1939), Buhovina (1939), (Estonia (1939), Latvia (1939), Lithuania (1939), Albania (1944), Kurile Islands (1945), Tannu Tuva (1945), Carpatho Ukraine (1945), Yugoslavia (1945), Bulgaria (1946), Hungary (1947), Poland (1947), Romania (1947), North Korea (1948), Czechoslovak (1948), East Germany (1949), China (1949), Tibet (1951), North Vietnam (1954), Cuba (1959), South Yemen (1969), Angola (1975), Madagascar (1975), Laos (1975), South Vietnam (1975), Ethiopia (1977), Mozambique (1977), Afghanistan (1978), Cambodia (Kampuchea) (1979), Nicaragua (1979), Zimbabwe (1980). Millions of people were killed by the Communists, and millions more were killed in World War II. Not believing the warnings at Fatima has brought untold hardship to the entire world.

- (17) On June 5, 1920, Christ sent his mother to Josefa Menendez, the first of many apparitions Josefa would experience over the next three years and out of which grew "The Way of Divine Love," a movement to console Jesus over the heartlessness of sinners (Menendez).
- (18) In 1926, Theresa Neumann, a young woman in Germany, began having apparitions of Jesus and his mother. These apparitions continued throughout Theresa's life. She became well known to the American public during the occupation of Germany after World War II when many American servicemen became aware of her experiences (Steiner).
- (19) On November 12, 1932, Christ sent his mother to the Vaisin family in Beauraing, Belgium, with the message "Always be good! Pray very much! I will convert sinners (Sharkey, p. 127).
- (20) On January 15, 1933, Christ sent his mother to Mariette Beco at Banneau, Belgium, and asked Mariette to "Pray hard" (Sharkey p. 128).
- (21) On November 1, 1937, Christ sent his mother to four girls in Heede, Germany, asking for prayer and penance (Culligan, p. 160).
- (22) In 1940, Jesus began appearing to Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity, a Poor Clare nun in Jerusalem and told her how to instruct people to love Jesus like he wants to be loved (Van Der Broek).
- (23) On April 25, 1946, Christ sent his mother to Baerbel Ruess Marienfried, Germany. Mary said the world must experience the consequences of its many sins and that Satan will try even harder to cause destruction because Satan knows his time is

short. Mary said that just as humanity can only find God's mercy through the intercession of her son, in the same way, her son would hear your prayers only through her intercession. Don't pray for external goods. Much more is at stake now. Pray for the conversion of sinners. Make sacrifices on their behalf. Pray that people be given peace in their hearts, for it is only upon this peace that the nations can build world peace (Anon., p. 6).

- (24) In 1961, in San Sebastian de Garabandal, Spain, Mari-Loli Mazon, Jacinta Gonzalez, Maria Cruz Gonzalez and Conchita Gonzalez had visions of St. Michael the Archangel and the mother of Jesus. They had over 2,000 apparitions spread between 1961 and 1966. The visionaries were asked to plead with humanity to return to God through prayer, fasting, repentance of their sins, and acts of mercy. Christ's mother told them that people must make sacrifices. They must do penance and pray often. If people do not do this, sin will run rampant. The cup is already filling. If people do not change, their sins will bring suffering to many.

All of the visionaries were given warnings about the future. Four major warnings are: (1) A worldwide warning, experienced by everyone, calling humanity to repent and return to God (2) A great miracle that will occur within one year after the warning (3) A permanent "sign" that will be visible for all time (4) A terrible chastisement if people do not repent. Jacinta described the Warning as something that is seen in the air, everywhere in the world and immediately acts in our souls. It will be short, but it will have a pronounced effect within us. Conchita said Mary

has given her the date of the Miracle. Conchita may announce the Warning eight days before it happens. The girls claimed they were told, among other things, that there would be only three more popes after John XXIII, which would have made John Paul II the last pope before the end of time (Perez) (Pelletier, *God Speaks at Garandabal*) (Pelletier *Our Lady Comes to Garandabal*).

- (25) There is a similar prediction concerning the last pope made by St. Malachi in A.D. 1143. He predicted there would be 112 popes between 1143 and the final persecution. He gave little cryptograms for identifying the popes. Pope John Paul II is the 110<sup>th</sup>. There will be only two more popes after him. Then will come the final persecution. Then the seven-hilled city will be destroyed, and God will judge the world (Malachi).
- (26) In 1965, Jesus and Mary began a series of apparitions to Marguerite, a young woman in Belgium. The contents of what she was told was published as the *Message of Merciful Love to Little Souls*, a book meant to encourage the practice of prayer and self-denial to console Jesus because of people's sins (Margarite).
- (27) Starting on April 2, 1968 and continuing till 1971, Christ sent his mother to Zeitoun, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt. Speaking no words, she was visible to huge crowds atop a church roof. A crowd of 250,000 watched her for hours. All told, more than 4,000,000 people saw her, including Egyptian President Abdul Nasser. Some of the apparitions lasted nine hours. Doves were also seen, and a fragrant purple smoke arose from the church. Moslems who saw her repeated the Kuranic phrase,



"Mary, God has chosen thee, and purified thee; he has chosen thee above all women." (The Internet).

- (28) On December 24, 1975, Christ's mother cured a severely injured and tortured South Vietnamese soldier, Stephen Ho Nqoc Ahn in Bihm Loi, South Vietnam. She told Stephen to urge people to repent of their sins and to reform their lives. (The Internet).
- (29) In May 1980, Christ sent his mother to Bernardo Martinez in Cuapa, in Communist Nicaragua. Part of the message was about world peace. People must work for peace. They shouldn't merely ask God for peace because if they do not themselves make peace, there won't be peace. People no longer deserve peace because of their defiance of God.

Nicaragua is a country, incidentally, which was caught in the middle of the struggle between superpowers. A larger war in Nicaragua could have escalated into something far more serious, and it could have involved the Soviet Union. The world had already been warned at Fatima that God would allow an atheistic government in Russia to punish the nations that do not turn away from their sins. At Cuapa, Mary said she had asked her son to appease his justice, but if people do not change, they will bring about a third world war. People must pray. They must put God's word in practice in their lives. They should look for ways to please God and practice justice toward their neighbor—and make peace in the world (Martinez).

- (30) On June 24, 1981, Christ sent his mother to six young teenagers in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia with a similar message (Kraljevic) urging people to strive

for peace, to have faith in Jesus, to undergo an interior conversion to conform to his Gospel, to pray fervently, to practice fasting to help discipline the passions, and to come to repentance. If people do not stop offending God by their sins, then Mary cannot hold back her son from chastising the world.

Christ's mother told the children that a series of catastrophes (caused by the willingness of some people to disobey God) are awaiting the world if people continue in sin. Some of these catastrophes can be averted by prayer and fasting by those who do believe. Mary promised a special sign, visible in the sky, to help convince the world when the apparitions are concluded (they are still in progress at the time of this writing), but she cautioned that now is the time to repent. If the unbelieving postpone repenting until they see the sign, it will be too late for them. She urged those who believe to make a more whole-hearted conversion to Jesus and deepen their faith in him.

Christ's mother first came to Medjugorje on June 24, 1981, with pleas for prayer and warnings that Christ feels the world, because of rampant sin, no longer deserves peace. Christ's mother told the children that peace is obtainable, but you (meaning all of us) must work to obtain peace. We must stop our sins, especially our sins of injustice against others. If we fail to do this, then we will experience the effects of sin: wars, robberies, rape, bigotry, all things that God has commanded people not to do. These messages began in 1981 and were ongoing during the Olympic games held in Sarajevo when Yugoslavia was an example of five ethnic groups getting along fine. The Yugoslavians ignored the

warnings. Their Communist government was hostile to the visionaries. Ten years later, to the day, Yugoslavia broke up into five independent republics, and wars of aggression and ethnic hatred started.

We all remember the Bosnian war and Serbia's ambition to build "Greater Serbia." Since Serbia was the strongest republic, and the UN was unable to contain them, NATO attacked and so weakened Serbia that Serbia became victim of ethnic violence also. Christ's mother asked for faith, prayer, fasting, conversion, and peace. Mary said she was sent to bring humanity back to her Son. She warned that Satan is especially active now and that fervent prayer can ward off his advances.

More than ten million pilgrims had visited Medjugorje by the tenth anniversary of the first apparition. On the tenth anniversary, conflict broke out among the Bosnian Serbs and Croats, which conflict spread to all Yugoslavia. Mary asked that each of us to return to her Son; to become aware of Satan's role in the modern world and to protect ourselves against Satan's actions through fervent prayer to Jesus and personal abandonment of our defiance against God. We are close to the events predicted. Convert yourselves as quickly as possible! Open your hearts to God! This is a message to all mankind.

- (31) Starting in 1981, Christ sent his mother to six girls and one boy in Kibeho, Rwanda with similar messages (Soul Magazine, Jan-Feb. '87, p. 28). The children are Alphonsine Mumureka (born 1965), Anathalie Mukamazimpaka (born (1965), Marie-Clare Mukangango (born 1961), Stephanie

Mukamurenzi (born 1968), Vestine Salina (born 1958), Emmanuel Segatashya (born 1967), and Agnus Kamagaju (born 1960). Alphonsine was the first to see Mary who said: "I am the mother of the Word." Mary said she came to Rwanda to prepare for her son's return. "The world is coming to an end. Mary said: If I come to Kibeho, it does not mean that I am concerned only for Kibeho, or for Rwanda, or for the whole of Africa. I am concerned and am turning to the whole world." (The Internet).

Rwanda is Africa's most Catholic country. Of the country's eight million people, approximately 65% are Catholic. On April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana's plane was shot down near Kigali, Rwanda's capital city. Immediately thereafter came one of the most devastating massacres in human history. In the months following the assassination, an estimated eight hundred thousand to one million Rwandans, nearly one-seventh of the country's entire population, were slaughtered by guns, machetes, hammers, and spears.

Ernest Rutaganda is the forth child of a Christian family in Cuyangugu, Rwanda. He received messages in his sleep. At 3 AM on day in 1983, he saw Jesus and Mary. Five years later, he saw Jesus again (1988) during a pilgrimage in Kibeho where Jesus and Mary were appearing to other visionaries. For refusing to obey government orders to stop holding prayer meetings in his home, where people came in great numbers daily from 1988 to 1990, Rutaganda was imprisoned for six months (March 12 to December 12, 1990) in Kigali, Rwanda's capital.

Jesus visited Ernest in prison and advised him to leave Rwanda immediately upon release, or he will be killed. When Rutaganda was released, he hesitated and was arrested and taken with others to a desolated spot to be killed. A guard recognized that Rutaganda was recently freed from prison and let him go.

During one vision of the future, which lasted eight hours, the visionaries saw horrible images of tragedy: massacre, decapitated bodies, and many bodies thrown into the rivers. They saw that if Rwanda did not return to God, there would be "a river of blood and many abandoned, decapitated corpses". The Rwandan holocaust came a few years later.

Christ told one of the visionaries: "Too many people treat their neighbors dishonestly. The world is full of hatred. You will know my Second Coming is at hand when you see the outbreak of religious wars. Then, know that I am on the Way" (The Internet).

In 1991, Ernest was told that there would be a massacre of Tutsit. This happened a year later in 1994. Other predictions are that if people do not pray, a country in North America, one in Europe, and one in Asia will provoke World War III. The famine after the war will encourage many to follow the Antichrist. It is important to reconcile oneself with God right now.

Recently, the Oprah Show interviewed Lisa Ling, who showed a documentary about the massacre in Rwanda and another massacre in The Congo: almost a million killed in Rwanda in 1994 and more than 3,500,000 killed in the Congo since

1997, with no end in sight. Suffering without end for human beings caught in a maelstrom of hatred and destruction. Surprisingly, Lisa did not mention the apparitions. We were warned, and our Media ignores the warnings.

In late July 2005, one of the main American TV networks aired a documentary about Rwanda. The documentary covered the political background that led to the hostility between the Tutsi and Hutu peoples in Rwanda, the rebellions, the coups and counter coups, the assassination of President Habyarimana, and the ensuing genocide. I was surprised that the documentary did not mention the apparitions in spite of the fact that the apparitions would have lent a more universal appeal to the documentary. The messages given the children at Rwanda were not merely meant for black Africans, they were meant for all of us. The God who created all of us has been warning all of us to repent. We have been warned to give up our lives of defiance or face the consequences. Unchecked sin can and will race through the world inspiring unprincipled persons to commit atrocious acts against those deemed weaker and unable to defend themselves. Because we do not listen, all of us are faced with these warnings right now.

There are also two movies about the genocide: *Hotel Rwanda* and *Sometimes in April*. Both are excellent, well-done movies that show the suffering the Rwandan people experienced during the genocide. *Sometimes in April* was especially poignant because two of the main stars portrayed brothers who were on opposite sides during the genocide. Surprisingly, neither movie mentioned

the apparitions. *Hotel Rwanda* was a true-life story of a man who tried to save as many people as possible. He managed a hotel in Kigali, the capital city, where Rutaganda was imprisoned. It's hard to believe that he did not know about the apparitions.

Satan's double aim is to destroy Christ's church from the outside, by any means possible, and to destroy the church from within with internal conflict and rivalry. Rabbi David G. Dalin gives an insight into this internal conflict in a book he wrote defending the memory of Pope Pius XII. Dalin mentions that the vilification of Pius XII stems from a 1963 German stage play "*The Deputy*," a work of fiction that depicts Eugenio Pachelli (before he was elected Pope Pius XII) as a Nazi collaborator guilty of "inexcusable silence as Europe's Jews were murdered." The play was a work of fiction devoid of historical evidence, but it became a sensation and "ignited a firestorm of controversy in the media and among intellectuals" (Dalin, p. 2).

Sounds similar to Dan Brown's "*The DaVinci Code*," which is also fictional, and has ignited a new controversy concerning the character of Jesus Christ, the one and only savior God provided. "The Deputy," according to Dalin, was the club used by Catholic liberals to bash "traditional church teaching on priestly celibacy, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, the ordination of women, papal infallibility, the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist, apostolic succession, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, and the Magisterium itself." If the liberals succeed, what will be left of the church? If "*The DaVinci Code*" convinces millions that Mary Magdalene was pregnant with Christ's daughter during the Last Supper and the daughter's descendants are still on earth today, what is left of the divine character and mission of Jesus Christ?

The opposition of Satan toward Jesus Christ and the church Christ founded is real and is escalating. Satan recruits anyone available to assist in defeating Christ and his church. This is a deadly conflict between God's commands and those who freely refuse obedience. This conflict is fought in earnest and fought for keeps. God is all-powerful, but channels that power through the finite limits of those who follow Jesus. Satan is powerful, but not all-powerful. Satan is limited also to what human beings can do, those humans who follow interests contradictory to God.

Satan and God oppose each other. It is an uneven contest. Satan has no hope of victory. We human beings are caught in the middle, and God allows it. God gives us power to bring world peace if we choose to obey. God also gives us power to destroy the world if we prefer not to obey. How dangerous for us caught in this struggle. How perilous for the whole world when it reaches its climax.

During this struggle, we have the opportunity to serve as safe refuges in Christ's body. Satan cannot overcome Christ. Satan can capture nobody Christ claims as his own. A soul steeped in sin and ashamed of its actions and loss of friends might feel very uncomfortable approaching Christ directly when seeking refuge from enemies who want to overpower that soul.

Such a soul can feel less embarrassed taking refuge in one of the wounds in Christ's body. Many saintly persons in the past asked that they might rest in one of Christ's wounds. They would not be awestruck by Christ's majesty, but would, instead, see a wound that Christ bore for them. They could try to console Christ because of the wound and thereby divert what might have been an uncomfortably embarrassing experience into one that draws from that soul compassion, concern, and gratitude. Concentrating on the wounds of Christ leads to deeper holiness and love for the



Savior who is willing to suffer so much for us.

We are all spiritual wounds on Christ's body. We are more painful than the physical wounds inflicted on Christ during the crucifixion. Those wounds were physical. We are living, spiritual beings, each joined to Christ's body, but each imperfect, each harboring self-love, presumption, vanity, poor opinions of others, pride in doing things "my way," all spiritual attitudes that cause suffering to Christ because Christ willingly endures them so that we can remain "married" to him, an integral part of his body.

If some soul steeped in sin and ashamed of its actions wanted to find safe refuge in one of Christ's wounds, you could be that wound. No matter what sins that soul committed, that soul would be astounded at God's toleration of your defects, those great spiritual wounds in Christ's body. You would be the place where that soul can forget, for a moment, its own sins and be inspired to console Jesus over what you are doing. That soul would be perfectly safe from Satan because you are part of Christ, and Satan cannot take what belongs to Christ. This is the main function of Christ's Church: to bring lost souls back to God.

Apocalypse 21 and 22 appear to predict what the world will be like when Christ subdues all disobedience. I believe the conditions described below will occur when we all dwell in eternity.

#### APOCALYPSE 21:1-27

- 1 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more.*
- 2 *And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of*

*heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

3 *And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God.*

4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.*

5 *And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true.*

6 *And he said to me: It is done. I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely.*

7 *He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God; and he shall be my son.*

8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

9 *And there came one of the seven angels, who had the vials full of the*

*seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying: Come, and I will shew thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.*

10 *And he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain: and he shewed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*

11 *Having the glory of God, and the light thereof was like to a precious stone, as to the jasper stone, even as crystal.*

12 *And it had a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.*

13 *On the east, three gates: and on the north, three gates: and on the south, three gates: and on the west, three gates.*

14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

15 *And he that spoke with me, had a measure of a reed of gold, to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall.*

16 *And the city lieth in a foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the golden reed for twelve thousand furlongs, and the length and*

*the height and the breadth thereof are equal.*

17 *And he measured the wall thereof an hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is of an angel.*

18 *And the building of the wall thereof was of jasper stone: but the city itself pure gold, like to clear glass.*

19 *And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second, sapphire: the third, a chalcedony: the fourth, an emerald:*

20 *The fifth, sardonyx: the sixth, sardius: the seventh, chrysolite: the eighth, beryl: the ninth, a topaz: the tenth, a chrysoprasus: the eleventh, a jacinth: the twelfth, an amethyst.*

21 *And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, one to each: and every several gate was of one several pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

22 *And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb.*

23 *And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.*

- 24 *And the nations shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.*
- 25 *And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there.*
- 26 *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*
- 27 *There shall not enter into it any thing defiled, or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they that are written in the book of life of the Lamb.*

APOCLAYPSE 22:1-21

- 1 *And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*
- 2 *In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
- 3 *And there shall be no curse any more; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.*
- 4 *And they shall see his face: and his name shall be on their foreheads.*
- 5 *And night shall be no more: and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.*
- 6 *And he said to me: These words are most faithful and true. And the Lord God of the spirits of the*

*prophets sent his angel to shew his servants the things which must be done shortly.*

7 *And, Behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.*

8 *And I, John, who have heard and seen these things. And after I had heard and seen, I fell down to adore before the feet of the angel, who shewed me these things.*

9 *And he said to me: See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the words of the prophecy of this book. Adore God*

10 *And he saith to me: Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

11 *He that hurteth, let him hurt still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.*

12 *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works.*

13 *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*

14 *Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.*

15 *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.*

16 *I Jesus have sent my angel, to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and stock of David, the bright and morning star.*

- 17 *And the spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life, freely.*
- 18 *For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.*
- 19 *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book.*
- 20 *He that giveth testimony of these things, saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*
- 21 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

If the premises I set forth in this book be true, then I cannot avoid the conclusion that we are at, or near, the final times, the times when fallen angels opposed to God will lead hordes of fallen humans to attack Jesus Christ and all that he stands for. Maybe I will live to see that day, for it does not seem far away.

Whatever my prejudices, be they the influence of my parents, my family, my nation, my race, my friends, or my own--no matter where my preconceived thinking comes from--the only thing that will matter when I leave this world is who do I think Jesus Christ is. How close did I recognize the Jesus Christ that he, himself, knows he is? He is the person who brought me into existence. He provides the power for me to exist today and to function. He immobilizes his will against my free will--what a

crucifixion for him--as he unflinchingly carries out his father's will that I have genuine freedom.

Have you ever thought what it must be like in God's heavenly kingdom? There would be no arguments about anything, no controversy. Everyone would believe what God knows to be true. This is way different from the situation here on Earth, where we have three major religions based on God's public revelation, all three divided into separate groups, each with different ideas on what God revealed. Christians, by the way, are divided into thousands of conflicting groups, each with widely differing beliefs.

Can you imagine an Islamic terrorist, repentant before death, mingling with victims of Islamic terrorism, perhaps victims of the former terrorist in question? Can you imagine a young Nazi SS storm trooper, repentant before his death, mingling with victims of the holocaust? How about you? Can you imagine yourself mingling with deceased people you didn't like or people who had good reason not to like you?

Think about it! In this life, we are separated, suspicious of each other, hostile to some. How can we fit into a heaven where there is absolute harmony, peace, universal recognition of truth, and love--most of all--love? All the conflict, ambition, pride, jealousies, resentment that rips the human family apart in this life are resolved in God's kingdom. There is no racial conflict, no political resentments, nor horror at seeing victims of our sins or hatred at seeing those who oppressed us. God would have worked all this out. Everyone, even those with the tiniest imperfections, will have been purified by God in such a manner that the same person who had the imperfections has experienced what it takes to recognize those imperfections, take ownership of them and, with God's help, eradicate them. The person remains the same person, but becomes



absolutely perfect, whereas before, this same person was imperfect.

Everyone in God's heavenly kingdom will know it because they all experienced this purification themselves. No more resentment. No more animosity, mistrust, suspicion, pride, jealousy. All that is gone because every person has had to deal with God because of his or her imperfections. All that is left is love. Love abounds in God's heavenly kingdom. Everybody loves everybody because they love God, and they perceive that God loves everybody, including themselves. We love God because we now (in the heavenly kingdom) know God. We love ourselves because we know that God loves us. We are able to love others because we are able to love ourselves. If we don't love ourselves, how can we love others?

One of the worst experiences in this life is our own self-loathing. We know ourselves better than anyone else knows us. We can put on a friendly, polite, even virtuous exterior, but, inside, we know all the wrong things we did or wished we did. Self-loathing does not exist in God's heavenly kingdom. I am becoming more and more aware of my own imperfections and my past sins. While in this life, I try my best to deal with them.

I know I am guilty for my sins because I chose to commit them. Christ is implicated because his power kept me in existence as I carried them out. To my shame and his sorrow, I am guilty of many transgressions. How can I undo the harm I have done, I who cannot control the events I set in motion?

It is I who am guilty, but in his human nature, Jesus accepted my guilt as well and paid the same penalty I must pay. In so doing, he set an example for me, to show me what kind of conduct he expects from me as I continue my pilgrimage through life.

He is the Most High God become human, the divine Lord and Creator of everything that exists; and yet, he is the human savior of all who have offended him and seek forgiveness. He is God flowing through me, and I am part of him because I am marked by baptism. When my life is done, it is he and only he who will both judge me and requite me for my deeds.

May he teach me humility over the few things I did right and grant me pardon for the many things I did wrong.

## Chapter 20

### Overview of Prior Interpretations

Now that I have written nineteen chapters telling you how I understand the Apocalypse, it is time to tell you how others understood it before me. I already mentioned the disagreement, even contradictions, put forward by other authors. I also mentioned that I started off impressed by an interpretation I later felt was incorrect. It benefited me, however, because it helped me pay serious attention to God's word.

This is an important attitude--to take God's Word seriously. Jesus Christ is God's Word. The Apocalypse is the "*The Revelations of Jesus Christ, . . .*" (Apoc. 1:1). That is how Scripture describes it. Jesus Christ certainly knows what the Apocalypse reveals. It cannot be true that everybody's conflicting interpretations have equal validity in his eyes.

In my search for better understanding, I thought I should digest the thoughts of others to help nurture my own thoughts. Now that I have presented my thoughts to you, I think it fair to tell you what others think.

The early Christians read into the Apocalypse their own experiences with Judean and Roman persecutions and their hope that Jesus Christ would triumph over those trying to blot out his memory. The early Christians thought this would happen in their own lifetime. Justin Martyr (killed in A.D. 165) believed the Church would last a thousand years in Jerusalem; then all the dead would rise and face judgement (Risk, p. 351). Irenaeus, Hippolytes (Mounce, p. 39), and others (Baldwin, p. 28) thought the same.

A long standing Old Testament tradition divided history into seven millennia, six of strife and one of rest,

like a millennial sabbath (Haydock, p. 344). Some early Christians picked up on this and presumed that the saints would rule earth during the last millennium (Augustine, XX, 7, p. 719). Some thought the Christian kingdom would last one thousand years, others thought the saints, themselves, would live the whole thousand year period.

Pagan seers offered a contradictory prediction: Christianity would last one year of days. It would die out after 365 years (Augustine, XVIII, 54, p. 666).

Some Christians separated from the original Church because of millennial doctrines. Montanus in A.D. 150 and the two prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla said that Christ would return in their lifetime. The new Jerusalem would descend at Pepuza, Greece. Christ, they predicted, would rule the millennial kingdom from there (Baldwin, p. 27).

Seeing that Rome was not going to fall as quickly as Judea, some third-century Christian leaders re-examined their understanding of the Apocalypse and looked for deeper meanings. Origen (b. 184, d. 254) looked for allegorical symbols rather than concrete historical predictions (Mounce, p. 40).

Around A.D. 300 Victorinus wrote a commentary, the earliest one still available today. He held that John prophesied Nero's return to ravage Rome, this to be followed shortly after by Christ's return (Mounce, p. 39). Christ would bind Satan to prevent any deception of believers, but Satan would remain free to deceive non-believers (Johnson, p. 185). Victorinus thought the two witnesses opposing Nero would be Jeremiah and Elijah (Ford, p. 177).

Around A.D. 370 Tyconius, an African Donatist, wrote how he understood the millennium. He believed it already began with Christ's ascension and that one thousand years symbolically means a long time (Mounce, p. 40). He was first to regard the thousand years in non-literal terms.

He felt it represented the Church age between Christ's ascension and Christ's return (Johnson, p. 181). Origen also understood the millennium this way (*ibid.*).

Augustine (A.D. 354-430) a contemporary of Tyconius, interpreted the Apocalypse in his book *The City of God*. His views have influenced Catholic thinking ever since. He divided humans and angels into two societies or, as he puts it, cities. One serves God and is populated by the good angels and all humans of good will. The other opposes God and is made up of fallen angels and all humans of evil will.

The human elements of these two societies were founded on earth by Cain, who rebelled against God, and his brother Seth, who served God. As these societies developed, they spread and attracted the other offspring of Adam. The earthly city attracted those who prefer earthly things over God; the godly city attracted those who prefer God.

All humans are exposed to these two alternatives and choose according to their hearts. Augustine outlined the history of these two societies to Christ's time. Then, in book XX, section 19, he predicts their future by interpreting the Apocalypse.

He criticized an opinion, current in his day, that Nero is on the sidelines somewhere, unaged since death, watching for his chance to return to power. Jerome, who translated the Old and New Testaments into the Latin Vulgate also did not believe that Nero would return.

Augustine believed the millennium started with Christ. He quotes Matt. 12:28, Luke 10:9 and Luke 11:20 to show that Christ told people the kingdom had already started. This kingdom is really the society, the city, of God's people brought to a higher perfection by Christ. In this more perfected state, it will continue until Christ returns.

Augustine's commentary begins with the binding of

Satan and the establishment of the thousand-year rule of saints. Before getting into that, however, he discussed Daniel's beasts from the sea. Daniel's four beasts represent four empires: the Assyrian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman (Dan. 7:1-28). Augustine explains that these are successive manifestations of the city of the wicked.

Augustine had a problem with the ten horns (or kings) of the fourth beast (Dan. 7:7 & 24) because Rome had more than ten kings during the monarchy. He felt that ten stood for fullness of number, representing all the Roman monarchs.

The little horn that arises (Dan. 7:8 & 24) is the antichrist, who will appear shortly before the final judgment and attack the followers of Christ (Augustine, XX, 23, p. 748). God will intervene and stop this persecution (Augustine, XVIII, 53, p. 665). Then will come the final judgment and the eternal reign of saints. Antichrist's three-and-one half year reign will coincide with the last three-and-one half years of the saint's terrestrial reign (Augustine, XX, 13, p. 730-2). Satan, bound since the beginning of the terrestrial millennium, will be released when antichrist reigns.

Augustine interfaced past history to the Apocalypse at the point when Christ bound Satan. Christ started binding Satan right after Pentecost as Christianity spread throughout Judea. As Christianity spread, Satan's activity within the converted areas was progressively curtailed. When Christianity spread outside Judea into the surrounding nations, the binding of Satan became more widespread.

Once bound, Satan will remain bound until Christianity becomes established. Then Satan will be released. Afterward will come the three-and-one half year reign of antichrist. Augustine felt the wicked would not return to God then because Satan would once again be fully armed (Augustine, XX, 8, p. 722).

To defend his interpretation, he quotes Matt. 12:29: *"Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong, and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong? and then he will rifle his house."* (Augustine, XX, 8, p. 724). This is what Jesus is doing during the Christian age: binding Satan so Jesus can rifle, or take away, the people of good will that once were claimed by Satan.

In addition, as Christianity grows, Satan is more and more restricted to the bottomless pit, which Augustine defines as a spiritual abyss fueled by the mentality of the wicked whose malice towards Christ is bottomless. Satan was in that spiritual abyss all along. Deprived now of god-fearing people, Satan takes even firmer hold on the wicked (Augustine, XX, 7, p. 720).

The souls released from Satan's grip had lost spiritual aliveness due to their own sins and the lasting effects of our first parents' sin. Christ restores spiritual life to the souls he releases by applying his own spiritual life to them through their faith. They sealed his life in themselves through baptism. Now they who were spiritually dead are alive. This is the soul's resurrection. The second resurrection will be the body's resurrection.

He quotes John 5:25-6 to prove his point: *" . . . the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice . . . and they that hear shall live."* This describes the first resurrection: the soul's resurrection from spiritual death.

Then Augustine quotes John 5:28-9 on the second resurrection: *" . . . for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And . . . shall come forth unto the resurrection . . ."* (Augustine, XX, 6, p. 275). Augustine then draws a parallel. Since there are two regenerations: one of the soul in faith by Baptism, the other of the body in flesh by incorruption, so are there also two resurrections. The first one is of the soul in this world; the second one is of the body in the next world

(Augustine, XX, 6, p. 718). The first resurrection is into the kingdom already established. We on earth participate in it.

There are tares with the wheat in this world. The tares (the wicked) will grow along with the faithful until the end. Angels will first reap the tares and burn them; then they will reap the wheat (Augustine, XX, 9, p. 725).

To show that the first resurrection is not bodily resurrection, he quotes the New Testament on resurrection through baptism: ". . . *risen with Christ* (Col. 3:1) . . ." and: ". . . *walk in newness of life*." (Rom. 6:4) and: "*Rise . . . Arise from the dead*: (Eph. 5:14) . . ." and ". . . *go not aside from him lest you fall*." (Eccles. 2:7). Fall in Latin is derived from the Latin word "cada," as in "cadaver." It is used here to mean fall dead. He also cites Rom. 14:4: "*To his own master he standeth or falleth*." And 1 Cor. 10:12: ". . . *he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall*." (Augustine, XX, 10, p. 728).

The thrones the elect sit upon in Apoc. 20:4 are not thrones of judgment, but those of Church rulers (Augustine, XX, 10, p. 726). The martyrs are named for a part, the best part, of all deceased that belong to Christ (Augustine, XX, 10, p. 727). The saints will continue to reign after Satan is loosed (Augustine, XX, 13, p. 732). Christianity will not disappear.

Augustine claims that Scripture indicates that Satan, when loosed, will seduce the nations--not merely humans--but whole nations, nations now united with the Christ, but before were in error and impiety. The Apocalypse does not imply that Satan, when bound, shall seduce no person anymore; but that, when bound, Satan shall not seduce the whole people who make up Christianity. Augustine feels the reason Christ bound Satan for one thousand years was to allow the nations to grow sufficiently strong, so that, when Satan is released, the nations need not be, and have no excuse for being, deceived by Satan (Augustine, XX, 7-8,



pp. 721-2).

Gog and Magog are not specific barbarian nations, nor are they the Getae and Massagetae. Gog and Magog depict the "house" (gog) and "of the house" (magog); that is, "the house" and "he that cometh out of the house". Both names refer to all nations, neither refers directly to Satan.

The nations are "the house" because Satan is hid and housed in them. They are "of the house" because having harbored secret hatred, they now spew open hatred, and attack Christ's followers throughout the earth (Augustine, XX, 11, p. 729).

Augustine described two kingdoms of God. For the first resurrection there is a kingdom where both those who obey the Commandments and those who disobey are found. For the second resurrection, there is a purified kingdom where only those who keep the Commandments can enter. This purified kingdom is perfect and utterly exempt from evil. So the earthly kingdom is both the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven; whereas, in the next life, there will only be one kingdom, the one of heaven, the one without tares (Augustine, XX, 9, pp. 725-6).

*"Fire came down from heaven and devoured Gog and Magog."* Augustine interprets the fire as the saint's unyielding firmness against the wicked. Their firm faithfulness to God shall burn the wicked (Augustine, XX, 12, p. 730).

Even though we all know the world will end, Augustine cautions against any attempt to compute the years still remaining. Christ himself said it is not for us to know these things (Augustine, XVIII, 53, p. 665). When the final judgment occurs, those not belonging to the City of God will go to eternal misery, which is the second death. Souls there shall forever be separated from God, their life, and physical bodies shall forever be subjected to everlasting pain (Augustine, XIX, 28, p. 709).

Augustine interprets the new heavens and new earth this way: the present world shall lose its form by worldly fire, as it formally was destroyed by earthly water; and all corruptible qualities will burn away. God will then renew the world to make it fit for people with immortal bodies. This renewed world is the place, the new heaven surrounding the new earth, where the immortal ones of the second resurrection will dwell (Augustine, XX, 16, p. 735). The new Jerusalem is a vision of the eternal heaven, the place where humans and God interact. There is no grief there, no death, no sin (Augustine, XX, 17, p. 736).

In A.D. 387, Hilarianus wrote that the sixth millennium would start in A.D. 498 (Baldwin, p. 28). When it did not happen, Primasius, a sixth century north African bishop, influenced by Tyconius and Augustine, tried to uncover the deeper abstractions, the universal symbolism, that was buried in the text (Mounce, p. 40).

Christian leaders then interpreted the Apocalypse in terms of early Christian history until the time of Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202). Joachim developed a new interpretation.

Joachim first studied the Apocalypse in 1183. He felt (if the millennium had really started during the early Christian era) that Christ should have returned by at least 1196. He developed a new school of interpretation. It has influenced Christian thinking ever since.

His work focused on three central issues: (1) Correct interpretation of Scripture, (2) The mystery of the Trinity, and (3) The meaning of human history. He felt Israelite history in Old Testament times previewed similar events Christians would experience in New Testament times (McGinn, p. 127).

According to Joachim, there are three great ages: (1) the age of God the Father, covering Old Testament times, (2) the age of God the Son, covering New Testament times until A.D. 1200, and (3) a new age, the age of God the Holy

Spirit. This new age will see an increase of monasteries and convents, the Bible being understood in a mystical sense to get at its inner meaning, and Christ returning in person to rule the thousand year millennium.

Joachim thought the beast emerging from the sea referred to Islam, the wound in the beast's neck was caused by the Crusades. The beast from the earth was the Cathan heresy. The angel rising from the east having a sign of the living God (Apoc. 7:2) predicts a new pope who will lead the Catholic Church after the wheat is purified of tares (McGinn, p. 135).

In the thirteenth century when papal power was at its height and many popes were more worldly than saintly, there developed a prophecy of a coming Pastor Angelicus. This prophecy was amplified through the years and by 1590 was written in the form we have today, the famous prophecies of St. Malachy (Malachy, & McGinn, pp. 186-9).

Some Franciscans who followed Joachim, probably fed up with the moral laxity of high-ranking clergy, began to identify Babylon with ecclesiastical Rome, and the antichrist with the papacy (Johnson, p. 181). Joachim, however, always remained a loyal Catholic (Mounce, p. 40).

Joachim started the trend of interpreting the Apocalypse to fit contemporary times. Others followed suit. Gerardo of Borgo San Donnino predicted that the Holy-Spirit-age would begin in 1260, the Church would be abolished, and Joachim's writings would replace the Old and New Testaments (Baldwin, p. 31).

Alexander of Bremen, in 1242, claimed that the Apocalypse predicts the whole panorama of Christian history. Nicholas of Lyra, in 1329, claimed it outlined world history in chronological order.

During the fifteenth century, just prior to the Reformation, Christian seers focused on three basic themes: (1)

criticism of widespread corruption within the clergy, (2) warnings that Catholic Church property would be confiscated, and (3) a northern emperor or the Turks will scourge the Catholic Church (McGinn, pp. 270-1).

Wolfgang Autinger, a German apocalypticist (1460-1508), interpreted the eight weeks of St. Methodius. They are eight weeks of years (fifty-six years) starting with the Turkish conquest of eastern Europe (1453). Autlinger also claimed that there will only be seven Turkish emperors including Ottoman. The sixth was Mohammed II, who died in 1481. Mohammed II conquered Constantinople and started the fifty-six year countdown. Under his son (who was reigning when Autinger made his predictions) the Turkish empire will end.

According to Autinger, the great whore of Babylon is Turkey and the Saracen Empire. The beast upon whom she sits is Mohammed (McGinn, p. 274).

In 1438 a German visionary claimed to see St. Michael carrying a yellow cross. Michael told him to encourage the Emperor Maximilian to correct abuses in the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. When the visionary could not convince Maximilian, he turned violently against the Empire. He claimed, among other things, that the original chosen people were Germans, not the Israelites, and that German not Hebrew was spoken in the garden of Eden. According to him, Hebrew did not exist until the tower of Babel (McGinn, p. 272).

By 1480 some Germans felt they were God's people, that Adam, through Japheth, could be considered German--he spoke German--and passed his patrimony to the German people through Japheth (Quispel, p. 122).

Catholic clergy and lay people spent the next forty years ignoring friend and foe telling them to correct abuses in the Catholic Church. The medieval Church grew progressively more and more lax and more and more

tolerant of irregularities.

Finally, in 1517 a major controversy arose when the Augustinian priest, Martin Luther, publicly criticized the sloppy manner in which indulgences were handled. The controversy quickly passed beyond theological questions and became a motivating force in the politics of nationalism.

People now wanted to form for themselves autonomous, independent, and sovereign nations with autonomous churches, liberated from Rome. This broke up Christendom, both Church and Empire, into separate and hostile groups. During the struggle, Martin Luther bitterly opposed the papacy and those who remained loyal to the papacy.

Martin Luther wrote two commentaries on the Apocalypse (Luther, VI, pp. 479-488). In his longer one, he identified the sea beast as the Holy Roman Empire (the Catholic secular empire) and the land beast as the papacy (Luther, VI, p. 483).

Other Reformation leaders, especially Calvin, believed the same (Haydock, p. 337) and amplified it. They soon developed a new school of interpretation. It held that Catholicism was an apostate church and was the whore of Babylon and had persecuted true Christians ever since Constantine's time (or, as others put it, since an early Church council), and that the papacy was antichrist (Patrides, pp. 131 and 269 & Haydock, p. 332).

Martin Luther accepted Nicholas of Lyra's claim that the Apocalypse contained a complete history of the world in the right chronological order. Luther added the identification of the Holy Roman Empire as the sea beast and the papacy as the land beast (Luther, VI, p. 485).

Luther starts off proposing that the seven letters are pastoral letters to actual churches exhorting them to abide and increase in faith and to reform their lives. The four horsemen are: (1) persecution by the state, (2) persecution by war and bloodshed, (3) persecution by scarcity and

famine, and (4) persecution by pestilence.

The first four trumpets are four heresies: (1) Tatian, who forbade marriage; (2) Marcion with his Cataphrygians, plus the Manichaeans, the Montanists and Luther's foe Münzer; (3) Origen, who embittered scriptures with reason; and (4) Novatus, with his Cathari who deny penance, and the Donatists (Luther, VI, pp. 482-6).

Luther identifies the three woes as Arius the great heretic (first woe); Mohammed and the Saracens (second woe); and the papal empire and the imperial papacy as the third woe. The strong angel with the bitter book John must eat represents the papacy with its sham church and its spiritual stage-show, the Mass. The two witnesses are pious teachers who remain faithful in spite of the three woes (Luther, VI, pp 483-5).

Luther believed the millennium started when the Apocalypse was written and will end when the papacy falls (Luther, VI, p. 485). When the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire fall, Satan will be loosed to round up Gog and Magog (whom Luther identifies as the Turks and the red Jews) (Luther, VI, p. 486).

The final judgement will come quickly. Then comes the new Jerusalem, the holy city. It will wed Jesus Christ in an eternal marriage. All the godless will be damned along with the devil, and they will be confined to hell (Luther, VI, p. 486). Luther felt he was living near the end of the millennium, the end of the world.

Luther started a new school of interpretation claiming that: (1) Catholicism was the "whore of Babylon" sitting atop the revived Roman Empire (the Holy Roman Empire), (2) Catholicism is an apostate church that suppressed true Christians into the "Babylonian captivity," and (3) the Pope is the antichrist (Luther, VI, p. 485). These claims found wide acceptance because of the laxity and immorality of many unworthy Catholic clergy.

The Catholic hierarchy had been urged to reform under their own Magisterium, but they kept postponing it. When a reformation finally did start, it was sponsored by Catholics outside the hierarchy. They rejected not only excesses that needed correction, but long-standing doctrine and devotional practices and the Catholic Church's organized structure.

The realization that the Reformation rejected good along with bad stimulated a long-overdue reform by the Catholic hierarchy. This internal reform became known as the "Counter-Reformation". It was successful, but it came too late to heal the split that had already occurred.

The early seventeenth century Protestant commentators David Pareus (1548-1622), John Cotton (1584-1652), Joseph Mede (1586-1638), (all three Englishmen), and Cotton Mather (1663-1728), an American Puritan influenced by John Cotton, all identified the Catholic Church as one of the beasts in the Apocalypse (Patrides, pp. 131 & 269).

Pareus identified the sea beast as any pope after the sixth century (Patrides, p. 131). Mede identified the sea beast as the Catholic secular empire and the land beast as the papacy (Patrides, 139). Mather identified the sea beast as Catholicism (Patrides, p. 269).

John Cotton claimed Protestantism's rapid success was destroying Catholicism. He differed from Luther on the millennium, though. He believed that after the papacy's fall and Protestantism's rise, Christ will bind Satan for the thousand-year millennium. He thought Christ would do this when the sea beast's (papacy's) 1260 year reign ends in 1655 (Patrides, p 270). John Cotton apparently puts the start of the sea beast's reign at A.D. 395.

The proposed millennium then, starting in 1655, would be a human achievement guided by the Holy Spirit. At the millennium's end, when people applying the true Gospel

make true religion triumph over false religion, Christ would return. Then would come the general resurrection and judgment.

During the 1580's in England as the Reformation transformed British society, the woman giving birth was interpreted as Queen Elizabeth giving birth to a Protestant dynasty to rule both Church and State. The Holy Roman Empire, with the Pope encouraging it, was interpreted as the red dragon ready to devour the woman's offspring (Patrides, p. 184).

England's troubles with the Holy Roman Empire (headed by Charles V of Spain) intensified until Charles V sent the Spanish fleet to invade England. When the English defeated the armada, they insured the Protestant dynasty's survival. On the continent, several religious groups, separated from Rome (or from state-sponsored Protestant churches) tried to establish the millennial kingdom. One was the Anabaptists. They founded the "New Jerusalem" in Germany.

Their movement started on Holy Thursday in 1531 when they revolted against the state-sponsored religion and formed their own dissenting sect. It remained primarily a religious revolt until early 1534, when Jan Brokelman and Jan Matthys added a political dimension.

These two men encouraged city leaders to convert the city's government into a millennial kingdom and invite outsiders to join. They renamed Münster "New Jerusalem" and severed political ties with other cities. They introduced polygamy, citing Old Testament authorization, and decided that all eligible young maidens in New Jerusalem must marry. Some they forced into marriage. Their enemies felt forced marriage was thinly disguised rape.

Public sentiment turned against the city. Finally an army was sent to settle the dispute. New Jerusalem was destroyed in 1535, the last leaders beheaded on January 23,



1536 (Chamberlin, pp. 59-86).

The Jesuits, a new order of Catholic priests founded by Ignatius of Loyola, led the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The Jesuit priest Rivera (1537-1591), felt the rule of saints with Christ started when Christ ascended into heaven. It will continue until Christ returns. Rivera felt St. John predicted some events that were short term from his perspective and other events that would not occur until the end of the world. What lay in between, the events of the millennial age, John did not predict (Johnson, p. 182 & Mounce, p. 40).

Alcansar, another Jesuit (d. 1614), compared Apoc. 4 through 19 to the early Church era. He felt Apoc. 4 through 11 covered the Church's struggle with Judaism and Apoc. 12 through 19, the Church's struggle with paganism. Apoc. 20 through 22 prophesied the Church's triumph in the fourth century when Constantine championed the Church (Mounce, p. 41).

In the early 1600's, a strong millennial sentiment stirred England. The English had just gone through the Reformation. They expected that Christ would soon fulfill Daniel's prophecies. Daniel prophesied four successive kingdoms that were finally replaced with an everlasting kingdom (Dan. 7:27).

The English people of the mid 1600's called this new kingdom the "Fifth Monarchy" (Chamberlin, p. 89). Their expectation was heightened in 1642 when Henry Archer published *The Personal Reign of Christ Upon Earth*. In it Archer combined Daniel's visions with some visions from the Apocalypse. He identified the fourth kingdom (in Daniel 7:19-27) as the Roman Empire and the fifth kingdom as the soon-to-come millennial reign of Christ upon earth. (The first three kingdoms in Dan. 7:19-27 are traditionally identified as the empires of the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Greeks).

Archer predicted that Christ would return to establish the fifth monarchy in 1666. He identified the ten horns as ten kingdoms that ruled Europe between the Roman Empire and the fifth monarchy. The little horn he identified as the papacy. He based his calculations on the assumption that the 1260 days are really years starting when the papacy seized control of the Church in A.D. 406, and ending in 1666 with the fifth monarchy.

When Oliver Cromwell's Puritan government deposed the English monarchy, many viewed this as a grass-roots fifth-monarchy. Cromwell took control on January 30, 1649, when he ordered Charles I beheaded. Archer predicted the fifth monarchy to begin in 1666. Cromwell died in September, 1658, eight years before this was to happen. Cromwell's son succeeded him. When young Cromwell realized how unpopular he was, he retired. He held office for eighteen months.

The British monarchy was then restored (in 1660). Charles II became the new king and head of the English church. A confrontation soon developed between the king's men and the fifth monarchists. Outraged that the old monarchy was restored rather than set up the millennial kingdom, the fifth-monarchists took to arms. They were defeated, the last leader captured on January 6, 1661. This ended the fifth monarchy movement in England (Chamberlin, pp. 87-109).

Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), an English Unitarian, proposed that conditions on earth would gradually get better until the whole world was Christianized; then Christ would return for the millennium (LaHaye, *Revelation Illustrated and Made Plain*, p. 290). Whitby's work influenced Cotton Mather (mentioned above).

Some famous English laymen became interested in the Apocalypse at this time. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the famous scientist (an Anglican), wrote several books

interpreting the Apocalypse (Patrides, p. 242).

In 1740, Johann Albrecht Bengel in his *Erklarte Offenbarung Johannes* picked up on the world-history interpretation of Nicholas of Lyra. Bengel predicted that a reign of peace was immanent.

In 1771 Ann Lee founded the Shakers (Chamberlin, p. 142). Late in the eighteenth century, Eichorn suggested that the Apocalypse should be taken as a great dramatic poem portraying the progress of the Christian faith (Mounce, p. 41).

In 1795 Richard Brothers, an Englishman known as the "Nephew of God", already having a sizeable following due to his book *Revealed Knowledge*, predicted that on July 1, 1795, he would be in Constantinople with a volunteer army ready to capture Jerusalem and start the millennium. His book, though only sixty-eight pages, won him many sympathizers.

Brothers outlined world history and corrected many errors he felt had crept into Scripture. He claimed to be the Hebrew prince promised since the Diaspora (Chamberlin, p. 117). He will start the millennial kingdom on November 19, 1795 (Chamberlin, p. 121). (The French Revolution was underway at this time.)

Brothers never led his army against Jerusalem. King George III of England, offended by Brother's criticism, had Brothers arrested. Judged insane, Brothers spent the rest of his life in an insane asylum (Chamberlin, p. 124).

Martin Luther interpreted the Apocalypse to reflect his conviction that Catholicism is false. He claimed the popes seized control of the millennial kingdom and caused the great apostasy. He identified the papacy and its sponsor the Catholic secular empire (Catholicism was the established church of the Holy Roman Empire) as the beasts. They had attacked the millennial kingdom and now, in Martin Luther's time, are ready to destroy it. Christ will defeat them and

then judge the world.

Other reformers, however, had premillennial views. Many felt the millennial kingdom had not yet started and could not start until true Christians escaped the papacy's grip. Like Luther, they expected the papacy's imminent fall. When the papacy did not fall, they looked deeper into Scripture for clues on where the Reformation really did interface with the Apocalypse.

Generations passed. The Catholic empire (the sea beast) dissolved, but the papacy (the land beast) remained standing. So some Protestant interpreters abandoned Luther's interpretation that linked the land beast to the papacy and began (around 1800) to recast the whole concept of the restored Roman Empire.

At the same time, John Nelson Darby, proposed a new theory of Bible interpretation--dispensationalism. Formally a Protestant minister in Ireland, he left Ireland in 1825 to organize the Plymouth Brethren in England. His seven dispensations are:

- (1) Innocence    Adam and Eve.
- (2) Conscience    The early offspring of Adam and Eve.
- (3) Government    Humans having formed their own governments.
- (4) Promise    God's promised covenant through Abraham and the Patriarchs.
- (5) Law    The Mosaic Covenant.
- (6) Church    The new covenant through Jesus Christ.
- (7) Kingdom    The millennium (Sena, p. 17).

Many Protestant interpreters expected Christ to return in their lifetime. The American William Miller announced in 1831 that Christ would return between Mar 21, 1843, and

March 21, 1844. He calculated that Daniel's 2300 days (Dan. 8:13-4) meant years, starting from the command to restore Jerusalem in 457 B.C. (Whalen, p. 142 & Chamberlin p. 169). When Christ did not return by March 21, 1844, Miller's followers recalculated the date for Oct. 22 of that year (Whalen, p. 142).

When Christ still did not return, Miller's followers decided not to predict more dates. Some held that Christ did return in an invisible way. Miller's followers then split into several groups. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah Witnesses are two outgrowths from the Millerite movement.

Two European millennial groups moved to America in 1846. George Rapp brought a group to Pennsylvania from Germany, and Eric Johnson brought a group from Sweden. Johnson believed he was Christ's second incarnation (Chamberlin, p. 142).

Adam Clarke, an English Protestant, wrote a popular commentary on the whole Bible in 1832. His commentary is still published today (Clarke). Clarke identified the sea beast as the secular Holy Roman Empire (Clarke, VI, p. 1027) and the land beast as the Romish clergy (Clarke, VI, p. 1020). He identified 666 as the Romish hierarchy, the Pope as antichrist (Clarke, VI, p. 1027).

He claimed the seven signs are of the greatest importance to the Protestant Church, but they are difficult and obscure. The woman giving birth is the Church, attacked by heathens. War breaks out, but Constantine wins (Clarke, VI, p. 1012). Constantine deposes the dragon (the heathens) from power. Clarke claims the sea beast blasphemously claimed (later on) to be the Holy Roman Empire. He said the Romish church did the same when it claims to be the Holy Catholic Church.

Clarke identified the beast's seven heads as the Roman Empire's seven forms of government: (1) Monarchy, (2) Consulate, (3) Dictatorship, (4) Decemvirate, (5) Military

Tribune Consulate, (6) Triumvirate, and (7) Imperial (Clarke, VI, p. 1009). The imperial head was wounded with the fall of the western empire but was restored to life under Charlemagne. It uttered blasphemies by praising itself for forty-two weeks of thirty days converted to years, or 1260 years. This lasted until the Reformation. The blasphemies include those uttered by the Romish church who "*blaspheme the names of God in their idolatrous worship and in the impious doctrine of transubstantiation.*" (Clarke, VI, p. 1019).

Clarke insists that the sea beast is the Holy Roman Empire. The land beast is the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Romish church. The two horns are the monastic clergy and the secular clergy (religious priests and diocesan priests). The land beast caused people to worship the sea beast by promoting miraculous cures and "holy" shrines to deceive the world.

The image of the first beast is the Pope who takes upon his person all that the Roman Empire stood for. The pope caused fire to come down from heaven. Fire stands for God's wrath. The Pope also brought his own wrath against those who rejected his authority. He caused all people to be marked. The mark is the rites of the Latin worship: the Mass, the sacraments, and the veneration of saints, which Clarke claims is idolatrous. The Pope forced all people, great and small, to be identified by this mark of idolatrous worship (Clarke, VI, 1024).

The whore on the beast (first sight) is the Romish church: "*She affects the style and title of our Holy Mother the Church, but she is, in truth, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*" (Clarke, VI, p. 1037). Clarke claims Babylon's fall predicts the fall of the Catholicism from control of the true Christians (Clarke, VI, pp. 1045-9).

Clarke does not believe in a literal millennium. Instead, he expected Satan to be bound and a progressive

moral improvement to take place because the bound Satan will now find it harder to affect humans with superstition and idolatry (Clarke, VI, pp. 1050-5).

Clarke described J. G. Wetstein's work (Clarke, VI, pp. 964-4). Wetstein related the Apocalypse to historical events of the early Church. He believed the Apocalypse was written before the fall of Jerusalem and prophesied its destruction.

Wetstein divided the Apocalypse into two parts: the closed book and the open book. The closed book concerns "the earth and the third part," which he identified as Judaism. The open book concerns the many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings of the Roman Empire. The book of seven seals is God's bill of divorce against the unbelieving Judeans.

Wetstein interprets the seven seals as follows: (1) the white horse is King Artabanus and his Parthians, who ride white horses and have slaughtered many Judeans in Babylon; (2) the red horse is the Sicarii during the administration of Felix and Festus; (3) the black horse is the famine under Claudius; and (4) the pale green horse is the plague caused by the Sicarii and the famine.

The martyrs under the throne (fifth seal) are Christians martyred in Judea. The sixth seal is civil unrest in A.D. 42-4. The seventh seal (the one-half hour of silence) is the short truce granted to Agrippa I in A.D. 44.

Wetstein interprets the seven trumpets as (1) civil unrest prior to the Judean revolt (hail), (2) Judeans slaughtered at Caesarea (burning mountain), (3) Judeans slaughtered at Scythopolis (fallen star - wormwood), (4) the anarchy of the Judean commonwealth (heavens dimmed), (5) the attack by Cestius Gallus as the first woe (locusts), (6) Vespasian's army as the second woe (army), and (7) the civil war in Jerusalem as the third woe.

Wetstein interprets the woman giving birth as the

Christian Church opposed by the first six Caesars. Nero is the Dragon. The sea beast is Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, Galba being the wounded head. Vespasian and his two sons are the land beast. The number "666" stands for "Titus."

According to Wetstein, Ortho is the person riding the cloud, wielding the sickle. He is trying to prevent Vitellius from resupplying his army. The winepress is the wars between Otho and Vitellius.

Wetstein identifies the first six vials as: (1) sores contracted by Vitellius' men due to their intemperance, (2) the sea turning to blood predicts the naval victory of Vespasian over Vitellius, (3) the rivers turning to blood predicts the subsequent slaughter of Vitellius' troops, (4) the sun's heat shows how Vitellius' men suffer from their sores, (5) the throne darkened describes Rome in torpor due to Vitellius' defeat, (6) the army crossing the Euphrates is Vespasian marching toward Rome. The three frogs are Vespasian's troops dividing into three armies to besiege Rome. The seven vials cover the years 68 through 70.

Wetstein interprets the first sight, the whore on the beast and the fall of Babylon, as the fall of Rome to Vespasian. The seven heads, which are seven kings, are Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Galba. The eighth one, being one of the seven, is Otho, who was by adoption meant to succeed Galba. The ten horns are ten Roman leaders who support Vespasian. Wetstein interprets the fourth sight, the beast and the false prophet, as Vespasian and the Flavian Dynasty he started.

The fifth sight, the millennium, is the forty-year period starting from Domitian's death and ending with the Judean revolt against Hadrian. The war under Gog and Magog predicts the attack upon Christians by Bar Kochba and his followers who, in A.D. 131-5, came forth suddenly from dens and caves tormenting Christians and fighting a destructive revolt against Rome. The seventh sight, the new



Jerusalem, is the Church.

A Catholic biblical scholar, Fr. Leo G. Haydock, wrote a commentary on the whole Bible. He tried to refute rival interpretations that identified Catholicism as the scarlet whore, popery as the beast, and the Pope as antichrist. Haydock's commentary was printed as marginal notes in many Douay-Rheims Bibles published in the nineteenth century.

Haydock tried to relate the seven trumpets to Church history. The first trumpet, hail, predicted early persecutions and heresies. The second trumpet, the burning mountain, predicted the Arian heresy. The ships destroyed are local churches misled by Arius (Haydock, p. 330). The third trumpet, the falling star, predicts Bar Kochba, whose defeat spread Judeans throughout the Empire. They carry their bitterness, like the bitter herb wormwood, with them. The fourth, the heavens dimmed, refers to the Greek schism of A.D. 1054.

Haydock interpreted the fifth trumpet, the locusts, as the Reformation. Luther was the falling star who divided the Church. Haydock felt the sixth trumpet, the army, was a future event, perhaps the release of demons in antichrist's time (*ibid.*).

Haydock felt the army wearing breastplates of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone could refer to nineteenth-century artillery. Perhaps, reasoned Haydock, John mistook rows of firing cannons for horses whose mouths spewed forth brimstone (sulfur), fire (charcoal), and hyacinth (saltpeter which burns with a hyacinth blue flame) (*ibid.*). These chemicals actually make up gunpowder. John would not have been known about gunpowder when he saw the vision.

The horse heads are really cannons firing through what looks like mouths. The firing begins as wisps of flame coming from what looks like the tails (breeches). John, not recognizing cannons, described what he saw as fire-spitting

horses, similar to scorpions because they had stings in their tails as well as in their mouths (Haydock, p. 332).

Haydock then disputes Protestant claims that popes are antichrist. Some Protestant authors claimed that antichrist ruled Catholicism for 1260 years (Haydock, pp. 340-1). One claimed that antichrist's rule started in A.D. 312 during reign of Pope Sylvester. The 1260 year period ended in 1572 when the Reformation liberated true Christians. The papacy would then fall.

When the papacy did not fall, the starting date was changed to A.D. 410 when Aleric the Goth pillaged Rome. Antichrist's reign through the papacy would then end in 1670. This is a more believable date for later commentators faced with a still-standing papacy. The starting date was later changed to A.D. 456, during the reign of Pope St. Leo. This would have the papacy fall in 1716, a more believable date for the eighteenth-century commentators.

The papacy still had not fallen. Now a new interpretation developed, one that involved a future rapture and a literal thousand-year millennium (Sena, p. 17). Millennialism had been almost forgotten since the fourth century (LaHaye, *op. cit.*, p. 55). Haydock treated the millennium the same way Augustine did: It is the Church age. Christ started the millennium. It will continue until Christ releases Satan. Satan will lead Gog and Magog to attack the Church. The end of the world follows, bringing the final resurrection and the final judgment. Christ will then remake the earth into a flawless condition. New Jerusalem is the eternal heaven, peopled with saints and angels (Haydock, pp. 343-5).

Several millennial movements sprung up in the nineteenth century. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Watchtower and Tract Society are the best known, but there were others also.

On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith founded The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He wrote, as the church's tenth article of faith: "*We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.*" (A Small Mormon Leaflet).

Joseph Smith said an angel told him that the American Indians descended from Israelites who migrated to America in 600 B.C. They started two racial stocks, the Lamanites, who survive today as the American Indians, and the Nephites, whom the Lamanites long ago destroyed. Plus, an earlier migration of Semitic people, the Jaredites, came to America right after the Tower of Babel was built.

Joseph Smith said the angel told him that Jesus Christ ministered to the Nephites after his resurrection until they were destroyed, and that the Church in Europe was destroyed by the papacy (Smith, *The Book of Mormon*, introduction). Smith claimed that Jesus Christ commissioned him to select twelve new apostles and re-establish the church in America (ibid.). Smith received the Book of Mormon on gold plates given him by an angel (ibid.).

John Wroe, in 1850, argued that the Saxons descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel. His followers formed a millennial group they named the Ingathering of Israel (Chamberlin, p. 142). The late Herbert W. Armstrong argued this Christian-Israelite doctrine that the Saxons are the ten lost tribes through his World Church of Tomorrow and their magazine *Plain Truth*.

The Reformation focused attention on the Apocalypse. Most Protestant commentators believed Catholicism to be an apostate church. They thought popes had seized control of Christianity, but now the papacy will fall as Christ liberates and purifies the true Church. They interpreted the

Apocalypse along those lines. Some, just like Martin Luther, believed that Christianity was at the millennium's end. Satan will now round up Gog and Magog for one last attempt to destroy Christianity.

Other Protestant commentators had premillennial views, views dormant since the fourth century. When the papacy falls, Christ will return, they think, and will start the thousand-year rule of Saints. Following the thousand years, Satan will be released to lead Gog and Magog for the final assault.

In the years following the Reformation, as it became obvious that the papacy was not going to fall, Protestant commentators began to look further into the Apocalypse for deeper, and less prejudicial, interpretations. They developed several schools of interpretation. One was "preterist," a viewpoint that the visions were based upon events known to the author when he wrote the Apocalypse. Another was "historical," holding that the visions were inspired prophecies of Church history.

A third was "futurist," that is all the visions from Apoc. 4 through Apoc. 22 prophesy a time that is future even to us. The prophecies describe the rapture, the seven year tribulation ending with antichrist's defeat, Satan in chains, and Christ's return for the thousand-year millennium.

A final school is "allegorical." Some call it "idealist," or "timeless symbolic," or the "spiritualized approach." This viewpoint holds that the visions are not prophetic to any specific future events. They merely point out in an allegorical way certain timeless factors at work in human destiny. The visions show what relationship these timeless factors have with the revelation made by Jesus Christ (Johnson, pp. 13-4 & Sena, p. 9 & Mounce, p. 43).

The popularity of these different viewpoints has fluctuated through the centuries. The futurist viewpoint was held by Justin Martyr (A.D. 164), Irenaeus (A.D. 195),

Hippolytus (A.D. 236) and Victorinus (A.D. 303). It dropped in popularity after Augustine's commentaries of around A.D. 400. The futurist viewpoint was revived again in the late 1500's by the Spanish Jesuit, Francisco Ribera (Johnson, p. 13) who may have proposed it to refute charges by Protestant reformers that Catholicism was the culprit prophesied in Apoc. 12.

The historical viewpoint was originated by Joachim of Fiore (died A.D. 1202), who interpreted the 1260 days as 1260 years. This viewpoint was further developed by Protestant reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin. Since then, many historical interpretations have been proposed by both Catholic and Protestant commentators, but with very wide differences of opinion. Today there is a serious lack of agreement, even among Protestant commentators, identifying the various historical periods (Johnson, p. 13).

The preterist viewpoint was proposed by the Spanish Jesuit Alcansar in 1614 (Johnson, p. 14) probably, once again, to refute the reformer's claims that Catholicism was the oppressor of Christians.

The idealist viewpoint is the most recent one to receive serious attention. It tries to get behind specific events and to analyze the timeless factors that influence history. It probably became popular because it avoided the temptation to level unfair accusations against other Christian groups and because so many of the earlier scenarios, which seemed so plausible when they were prepared, failed the test of history.

Within these viewpoints are all three positions regarding the millennium: premillennialism, postmillennialism and amillennialism. Premillennialism holds that we are in the era preceding the millennium, and Christ himself will start the millennium. Post millennialism holds that human beings, by their own efforts, will complete the millennium, using the Gospel's truth to dispel error and

bring ten centuries of peace and Christian justice. Then Christ will return. Amillennialism holds that the millennium was a figurative phrase and did not prophecy any specific historical era.

Twentieth-century commentaries by Protestant authors can be divided into two groups: ones that claim the letters to the seven churches prophesy Church history, and ones that do not. I have reviewed the following authors who claim the letters do not prophesy Church history:

William Barclay, *The Revelation of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976)

Adela Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: the Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984)

Billy Graham, *Approaching Hoofbeats* (Waco: World Book 1983)

Homer Hailey, *Revelation, an Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker House Books, 1979)

Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: a Bible Study Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983)

Richard L. Jeske, *Revelation for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortran Press, 1983)

Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelations* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977)

Martin Rist and Lynn Hough, "Commentary on Revelations," in *The Interpreters Bible* (New

York: Abingdon Press, 1957)

The above all hold the letters to be pastoral in nature and meant for all Christians.

Twentieth century Protestant authors who claim the letters do prophesy Church history or who identify Catholicism as an apostate church or as one of the beasts are:

Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside: The C. Larkin estate, 1919)

Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Illustrated and Made Plain* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973)

*Liberty Bible Commentary*, ed. Jerry Falwell, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983)

H. M. Morris, *The Revelation Record: a Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of the End Times* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndal House, 1983)

Hal Lindsey, *There's a New World Coming* (Santa Anna: Vision House Publishers, 1973)

These authors hold similar views about the successive stages in Church history prophesied by the seven letters, which stages can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Ephesus covers the condition of the Church during Apostolic times.
- (2) Smyrna predicts its condition during the early persecutions by Rome (A.D. 100 to 313).
- (3) Pergamus predicts the Church entering into error

during the years A.D. 312 to around 600-606. This phase of Church history is given similar names by the authors: “licentious church” (Larkin, p. 21); “indulged church” (LaHaye, op. cit., pp. 37-40); “church of worldly alliance” (*Liberty Bible Commentary*, p. 2661); “infiltrated (imperial) church” (Morris, p. 56); and “church merged with state” (Lindsey, *There’s a New World Coming*, p. 54).

- (4) Thyatira predicts the Church era from around A.D. 600 to the Reformation. Larkin names this era “the lax church” (Larkin, p. 29). LaHaye calls it “the pagan church” (LaHaye, op. cit., pp. 43-8), but LaHaye claims the time period is A.D. 606 to the future tribulation, making this phase co-existent with some of the later phases.

The *Liberty Bible Commentary* (on page 2662) calls it “the church of continued sacrifice and clerical domination.” Morris (on page 59) calls it “the adulterous church.” And Lindsey (on page 58) calls it “the counterfeit church of image worship, superstition, and priestcraft.” They are all referring to the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages.

- (5) Sardis covers the Reformation until 1720, which era is named as the “dead church” (Larkin, p. 25 & LaHaye, op. cit., pp. 49-50); “the church of empty profession” (*Liberty Bible Commentary*, p. 2664); and “the church of empty orthodoxy” (Lindsey, op. cit., p. 62 & Morris, p. 67). These authors are all referring to the original Protestant churches. Some of these authors are members of various dissenting sects branched off from the original Protestant churches.
- (6) The letter to Philadelphia covers the years 1750



through the nineteenth century. This is the era of the “favored” or “loved” church because of the missionary activity during that period, and finally

- (7) Laodicea, the church in the twentieth century, the “lukewarm” church.

All five of these interpretations predict a “rapture”, and “tribulation.” During the rapture and tribulation, the Jews will convert and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Some Gentiles will believe and be saved.

Those Gentiles who resist conversion will organize behind a political leader (the beast from the sea—the antichrist) and a false religious leader (the beast from the land—the false prophet). The tribulation will end with a climactic battle between antichrist (leading those who rallied behind him) and Jesus Christ (who descends from heaven with the raptured saints).

Christ and the raptured saints rescue the tribulation saints (those converted during the tribulation), destroy antichrist and his followers, and bind Satan for one-thousand years. Christ then starts the millennial kingdom, and he and his saints rule during the millennium.

In this view, the sea beast is the modern equivalent of the medieval Holy Roman Empire, and the land beast is the modern equivalent of the Catholic Church. Luther had previously identified the Holy Roman Empire as the sea beast and the Catholic Church as the land beast (Luther VI, p. 483). He named the visible heads of these two organizations as the antichrist and the false prophet.

Luther did not predict a rapture or a future millennium. He believed the millennium began during apostolic times. The five authors mentioned above did not connect the sea beast and the land beast to Catholicism as openly as Martin Luther did, but it seems they do believe there is a connec-

tion.

Larkin proposes the sea beast will be a resurrected “lost” person like Judas Iscariot. The False Prophet will be another “lost” person (Larkin, pp. 122-6). Larkin claims the whore of Apoc. 17 is all false religions, including Catholicism (Larkin, p. 53).

LaHaye also proposes that the sea beast will be a resurrected lost person (LaHaye, op. cit., pp. 171-4 & 180-5), but he does not cite Judas as the person. The whore is the Ecumenical church led by the Catholic pope (LaHaye, op. cit., 226-33).

Hal Lindsey, in *There's a New World Coming*, on pages 184 & 192, proposes that the sea beast and the land beast are the antichrist and his false prophet. On pages 234-7, Lindsey claims that the whore is a soon-to-come worldwide occultic system sanctioned by the European Economic Community nations.

The *Liberty Bible Commentary*, on page 2689, proposes that the sea beast is the nations of the revived Roman Empire and the land beast is the antichrist, who is also the false prophet and will be an apostate Jew. The whore (page 2078) is the corrupted Catholic Church. The whore includes all false religions and is headed by the pope in Rome who dominates the revived Roman Empire.

Morris, on page 247, proposes the sea beast represents a man, but it also represents the seven prior empires of Sumer, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and, Rome. The land beast will be the leader of the world religious system.

These five authors claim that Apoc. 1 through 3 cover past events and Rev 4 through 22 cover the future rapture, tribulation, and millennium. The rapture is predicted in Apoc. 4:1-2 when John is told: “*Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit....*” All five authors claim

that the phrase “*immediately I was in the spirit*” describe the rapture.

Some authors propose an elaborate timetable linking the Apocalypse to Daniel’s seventy weeks between the rebuilding of the Temple and the coming of the Messiah and to Ezek. 29 describing the war with Gog and Magog.

Daniel’s prophecy states that between the decree to rebuild the Temple and the Messiah’s arrival, there shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks (of years) or 483 years. After the 483 years, the Messiah shall be slain, and the people shall deny him and not be his (Dan. 9:25-7).

The traditional interpretation is that the 483 years prophecies the arrival of Jesus Christ. The countdown starts when Artaxerxes granted permission to rebuild Jerusalem in 458 B.C. The seventieth week would then fall during the years A.D. 26 through 33 which coincides perfectly with the public ministry of Jesus.

Larkin (on page 114) and LaHaye (on pages 90-2) both claim that there is a gap in the duration of the seventy weeks. The first sixty-nine weeks proceed continuously until the time of Christ. Then the countdown is put on hold for a very long time. Later on (at a time future to us) the countdown will resume.

They claim this gap is also reflected in Apoc. 12 verses 5 & 6: “*And she brought forth a male child ...*” & “*... the woman fled into the wilderness....*” There is a gap between these two verses similar to Daniel’s gap. It lasts for approximately two thousand years (Larkin p. 94 & LaHaye, op. cit., p.9).

Larkin claims there is another gap in Isaiah 11:1-4 in verse 4 where the colon is. “*But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth*” ∴ “*and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth . . .*” (Is. 11:1-4 from *King James Bible*). These two events span the time between the first and second comings

of Christ (Larkin, p. 172).

After Christ's weds his raptured bride in heaven, he will take his bride "on a honeymoon" to earth to defeat the antichrist (Larkin, p. 170). The first battle will be at Edom, the second at Armageddon, the third at the valley of Jehosaphat, the fourth (and last) at Jerusalem (LaHaye, op. cit., pp. 268-70).

The vintage (Apoc. 14:20) is of the "vine of the earth," a concept similar to Augustine's city of the wicked. It is the corporate body of those opposed to the Church (Larkin, p. 137). The Jehovah's Witnesses also have a similar belief about the vine of the earth.

When Mussolini acquired Libya, Ethiopia, and Albania, some commentators felt this proved that the Roman Empire was being revived. They then predicted that Mussolini would also acquire Egypt and the Suez Canal (Rimmer, p. 171). After Mussolini's defeat in World War II, some commentators looked to Russia and Russia's allies, Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer (Balkan Countries) and Togarmah (Armenia), as the countries that will fulfill Ezek. 38 (Rimmer, p. 40).

Many interpretations today identify the United Nations as the sea beast. Some, such as LaHaye, identify the United Nations as the white horse riding forth to conquer LaHaye, op. cit., p. 100). LaHaye (on page 163) also writes: "*Nothing has caused more havoc and evil to humanity than government.*"

Between 1820 and 1830, many Protestants in England felt that Jesus Christ would return in their lifetimes. Three hundred Anglican and six hundred sectarian clergymen fueled the expectation (Rosten, p. 248).

A similar movement arose in America. It was led by William Miller, but two hundred clergymen: Baptist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, and others supported the movement. I mentioned the

Millerites earlier. They predicted Christ would return in 1844.

When Christ did not return, their movement dissolved. But some Millerites reorganized their thoughts. They felt that, even if they did not know the exact day Christ would return, they still needed to warn the world to be ready when Christ finally does come.

They felt, among other things, that Saturday was the correct Lord's day and that humanity ought to be keeping Saturday holy on the advent, or return, of Christ. Probably for that reason, they became known as the Seventh Day Adventists.

They believe in a one-thousand-year millennium, but it will take place in heaven, not on earth. During the heavenly millennium, the earth will be a desolated, depopulated wilderness (Rosten, p. 249). At the end of the millennium, the earth will be reactivated, the wicked will rise, the righteous will return from heaven, the New Jerusalem will be established on earth, and the final judgement will take place.

Charles Russel split off the Watchtower and Tract Society from the Adventist movement in 1872. Russel believed Christ would return to earth invisibly in 1874 (Rosten, pp. 169-79). He later argued that the time of the Gentiles ended in autumn, 1914, when World War I started. Christ then went to the heavenly Zion to await the 144,000 elect while "*the world empire of the Babylonish religion approached the most critical period in world history*" (*Babylon the Great Has Fallen*, p. 500). "Babylon the Great" then fell. When Babylon fell, the followers of Russel imprisoned for preaching against world government were released. This happened in March 1919 (op. cit., p. 504).

Russel later changed the society's name in 1931 from "Watchtower and Tract Society" to "Jehovah Witnesses"

(op. cit., p. 516). By 1935, most of the 144,000 elect had been gathered, although there is still a remnant yet to be gathered. The gathering of the “others” the “great crowd,” is being done through the activity of the Jehovah Witnesses (op. cit., p. 632).

Both Jehovah Witnesses and The Worldwide Church of God are actively spreading their message to the American public: Jehovah Witnesses by door to door evangelists, the Worldwide Church of God by a TV ministry and a widely circulated, no-charge magazine *Plain Truth*.

The early reformers who broke away from mother Church cited the unchristian conduct of Catholic clergy. This scandal had been going on for generations prior to the Reformation. When criticism clamoring for reform was met with hostile resentment, the dissenters lost patience. They listened to those who claimed the Catholic Church was the whore on the beast.

Soon the entire book of the Apocalypse was interpreted to show that the Catholic Church was a false church. The Holy Roman Empire (Catholic Europe) was the political beast from the sea in league with the Catholic Church (the beast from the land). Together they oppressed the true Christians. Now that reform has started, Christ will return and defeat the two beasts. These accusations were difficult to counteract because nobody can prove what the visions might mean in God’s thinking, but it was easy to prove the sins of those who abused the authority entrusted to them.

We had a similar confrontation today between the capitalist nations and the communists. The outcry of communists does not prove that capitalism is unjust, but the obvious crimes committed by some capitalists, even against their own laws, was the fuel that kept communism on the upswing. Therefore, I can understand the argument that God permitted the Reformation and communism to grow as

chastisements for sin. Some Catholic commentators identify the Reformation and communism as the first and second woes. At any rate, these accusations had to be answered. Many sixteenth-century Catholic commentators tried to answer them point by point.

The Holy Roman Empire fell apart, but the papacy did not fall. Sixteenth-century Protestant commentators then began looking for deeper meanings. Catholic commentators did the same. This led to commentaries that were either symbolic or preterist in viewpoint. Modern Catholic commentaries like this are:

Robert Baldwin, *The End of the World* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. ,1984)

Jean-Louis D'Aragon S.J., "Commentary on Revelations," in *The Jerome Bible Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968)

William G. Heidt O.S.B., *The Book of the Apocalypse* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1962)

C. C. Martindale S.J., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953)

PHEME Perkins, *The Book of Revelations* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1983)

Patrick J. Sena C.P.P.C., *The Apocalypse: Biblical Revelation Explained* (New York: Alba House, 1983)

John J. Scullion S.J., "Revelations," *A NewCatholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*

(London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969)

John Tickle, *The Book of Revelation: A Catholic Interpretation of the Apocalypse* (Liguori: Liguori Publications, 1983)

Other Catholic authors came up with interpretations that spanned Church history similar to the way some Protestant commentators did with the seven letters. The Catholic commentators, however, used a scenario based upon the seven trumpets.

Two who traced Church history through the trumpets are:

James H. Culleton, S.T.D., J.C.D., Li. D., *A Key to the Apocalypse* (pamphlet: Publisher not indicated, perhaps Academy of California Church History, 1959)

Herman B. Kramer, *The Book of Destiny* (Belleville: Buechler Publishing Co., 1955)  
(Rockport: TAN Books, 1975)

Kramer claims the first trumpet, calling forth hail, predicts early Church problems with heresies and barbarian attacks (A.D. 313-600). The second trumpet, the burning mountain cast into the sea, predicts persecution by Islam (A.D. 650-900). The third trumpet, the falling star affecting fresh water, predicts the split of “eastern” and “western” churches in A.D. 1054. The fourth trumpet, the heavens dimmed, predicts the short-lived Western Schism (A.D. 1378-1417) during which, for a period of thirty-nine years, as many as three men simultaneously claimed to be pope.

Kramer identifies the fifth trumpet, The first woe—the locusts, as the Reformation. He compares the sixth trumpet,



the second woe—the army of two hundred million soldiers, with the Communism empire.

Culleton has a different interpretation. He claims hail predicts the arrival of Islam. The burning mountain cast into the sea represents natural barriers the Church will have to overcome to spread the Gospel. The falling star predicts the struggle with Arianism (A.D. 320-380). The heavens dimmed predicts the Eastern Schism.

Culleton agrees with Kramer on the two woes. The locusts predict the Reformation; the army predicts communism. Culleton and Kramer both claim the intermediary vision following the army, when John is asked to eat the scroll and preach again, prophesies the present time. This differs from the opinions of many Protestant commentators who believe the present times lies with the introductory vision ahead of the seals, so that all seven trumpets would be future to our time.

Stanislaus Geit, in his *L'Apocalypse et L' Historie Ethude Historique Sur L' Apocalypse Johannique* tried to relate the visions to early Church history. His book is in French, but J. M. Ford and J. Scullion have reviewed parts of it in their works. Geit proposed that the first woe (locusts) was five months of terror in February-June of 66, prior to the Judean revolt (Ford, p. 149).

The second woe (army) occurred in October and November of 66 when Cestius Gallus brought in the fourth legion (Ford, p. 154). The third woe was the three and one-half year campaign of Vespasian and Titus from April 25 to September 27 of A.D. 70 (Scullion, p. 1276).

A partial interpretation came out of locutions Don Stefano Gobbi claims to have heard from the Virgin Mary beginning July 7, 1973 (Gobbi). He started a movement: *The Marian Movement of Priests*.

Fr. Gobbi claims The Virgin gave him an interpretation of the seven signs, applying them to modern times. The

first sign, the woman giving birth is the Virgin Mary ready to deliver her children (the Church) from Lucifer (Gobbi sections 175, & 314). The great red dragon waiting to devour her children is Lucifer or Satan working through Atheistic Communism (Gobbi, section 363). The dragon is bloody red because of his wars of conquest. He is huge, signifying the vast territory conquered by Communism. The Virgin Mary first warned of Communist conquests at Fatima in 1917 (Gobbi, section 406).

The mother of Jesus appears as a great sign because God desires her to take us humans away from Communism and bring us back to God. The wings of the great eagle is the Word of God. The eagle is Saint John. The two wings symbolize faith and charity, which cause Mary to soar above false doctrines that flood out from atheistic Communism. Mary sought refuge in the desert, which is the hearts and souls of those who receive her.

The beast like a leopard, the Sea Beast, is Freemasonry (Gobbi, section 405). The dragon (Lucifer) is the power animating the Sea Beast. The Sea Beast's claws and lion's mouth show that he works everywhere through cunning and through social communication. The Sea Beast's seven heads represent Masonic lodges. The Beast has ten horns showing how powerfully he can influence humans through modern means of communication.

The Sea Beast wants to obstruct the path opened by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By means of Black Masses and the satanic cult, the Sea Beast blasphemes all the commandments. He does this by promoting: false idols, sacrilegious films and blasphemous literature, Sunday as a day of sports, homosexual families, abortion, sexuality and pornography, robberies and kidnapping, habitual lying, sexual pleasure, and selfishness.

The Sea Beast also replaces the seven capital virtues with the seven capital vices, which are the beast's seven

heads: pride, lust, avarice, anger, sloth, envy, and gluttony. Masonry's end result is to draw all humanity away from God's law (Gobbi, section 405).

The Land Beast is Ecclesiastical Freemasonry, or Catholic clergy spread throughout the Catholic hierarchy, who have become Masons (Gobbi, section 406). This was announced at Fatima when the virgin Mary said that Satan would enter even to the summit of the Church. Masons within the Catholic Church are destroying the clear understanding of who Christ is.

The number 666 indicates Antichrist's name. Lucifer became the Antichrist. The name calculates as follows: 333 indicates the mystery of God. Lucifer wanted to ascend above God, hence his number is 666.

Lucifer's number counted once indicates the year 666 (five years after the Omayyad dynasty in Islam, ten years after Ali, caliph of Islam). During this period of history, Islam unwittingly serves the interests the Antichrist by denying the Trinity and the revealed truth that Christ is divine.

The number counted twice indicates the year 1332 (five years before the hundred years war between England and France). Antichrist during this period of history launched a fierce attack on Faith in God's Word, (probably through French philosophers). This was almost one hundred years before the Reformation, which, combined with nationalism, broke Christendom's unity.

The number 666 counted three times indicates the year 1998. During this period, Freemasonry, assisted by its members infiltrated into the Catholic hierarchy, will set up a false Christ to replace the real Christ and the Church Christ established to draw people to God. This fake Christ and false Church will be adored and will seal those who follow it (Gobbi, section 407). Anyone who has accepted the seal on his forehead shows that he accepts the denial of God and

the rejection of God's law. Anyone who accepts the seal on his hand shows that he intends to act independently of God. He will work for himself to gather worldly goods and money.

It appears that Antichrist (Lucifer) will make three major attempts to destroy Christ's mission and Christ's Church. The first two were very powerful and long lasting. They are still operating today. The third attempt is yet to come and will be the most powerful. Freemasonry, under the guidance of Antichrist will, once again, attempt to destroy Christ's mission and Christ's Church. This attempt will be so powerful, that God will not permit it to succeed.

One wonders, if international terrorism becomes so widespread that frightened people willingly give absolute power to a worldwide government that promises to protect them, if a man representing Antichrist can rise to power in our lifetime. He will lead hordes of people, thinking they are protecting themselves, to attempt destroying what Christ has built. I wonder how many of us will be prepared for that experience.

The Virgin Mary offers humanity her seal, which is consecration to her Heart (Gobbi, section 410). The three angels announce the final tribulation (Gobbi, section 478). The first angel announces that all persons will see their own lives, all they have done, the way that God views them. All demons and damned souls will pass into hell so they can no longer do any harm.

The second angel announces Babylon's fall. The third angel proclaims the great chastisement for everyone who worships the beast and the beast's image. If anyone has the beast's mark on forehead or hand, that person will drink God's wrath.

The mother of Jesus is Queen of all the angels. God, therefore, assigned her the task of an angel, giving her the key to the abyss and the great chain. The chain is prayer

made with Mary (Gobbi, section 479). The prayer is the Rosary. Praying the Rosary will imprison Satan.

David Chilton published *The Days of Vengeance* in 1987. He also relates the Apocalypse to first-century events. Chilton's interpretation is similar to mine except he appears to believe that the entire Judean nation fell in A.D. 70. He does not mention the Judean defeat under Bar Kochba in A.D. 134.

Chilton also does not mention J. M. Ford's position that parts of the Apocalypse might have been generated by John the Baptist. Chilton does quote Ford on several other points in his book. Chilton's main thrust seems to be the promotion of a Christian political movement to transform society into complete harmony with God. He calls this movement "Christian Dominion."

Chilton claims the letters to the seven churches outline the past history of Israel rather the future history of the Church. They relate to seven periods or stages of pre-Christian attempts to serve God. Ephesus relates to Adam and his sons. Smyrna relates to the Patriarchs. Pergamun relates to the time of Balaam and Balak. Thyatira relates to King David. Sardis relates to the period prior to the Babylonian exile. Philadelphia relates to the time after the exile. Laodicae relates to the lukewarm "Synagogue" in the time of Christ (Chilton, pp. 86-8).

He interprets the throne in Apoc. 4 as the mercy seat. The four living creatures are cherubim. The sea of glass is the bronze basin. The seven lamps correspond to the seven-branched candlestick. The elders are the twenty-four courses of Old Testament priests and the New Testament leaders of the Church, all now in heaven. The four beasts represent created nature as a whole but, more specifically, reflect the four Zodiac signs that regulate the four seasons (Chilton, pp. 150-8).

The white horse represents Christ riding out with his

angels to destroy apostate Israel. The red horse represents war. The black horse represents famine bringing economic hardship. The pale green horse represents death followed by the grave. The martyrs under the throne are Christians martyred by the unbelieving Judeans (Chilton, pp. 180-96).

The seven trumpets announce that the curses of Deut. 27 to 30 are ready to happen. Deut. 28:1-14 covers blessing if the Israelites and their descendants comply with the covenant. Verses 15 to 38 cover curses if they do not comply. When Christ arrived and the Judean Nation was not complying, the curses fell upon them.

The first woe, the locusts, is a full-scale demonic attack on Judea by devils Lucifer released from the abyss. Lucifer had already fallen from heaven when Christ sent the seventy disciples to preach (Chilton, pp. 243-7). The second woe, the army, is Cestius Gallus' invasion of Judea (Chilton, p. 286).

The two witnesses refer to Moses and Elijah, who symbolize the law and the prophets (Chilton, pp. 277-8). The third woe is the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersal of the Judean people (Chilton, p. 286).

Michael and his angels fighting the dragon represent Christ and the apostles attacking Satan. The woman's flight into the wilderness is Judean Christians fleeing Jerusalem (Chilton, pp. 309-16).

The sea beast represents both the Roman Empire and Nero. The ten horns represents the ten imperial provinces. The land beast is false prophecy coming from apostate Judea enforcing emperor worship (Chilton, pp. 327-44).

Chilton believes the thousand year millennium refers to the "pre-consummation era" (the Church age). It has already lasted 2000 years and may go on for many more years, maybe a million years (Chilton, p. 507).

This is where Chilton builds up his case for Christian Dominion. He appears to be primarily interested in building

a Christian society here on earth, but he argues against trying to accomplish dominion through political action, even though he affirms that political action is valid and necessary.

He cautions that Christians must not seize political power. Dominion in civil government cannot be achieved before we attain wisdom. We must wait for Christ to bestow wisdom upon us (Chilton, p. 511). Christ will do it when the time is right. We must help prepare for it (Chilton, p. 512).

Tim LaHaye, in 1996, co-authored with Jerry B. Jenkins an immensely popular fictionalized interpretation, the “Left Behind” series (LaHaye and Jenkins). The series consists of thirteen volumes, starting with “Left Behind” and ending with “Prequel and Sequel” with a combined sales of well over 60 million books. Audio versions of all volumes have been published and at least two full-length movies. A similar series was published for young readers.

The series predicts a future rapture, tribulation, the return of Christ in the flesh, and a 1000-year millennial kingdom with Christ present as king. The first volume *Left Behind* portrays what those left behind experience as the righteous are raptured. Planes fall from the sky because the pilots are raptured. Trains crash. Highways, world wide, are clogged with numerous accidents caused by cars without drivers. Doctors disappear during operations. The only things remaining of the raptured persons are their clothing.

The people left behind try to understand what has happened and gradually divide into two groups: Those who finally believe and those who do not believe. The main characters on both sides are introduced.

The other volumes narrate the rise of a charismatic, powerful, and ruthless political figure that leads those who do not believe and the rise of leaders of those who do believe. The predicted two witnesses appear and preach at Jerusalem. The army of locusts, in the form of large metallic-like insects in the novel, torment those who do not

believe. The powerful world leader is assassinated and comes back to life. He is the Antichrist, now certain that he is divine.

He openly announces his divinity at the Temple site, and God strikes him down. Christ returns with the raptured saints and unites them with the tribulation saints (those converted during the tribulation) and rules a peaceful world for 1000 years.

Not everybody accepts this futurist interpretation. Gary DeMar calls it “End Times Fiction” in his book of that title (DeMar). The fictionalized series does make these predictions seem a little far-fetched. Hank Hanegraaff convinced the publishers of *Left Behind*, Tyndal House, to publish a multi-volume fictionalized interpretation placing most of the predicted events as taking place during the early church age. (a preterist interpretation). Sigmund Brouwer co-authored with Hanegraaff.

The first volume “The Last Disciple” was published in 2004. It portrays Nero as the Antichrist and John the Evangelist as the last disciple. The authors develop fictional characters along with real historical characters and events. It is difficult for someone not familiar with the era to discern what is fictional from authentic history, but authentic history is abundant in the novel. The second volume “The Last Sacrifice,” along with a CD version, came out in October 2005 (Hanegraaff). It continues the development of the main characters. More volumes in this series will be released over the next several years.

These very different interpretations (futurist and preterist) brought out by the same publishing house have caused some controversy between the authors and those who read the books. A lively discussion on The Internet and on Amazon.com reader’s comments shows how interested people are in what the Apocalypse might really mean. Reading both series would illustrate the ramifications of



these two very different schools of interpretation.

In 1981, Robert F. Riggs published *The Apocalypse Unsealed*. Riggs interpreted the Apocalypse from an Islamic viewpoint. He claims the Apocalypse predicts the arrival of the Islamic faith and the career of the Bab (the alleged twelfth imam). According to Riggs, the predicted Messiah is the Bab come to establish the kingdom.

In 1912, Rudolph Steiner wrote *Die Apokalypsis des Johannes*, a new kind of psychological, almost psychiatric, commentary. Steiner believed John saw dream visions of a spirit world which really exists. Carl Gustav Jung in his *Answer to Job*, also wrote a psychiatric commentary on the Apocalypse. Jung will be discussed below.

The famous American seer Edgar Cayce interpreted the Apocalypse during his diagnosis of the spiritual ailments of his clients. He claims the visions represent moods, or emotions, emanating from the various organs of the human body. He relates the seven seals to the seven endocrine glands, which he called the spiritual centers of the body: (1) pituitary, (2) pineal, (3) thyroid, (4) thymus, (5) solar plexus, (6) lyden, and (7) gonads. He relates the seven trumpets to the same glands, but listed in reverse order, the four winds being: (1) gonads, (2) lyden, (3) solar plexus, and (4) thymus; these four, he claims, are the body's physical centers (see Cayce).

D. H. Lawrence and C. G. Jung have published similar interpretations. Both criticize Christianity and argue that the Apocalypse was based upon pre-Yahwist pagan lore.

D. H. Lawrence starts with the seven seals. He claims the seven seals are based on ancient pagan rites that initiate aspiring humans into service to the gods. This lore is now corrupted due to redactions and reinterpretations by Jewish and Christian editors. Lawrence believed the pagans had discovered the true correspondence between the individual and the universe, which correspondence was exact and

perfect. But Christian writers destroyed it. He also believed that God is not a person. God is an impersonal force behind nature (Lawrence, p. 35).

Lawrence then relates the four horsemen to certain aspects of human nature. The white horse represents our jovial or sanguinary (bloody) nature, but is depicted as white because blood represents our life. The red horse represents our warlike or choleric nature. It is not merely anger, but natural fieriness or passion. The black horse represents our saturnine, our phlegmatic nature. The pale green horse represents our mercurial nature, which signifies death (Lawrence, p. 102).

Jung argues that the four horsemen point out the sinister side of God. Jung calls all seven seals “*a veritable orgy of hatred, wrath, vindictiveness, and blind destructive fury.*” (Jung, p. 125)

Jung starts his commentary with a long criticism of God. He claims that God is not a conscious being (Jung, p. 33), but rather the unconscious force behind nature. The visions of the Apocalypse stem from the collective unconscious of humans, a racial memory of primordial events that all humans sometimes glimpse (Jung, p. 134). He then describes the relationship between Job and God.

Lucifer was one of God’s sons who, more so than the others, was inclined to make use of God’s omniscience. God was omniscient; but, because of God’s state of unconsciousness, God did not take advantage of this omniscience. This consciousness of God, to begin with, was not much more than a primitive awareness that knows no reflection and no morality (Jung, pp. 67-8).

Lucifer took advantage of God to goad God into treating Job in an unfair and immoral manner. Job, for his part, displayed a greater sense of morality than God did. Jung claims Job showed himself superior to God both intellectually and morally (Jung, pp. 14 & 68). God then, to

expiate this wrongful treatment of Job—and through Job, all of humanity—decided to become human to suffer as Job was made to suffer (Jung, pp. 85-91).

The preceding is enough to show how Jung's conception of God differs from the Christian conception. His commentary is, not surprisingly, highly anti-Christian. He, like D. H. Lawrence, views the woman of Apoc. 12 as a pre-Christian, pre-Yahwist image stemming from our collective unconscious. This image portends the birth of a divine child.

He identifies the woman as "anima mundi" (earth's soul), a peer of primordial cosmic man. She is in a perennial process of birth that has occurred over and over again throughout history. Briefly stated, this indicates that we are part of God. We are becoming more and more aware of the God that is within us (Jung, p. 158) through a birthing of what was in the unconscious bursting forth into our consciousness (Jung, p. 163).

Jung's main theme is the repressed hostility in the visions. This hostility stems from God's unreflexive and amoral interaction with the universe.

In 1957, Norman Cole in his *Pursuit of the Millennium* traces the influence of Medieval millennialism into modern socialism and nazism. Hitler, for example, claimed that his Third Reich would last a thousand years. Hitler's nazism was the antithesis of Christian principles, which brings us full circle to the "what if" asked at the beginning of this book. What if Hitler really were the antichrist; but God, for reasons of providence, cut Hitler's career short?

What if, really, most of the prophecies of the Apocalypse happened long ago?

In my book, I argued my case that most of them did.

<< end of chap twenty >>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**N**ote that all references in this book are keyed to this bibliography through author's last name, title (if I listed more than one book by the author), and page number.

Achtemeier P. J. et. al., *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

Alonso, Joaquin Maria, C.F.M., *The Secret of Fatima, Fact and Legend* (Ravengate Press, 1979).

Anon., *The Message of Marienfried* (AMI International Press, 1970).

Armstrong, Herbert W, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last* (Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1959).

Armstrong, Herbert W, *The Mystery of the Church* (Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1986).

Armstrong, Herbert W, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1967).

Augustine, St., *The City of God* (New York: Marcus Dods Translation. Modern Library Publishers, 1950).

Avi-Yonah, Michael, *A History of the Holy Land* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1969).

*Babylon the Great Has Fallen* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible

and Tract Society, 1963).

Baldwin, Robert, *The End of the World* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 1984).

Barclay, William, *The Revelation of John, in two volumes* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

Barnes, Albert, *Notes on the New Testament: Revelations* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1884, reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998).

Berrigan, Daniel, *The Nightmare of God* (Portland: Sunburst Press, 1983).

Birley, Anthony, *Lives of the Later Caesars* (Hammondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976).

Brainton, Roland H., *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952).

Burke, Michael, *Mexico, an Illustrated History* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1999).

Burrows, Millar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: The Viking Press, 1955).

Caird, G. B., *A Commentary on The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

Carr, Joseph J., *The Twisted Cross: the Occult Religion of Hitler and the New Age Nazism of the Third Reich* (Shreveport, LA: Huntington House, 1985).

Carroll, Warren H., *The Founding of Christendom: A*

*History of Christendom* (volume one of a six volume set) (Front Royal, VA: Christendom College Press, 1985).

*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Prepared by an Editorial Staff at The Catholic University of America (New York, McGraw Hill, 1967).

Cayce, Edgar, *The Revelation: a Commentary Based on a Study of Twenty-four Psychic Discourses* (Virginia Beach: A. R. E. Press, 1945).

Chamberlin, Ernest R., *Antichrist and the Millennium* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975).

Chilton, David, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelations* (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987).

Clarke, Adam, *Clarke's Commentary (in 6 volumes)* "Revelations" in volume 5, originally published in 1832 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977).

Collins, Adela Y., *Crisis and Catharsis: the Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).

Cooke, Jean, Ann Kramer, and Theodore Rowland-Entwistle, *History's Timeline* (New York: Crescent Books, 1981).

Cornfield, Gaalya, general editor, *Josephus: The Jewish War* (Israel: Zondervan, 1982).

Coyne, William, *Our Lady of Knock* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., ).

Crozier, Brian, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Rocklin, CA: Forum, 1999).

Culleton, James, Fr., *A Key to the Apocalypse* (Publisher not indicated, perhaps Academy of California Church History, 1959).

Culligan, Emmett J., *The Last World War and the End of Time* (Emmett J. Culligan, 1950).

Dalin, Rabbi David G., *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* (Washington, D.C.: Regency Publishing, Inc., 2005).

D'Aragon, Jean-Louis, S.J., *Introduction to Revelation (A Commentary in the Jerusalem Bible)* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1960 & Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968).

Danielou, Jean, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1958).

Davis, Marietta, *Scenes Beyond The Grave* (Dayton, OH: Stephen Deuel, 1870).

Davis, Marietta, *Caught Up into Heaven* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1999).

De Angelis, Gina, *Hernando Cortez and The Conquest of Mexico* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000).

DeMar, Gary, *End Times Fiction* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001).

*Douay-Rheims Bible*, Baltimore edition, (Baltimore: John Murphy Co., 1899).



Edinger, Edward F., *Archetype of the Apocalypse, a Jungian Study of the Book of Revelation* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).

*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Fifteenth edition, (c. 1974), 1986 printing.

Esuebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, translated by G. A. Williamson. (London: Penguin Books, 1965).

Feinberg, Charles L., *Millennialism: The Two Major Views* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), (Originally published in 1936).

Fermi, Laura, *Mussolini* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

Finkelstein, Louis, *Akiba: Scholar, Saint and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1936) and (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1982)

Flynn, Maureen, *Fire From Heaven*, (Herndon, VA: St. Dominic Media, 2005).

Ford, J. Massyngeberde, *The Anchor Bible: Revelation: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1975).

Foy, Rev. Felican A., O.F.M., ed. *Catholic Almanac* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1990).

Franciscan Friars of The Immaculate, *A Handbook on Guadalupe* (Waite Park, MN: Park Press Inc., 1996).

Freedman, D. L. and Greenfield, J. C., *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1969).

Giet, Stanislaus, *L' Apocalypse et L' Historie Ethude Historique Sur L' Apocalypse Johannique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).

Ginzberg, Louis, *Legends of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1978).

Ginzberg, Louis, *The Legends of the Jews*, volume I of a 7 volume set. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966).

Gobbi, Stefano, Fr., *To The Priests Our Lady's Beloved Sons*, 18th English edition, (St. Francis, Maine: Marian Movement of Priests, 1997).

Gonzales, Catherine Gunsalus and Justo L. Gonzales, *Revelations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

Graham, Billy, *Approaching Hoofbeats* (Waco: World Book, 1983).

Grayzel, Solomon, *A History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1947).

Gregg, Steve, *Revelation, Four Views, A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997).

Grimm, Harold, J., *The Reformation Era 1500-1600* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973).

Gutzke, Manford George, *Plain Talk on Revelations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979).

Hailey, Homer, *Revelation, an Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979).

Haffert, John M., *Meet the Witnesses* (Ave Maria Institute, 1961).

Haffert, John M., *Deadline: The Third Secret of Fatima* (Ashbury, N.J.: 101 Foundation, 2002).

Hanegraaff, Hank and Sigmund Brouwer, *The Last Disciple* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndal House Publishers, Inc. 2004).

Hanegraaff, Hank and Sigmund Brouwer, *The Last Sacrifice* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndal House Publishers, Inc. 2005).

Harel, Menashe, "The Jewish Presence in Jerusalem Throughout the Ages." in *Jerusalem*, ed. Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher and Anna Siani (New York: The John Day Co., 1974).

Harrington, Daniel, *Revelation, the Book of the Risen Christ* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1999).

Harrington, Wilfrid J., S. J., *Revelation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

Haydock, George Leo, Fr., *Annotations in The Holy Bible* (Douay-Rheims) (England: The National Publishing Co., 1883).

Heidt, William G., O.S.B., *The Book of the Apocalypse*

(Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1962).

Heber, Albert Joseph, SM., *The Tears of Mary and Fatima. Why?* (Albert J. Heber, 1983).

Henry, Matthew, *Revelation* (Nottingham, England, Crossway Books, 1999).

Hoppe, Maurice, *Christ and the Dragon* (Middleton, IA: CHJ Publishing, 1999).

Jeske, Richard L., *Revelation for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortran Press, 1983).

Johnson, Alan F., *Revelation: A Bible Study Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

Johnston, Francis, *The Wonder of Guadalupe* (Rockside, IL: Tan Books, 1981).

Josephus, *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus: in Two Volumes* translated by Wm. Whiston. (Philadelphia: J. Grigg, 1829).

Jung, Carl G., *Answer to Job*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954).

Kirban, Salem, *666* (Huntington Valley, PA: Salem Kirban Inc., 1970).

Klein, Mina, C., *Israel: Land of the Jews* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).

Klein, Mina C. and H. Arthur, *Temple Beyond Time* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1970).

Kraljevic, Svetozar, O.F.M., *The Apparitions of Our Lady of Medjugorje* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1984).

Kramer, Herman B. Rev., *The Book of Destiny* (Belleville: Buechler Publishing Co., 1955). Republished in Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1975).

Krodel, Gerhard A., *Revelation: Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989).

LaHaye, Tim and Jenkins, Jerry B., *Left Behind Series* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2000).

LaHaye, Tim, *Revelation Illustrated and Made Plain* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

Larkin, Clarence, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside: The C. Larkin Estate, 1919).

Lawrence, D. H., *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelations* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980).

*Liberty Bible Commentary*, Jerry Falwell, editor, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983).

Lindsey, Hal, *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon* (King of Prussia: Westgate Press Inc., 1980).

Lindsey, Hal, *Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front Ltd. 1997).

Lindsey, Hal, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 1970).

Lindsey, Hal, *There's a New World Coming, a Prophetic Odyssey* (Santa Anna: Vision House Publishers, 1973).

Lindsey, Hal, *The Rapture* (Toronto & New York: Bantam Books, 1983).

Lindsey, Hal, *Vanished into Thin Air* (Beverly Hills: Western Front, Ltd., 1999).

Lucia, Sister Mary, *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words* (Ravengate Press, 1976).

Luther, Martin, *Works of Martin Luther: Translated with Introductions and Notes*, volume VI of a six volume set. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman and The Castile Press, 1916).

Lyle, Denis, *Countdown to Apocalypse, Unlocking Bible Prophecy* (Greenville, SC: Emerald House, 1999).

Malachy, St., *The Prophecies of St. Malachy: Introduction and Commentary by Peter Bander* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1973).

Mansoor, Menahem, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983).

Marguerite, *Message of Merciful Love to Little Souls* (Pope Publications, 1975).

Martindale, C. C., S.J., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953).

Martinez, Bernardo, *Apparitions of Our Blessed Mother at*

*Cuapa, Nicaragua* (World Apostolate of Fatima, 1982).

Mary of Agreda, *The City of God* (Ave Maria Institute, 1949).

Mather, Cotton, Commentaries. Taken from Patrides, C. A., et. al. *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

McGinn, Bernard, *Visions of the end: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

Mede, Joseph, Commentaries. Taken from Patrides, C. A., et. al. *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Menendez, Josefa, Sister, *The Way of Divine Love* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1981).

Mohammed, *The Koran* (Originally in Ancient Arabic, 610), translated by N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin Classics, 1956).

Morris, H. M., *The Revelation Record: a Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the prophetic book of the End Times* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndal House, 1983).

Mounce, Robert H., *The Book of Revelations* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977).

Oesterricher, John M. and Sinai, Anne, *Jerusalem* (New York: The John Day Co., 1974).

Pareus, David, Commentaries. Taken from Patrides, C. A., et. al. *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Patrides, C. A., et. al., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Payne, Robert, *The Holy Sword: the Story of Muhammed to the present* (New York: Harper and Brothers., 1959).

Pelletier, Joseph A. Fr., *God Speaks Garabandal* (Assumption Publications, 1971).

Pelletier, Joseph A. Fr., *Our Lady Comes to Garadanbal* (Assumption Publications, 1970).

Perez, Ramon, *The Village Speaks* (Workers of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, 1981).

Perkins, Pheme, *The Book of Revelation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1983).

Piper, Dean J., *Is He Coming Soon?* (Lima, OH: CSS Publishing Co. Ltd., 1999).

Pipes, Richard, *Three "Whys" of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

Potok, Chaim, *Wanderings* (New York: Knoff and Ballentine Books, 1978).

Price, Walter K., *Next Year in Jerusalem* (Chicago: Moody



Press, 1975).

Quispel, Gilles, *The Secret Book of Revelation: the Last Book of the Bible* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

Ricciotti, Giuseppe, *The Life of Christ*, translated by Alba I. Zizzamia (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1974).

Richard, Abbe M., *What Happened at Pontmain* (Ave Maria Institute, 1971).

Riggs, Robert F., *The Apocalypse Unsealed* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1981).

Rimmer, Harry, *The Shadow of Coming Events* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946).

Risk, Martin and Hough, Lynn, "Commentary on Revelations" in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. XII, page 351 ff. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957).

Rosten, Leo, *Religions of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).

Ruiz, Ramon Eduardo, *Triumphs and Tragedy* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1992).

Sachar, Abram, Leon, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, *The New Testament. Apocrypha*, volume II of a two volume set. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).

Schurer, Emil, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of*

*Jesus* (New York: Schoken Books, 1961).

Scullion, John J., S.J., "*Revelations*," a commentary in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Rev, Reginald CX. Fuller (London & Nashville: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969).

Sena, Patrick J. Rev. C.PP.S., *The Apocalypse: Biblical Revelation Explained* (New York: Alba House, 1983).

Sharkey, Don, *The Woman Shall Conquer* (Prow Books, 1954).

Smith, George D., DD, PhD, editor, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (In two volumes). (New York: MacMillan Co., 1955).

Smith, Joseph, *The Book of Mormon*, translated by Joseph Smith with an Introduction (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1823).

Smith, Joseph, *Joseph Smith's Testimony* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1976).

Steckoll, Solomon H., *The Gates of Jerusalem* (New York: Frederich A. Praeger, 1968).

Steiner, Johannes, *Therese Neumann, A Portrait Based on Authentic Accounts, Journals and Documents* (Staten Island, NY: Abba House. 1966).

Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, in two volumes. translated by J. C. Rolfe, PhD., (London: William Heineman Ltd. and New York: The MacMillan Co., 1914).

Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, in the *Complete Works of Tacitus*, translated by Alfred J. Church and William J. Brodribb (London and New York: Macmillan and Company, 1906).

Tacitus, *The Histories*, in the *Complete Works of Tacitus*, translated by Alfred J. Church and William J. Brodribb (London and New York : Macmillan and Company, 1906).

*The New American Bible*, New Testament, "Introduction to Revelation," (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970).

*The Jerusalem Bible*, New Testament, "Introduction to Revelation," (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

Tickle, John, Rev., *The Book of Revelation: A Catholic Interpretation of the Apocalypse* (Liguori: Liguori Publications, 1983).

*The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*, King James Bible (New York: American Bible Society, 1878).

The Internet (for Reformation, Cortez & Guadalupe) many hits under those headings and under Juan Diego, Live Science, Aztec Gods and Goddesses, The Spanish Conquest, [www.santa.org](http://www.santa.org), Religious Tolerance.org, and many others as found under Google.

The Internet (for Communism and Fatima) The Communist Revolution in Russia, The Apparitions at Fatima, as found on Google.

The Internet for LaSalette and Pope Pius XI, as found on

Google.

Trochu, Francois, Abbe, *Saint Bernadette Soubrious* (Longmans, Green & co., 1957).

Valtorta, Maria, *The Poem of The Man God (in five volumes)* (Sherbrooke, QC, Canada: Editions Paulines, 1986).

Van Der Broek, Silvere, Rev., *The Spiritual Legacy of Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1981).

Whalen, William J., *Separated Brethren* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 1972).

Wilson, Edmund, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Yadin, Yigael, *Bar Kochba: the Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Second Jewish Revolt against Imperial Rome* (New York: Random House, 1971).

Zeitlin, Solomon, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, volume III., (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962).







<< end of book >>