

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

JOHN MILLER

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COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

1

Rev.1¹

The book of the Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, not of 'St. John the divine'. God gave to Him this revelation of events which must shortly (shortly or speedily as God speaks of time) come to pass. The object was to show to God's bondservants in the seven churches in Asia, first of all, the course of coming events, events which had primarily to do with the time immediately prior to the millennial reign of Christ and afterwards stretching on into eternity. This outline of events is preceded by things which John saw, as in chap.1: and which were then existing, as outlined in the seven messages or letters which were written in one book, which was to be sent to the seven churches in Asia. Jesus Christ sent it by His angel (Rev.17:1²,15³; Rev.19:10⁴; Rev.22:8⁵,9⁶), and signified (that is, gave it by signs or symbols) to His bondservant John. John was a faithful witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. He with Peter said earlier, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:20⁷).

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.15>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.10>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.8>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2022.9>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.20>

Blessed is he that readeth.

This evidently is public reading, for the hearers also are blessed by the reading, but reading and hearing fail in their purpose unless there is the keeping of the things of this prophecy.

John to the seven churches.

The seven churches were in the Roman province of Asia, not the Continent of Asia, nor what is called Asia Minor. These are not seven churches selected from among other churches in Asia. John addresses this book “to the seven churches” (Gk. *tai hepta ekklesiais*). The churches of God in Troas (Acts 20: 5-7⁸), Colossae and Hierapolis (Col.1:2⁹; Col.4:13¹⁰) were churches in Asia at one time, but were no longer in existence, or perchance no longer acknowledged by the Lord, when the Revelation was written. Laodicea, which formed with Colossae and Hierapolis a group of churches in the south east corner of Asia, was, alas, in a wretched state (Rev.3:14-17¹¹), and unless they repented would be disowned as a church of God by God.

Grace to you and peace.

This salutation of grace and peace is from the Trinity. God the Father is here described as the self-existing, eternal Jehovah, One who is, who was, and who is coming, a Being Ineffable, to whom past, present and future are an eternal NOW, and as is the Father so are the Son and the Spirit. Jehovah is a name proper to all three

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.%205-7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.2>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.13>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.14-17>

Persons. The Spirit is described as “the seven Spirits which are before the throne”, seen in Rev.4:5¹² as seven Lamps of fire. Again in Rev.5:6¹³, the seven Spirits are the seven Eyes of the Lamb sent forth into all the earth. There is one Holy Spirit (Eph.4:4¹⁴). Seven, it has been suggested, shows “His plenitude and perfection,” though it is wiser betimes not to use words to cover our ignorance. Seven in Ephesians forms a unity or oneness; the unity of the Spirit is (1) one body, (2) one Spirit, (3) one hope, (4) one Lord, (5) one faith, (6) one baptism, (7) one God and Father of all. Gk. henotes (unity) is derived from hen neut. of heis (one).

So the seven Spirits are, I judge, one Spirit. The mystery of the Divine Being shall in time to come be more fully understood by us. We do well in these our childhood days (1 Cor.13:9-12¹⁵) not to darken counsel by words without knowledge (Job 38:2¹⁶). We feel that much of what has been written about the book of the Revelation comes within the meaning of the LORD’S words in Job. The seven lamps upon the Lampstand in the tabernacle are, we judge, symbolic representations of the seven Lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits. No book in the Scriptures has so many groups of sevens: seven Spirits, seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven heads of the beast, seven angels which have the seven bowls with the seven last plagues. Jesus Christ is described in a threefold way, which is of universal application: (1) “the faithful Witness,” (2) “the Firstborn of the dead,” and (3) “the Ruler

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.5>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.6>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.13.9-12>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.2>

of the kings of the earth.” He is the faithful Witness conveying a world-wide message to men, which, as Luke shows in Acts 1:1¹⁷, He continued through the apostles and prophets (Heb.2:3¹⁸,4¹⁹; Eph.2:20²⁰) after His resurrection. He is the Firstborn of the dead, that is, the Firstborn of all the dead. He is also the Firstborn from the dead (Col.1:18²¹), that is, He is the Firstborn of all the blessed dead who shall be raised prior to the millennium. He is also the Ruler of the kings of the earth, being King of kings, and Lord of lords (1 Tim.6:15²²).

“Firstborn” describes one who is supreme, pre-eminent, who has priority in rank (Ps.89:27²³). The Lord is Firstborn of all creation (not the first to be born, as though He were Himself a creature), for in Him, through Him and unto Him were all things created (Col.1:16²⁴; Jn 1:3²⁵). He is the Cause of all creation. He is also the Cause of all resurrection. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor.15:22²⁶). He is also the Firstborn among many brethren (Rom.8:29²⁷). “Unto Him that loveth us:” the present participle for “loveth” describes the characteristic

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.1>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.3>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%202.4>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.20>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.18>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.15>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.89.27>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.16>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.3>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.22>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.29>

action of Jesus Christ; He is the loving One who loves His own and will for ever love them (Jn 13:1²⁸). “Loosed” in the original is an aorist participle which shows that He is the One who loosed or freed us in the past from our sins. The loosing from sins is a past event but the loving is present and continuous.

And He made us to be a kingdom.

In this note of praise we have definite allusion to what took place at Sinai, in Ex.19:24²⁹, in its anti-typical meaning, when the terms of the covenant which God was about to make with Israel, who had already been redeemed, were read in their hearing. Upon their acceptance thereof, they were to become a kingdom of priests, as well as a peculiar people and a holy nation. This same truth is implied here in Rev.1:6³⁰: We have in Tit.2:14³¹, and in 1 Pet.2:5-10³², a peculiar people and a holy and royal priesthood. The seven churches, though a people in much failure and weakness, were still owned by Him, and the Lord walked in their midst and ruled over them. Whilst we believe all born-again persons have a birthright to priesthood, as the sons of Aaron had, not all who are born again are gathered together according to Acts 2:41³³,42³⁴, subject to the Lord's will and authority (Matt.28:18-20³⁵).

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.1>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.19.24>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.6>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.14>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.5-10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.41>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.18-20>

Consequently they are not a kingdom and priests to God. Those who have a birthright to priestly service should be together, as in 1 Pet.2:5-10³⁶, as a holy and royal priesthood to be built up as a spiritual house. Of old the priesthood of the house of Aaron served God in His house and temple and could not render service to God apart from His house. Kingdom, priesthood and house are linked together both in the past and present dispensations. It should be carefully noted that it was those who were gathered together in the seven churches in Asia who were made a kingdom and priests by the Lord to God His Father.

Behold He cometh with the clouds.

Here we have graphically portrayed the coming of the Son of Man to earth in judgement, of which Matt.24:27-31³⁷, Rev.19:11-16³⁸, and many other portions, speak. Every eye of men on earth shall see Him then, and the Jewish people shall look upon Him whom they pierced, as we learn from Zech.12:10³⁹; and besides the mourning Jews all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Many, alas, will be ill prepared for His coming, for many in that day shall call on the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from His face and His wrath (Rev.6:15-17⁴⁰).

I am the Alpha and the Omega.

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.5-10>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.27-31>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.11-16>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.12.10>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6.15-17>

These are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. If we place the letters of the alphabet in a circle and place A over Z, then whichever way we move round the circle we come to A and Z. So that if we go backward in thought over the ages then God is there, and forward, God is there also. David the psalmist said, “Thou hast beset me behind and before” (Ps.139:5⁴¹). “In Him we live, and move, and have our being,” said Paul (Acts 17:28⁴²). Happy are those who can say with Moses that “The eternal God is thy dwelling place” (Deut.33: 27⁴³; Ps.90:1⁴⁴). The One who is the Alpha and the Omega is the eternal Jehovah, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. What is true of the eternal Father, is true of the eternal Son, and of the eternal Spirit. The Son also says in Rev.22:13⁴⁵, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

I John, your brother.

This describes the abiding relationship of all who are born again, they have all one Father. John was also their companion, fellow or fellow-partaker. Whilst all born-again persons are brethren, not all such are companions or fellow-partakers in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus. Those “in Christ,” new creatures or a new creation in Him, are united to Christ their Head by ties of life and love which never can be severed, but “in Jesus” shows saints on earth in a scene of tribulation, trial and temptation, for the kingdom of God in such a scene ever involves suffering (2

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.139.5>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.28>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.33.%2027>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.90.1>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.13>

Thess.1:5⁴⁶,6⁴⁷). Truth, we are told, is in Jesus (Eph.4:21⁴⁸), the blessed One who is the Truth and who taught it during the days of His earthly sojourn and also suffered for it (Jn 18:37⁴⁹,38⁵⁰).

John was knowing that tribulation which comes through obedience to the truth, for he was in the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He adhered to what God's word said and to what Jesus testified. He was in God's kingdom, though for the time being he could not meet with God's gathered saints. The kingdom of God, that favoured position which Israel occupied as His people under His rule, was taken from them upon their rejection of the Lord and given to another nation, as we learn from Matt.21:43⁵¹, which should bring forth the fruits thereof. That nation was the little flock of Lk.12:31⁵²,32⁵³, to which the Lord said, "Howbeit seek ye His kingdom," (the kingdom of God, AV/KJV, RVM) "and these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Of the kingdom of God Paul reasoned and persuaded in the synagogue in Ephesus, but because of Jewish opposition Paul had to separate the disciples from the synagogue (Acts 19:8⁵⁴,9⁵⁵). Paul

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.5>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%201.6>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.21>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2018.37>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2018.38>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.21.43>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.12.31>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2012.32>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.8>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.9>

says again in Acts 14:22⁵⁶ that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of Rev.1:9⁵⁷ is the same as that of verse 6, “He made us to be a kingdom.” As in Acts 14:22⁵⁸ and 2 Thess.1:5⁵⁹, tribulation and suffering are connected with the kingdom of God which those are called upon to endure who are subject to the Lord’s authority. Thus “in Jesus” shows saints on earth in the place of suffering in obedience to the authority of Christ, whereas “in Christ” applies to saints of this dispensation, who, by baptism in the Spirit, are members of His Body (1 Cor.12:13⁶⁰), and “in God” is true of all men, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28⁶¹). John, according to tradition, had been banished to the rocky Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Why he was there he states was because of the word of God and the Testimony of Jesus.

I was (became) in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.

“In the Spirit,” according to Rom.8:9⁶², is true of all believers in Christ; “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” “In the flesh” describes that naturally sinful, immoral state in which all unbelievers are; but at the time of regeneration believers are delivered from being in the flesh to being in the Spirit, when the Spirit of God enters into them, making

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.22>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.9>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.22>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.5>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.13>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.28>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.9>

their body His temple (1 Cor.6:19⁶³). “In the Spirit,” in the Revelation, was that ecstatic state into which John entered (became), something he was not in before (on the Lord’s day). It was not in spirit, denoting merely a condition of mind, nor was it in his own spirit, but “in the Spirit,” that is, the Holy Spirit, to whom his whole being was tuned and in harmony; he was alive to spiritual realities of which men contiguous to him were entirely unaware.

Paul’s experience as he lay on the ground, stoned, outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:19⁶⁴), at which time it is thought he was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, as he tells us in 2 Cor.12:1-4⁶⁵, seems to be a somewhat similar experience to John’s. Peter’s experience in Acts 10 seems to be similar also. Daniel too, in Dan.10⁶⁶, tells us of his experience when he was brought into contact with intense spiritual realities. In Dan.8:27⁶⁷ we are told of the physical effects of Daniel’s experience in receiving divine revelations: “I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days.” The day on which John became “in the Spirit” was the Lord’s day. The word rendered “Lord’s” here is only twice used in the New Testament. This word in the Greek is an adjective, not a possessive noun. It is used here to describe the day, and in 1 Cor.11:20⁶⁸ to describe the supper; the day and the supper are linked together, the latter is proper to the day. The word “Lordly” has been used to give the meaning of the Greek adjective. “The Lord’s day” is not “the day

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.19>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.12.1-4>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.10>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.8.27>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.11.20>

of the Lord,” which is referred to frequently in both the Old and New Testaments and is of more than a thousand years in extent (2 Pet.3:10⁶⁹); it commences with the Lord’s coming as Son of Man and continues till the judgement of the Great White Throne.

I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

This trumpet-like voice commanded John to write what he heard in a book and to send it to the seven churches. There was but one book for all the seven churches, but in Rev.2⁷⁰ and Rev.3⁷¹ there was a special message which was given by the Spirit to each from the Lord who walked in their midst. Whilst it was the Lord who spoke to the churches, it was equally true that the Spirit spoke, as we read, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” (Rev.2:7⁷²). The seven churches in the province of Asia are specifically mentioned as located in seven well known cities at the time of the writing of this book. Some have embarked on a system of exposition based on the interpretation of the meaning of the names of these cities which were given to them by pagans, names which have no spiritual significance whatever.

Again, what is said in certain of the messages to the churches is spiritualized, as, for instance, Jezebel of Rev.2:20⁷³ is made to mean the church of Rome, whereas, quite evidently, she was a woman in Thyatira, who taught the same doctrine as certain in Pergamum held, even the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.10>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.7>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.20>

block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. May we mention what has been written by certain expositors? In dealing with the name Philadelphia it is said, "Philadelphia signifies 'brotherly love'; and brotherly love is one of the special features of the acting of the Spirit of God as formative of the Philadelphian church."

Smith's Bible Dictionary (Book 2, page 830) says this about Philadelphia: "A town on the confines of Lydia and Phrygia Cataceumene, built by Attalus II, king of Pergamus," it is "still represented by a town called Allahshehr (city of God)." Philadelphia received its name from its founder Attalus Philadelphus, and what king Philadelphus, who lived before any apostle came to Asia with the message of divine love, had to do with Christian brotherly love leaves one in bewilderment. This method of interpreting the word of God is simply grasping at shadows and losing the literal, plain and evident meaning of the Scriptures. Think also of the exposition based on the meaning of Laodicea:- "Laodicea probably means 'righteous people.' The seventh and last church corresponds with the seventh parable in Matt. 13⁷⁴ – the parable of the net.

There are two things which characterize the last stage of the Church's history – outwardly, increasing activity in Gospel work; inwardly, self-righteous, spiritual pride, and luke-warmness as to the truth and authority of Christ." "Righteous people" by a stranger juggling with words becomes "self-righteous people," and, stranger still, the name Laodicea has some connection with an implied spiritual significance with "the last stage of the Church's history." But what church can this be? Is it Christendom, that Babel of confusion which with lip service acknowledges Christ, but does no

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13>

more? Or is it the Church which is Christ's Body? It cannot be the latter, for the sins of self-righteousness and spiritual pride can never enter there, for that Church will be presented by Christ to Himself "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph.5:27⁷⁵).

We are left to guess what church was before the writer's mind, and what is meant by the church's history. It is this loose method of using the word "church" that has led to the hopeless confusion that exists in regard to church truth. How did the city of Laodicea get its name? The answer is, it "derived its name from Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II, king of Syria." Here again the name comes from pagans who had no connection whatever with "the last stage of the Church's history." Then as to the Laodicean church answering to the parable of the net, in Matt. 13⁷⁶, it has no similarity to that parable whatever, other than that they are the seventh in order in each case.

Let us adhere to and state unequivocally the fact that the book of the Revelation was sent by John to the seven churches which were in Asia at the time that John wrote the book, and were located in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, and so forth, cities which were well known in the world then. The book was not written to and sent to seven stages, epochs or developments of what expositors have been pleased to call "the church," a use of the word "church" which is nowhere found in the New Testament. Christendom is no church at all.

If God's children would be right as to church truth let them study the uses of the word church in the New Testament, and they will

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.27>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.%2013>

find that there are no such ideas there, such as that the church is composed of people who make a nominal profession of Christianity, or that the church is composed of all believers on earth at any one time, or that because they are not together therefore the church is in ruins. If believers would be right they require to see the clear distinction between the Church which is Christ's Body, which includes all believers from Pentecost until the coming of the Lord for that Church, and the church of God which is ever a local gathering of God's separated saints, such as were the seven churches in Asia.

The book of Revelation is first of all a book which contains messages to the seven churches concerning their state at that time. But like all Scripture, which was written to people who lived when the books were written, it contains a message for all time. The principle on which the Scriptures were given is laid down by Paul in Rom.4:23⁷⁷,24⁷⁸: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, ... but for our sake also."

And I turned to see the voice which spake with me.

As was natural John turned in the direction whence the voice came, and what met his gaze were seven golden lampstands, not candlesticks. There was one lampstand in the tabernacle and ten in the temple. The lampstand had six branches and a central stem, on these were set seven lamps. These with the lampstand and the vessels thereof were made of a talent of pure gold. The lamps were dressed and filled in the morning at the time of the morning sacrifice and of the offering of the incense on the golden altar, at the hour of prayer. They were lit at the time of the evening sacrifice.

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.23>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.24>

“Candlestick” for “lampstand,” “bishop” for “overseer,” and “baptism” for “dipping,” are some of the defects in translation in our English Bibles.

Gold lamps signify children of God, such as are born again. Alas, many who are children of God, who strenuously uphold the need for the new birth, are not so careful about seeing that they are set on a gold stand (gold speaking of that which is divine and of divine glory); a silver, brass or wooden stand serves well enough for them. But children of God should not be satisfied with anything less than being in a church of God. Gold speaks of the divine character of each of the seven churches. Children of God and churches of God – “of God” shows their divine origin and character. In the New Testament children of God are not contemplated as being in anything else than a church of God, but alas, the devil has scattered the children of God in almost all the sects of Christendom. Though the seven churches were equal in preciousness as to their position, they were very diverse as to their condition. Condition may vary greatly in different churches and in the saints therein, but position admits of no variation, the position is either divine or it is not. A church is either a golden lampstand or it is not. The seven lampstands were the seven churches of God in Asia.

In the midst of the lampstands One like unto a son of man.

The Lord appeared to John like a son of man. In Phil.2:7⁷⁹ we are told that He was “made in the likeness of men.” He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. As the high priest of old was to judge God’s house and to keep His courts (Zech.3:7⁸⁰), even so the Lord in the midst

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.7>

of the seven churches, in Rev.1-3⁸¹, is viewed as judging God's house, as seen in the seven churches. All judgement has been given by the Father to the Son, because He is Son of Man, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father (Jn 5:22⁸²,23⁸³). In due time He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31⁸⁴; Matt.25:31-46⁸⁵), but judgement begins at the house of God, "at us" who are described as a spiritual house (1 Pet.2:5⁸⁶; 1 Pet.4:17⁸⁷).

It is not His loins, the seat of strength, that are girt with a golden girdle, but His breasts, the place of affection. Of old the breastplate of judgement was upon the breast of the high priest; he bore the names of the children of Israel upon his heart continually. The Lord's judgement of His own is ever tempered by love. His head and His hair were as white wool, white as snow. Such was the appearance of the Ancient of Days to Daniel (Dan.7:9⁸⁸). This speaks infinite purity and holiness. The mind of Christ is infinitely pure and holy as is the mind of God. The thought of sin never enters the mind of Deity. His eyes were as a flame of fire. In the Lord's case, unlike that of men, it is not light from without that enters and illuminates Him; He sees by light from within. He is Himself Light (Jn 1:4⁸⁹). He is the Light of the world (Jn 8:12⁹⁰).

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.7>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1-3>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.22>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.23>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.31>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.31-46>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.5>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.4.17>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.7.9>

From His eyes proceed rays of divine fire piercing and entering into the recesses of the heart, and all the processes of human thought, hidden from human sight, are naked before Him. Paul describes such divine sight in the words, “There is no creature (angelic or human, fallen or unfallen) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb.4:13⁹¹). His feet were like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. Brass speaks of judgement, and righteousness is intimately associated with this. Whilst on earth the Lord walked in the paths of judgement (Prov.2:8⁹²), and in the paths of uprightness (verse 13), and in the paths of righteousness (Ps.23:3⁹³). He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity (Ps.45:7⁹⁴; Heb.1:9⁹⁵).

His feet were beautiful upon the mountains (Isa.52:7⁹⁶). There was no defilement in His walk on earth. Now as Judge His feet are as refined brass. Who has the right to judge but One who is Himself perfectly just? In matters of judgement Paul exhorted Timothy, “Keep thyself pure.” A judge who judges others but practises the same things will not escape the judgement of God (Rom.2:1-3⁹⁷). His voice was as the voice of many waters. Such was the sound of

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.4>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.12>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.4.13>

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.2.8>

93. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.23.3>

94. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.45.7>

95. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1.9>

96. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.52.7>

97. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.1-3>

the voice of the Almighty, in Ezek.1:24⁹⁸, and the voice of the God of Israel, in Ezek.43:2⁹⁹: Such a voice keeps the ear listening and is indicative of the infinite mind and depth of thought which lie behind such a voice. David, in Ps.29:3¹⁰⁰,4¹⁰¹, describes the voice of the LORD thus: “The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: The God of glory thundereth, Even the LORD upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.”

He had in His right hand seven stars.

These, we are told, are the angels or messengers of the seven churches (Rev.1:20¹⁰²). They are in (Gk. en, in) His right hand (Rev.1:16¹⁰³), but in (Gk. epi, upon) His right hand (verse 20), as though He had opened His hand to show them to John. Out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. When the Lord comes to earth in judgement He is called “the Word of God.” In Jn 1 He is shown as the Word in three ways.

(1) In verse 1 He is shown as the Word in the beginning in full fellowship with (Gk. pros, towards) God. (2) In verse 2 He is seen as the Maker of all things, the One through whom all things became, that is, came into being. (3) In verse 14 it is said that the Word became flesh, that is, He was born of a woman to become Kinsman-Redeemer. He appeared in grace so that men might of His fulness

98. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.1.24>

99. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.43.2>

100. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.29.3>

101. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2029.4>

102. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.20>

103. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.16>

receive grace for grace. Then last of all He will appear as the Word of God in judgement. Then shall He speak unto men in His wrath (Ps.2:5¹⁰⁴).

“Out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations” (Rev.19:15¹⁰⁵). “He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked” (Isa.11:4¹⁰⁶; 2 Thess.2:8¹⁰⁷). How different it will be then from His lowly earthly life, when He moved about as the Man of sorrows and the One who was well acquainted with grief! He said, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting” (Isa.50:6¹⁰⁸). Men may be as stars in His right hand, lights to be seen and to give light in this world’s night, but the Lord’s countenance was as the sun shining in its strength: before this light, intense, strong and beautiful, all other lights are as nothing, even as stars disappear in the light of the sun. Here indeed is the glory that excelleth.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead.

This is the same One in whose bosom John lay at the last supper in the upper room, but how different He is now from then! As it was with John, so was it with Daniel, who, when he saw the vision by the river Tigris, said, “There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no

104. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.2.5>

105. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.15>

106. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.4>

107. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.8>

108. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.50.6>

strength ... then was I fallen into a deep sleep on my face, with my face toward the ground” (Dan.10:8¹⁰⁹,9¹¹⁰). It such was the effect on human flesh in John and Daniel, how true must be the words of the LORD to Moses! – “Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me and live” (Ex.33:20¹¹¹). Here is One who dwells in light unapproachable; “Whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim.6:16¹¹²); who veils His glory in His manhood so that men may bear the glory in His manifestation as the Divine Son.

He laid His right hand upon John and told him not to fear, for He was the first and the last. Here is one of the many “fear nots” of Scripture, the first of which was spoken to Abram: “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Gen.15:1¹¹³). The Lord said to John, “I am ... the Living One; and I was (became) dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.” Millions follow Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and venerate popes many in number, but they are all dead. Jesus Christ is alive. Here is an infinitely important and vital difference. What can the dead do for either living or dead men? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Our case is most pitiable if Christ is not raised from the dead (1 Cor.15:19¹¹⁴). The Lord became dead by an act of His own will; He laid down His life of Himself, no one took it from Him (Jn 10:17¹¹⁵,18¹¹⁶).

109. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.10.8>

110. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2010.9>

111. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.33.20>

112. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.16>

113. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15.1>

114. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.19>

115. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.17>

The living One has the keys of death and of Hades; He has complete control and authority over the dead in the realm of the unseen. (“Hades” is a Greek word composed of the negative a and eido – I see, and means literally “what cannot be seen, the place of the unseen, where the sight of man cannot penetrate.” It is not the grave, the place of the interment of the body; that we can easily see. Hades is the invisible abode of the souls of the dead.) None of the saints of the Church which is Christ’s Body go to Hades at death; when they are absent from the body they are at home with the Lord (2 Cor.5:6-8¹¹⁷); they are with Christ, which is very far better (Phil.1:23¹¹⁸.) Old Testament saints were delivered from it, from the place therein called Paradise, by the Lord (Lk.23:43¹¹⁹; Eph.4:8-10¹²⁰; Heb. 2:14¹²¹,15¹²²). See also Ps.16:8-11¹²³, quoted by Pet.in Acts 2:27¹²⁴, where the Lord says that His soul would not be left in Hades (that is, He Himself, see Acts 2:31¹²⁵, RV). Saints of both Old Testament and New Testament times who have died, are now in heaven.

Write therefore the things which thou sawest.

Here we have a threefold division:

116. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2010.18>

117. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.6-8>

118. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.23>

119. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.23.43>

120. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.8-10>

121. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.%202.14>

122. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%202.15>

123. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.16.8-11>

124. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.27>

125. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.31>

(1) The things which John saw were the visions of the Lord, the lampstands and the stars.

(2) “The things which are”: these were the things which were existing in the seven churches, as revealed by the Lord to John, contained in Rev.2¹²⁶ and Rev.3¹²⁷.

(3) “The things which shall come to pass hereafter” are the things which will transpire after the Church which is Christ’s Body is complete, and the Lord has come to the air for all in Christ, the living and the dead.

Then churches of God will cease to exist; for though the Church which is Christ’s Body is an eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ (Eph.3:4-11¹²⁸), churches of God are local gatherings of God’s gathered people, which may come into being or cease to exist, and they will certainly cease to exist when the Lord calls His saints away from this earth to meet Him in the air. Much has been written which is spurious and thoroughly unscriptural as to this dispensation of grace being divided into seven periods, beginning with the Ephesian period and closing with the Laodicean.

One expositor writes thus: “A special, but by no means exclusive, application of the first three chapters to the Asiatic assemblies named must be admitted. Thus, John greets ‘the seven assemblies named which are in Asia’ (verse 4); he has them equally in view in verse 11; while to each of the seven a special epistle is addressed (chapters 2 and 3). But while a primary application to the seven

126. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

127. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

128. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.4-11>

Asiatic assemblies is undoubted, it is equally clear that they are representatives of the whole Church, not only at any given moment, but also in the successive moral stages of her history.”

Here we have three propositions placed before us by the writer:

- (1) the primary application to the seven churches in Asia existing at the time of the writing of the book of the Revelation;
- (2) that the seven churches in Asia are representative of the whole Church at any moment in this dispensation of grace; and
- (3) that these churches represent seven successive moral stages in the history of the Church throughout its entire history, from Pentecost, I presume, until the Lord's coming.

We differ entirely from this writer, and others also who have repeated the same thing, as to there being any application other than the primary one. It would be foolishness to deny that the book of Revelation was written to the seven churches in Asia, two of which are referred to elsewhere in the New Testament (Ephesus and Laodicea). Then, by a strange confusion of thought which we cannot accept, the writer alluded to gives two further interpretations in points (2) and (3), for if the seven churches show the Church (one Church) “at any given moment,” then they cannot show seven successive moral stages in the Church's history as well.

For instance, if we are now in the Laodicean stage we cannot also be in the Ephesian stage. What is this Church which has a history to which this writer refers? The Church which is Christ's Body has no history whatever. This Church is comprised of all believers from Pentecost who have been baptized in the Spirit into the Body. Most

of these are in heaven, and many of those members still on earth, even in the same town, are quite unknown to one another. It has been described by theologians as the invisible Church. What is the visible church which has a history? Where is this history? Where was this church prior to or at the time of John Huss of Bohemia and Martin Luther of Germany, or even after the Reformation? Is this the union of professing Christians, many of whom are not born again?

It is this unscriptural use of the word church which has led to all the confusion as to church truth which exists among would-be instructors of the uninstructed, leading to such ideas as that the church is in ruins. There is no such idea in the New Testament Scriptures as that "the whole church" is composed of believers who are scattered in almost every sect in Christendom. As this is a most important line of truth, we plead with the reader to examine the use of the word church in the New Testament. These first three chapters of the Revelation have a simple, primary meaning, namely, that they were written by John in Patmos and sent to the seven churches in Asia to correct certain disorders therein: the remainder of the book was to make known to God's servants the things that must come to pass hereafter.

The mystery of the seven stars.

The seven stars are said to be the angels of the seven churches. Who were those stars or messengers?

- (1) Were they angels and not men?
- (2) Was the angel a bishop over each church?

(3) Were they the elders (or overseers) of each church viewed as one, each church being ruled by a plurality of elders together?

(4) Do they symbolize the ministry (in the hands of the elders and deacons) in each church?

(5) Was the angel a man who acted as the messenger of the church to which he belonged?

We may dismiss (1) in the light of the fact that the angel who was written to by John was a person who belonged to a church. We may also dismiss (2), as nowhere in the New Testament is a church (of God) ruled by one bishop or overseer. Even Peter the apostle, in his capacity of ruler, calls himself a fellow-elder (1 Pet.5:1¹²⁹). As to (3), while a lampstand shows a number of lights placed together to shed one light, stars are individual lights; thus we judge that a star or angel does not speak of a group of overseers acting together. (4) The ministry of a church in the hands of the elders and deacons is too impersonal and could not be written to; so we judge that the angel does not refer to the ministry of a church. (5) The book of the Revelation does not contain general ministry of the word, but is a book of special Revelation from God which was committed to persons to be conveyed to the seven churches in Asia, as in Rev.1:4¹³⁰: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia." The angels were as definitely indicated as the churches. It seems to me that some help on this subject may be derived from the case of Epaphroditus who came from Philippi to Paul at Rome with the bounty of the Philippian church.

129. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.1>

130. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.4>

Paul calls him “your messenger (apostle) and minister to my need” (Phil.2:25¹³¹). He also calls him his “fellow-worker” and “true yoke-fellow”: “I beseech thee also, true yoke-fellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel (Rev.4: 3¹³²). Such a reference seems to support the generally-accepted view that Epaphroditus carried back to Philippi this wonderful epistle, in which Paul acknowledged with gratitude the tangible expression of their thought for him. Without seeking to fill in what God has left out, it seems, from the case of Epaphroditus, a reasonable view to take of those angels or messengers, that they were men sent by the seven churches to John, whether for spiritual help or with a material gift to meet his need; and that they carried back to the churches from which they came the book of the Revelation, and caused its contents to be read in each of the seven churches, special emphasis being given by each messenger to the particular epistle for the church to which he belonged. See Matt.11:10¹³³, Mk.1:2¹³⁴, Lk. 7:24¹³⁵, 27¹³⁶, 9:52¹³⁷, Jas.2:25¹³⁸, where the Greek word Aggelos (angel) is applied to a human messenger. Had this been done in Rev.1¹³⁹, 2¹⁴⁰, 3¹⁴¹, it would have saved much confusion of thought

131. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.25>

132. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.%203>

133. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.10>

134. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.1.2>

135. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.%207.24>

136. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%207.27>

137. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%209.52>

138. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.25>

139. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1>

140. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%201.2>

141. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%201.3>

among commentators on the book of the Revelation. “Angel” in these chapters means a human messenger.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

2

Rev.2¹

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write.

As the church in Ephesus was a definite group of saints, capable of loving and hating, working and enduring, hearing and repenting, so it seems that the angel of the church was a man who could be addressed. In each of the several epistles the Lord presents Himself in a special character. Here He speaks of Himself as One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. Being present in the midst He knew exactly the condition of the Ephesian church. He says, "I know" (Gk. oida, I see, not ginosko, I learn); He saw with eyes as a flame of fire, therefore He knew perfectly their works, labour and endurance. He knew that they could not bear evil men, and had tried those that said that they were apostles, perhaps by such tests of apostleship as Paul applied to himself (1 Cor.9:1^{2,3}; 2 Cor.11:5-15⁴), and found them liars.

They had borne with endurance, had laboured and not grown weary. All this was to their credit, and the Lord ever praises and will praise that which is worthy in His saints. Alas, there was that which overshadowed all the good that they had done; they had left

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%209.2>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.11.5-15>

their first love. There are some who think that the leaving of their first love means that they had left their first Lover, the Lord. I am of the opinion that “love” here means a state, not a person, though it must be conceded at once that leaving their first state of love must affect their relationship with their Divine Lover. Ephesus had had a great past, from the days when Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully (Acts 18:24-28⁵). Then came Paul and found the twelve disciples who were following the teaching of John the Baptist, as Apollos had been, and Paul brought them up to date in the progress of the work of God. Paul continued in the work of the Lord in the synagogue until he found it necessary, because of the opposition of the Jews, to separate the disciples from the synagogue.

After this he continued to reason in the school of Tyrannus. Special miracles were wrought by Paul, diseases departed, evil spirits went out, and books of magical arts, valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver, were publicly burned. The Spirit’s comment through Luke is, “So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed” (Acts 19:1-20⁶). But, alas, other days fell upon Ephesus, as Paul prophesied in Acts 20:29⁷,30⁸, when from among the elders, men arose speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them, and grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock. Paul’s three years’ work was attacked by Satan.

Later, Timothy was left by Paul in Ephesus to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine (1 Tim.1:3⁹). Then came the sep-

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.24-28>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.1-20>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.29>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.30>

aration of 2 Tim.2:21¹⁰, when those who were faithful to the Lord and the truth which they had learned were called upon to purge themselves out from the false teachers and their followers, such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus. Whilst there can be no valid excuse for leaving one's first love, yet we need to have the whole picture of the Ephesian church before our mind to see possible causes why such a condition had befallen them. We are all liable to look back on the past and to say that "the former days were better than these" (Eccles.7:10¹¹). The darker the day and the harder the way the more we should lean on the strong arm of our Beloved.

Men change, times change, but He changes not. Changes in Ephesus had told their sad tale. Paul was now with the Lord, and also most, if not all, of the other apostles had gone, like Paul, to a well-earned rest. The aged John was confined in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The days were grim, both within and without the Ephesian church, and the once sparkling lustre of the love of the saints had grown dim. Though many had gone and their loss was sadly felt, the Lord was still present, walking in their midst. If the mighty happenings and the powerful preaching of past days were gone, yet the Lord was near to love and be loved. He felt the loss of their love. The atmosphere of the assembly was cold and clammy. He would leave unless there was a change. The lampstand would be removed. They would be unchurched.

To remove the lampstand does not mean that He would remove all the saints by death from earth, the scene of testimony. The Lord compares the loss of first love to a fall; "Thou art fallen," He said.

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.3>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.21>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eccles.7.10>

Their inward attitude to the Lord was changed, as was the attitude of Adam and Eve, who when they sinned no longer walked and talked with the LORD as formerly. The Lord calls upon the Ephesian church to repent (that means, to change their mind and their whole attitude to Him), and to do the first works; these are the works wrought in the power of first love, the strongest and sweetest emotion which fills the breasts of God's people. The Lord commends them for their hatred of the works of the Nicolaitans, "which," He said, "I also hate."

Who were the Nicolaitans? Some in early times said that they were the followers of Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6:5¹²), but others deny this. There is no certainty whence these people sprang, but there is a general agreement on this, that they were heretical, an impure sect whose works were hated by the Lord and by the Ephesian saints. It is futile to follow a specious interpretation of who the Nicolaitans were from the meaning of their name, which is derived from Nike, victory, and Laos, people, and think of them as a victorious people, for they were otherwise than that. To follow still further in this specious interpretation into the difference between "clergy" and "laity," however unscriptural the ideas in these terms may be, can lead to no definite conclusion as to who these people were or what they believed. To the repentant overcomer the promise of his reward is this, that he will be given the privilege of eating of the Tree of Life that is in the Paradise of God.

The word Paradise has three uses in the New Testament:

(1) It is used by the Lord to describe that part of Hades (called by the Jews, Abraham's bosom – Lk.16:23¹³) to which the Lord

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%206.5>

and the repentant robber went after death, and where were all the blessed dead of past dispensations.

(2) In 2 Cor.12:2-4¹⁴, it is the third heaven to which Paul was caught up.

(3) In Rev.2:7¹⁵, the Paradise is the city of the New Jerusalem, where the Tree of Life grows on each side of the river of Water of Life, which flows in the midst of the street of the city.

“Paradise” literally means “a pleasure garden with various kinds of trees, a place of delight.”

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write.

Here the Lord speaks of Himself as the First and the Last, which became dead and lived. What can give greater comfort than the knowledge that the One who became dead by His own act of laying down His life for us is alive for evermore? It is a living Lord who saves and keeps. The Lord speaks little of the works of the church in Smyrna, but as much of tribulation and poverty. He says, “Thou art rich”; although poor as to this world’s goods, yet rich in faith (a rich faith means a rich saint), and heirs of the kingdom which the Lord promised to them that love Him (Jas.2:5¹⁶). Tribulation is a refiner: gold becomes more precious as it is refined. In Dan.11:33-35¹⁷, it speaks of the wise instructors of the people falling “by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days.”

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.16.23>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.12.2-4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.7>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.5>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.33-35>

Then we are told, “Some of them that be wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.” Such will be the experience of many during the time of the Great Tribulation. This suffering church has no accusation laid against it by the Lord. In this respect it is like that of Philadelphia, though the emphasis is laid on the lack of strength in Philadelphia. The Jews who frequently and viciously attacked Paul in his day, and were enemies of the gospel, were still at their work in Smyrna, for here we read of the blasphemy of them which say that they are Jews, but are a synagogue of Satan. Far from being Jews, as Paul defined a Jew in Rom.2:28¹⁸,29¹⁹, they manifested the same spirit as when they cried, “Crucify, crucify,” in regard to the Lord; so here they blaspheme His followers. The devil was about to cast some of the suffering saints into prison, and their tribulation was to extend ten days, but whether this was for ten literal days, or for ten, “the unknown quantity,” it is perhaps impossible to say.

We believe that this tribulation has nothing whatever to do with the persecutions from A.D.249 to A.D.284, as some have taught, under Roman emperors Decius, Valerius, Aurelius, and Diocletian. The tribulation of the church in Smyrna was before the end of the first century A.D. The special promise to the sufferers is, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” This crown is promised to such as endure temptation, whether from fleshly lusts, as in Jas.1:12-15²⁰, or from external trial and persecution, as here in Smyrna. Here is another of the “fear nots” of Scrip-

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.28>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.29>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.12-15>

ture. The promise to the overcomer is, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”

What does it mean to be hurt of the second death, which we are told in Rev.20:14²¹; Rev.21:8²², is the lake of fire? Some help may be derived from the use of the word “perdition” or destruction. It is used of the “man of sin” (the beast), who is called the “son of perdition” (2 Thess.2:3²³), who will with the false prophet be cast into the lake of fire (Rev.19:20²⁴). This same word is used in connection with the destruction of the life of the believer, for it is possible for a saved person to have a lost life, a life which has gone to perdition. Paul says, in Heb.10:39²⁵, “But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul (or life).” It is only in such a sense that a believer, saved with an eternal salvation (Heb.5:9²⁶), can be hurt of the second death. See also 1 Cor.3:13-15²⁷; Matt.16:24-26²⁸.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write.

Here the Lord speaks of Himself as having a sharp two-edged sword. He adopts a warlike attitude because there were those in Pergamum who held the teaching of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans. Satan’s throne, we are told, was in Pergamum. Here was the

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.14>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.8>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.20>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.39>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.5.9>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.13-15>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.24-26>

seat of Roman government, and here had been erected a temple in which divine honours were given to Augustus. Many, many thousands of Christians throughout the Roman empire suffered death rather than give divine honours (due to God alone) to Roman emperors. Satan and his hosts are called “the principalities ... the powers ... the world rulers of this darkness ... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph.6:12²⁹). From Pergamum, the place of Satan’s throne and dwelling, he carried on his baleful work against the saints of God, but those in Pergamum had stood firm. The Lord said, “Thou holdest fast My Name, and didst not deny My faith.” They had been true to Him and to His word.

Antipas had been valiant in the fight against the powers of darkness, and touchingly the Lord refers to him as “My witness, My faithful one,” who had been killed for his faithful testimony. If Satan does not manage to destroy God’s saints by evils without, he will seek to destroy them by evils within. In Pergamum were those who were playing the traitor’s part. They held the teaching of Balaam, who, though the Lord would not allow him to curse Israel, taught Balak how to destroy Israel, by the daughters of Moab being let loose among the sons of Israel, with the result that those women through their lust enticed the sons of Israel to sacrifice to their gods. The result was that Israel was joined to Baal-peor. Fornication and idolatry have ever been wedded evils.

We are not told that certain in Pergamum practised these evils; they held the teaching, and it is only a step from holding teaching to practising it. Others held the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. Now that such sin had been discovered by the Lord, action by the church was called for, and the church was called upon

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.12>

to repent or the Lord would make war with them with the sword of His mouth. The case was somewhat like to the sin of Achan. The Lord said that Israel had sinned, not that all the people had committed the sin of Achan, but there was sin in the camp, and defeat was theirs until the devoted thing had been removed and judgement had fallen on Achan and his house. The sword of His mouth is the word of God (Rev.19:13- 15³⁰,21³¹; Heb.4:12³²,13³³). Here again the reward to the overcomer is different – the hidden manna, and the white stone upon which is a new name which only the overcomer knows.

The hidden manna of wilderness times is what is referred to in Ex.16:33³⁴,34³⁵: “Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations ... so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. ” This, we learn from Heb.9:4³⁶, was a golden pot wherein was this manna, which was placed in the ark of the covenant. As the manna speaks of Christ, the overcomer is destined to have a very special portion of that blessed one to delight his heart above other believers. What is the white stone or pebble? It is said that in the past in criminal cases a white pebble was given in the case of acquittal, and a black in condemnation.

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.13-%2015>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2019.21>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.4.12>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%204.13>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.16.33>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2016.34>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.4>

A white stone was also given to the victors in the games. The Greek word for “stone” is only twice used in the New Testament, here, and in Acts 26:10³⁷ where it is the voting stone of persons in authority. Paul says that when the saints were put to death he ever gave his vote, or “stone” against them; that was in his unconverted days. Here the white stone indicates the Lord’s approval, and possibly the appointment of the overcomer to a place of authority.

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write.

To this church the Lord speaks as the One whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished brass. Whilst to Ephesus He is the One who is present in the midst, and to Pergamum He is ready to make war with them with the sword of His mouth, here He is seen in the role of the Judge. By the inherent light which streams from His eyes He sees all. He needs no evidence to be led to arrive at a judgement. Brass speaks of judgement, and here it is burnished brass. He knows perfectly and His judgement is just. He says, “I know (Gk. oida)” thy works: – love, faith, ministry, patience, – and He knew that their works now were more than at the beginning. All this was highly commendable.

The whole church was not corrupted, but there was one evil allowed, and that was, that they suffered an evil woman whom the Lord called Jezebel, because she had the characteristics of that daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, who had married Ahab and led her husband and Israel into the sin and immoralities of the worship of Baal (1 Kgs.16:30-32³⁸; 2 Kgs.10:19-28³⁹). Jezebel

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.10>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kings.16.30-32>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Kings.10.19-28>

in Thyatira taught the same as her ancient namesake, even idolatry and fornication. The church in Thyatira was responsible to deal with this evil woman and her followers. A number of expositors think that they see in Jezebel the church of Rome. What has this woman to do with the rise of the papacy? Nothing whatever! She lived at the time of John, towards the end of the first century of the Christian era, when political Rome was in power and papal Rome did not exist. So many bring their ideas to the Scriptures and cram them in, in order to take them out, instead of allowing the Scriptures to mould their thoughts. Jezebel was a woman who taught literal idolatry and fornication to those who listened to her; those in Pergamum also held this teaching. She was a woman; she is called, "the woman Jezebel," and not a church (so called).

If this woman did not repent, and the Lord had given her time to do so, the Lord would take direct action toward her, and deal with her and her paramours who committed adultery with her. He would also kill her children with death. One can understand the simple, straightforward words of the Lord, but how all this can be wrought out in regard to the rise of papacy in Rome is quite inexplicable. It is like so many sermons and books that are written on the Bible; the Bible itself is often simple enough, but the preaching and writing of men are like dark clouds that shut out the light. The world would be well blessed if many of the sermons and books about the Scriptures were taken and publicly burned as was done with the books of magic arts in Ephesus long ago.

Note here that the Lord speaks to all the churches; "and all the churches shall know." He is the one who searches the hearts and gives to each according to his works. If the woman Jezebel is the church of Rome in the early or middle centuries of this dispensa-

tion, what churches were these that were outside of her, who were to know that the Lord was the Searcher of hearts and the Judge of actions? We are left in an inextricable maze by this unscriptural periodic interpretation of these chapters and churches. Think of the words of the Lord, "But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira." There were Jezebel and her dupes in Thyatira (not in Rome or anywhere else), and "the rest in Thyatira".

The Greek preposition *en*, *in*, here shows clearly the location of those who are written to. Upon the rest in Thyatira the Lord cast none other burden than to clear themselves of the teaching and practices of the woman Jezebel, and to take such action toward her as was necessary. To defame the whole church in Thyatira, as some have done with their teaching concerning the Roman Jezebel, is to do injustice to the church in Thyatira and the faithful therein. The church in Thyatira was still a church of God where the Lord walked; it was not apostate Christendom. He that overcame, and kept the Lord's words to the end, was promised a place of authority over the nations in the coming kingdom. When the Lord would rule or shepherd the nations with a rod of iron and break them as a potter's vessel, He would give the overcomer the same honour as His Father had given to Him. The overcomer would also be given the morning star. Peter speaks of the Day (or Morning) Star arising in our hearts, not in the heavens, a reference to the Lord's coming for the Church (2 Pet.1:19⁴⁰).

This is no doubt in contrast to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon those who fear God's name at the Lord's coming as Son of Man to earth (Mal.4:2⁴¹). The Lord calls Himself the Bright and

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.1.19>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.4.2>

the Morning Star (Rev.22:16⁴²). The giving of the Morning Star to the overcomer is some special distinction that will be given at the Lord's coming again; even as those will be rewarded who have waited for Him to reappear (Heb.9:28⁴³; 2 Tim.4:8⁴⁴).

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.16>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.28>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.8>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

3

Rev.3¹

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write.

Here the Lord speaks of Himself as having the seven Spirits and the seven stars. His having the seven Spirits is no doubt an allusion to what is said in Rev.5:6², “I saw ... a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.” The Holy Spirit is seen as seven Lamps of fire burning before the throne (Rev.4:5³). The Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son (Jn 15: 26⁴). The Spirit, according to Ps.139:7-10⁵ is everywhere, in heaven, in hell, and in the uttermost parts of the sea. He is omnipresent as all the Persons of the Godhead are (Jer.23:24⁶). See also 2 Chron.16:9⁷; Prov.15:3⁸; Zech.4:10⁹, as to the eyes of the LORD being in every place, keeping watch. Such as spiritualize away the whole sense of the Lord’s messages to the seven churches think that they see Protestantism in the church in Sardis.

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.6>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.5>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.%2026>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.139.7-10>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.23.24>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron.16.9>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.15.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.4.10>

Protestantism was a protest at the first against the iniquities of the Romish church, in which a demand was made for the cleansing of that church and its priesthood. Where is there any protest made by Sardis against the evil woman Jezebel (said to be Rome) in the church in Thyatira? No such allusion is made to such a thing. To speak of Thyatira as Rome and Sardis as Protestantism is an interpretation forced into these passages of Scripture. It is pure imagination. The church in Sardis was in the first century, and not in the time of Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Zwingli, and others in England, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, etc. By such spiritualizing the clear teaching of church truth in the New Testament has been lost to many children of God. Such teachers seem to come under the apostle's stricture, "They understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm" (1 Tim.1: 7¹⁰).

Think of some of the birds that roost under the cover of Protestantism today, with doctrines as foul and unclean as have ever been hatched in Rome. Is this to be thought of as the church of God in Sardis? Having said so much about the erroneous interpretation of certain, let us now hear what the Lord says to those saints in Sardis who lived in the first century. The church in Sardis had a name that they were alive, but they were dead. Still they were a golden lampstand, and the Lord walked among them as He did in Smyrna and Philadelphia. Their position was right, but their condition was wrong. Their works were dead, a lifeless formality had set in. They were called to be watchful, that the things that yet remained, in which there was life but no movement, might be strengthened and established. Of old we read that the hair of the shorn Samson began to grow.

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.%207>

Life in the once strong man began to manifest itself. Recovery was slow and gradual. Samson could never have his eyes again, but his hair grew. In time the evidence of his separation to the Lord was seen. A church may get far down spiritually, but if the matter of separation to the Lord and His service is attended to, there will be an evidence of life, of revival. Let not saints allow everything committed to them to die, for if so, then they themselves will die, and a church that once existed will exist no more. Let us soberly ask ourselves, "What works of ours does God see before Him?" May we listen to what the Lord said to those in Sardis, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent." Received, hear, keep, repent! Is there not ever room for repentance, a change of mind which will result in a change of conduct? We may all change for the better or the worse. It lies with ourselves, and there is ever grace available for a change for the better.

If the saints in Sardis did not watch, then the Lord would come upon them unexpectedly as a thief, and they would learn to their sorrow what such a visitation would mean for them. But in contrast to the many, there were a few names in Sardis known to the Lord, who did not defile their garments. Garments speak of habits. Their behaviour was clean. Such the Lord said were worthy and would walk with Him in white. Walking with the Lord in unsoiled garments will lead to a closer walk with the Lord in the ages to come. We must walk with Him in His ways; He will not walk with us in our ways. Enoch walked with God. Noah too walked with God. Walking with Him demands that there shall be nothing in our lives that causes our hearts to be at a distance from Him.

The promise to the overcomer in Sardis was, that his name will not be blotted out of the book of life, and that the Lord would confess

his name before His Father, and before the angels. The second part of the promise is similar to what He promised to those who confessed Him before men (Matt.10:32¹¹; Lk.12:8¹²). As to the first part, it seems to me that there is a double writing in heaven, (1) the writing of all born-again persons (Ps.87:6¹³; Lk.10:20¹⁴), and (2) a writing of such as serve the Lord (Phil.4:3¹⁵). Only in the latter sense is it possible for names of redeemed persons to be blotted out of the book of life. We must ever distinguish between the new birth and service. In human affairs there are records kept of persons who are born, and also records of servants. These are not confused in men's affairs. Here is an honour for the overcomer, to have his name confessed by the Lord in heaven, and shame for those who do not overcome, to have their names expunged from the record of the Lord's servants. May we have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church in Sardis and to each of the other churches also.

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write.

Of Philadelphia one writer says, "Philadelphia signifies 'brotherly love,' and evidently points to the characteristic feature of the work of God in our days." "The revival of long-forgotten truths, and their application to the souls and lives of God's saints, was the Philadelphian work of eighty years ago." Here we are supposed to get the meaning and intent of this periodic teaching of the seven churches. Philadelphia is derived from Gk. *phileo*, I love, and *adelphos*, brother, and means "brotherly love". So the teachers

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.10.32>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.12.8>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.87.6>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.10.20>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.4.3>

of the “Brethren” movement apply this to themselves, as to what took place in Dublin and Plymouth. We have already pointed out that this city was called after its founder Attalus Philadelphus who lived before the Christian era began. What the name of the city of Philadelphia had to do with brotherly love among the Christians who formed the church in Philadelphia is a mystery.

But it becomes a bewildering mystery when it is applied to the “Brethren” movement, as is done by the writer whom I have just quoted, and by others also. It is easy enough to write piously about brotherly love amongst so-called “Plymouth brethren,” but what are the facts? Are such writers serenely oblivious of the cruel division between Darby and Muller, which separated these two men’s followers into two camps even to this day? We need not refer to lesser divisions which have taken place from time to time in both camps.

The exposition regarding Thyatira, that the woman Jezebel is the Papacy, is bad; that concerning Sardis, that this is Protestantism, is equally bad; but, if possible, the claim by “Brethren” writers that Philadelphia is the “Brethren” movement is worse. Philadelphia has nothing to do with the “Brethren” movement. It was a city in which there was a church of God in the days of John the apostle in the first century of this dispensation. The Lord writes to the angel of the church in Philadelphia as “He that is holy, He that is true.” He is the Holy One of God, of absolute holiness, equal to that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is also true, for He is the Truth. It is impossible for Him to lie. He could not say what was untrue from ignorance or by intent. He said, “He that sent Me is true,” and “My witness is true” (Jn 8:14¹⁶,26¹⁷). He also speaks as the One who has

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.14>

the key of David, who opens and none shuts, and shuts and none opens. He knew the works of those in Philadelphia, and that they had kept His word, and had not denied His name.

They had also a little power left, as though to indicate to them that they had had greater power at an earlier time. He set before them an open door. He would assist them; He would open a door for them to enter. How needful it is in the work of God that the Lord should open doors for the entrance of His word! See what Paul said about a great door and effectual being opened to him at Ephesus (1 Cor.16:9¹⁸; see also Acts 14:27¹⁹; 2 Cor.2:12²⁰; Col.4:3²¹). In Isa.22:20-25²² reference is made to the key of David, and to the work of Eliakim, on whose shoulders it was laid in the past. Shebna the scribe and treasurer was to be thrust from his office, and Eliakim exalted to the place of authority. Such indeed is the Lord; no one else but He is worthy to occupy the seat of having all authority in heaven and on earth. He will shut and He will open as seems right to Him. There was a synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia as there was in Smyrna, those who, like their master, were opposers of the truth and work of God. See how Satan opposed the work of God in the returned remnant from Babylon (Zech.3:1^{23,24}).

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%208.26>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.9>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.27>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.2.12>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.3>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.22.20-25>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.1>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech%203.2>

Where God is working Satan will also be found working in opposition. Those who composed the synagogue of Satan, Jews according to the flesh, but not Jews according to Paul's judgement in Rom.2:28²⁵,29²⁶, were in due time to be brought and made to worship at the feet of those in the church in Philadelphia, and to know that the Lord loved these saints. This does not mean that these saints would be worshipped as God is worshipped, but the Lord would honour them in this way, because they had kept the word of His patience. Patience here means endurance – “the word of My endurance.” James says, “We call them blessed which endured” (5:11).

There was a present reward for the Philadelphian church, that, because of their endurance, the Lord was going to keep them from the hour of trial that was coming on the whole inhabited earth to try the inhabitants thereof. This has nothing to do with the time of the Great Tribulation, for those saints with all the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body, will not pass through the Tribulation, whether they have kept the Lord's word or not. The Lord will have come to the air for the Church before the seventieth week of Dan.9²⁷ begins; this applies to Israel, and the second half of it is the time of the Great Tribulation. The New Testament writers wrote in the strain that the Lord's coming was imminent, and so here the Lord speaks of coming quickly, as also in Rev.22:7²⁸,12²⁹,20³⁰: The

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.28>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.29>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.9>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.7>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2022.12>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2022.20>

Greek word *taxu* here may mean speedily, hastily, or soon, shortly. It seems gravely possible that, through our failing to hold fast what has been entrusted to us, the crown we might have received may be given to another who has been more faithful. The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia is very outstanding.

The Lord says, “I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and Mine own new name.” We might say that it is a galaxy of promises. First the Lord says, “I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God.” But we read of the new Jerusalem, that John says, “I saw no temple therein,” that is, no material temple; yet there is a temple, “for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.” Evidently faithful men will have a close and permanent association with Deity in that coming city and in the worship therein. Let none despise or mar God’s present-day temple (which is not the Body of Christ) in the light of what is coming (1 Cor.3:16³¹,17³²; 2 Cor.6:16³³; Eph.2:21³⁴,22³⁵). God’s temple is God’s house.

On this pillar will be written three names; the name of His God, that is, the God of the Son of Man, who in His Manhood became a worshipper, the name of the new Jerusalem, and the Lord’s own new name. If the name of the new Jerusalem will be written on cer-

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.16>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.17>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.16>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.21>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.22>

tain of the saints of this dispensation, we can from this see who will compose the Bride of the Lamb, which is the new Jerusalem. Though the names of the twelve tribes of Israel will be on the gates of the city, this does not prove that the Bride is the redeemed of Israel, or that Israel is incorporated with the Church to form the Bride. We expect to deal with this point later on. The Lord's new name is not revealed as yet.

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write.

The state of the church in Laodicea is supposed to set forth the last phase of what some are pleased to call "the professing church". But what is the professing church, and what does it profess? Is it Christendom, that Babylonian conglomeration which pays but lip-service to Christ? The writer before referred to says, "Whatever the general condition of the church may be at any period, Christ never deserts it." Again he says, "The true and the false may enter the 'House' ... 'caught up' and 'spewed out' intimate the respective destiny of the true and the false, of true believers and mere professors." The church in this writer's view is a mixture of saved and unsaved people, a view of the church never once found in the New Testament Scriptures. Indeed the call of God condemns such an idea.

God's call to the church of God in Corinth was, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers ... Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor.6:14-18³⁶). The confusion of Darbyism as to "the church of God" and "the house of God" is utter and complete. No unsaved people are contemplated as being in the church in Laodicea, nor in any other church of God. "Lukewarm"

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.14-18>

shows that the saints had some measure of warmth, though such a state is detestable to the Lord. An unsaved person has no warmth at all, he is dead in his trespasses and sins, and as cold as death. If “lukewarm” means mere profession, the whole church was lukewarm, and therefore there was not a saved person in it. Let us think for a moment of the church of God in Corinth as giving guidance on the composition of a church of God. We are told in 1 Cor.15:2³⁷ that they were saved by the gospel that Paul preached. Also, the body of each of the saints therein was “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor.6:19³⁸), and they had each been baptized into one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) into one Body (of Christ) (1 Cor.12:12³⁹,13⁴⁰). Where are the false believers here?

Then, God’s spiritual house is built of persons who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and, as living stones, have come to Christ, the living but rejected stone, to be built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet.2:2- 5⁴¹). All these had been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and were born again (1 Cor.1:18⁴²,19⁴³,23⁴⁴). Where are these false believers and mere professors in the church and house of God? Laodicea does not present a professing church at the close of the dispensation of grace,

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.2>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.12>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2012.13>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.2-%205>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.18>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.19>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.23>

but was the church of God in the city of Laodicea, of which we read in Col.4:13-16⁴⁵, “the church of the Laodiceans.” The character in which the Lord presents Himself to this church is that of “the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” God is “the God of truth” (Isa.65:16⁴⁶, Amen, RVM). The first words that God put into the mouth of Balaam were concerning His truthfulness. “God is not a man, that He should lie; Neither the son of man, that He should repent: Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Num.23:19⁴⁷). God is not yea and nay.

As to “the promises of God, in Him (Jesus Christ, the Son of God) is the yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us” (2 Cor.1:19⁴⁸, 20⁴⁹). God speaks down to us in His Son and says, “Yea,” and we say back to God “Amen” through His Son. The Lord Jesus is the Amen in all the work of God, whether in creation (Jn 1:1-3⁵⁰), or in grace (Jn 1:14⁵¹, 16⁵², 17⁵³), or again in judgement (Rev.19:11-16⁵⁴). He is the true expression and response, the Amen, to the mind and will of God. Hence He is the faithful and true Witness. He, the incarnate Word full of grace and

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.13-16>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.65.16>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.23.19>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.1.19>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%201.20>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1-3>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.14>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.16>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.17>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.11-16>

truth, came to tell God out or declare Him. He is the beginning of the creation of God, though He Himself has no beginning nor end. He is, as the Almighty Himself, the Beginning and the End (Rev.1:8⁵⁵; Rev.22:13⁵⁶), the Alpha and the Omega. In Him and through Him and unto Him were all things created (Col.1:16⁵⁷), and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist or exist (verse 17).

It is the rankest heresy to hold that there was a time when the Lord was not, and a time when He was created. This was the doctrine of Arius, a doctrine which was condemned in the early centuries. His followers, the Jehovah's Witnesses (so-called), and others, are with us at this day. The Lord is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. God, the Father, and God, the Son, are co-existent. Many, many scriptures proclaim the true and full Godhead of the Son. Why had the Laodiceans become lukewarm? The answer is that they had turned from the Lord to things. They had become rich in material things and they had need of nothing. They were well-found as to worldly things, but, alas, in the heavenly things they were poor. They had temporal and material wealth, but they seriously lacked that which was spiritual and eternal. They did not even seem to need the Lord. Once they were hot, that is boiling, boiling with vigour and enthusiasm, but now the fire was burning low and they were tepid and insipid.

The Lord was about to vomit them out of His mouth; His portion in them had lost its pleasantness. They only thought that they were rich, while they were poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked.

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.8>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.13>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.16>

They had not learned the teaching of the Lord, that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses. The wealth of a man is in what he is, not what he has. His wealth is in his soul, not his pocket. The Lord spreads His riches before them like a merchant in the market place, and calls on them to buy from Him. He has for sale fine gold, white garments, and eye salve for their blindness. They are deaf to the cry of the divine Merchantman, so He packs together His goods and makes His way to their homes, and as a pedlar stands at the door and knocks. He will come in to them with His riches, if they will but open the door to Him.

Moreover, He is prepared to sup with them and they with Him. What an enriching Christ is this! Some there are who think that the Lord's words set forth a day of individual testimony at the close of the dispensation. Nothing can be further from the truth. The saints here addressed were such as were in the church of God in Laodicea, not saints sitting at home and in fellowship in no church at all. We know that in the last days perilous times will come, as Paul tells us in 2 Tim.3⁵⁸, but we must not allow ourselves, because of this, to dose off into sleep, thinking that the church in Laodicea prophetically sets forth a time of apathetic indifference to collective testimony at the close of the dispensation. The truth regarding the church in Laodicea was for that church towards the close of the first century.

We, of course, may learn lessons therefrom as we can from what is said to the church in Ephesus, and to the other churches as well. All these churches have words of instruction for us, if we have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He said to the Laodiceans, "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten." He loved

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3>

them. They were His born-again people, not false professors, mere tares to be cast out and burned. He called upon them to hear His voice through the Spirit. He spoke, but it is equally true that the Spirit spoke His message. He holds out to the overcomer a glorious promise. He says, “I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My father in His throne.” We can never sit on the throne of the Father; only Deity may sit there. Of old David and Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah in Israel. It says, “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD (Jehovah) as king instead of David his father and prospered” (1 Chron.29:23⁵⁹). This is Messiah’s throne in which the overcomer will sit with the Lord, as He promised.

For the sake of those who are exercised of God about church truth, we give our understanding of the subject, as revealed in the New Testament.

- There is a secular use of the word church, as applied to the free citizens who ruled the city of Ephesus, called “the regular assembly” or church (Acts 19:39⁶⁰). It is also applied to the irregular assembly or church of Demetrius, who had gathered the church of silversmiths together (Acts 19:32⁶¹).
- It is applied to Israel, the church in the wilderness, comprised of that called-out and gathered-together people (Acts 7:38⁶²).

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Chron.29.23>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.39>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.32>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%207.38>

- It is used of the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, which He is building on Himself, the Rock, and which He will present to Himself without spot or blemish or any such thing, when He comes to the air for all who are in Christ (Matt.16:17⁶³,18⁶⁴; 1 Cor.12:12⁶⁵,13⁶⁶; Eph.1:22⁶⁷,23⁶⁸; 5:22-32⁶⁹; 1 Thess.4: 13-18⁷⁰). The building of this Church began at Pentecost (Acts 1:4⁷¹,5⁷²; Acts 2:1-4⁷³), and it comprises all believers in Christ who are baptized in and indwelt by the Holy Spirit from Pentecost until the Lord's coming for the Church.
- It applies to the church and churches of God, which describe local gatherings of God's called-out and gathered-together people, for the purpose of divine service Godward in praise and prayer, and divine service manward in testimony to men. Such a people must be separate from the sects of Christendom, whether ritualistic or evangelical.
- There was a church of God in Corinth (1 Cor.1: 2⁷⁴; 2

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.17>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2016.18>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.12>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2012.13>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.22>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.23>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%205.22-32>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.%2013-18>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.4>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.5>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.1-4>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.%2020>

Cor.1:1⁷⁵), in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1⁷⁶; Gal.1:13⁷⁷), in Antioch (Acts 11:26⁷⁸; Acts 13:1⁷⁹), and in many other cities and towns. The churches were linked together in Roman provinces for the administration of God's will among His people. Thus we read of the churches of God in Judaea (1 Thess.2:14⁸⁰; Gal.1:22⁸¹); of the churches of Galatia (Gal.1:2⁸²; 1 Cor.16:1⁸³); of Macedonia (2 Cor.8:1⁸⁴); of Asia (1 Cor.16:19⁸⁵; Rev.1:4⁸⁶,11⁸⁷). Then churches of God are mentioned without being viewed as grouped together in provinces (1 Cor.11:16⁸⁸; 2 Thess.1:4⁸⁹).

- We have the churches of Christ (Rom.16:16⁹⁰), and the churches of the saints (1 Cor.14:33⁹¹), and also the church

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.1.1>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%208.1>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.13>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2011.26>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.1>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.2.14>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.22>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.2>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.1>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.8.1>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.19>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.4>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%201.11>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.11.16>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.4>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.16>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.33>

at the house (Rom.16:5⁹²; 1 Cor.16:19⁹³; Philn. 2). These uses of the word church, apply, in our opinion, to groups of saints forming the one church of God in the place, as in Rome, Ephesus, and Colossae, and, of course, Jerusalem, where there were thousands of saints who could not be accommodated in one building. Nowhere do we read of the church of Christ or of the church of the saints. The definitions are found twice and in the plural in both cases.

- In 1 Tim.3:15⁹⁴ we read of “the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” Though we frequently read of the churches of God, we never read of the houses of God. There is but one house of God at any one time, whether in Israel, in the days of the apostles, or now. God’s house is where men require to learn to behave themselves. Being in it is conditional, the condition being, “if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end” (Heb.3:6⁹⁵). This should not be read, “seeing we hold fast”; that would violate the plain meaning of the Greek, also the AV/KJV and RV versions and any other version of value. The house of God must not be confused with the Body of Christ; the former is conditional, the latter unconditional. The house of God is both a holy and a royal priesthood, to render divine service Godward and man-ward (1 Pet.2:3-10⁹⁶).
- Each church of God bears the character of the house of

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.5>

93. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.19>

94. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.15>

95. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.6>

96. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.3-10>

God, and altogether they form the one house, the dwelling place of God on earth. This unity is seen very early in the work of God in the Acts, for we read of “the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria,” (Gk. he ... ekklesia kath holes, “the church throughout all” or whole, from which words “the church catholic” is derived. It shows the unity which existed among the divinely gathered disciples wherever found. (See Acts 9: 31⁹⁷, RV).

- “The church of the firstborn (ones),” of Heb.12:23⁹⁸, is a company of heavenly beings who are called-out and are distinct from the general assembly of innumerable hosts of angels. A picture of this is seen in the tabernacle in the wilderness. The outer circle of those around the tabernacle was composed of the twelve tribes; the inner circle of the sons of Levi. Moses and Aaron and his sons were on the east, and on the other three sides were the three branches of the Levitical family, Kohath, Gershon and Merari. The Levites were taken instead of the firstborn of the sons of Israel, who, but for the serious incident of the Golden Calf would have occupied the inner place. This inner circle of the Levites instead of the firstborn is a copy of things in the heavens to which those in the house of God have come.

97. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%209.%2031>

98. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.23>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 4 & 5

Rev.4¹ and Rev.5²

As chapters 4 and 5 present heavenly scenes and are integrated together, we shall seek to deal with them accordingly. Rev.4³ begins with the words, “After these things.” The truth contained in the letters to the seven churches is truth proper to the churches of God during the dispensation of grace, as is the truth in other epistles of the New Testament. Whilst the New Testament Scriptures contain many things that have a bearing on men in general, and many things apply to all born-again people, yet we must recognize that the epistles were written to the divinely gathered saints in the churches of God and house of God. From Rev.4⁴ onwards the Lord is beginning to unfold events which will transpire after He has come for the Church, that is for all who are in Christ, the dead and the living. We shall find, as we proceed from Rev.4⁵ to Rev.19⁶, that the events are not given always in serial form in the order in which they will transpire. There will be found to be an overlapping.

We may briefly point out what we mean, when we indicate that at the end of Rev.6⁷ with the opening of the sixth seal we come to the

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

time of the coming of the Lord in the great day of His wrath. At the end of Rev.11⁸ we come again to the Lord's coming to earth, when the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Then in Rev.19⁹ we come again to the Lord's coming in judgement, and to the battle of Armageddon. In Rev.4:1¹⁰ we are told that a door was opened in heaven, and John was commanded by one with a voice like a trumpet to come up hither and he would be shown the things that would come to pass hereafter. "Straightway," he says, "I was (or became) in the Spirit." He describes what he saw. He saw a throne set in heaven and One sitting upon it, who was like a jasper stone and a sardius. There was no form or similitude, only the flashing splendour like in character to these precious stones. Jasper is said to be as clear as crystal, in Rev.21:11¹¹, and sardius is a stone of blood-red colour. This was the glory of God, the glory of Him who is the Father of lights in whom there is no darkness at all. This is the light unapproachable in which the Man of Sorrows now dwells, in the glory which He had with Him before the world was. There was a rainbow round about the throne like an emerald to look upon.

Who has not been entranced by a glorious sunrise or sunset as he viewed the streaming light paint the heavens with the exquisite colours of created light? Or again been captivated by the colours of the rainbow? But what will it be to see the glory of God in any manner or measure? Those who will see the rainbow around the throne will be such as will be in covenant relation with God, even

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.1>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.11>

as those are who have watched the rainbow from Noah's time. The blessings are far, far greater in the former than the latter. Round about the throne are four and twenty thrones, on which sit four and twenty elders, with crowns on their heads. Some may agree with the following statement of an expositor of the book of the Revelation: "The thrones and crowns point to a royal company of the redeemed and glorified saints in heaven." He also says, "By the elders we understand, therefore, the innumerable company of the redeemed saints, raised, changed, and caught up to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess.4:17¹²)."

Thus, the four and twenty elders are identified as the Church which is Christ's body. It is easy to make such statements, but we are anxious to know how this is worked out. The throne of God is one. Is not the number twenty-four as definite? Do the millions of saints in the Church, the Body of Christ, crowd on the twenty-four thrones, or are the twenty-four thrones symbolic of millions of thrones? Again, will all the saints of this dispensation be crowned with crowns of gold? Several reasons have been adduced as to why the twenty-four elders are all the redeemed of this dispensation:

- that angels "say," but saints "sing";
- that these twenty-four elders are old, mature persons, which points to a previous life;
- that they are crowned with gold crowns, the word crown (Gk. *stephanos*) being used of a victor's crown, showing that they have been victorious in their previous life on earth;
- that in the AV/KJV they sing a new song, saying, "Thou

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.17>

art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God with Thy blood,” us showing that they are redeemed persons; the angels not having sinned do not need to be redeemed.

There may be other reasons for supposing that the twenty-four elders form the Church which is Christ’s Body, but those given may be sufficient for examination at the moment.

(1) Note that in Rev.4¹³ the elders say, and in Rev.5¹⁴ they both sing and say. Moses both sang and spoke in Ex.15:1¹⁵; and David spoke in the words of his song, in Ps.18¹⁶: See the inspired heading of the psalm. But the whole case for angels not singing breaks down completely before the words of the LORD, in Job 38:4-7¹⁷, where we read of the time of creation, “When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy.” We may dismiss entirely the thought that angels do not sing.

(2) As to the elders being old, mature persons, one would think from this that the saints of the Church were older than the angels, but this is not the case. Elders amongst God’s people are not necessarily the oldest men. Younger men are often among the elders that rule because of their greater gifts and spiritual wisdom and experience. If for the moment we think of the elders as heavenly beings, who can say that all the angelic beings were created at the same time? May there not be some who are older than others? Whatever

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.15.1>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.18>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.4-7>

be the answer to such thoughts, the fact is, that angels were not all created equal in rank. Among celestial beings there are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers (Col.1:16¹⁸). There are fatherhoods in heaven as well as on earth (Eph. 3:14¹⁹,15²⁰), though there is neither marriage nor birth in heaven (Lk.20:34-36²¹) like what is on earth. In Col.1:16²² we have thrones, and in Rev.4²³ we have the twenty-four thrones of the elders.

(3) Then as to crowns, it is contended that the Greek word for crown (Gk. *stephanos*) always means a garland, chaplet, wreath, conferred on a victor in the public games and it is always used in the Scriptures in the sense of the honour conferred on a victor. We might ask, "Will all the saints be victors and wear a victor's crown?" Even with a very limited knowledge of the Scriptures we would have to confess that that will not be so. If all saints are victors and overcomers, why those letters to the seven churches which we have just considered? Why Paul's words to Tim.in 2 Tim.2:1-13²⁴? Will all saints wear the crowns of life, righteousness and glory? Have these not to be won? In Rev. 6:1²⁵,2²⁶, the rider on the white horse was given a crown (*stephanos*) before he went forth to conquer. It is not a reward for victory achieved, but a mark of honour in view

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.16>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%203.14>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%203.15>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.20.34-36>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.16>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.1-13>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.%206.1>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%206.2>

of the work he was given to do. The same is true of the woman, in Rev.12:1-6²⁷; she is crowned with a crown (stephanos) of twelve stars. The woman is Israel. The twelve stars are the twelve tribes.

What victory had Israel won? None at all! They had even crucified the Lord, who is seen as the Man-child that the woman, Israel, brought forth. Nevertheless such was the honour, according to God's electing grace, that He conferred upon her, that she should be the chosen vessel by whom the Lord would enter this world, as Paul says in Rom.9:5²⁸: "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Israel is still honoured in the purposes of God and has before her a great future, and that because of the Man-child, the Lord, who is now upon the throne of God. I judge that it is right to say that both Adam and the Lord were crowned with glory and honour by God before the work they were given to do; Adam, as set over all the work of God on earth, and the Lord in that He was to taste death for every man, and of course to reign as the Son of Man afterwards (Heb.2:6-9²⁹).

How often we hear Heb.2: 9³⁰ quoted as though it had a NOW in it, "Jesus, because of the suffering of death (now) crowned with glory and honour"! There is no "now" in the verse. It is helpful, I think, to quote what Liddell and Scott say as to the Greek word stephanos: "Mostly, a crown, wreath, garland, chaplet, whether given as a prize, mark of honour, or festal ornament." In the case of the elders, I judge that the crowns of gold are marks of honour befitting

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.1-6>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.5>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.6-9>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.%209>

their being seated on thrones round the throne of God, and are not indicative of their having been victors on earth.

(4) As to the insertion of the plural pronoun “us” in Rev.5:9³¹, it all depends on whether the Greek plural pronoun *hemas* in this verse is part of the Scriptures. As to this, authorities differ. Some textual critics of weight exclude it, and in consequence it is read as in the RV; other textual critics include it, and consequently it is to be read as in the AV/KJV Rev.5:8-10³² reads: “And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God (AV/KJV has, “hast redeemed us to God”) with Thy blood men (AV/KJV “out”) of every tribe (AV/KJV “kindred”), and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be (AV/KJV “hast made us”) unto our God a kingdom (AV/KJV “kings”) and priests; and they (AV/KJV “We shall”) reign upon (AV/KJV “on”) the earth.” There is no doubt that verse 10 should read as in the RV “and madest them (Gk. *autous*, them, not *hemas*, us) unto our God.”

Thus the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders are not speaking of themselves in verse 10: If this is so in verse 10, they cannot be speaking of themselves in verse 9 either; consequently the weight of grammatical evidence in the passage is for the omission of *hemas* in verse 9, for you cannot have *hemas* in verse 9 and *autous* in verse 10: It is a great weight to put on a disputed

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.9>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.8-10>

text, to conclude that the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders are human beings who have been purchased with the blood of Christ, a very great weight indeed. This is nevertheless what some have done. If the four and twenty elders are the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body, it is strange that in Rev.19:4³³ they are mentioned as a different company from the Lamb's wife, mentioned in verses 7 and 8: Again, how are we to understand the matter when we read of "one of the elders" (Rev.5:5³⁴), in the light of the interpretation that the twenty-four elders signify millions of saints? We read also in Rev.7:13³⁵ of "one of the elders."

If the four and twenty elders are myriads of the ransomed, then so must also be the four living creatures, for they with the four and twenty speak the words of 5:9,10: We do not accept that the four living creatures are redeemed beings. We shall write of this matter later. We are told by John in 4:5 that "there were seven Lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." In regard to the interpretation of such a statement it is well to give heed to the LORD'S words to Job: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel By words without knowledge?" (Job 38:1³⁶,2³⁷). In Eph.4:4³⁸ we are told that there is one Spirit. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Divine Trinity – one God (Matt.28:19³⁹). The tabernacle with its service was a copy of the

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.4>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.5>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.13>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.1>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.2>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.4>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.19>

things in the heavens. In the tabernacle was the lampstand with its seven lamps of fire.

In the vision shown to Zechariah there was a lampstand with a bowl on the top of it and seven pipes to the seven lamps, and the explanation of the vision, of the continuous flow of oil from the bowl to the lamps, was – “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts” (Zech.4:2-6⁴⁰). The two live trees, which were Joshua and Zerubbabel, on whom rested the responsibility of leadership in the LORD’S work in the remnant which had returned from Babylon, poured out the golden oil to maintain the lamp of testimony. They were empowered for this work by the Spirit of the LORD of Hosts. As in the tabernacle and the temple, the lampstands upheld seven lamps of fire, giving light for divine service. The seven gave one light, not variegated lights. We learn from Eph.4:3-6⁴¹ that the seven ones mentioned form the unity of the Spirit. Unity is a state of being one, a oneness.

Thus, I judge, that the seven Spirits are one Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We may learn later why the Spirit is seven. Those who are instructed in Scriptural numerics speak of seven being the Spirit’s number, and of seven being a perfect number, but even when this has been said, how much are we instructed in the fact that there are seven Spirits? Before the throne was also a glassy sea like unto crystal. What are we to learn from this? It does not say that the sea was either glass or crystal, but it was like in appearance to crystal. I see no need to enter into a discussion of the difference between glass and crystal, that glass is the product of the hand of man, but crystal is a natural product got from the earth. In 15:2, this sea is mentioned

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.4.2-6>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.3-6>

again, and in this passage John says, “I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire.” The sea appears to be a solid substance, at least it had that measure of solidity, that those who came triumphant from the beast stood upon it. But what is the message of the sea? In the court of the tabernacle was the laver, and in the temple there was a molten sea of brass which held three thousand baths of water. The water in both of these vessels was for the priests to wash themselves (2 Chron.4:2-6⁴²; Ex.30: 17-21⁴³).

The laver was made of fine brass (or copper), of the mirrors of the serving women who served at the door of the tabernacle (Ex.38:8⁴⁴). The laver speaks of the laver or washing of regeneration, which is the word of God, by which every believer is bathed, and in consequence is clean for ever. The water of the word is afterwards to be used for the cleansing of the hands and feet in service for God (Jn 13:1-17⁴⁵; Jn 15:3⁴⁶; Heb.10:22⁴⁷; Tit.3: 5⁴⁸; Eph.5:25-27⁴⁹; Jn 3:5⁵⁰). If we think of the laver being made of fine burnished copper, we may think of it revealing defilement and also providing the water for cleansing of the defilement. Similarly, the word of God reveals defilement and cleanses it, when the word is

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron.4.2-6>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.30.%2017-21>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.38.8>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.1-17>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.3>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.22>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.%205>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.25-27>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.5>

applied. When we think of the glassy sea we have reached a place where there is no defilement.

The sea before the throne provides no water for cleansing. It is something of intense purity in which the least spot of defilement would be revealed. It seems to me that this is like what Ezekiel calls the terrible crystal (1:22), terrible indeed for man apart from the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and the word of God. Ezekiel says, “And over the head of the living creature there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.” I leave the reader with the result of my meditations. (The Hebrew word rendered crystal in Ezek.is rendered ice in Job.) “In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind” (Rev.4:6⁵¹). Because of the insertion of “us,” in Rev.5:9⁵² (AV/KJV), “for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God,” some have concluded that the four living creatures are the Old Testament saints, and the four and twenty elders the saints of the church which is Christ’s Body.

It is difficult to see how this is arrived at, and how the distinction is made between the Church and the saints of the Old Testament. For ourselves we are of the opinion that the four living creatures are four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders are four and twenty elders. This we think is the simple and straightforward explanation of who these beings are. The likeness of the living creatures in Ezek.1⁵³, which we know from Rev.10⁵⁴ to be the cheru-

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.6>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.9>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.1>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.10>

bim, is very similar to that of Rev.4⁵⁵, in that they have faces like a man, a lion, a calf, and an eagle; they are also connected with the throne of God. From this we are led to conclude that the same holy beings are in view. There are slight differences, truly, in the descriptions given, but those differences need not necessarily lead one to think that they are different beings. Differences in the Gospel narratives need not lead us to think that different narratives are in view. If the glassy sea reveals perfect purity in those who are privileged to stand before the throne of God, here are beings with countless eyes, which penetrate to depths far beyond mortal sight; with untiring and ceaseless energy they proclaim the thrice holiness of their Creator. It may be difficult for us to say with our present knowledge whether the cherubim and seraphim are the same beings.

The seraphim, in Isa.6⁵⁶, are the burning or fiery ones, and there is likeness in this respect to the cherubim of Ezek.1:13⁵⁷: We may learn who they are in God's good time, and until then it is well not to indulge in speculation. We are nevertheless strongly of the view that the living creatures of Rev.4⁵⁸ are the cherubim of Ezek.1⁵⁹ and Ezek.10⁶⁰: It is a grievous fact that Satan fell from his place amongst these holy beings, for he was the anointed cherub that covereth (Ezek.28⁶¹), and God commanded the prophet to take up a lamen-

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.6>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.1.13>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.1>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.10>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.28>

tation for him. From amongst the twelve apostles there was one who fell away too, Jud.as Iscariot, whom the Lord called a devil (Jn 6:70⁶²). It is perhaps of more than ordinary interest that the faces of the living creatures are those of four distinct classes of earthly creatures; the lion, the king of beasts; the ox, the greatest among cattle; the eagle, the chief among birds; and man, the greatest of all. These symbols have from ancient time been used to set forth the different characters of the Lord in the four Gospels; Matthew, the lion; Mark, the ox; Luke, the man; and John, the eagle.

The old Rabbis taught that the standards of the four encampments of the tribes of Israel round about the tabernacle were those of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle, but the Scriptures reveal nothing of this. When the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sits upon the throne, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him and worship, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created." The RV gives the correct rendering of the verse here. Here we have clearly stated that nothing came into being of its own will or through fortuitous chance.

The great Dagon of evolution here lies beheaded before the Ark of God's word, by one single verse. This verse says that all things were created by God and were created according to His will. Nothing could be plainer than these words. Which shall we believe, God or man? The answer is obvious! The wheel of chance may do for the gaming table, and here the devil and his votaries may seek an elusive fortune, but the God of heaven works according to plan

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.70>

and purpose. All will be effected “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph.1:11⁶³). Woe to those who set aside His will in any age. His object in creation was that He might have pleasure in His creatures and they in Him. Worship is an abbreviation of worth-ship. It is the shape or acknowledgement that worth produces upon another. In the Greek it signifies bowing down or prostrating oneself. We see this demonstrated in the act of the four and twenty elders who fell down before Him that sitteth on the throne when His worth or excellence was proclaimed by the four living creatures.

When God reveals Himself the proper attitude for angel or man to take is to bow before Him. David expresses the thought of worship when he says in Ps.95:6⁶⁴, “O come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.” There is the bowing of the body and also the bowing of the spirit (Jn 4:24⁶⁵). Job cursed the day when God gave him being, but we shall for ever bless God, we who are redeemed, that we ever were born; though some may wish that they had never been born. In Rev.5⁶⁶ we come to events in heaven necessary to the Revelation of the events which are recorded in the following part of the prophecy of this book. These events begin to be unfolded with the opening of the seven seals.

The reference in verse 1 to a book casts us back to what is said in 1:1, where we read of the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him. In the hand of the Almighty is a book which is close sealed with seven seals. A strong angel proclaims with a great voice,

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.11>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.95.6>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%204.24>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5>

“Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. Upon this John wept much. One of the elders said to him, “Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to open the book and the seven seals thereof.” In Jacob’s oracular blessing of Judah, he called him a lion’s whelp (Gen.49:9⁶⁷), that is a young lion. Here is the Lion Himself from whom Judah sprang. In Isa.11:1⁶⁸,10⁶⁹, we read of both the Shoot and the Root of Jesse, and, in Rev.22:16⁷⁰, the Lord calls Himself “The Root and the Offspring of David.” The Lord is the Root of David, as to His Deity, and the Offspring, as to His humanity. The Lord overcame because of who and what He was. Hence to Him the Overcomer is given not only the work of unfolding the future to His servants, but, having authority in heaven and on earth, of fulfilling all that is revealed.

John says, “And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a (young) Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.” It was not a ram that John saw, but a young Lamb, which speaks of weakness and tenderness; and having been slain, it bore the marks of death, but it was not lying dead, it was standing in the midst of the throne of God. Resurrection means the upstanding of one who has fallen in death. Here is the Lamb in resurrection in the midst of the throne and of the living creatures who are in the midst of the

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.49.9>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.1>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2011.10>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.16>

throne and round about the throne, and in the midst of elders who are round about the throne.

Once He was enclosed and compassed about by an assembly of evil doers (Ps.22:16⁷¹; Ps.88:17⁷²); He spoke of being in the midst of two or three of an assembly gathered into His name (Matt.18:20⁷³); He walked in the midst of the seven churches of Asia (Rev.1:11-13⁷⁴); He is now in the midst of the throne of God and of heaven's greatest beings and innumerable hosts. His place is ever in the midst. The seven horns and eyes of the Lamb are the seven Spirits of God. These are sent forth into all the earth. The horns speak of strength by which He will execute His will and defend His saints. The eyes tell of His infinite and accurate knowledge of all. In 2 Chron.16:9⁷⁵, we are told that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." (See also Prov.15:3⁷⁶; Zech.3:9⁷⁷; Zech.4:10⁷⁸)

Whilst it was ever true that the Spirit moved about everywhere in Old Testament times, effecting the will of God, there was a new sending forth of the Spirit as sent by the Son from the Father, which took place at Pentecost (Acts 2), and He ever proceeds from the Father and the Son. What a comfort it is to know that the

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.22.16>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.88.17>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.18.20>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.11-13>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron.16.9>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.15.3>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.9>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.4.10>

Lamb knows all and His strength is ever availing on our behalf in every contest of the battle of life! Such was the One who came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne. When the Lamb had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before Him, an act of worship in the light of the infinite worth of the lamb. They had each a harp and golden bowls full of incense.

Certain say that the harps and bowls apply to the elders, but not to the living creatures, but there is nothing in the Greek to support such a conclusion. Those who fell down before the Lamb were such as had harps and bowls. The Lamb is here worshipped by these heavenly beings as God is worshipped (Rev.4:11⁷⁹). He is “of full Deity possessed.” The golden bowls are full of incenses, of sweet odours of various kinds. These are the prayers of the saints who are on earth. The prayers of the saints are of manifold variety, yet all of them are viewed as sweet odours. They sing, the four living creatures and the twenty four elders, not simply the elders. In contrast to the song of creation of 4:11, the substance of their new song, the song of redemption, is: “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them (to be) unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.”

We have already, in our notes on Rev.4⁸⁰, dealt with the exclusion of “us” (Gk. *hemas*), in verse 9 here in the RV, and the change from “us” (*hemas*) to (autous) “them.” In keeping with this the RV also changes “we shall reign” of the AV/KJV to “they reign.” Our view is

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.11>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

that we can safely follow the RV reading of verses 9 and 10: Doing this we conclude that there is no evidence whatever for the views of many that the four living creatures are the Old Testament saints, and the twenty four elders are the saints of the Church which is Christ's Body. These two groups of four and twenty-four are exceedingly exalted heavenly beings. Those who are taught in Biblical numerics may see much in the numbers four and twenty-four as to government and such like matters. The fact that the twenty-four are elders would of itself show that rule is an implied condition of their eldership, and besides, they seem to perform other functions such as offering the prayers of saints on earth as incenses. The word "redeemed" of the AV/KJV is properly changed to "purchase" in the RV.

The Greek verb *egorasas* is derived from *agora*, a place of public concourse or market-place. Those who are viewed as purchased by the blood of the Lamb are those who will be saved on earth after the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, many of whom will be martyred in the time of the Tribulation, as indicated in Rev.6:9-11⁸¹; Rev.7:9-17⁸²; Rev.20:4⁸³: The vastness of the scene in heaven is depicted in verse 11, where angels with the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders form an innumerable company of a hundred million and besides thousands of thousands. Perhaps the better rendering of the vast company is, "and the number of them was myriads of myriads," ten thousands of ten thousands, which leaves the vast concourse numerically undefined. In Heb.12:22⁸⁴ we read of myriads of angels, innumerable hosts.

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6.9-11>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.9-17>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4>

The great voice of this vast host is, “Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

What added glory shall accrue to the Lamb because of the fact that He was slain, and has made possible the realizing of the vast purposes of grace that it was God’s will to show to men! But for His death all that God wished to manifest of His pardoning mercy and all the blessing that goes with it could never have been revealed. The heavenly beings, whose unfallen nature finds them ever in alignment with the divine will, rejoice with endless delight at the triumph of Calvary. In ages past they desired to look into such things (1 Pet.1:12⁸⁵), but now the vast panorama of God’s grace in Christ is revealed fully to them and in this they greatly rejoice. There had been joy in their presence over one sinner that repented, but now they think of men of every tribe and nation being brought within the circle of God’s favour. The ascription of power, riches, and so forth, to the Lamb will afford us food for meditation as we lift and review each separate word. Then follows the voice of every created thing, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and they ascribe to God, and to the Lamb, blessing, honour, glory, and dominion.

This is the inherent right of God the Creator and of the Lamb. This agrees with what the apostle says in Phil.2:10⁸⁶,11⁸⁷ when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.22>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.12>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.10>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.11>

to the glory of God the Father. This seems to indicate that beings who shall never know the mercy of God because of their rejection of it shall with those who are redeemed be required to give glory to God. When this vast host has ascribed to God and to the Lamb the blessing, honour, glory, and the dominion for ever and ever, the four living creatures say, Amen. And the elders fall down and worship.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

6

Rev.6¹

In Rev.6² we have the Lamb opening six of the seven seals with which the book of Rev.5³ was sealed. The seventh seal is not opened until Rev.8⁴, when after the silence of half an hour in heaven, the seven angels which stand before God were given seven trumpets. The soundings of the last three of these angels are the three Woes (Rev.8:13⁵; Rev.9:12⁶; Rev.11:14⁷). The horses and horsemen of Rev.6⁸ bear a striking resemblance to those of Zech.1:8-17⁹, and these horsemen of Zechariah have to do with the Lord's purpose in connection with His return in His mercies towards Jerusalem, where His house was to be built. It seems to me that the same consideration emerges in connection with His purpose regarding Jerusalem in days yet to come, for we can see that the opening of the sixth seal brings us to the coming of the Lord to the earth (Rev.6:12-17¹⁰; Acts 2:19¹¹,20¹²; Matt.24:29-31¹³; Isa.2:19-21¹⁴).

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.8>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.8.13>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.9.12>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.14>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.1.8-17>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6.12-17>

In Zechariah we see a man riding on a red horse standing among the myrtle trees. This man said of the horses, red, sorrel, and white, "These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." These answered the angel of the LORD who stood among the myrtle trees (who seems to be the same as the man on the red horse), "We have walked to and fro through the earth and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." The whole paragraph is interesting and instructive as to the state of quietness among the nations at the close of the Babylonian empire, and of God's displeasure at this while His house lay waste. This scene finds its place towards the end of the seventy years of Babylonish captivity. Then followed the destruction of the Babylonian empire and the liberation of the Jews by Cyrus, who were freed to go up and to build the temple. God will again begin to move in regard to Jerusalem and the fulfilment of His prophetic word, and He will send forth His horsemen again.

In Zech.1¹⁵ the horses were red, sorrel (or bay, a reddish-brown colour), and white. In Rev.6¹⁶ they are white, red and black. There is also a pale horse, in Rev.6¹⁷: he who rides upon him is Death, and Hades follows with him, and he seems to complete the work of the previous two horsemen. He who rides on the white horse is not the Lord. He is not crowned because of past victories, but because he

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.19>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.20>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.29-31>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.2.19-21>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.1>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6>

is going forth to conquer. The crown here is Gk. *stephanos*, which is a token of honour conferred upon him. In the Lord's case, when He rides forth to victory on a white horse, in Rev.19:11¹⁸,12¹⁹, He is not crowned with a crown (*stephanos*), but with many diadems (Gk."diadema, a diadem, tiara, i.e. a white band or fillet; worn by kings around their usual headdress"). Such diadems are an evidence that He is King of kings.

God's purpose among men cannot fail despite all the forces of the devil, demons and men. Hence He who sits on the white horse goes forth conquering and to conquer. The possibility, in the interpretation of the meaning of the rider on the white horse, is that he goes forth to conduct the spiritual battle which will be waged between God's saints and the Devil, as is indicated in Rev.12:11²⁰: "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death." Though it is said, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev.13:7²¹), this does not mean that he, the beast, overcame them spiritually, but by physical persecution he overcame them in a bodily sense. He will undoubtedly slaughter them in vast numbers, as Rev.7:9²²,13²³,14²⁴, shows, but they will never yield to him, to render to him the worship the He will demand.

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2019.12>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.11>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.7>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.9>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%207.13>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%207.14>

When the Lamb opens the second seal and the second living creature says, "Come," there comes forth a red horse. The result of his going forth is that peace is taken from the earth, and mankind enters upon a time of world-wide, international, slaughter. At the present moment the nations seem to be preparing for such slaughter with destructive weapons in their possession which make the deadly weapons of past times seem mere toys. At the opening of the third seal John saw a black horse, and his rider had a balance in his hand. After this world-wide slaughter famine stalks the world. Cereals are in short supply. It is a black period of famine and mourning. Such times follow wars. Oil and wine, unlike cereals, are not vital to life, and these are available to those who can get them, but the shortage of cereals, in consequence of world conflicts, strikes at the lives of earth's inhabitants. With the opening of the fourth seal we have another kind of horse, a pale horse of death-like colour, whose rider is Death, and Hell follows with him.

Theirs is a joint commission, they being given authority over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, death and wild beasts. It would seem that they go forth to gather the wreckage of humanity from the wars and famine, etc., left by the former horsemen. Death claims the body and Hell the soul. Whilst God is marching against men through the horsemen who were sent forth, men have been turning in their fury upon His saints who have been faithful in their witness to the word of God. Thus with the opening of the fifth seal John "saw underneath the altar the souls (not their bodies, for their resurrection had not taken place) of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." The altar was the place of public testimony, at the base of

which the blood of the sin offering was poured in past times, so that the testimony of God's people might continue.

Here are the souls of saints beneath the altar, saints who on earth had given their lives in public witness for God, and after death they are at rest beneath the altar. The brazen or copper altar was the place where divine judgement fell upon the sacrificial victims, and here those who had been slain, who had sacrificed their lives, not for sin, but in testimony, cry for judgement, "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here the cry is unlike the Lord's and Stephen's (Lk.23:34²⁵; Acts 7:60²⁶), for then the day of grace lay ahead, but the cry is like that of Ps.79:5²⁷,6²⁸,7²⁹; Ps.74:10³⁰,11³¹; Jer.10:25³², etc. They were each given a white robe and told to rest for a little time until their fellow-servants and brethren should be killed as they had been. This company of the slain martyrs of the Great Tribulation, which is in the last three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, are seen in Rev.7:9-17³³, where they stand with the rest of their fellow-servants who had been slain in the time of the Great Tribulation (verse 14).

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.23.34>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%207.60>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.79.5>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2079.6>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2079.7>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.74.10>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2074.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.10.25>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.9-17>

These, I judge, are the same as those that come triumphant from the beast and from his image (Rev.15:2-4³⁴). As we have already indicated, the opening of the sixth seal brings us to the time of the coming of the Son of Man in judgement to the earth, at the beginning of the day of the Lord. This paragraph must not be spiritualized and interpreted as being one of the convulsions on the earth during the time of God's judgements which fall thick and fast, as they fell of old on Pharaoh and the Egyptians prior to the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of the firstborn of man and beast. "The great day of their wrath is come;" "their wrath" is that of God and of the Lamb. Here is a time of unspeakable terror, of signs in heaven, and the sun black as sackcloth, the moon as blood, the stars falling from heaven, and heaven removed as a scroll; on earth there is a great earthquake (possibly that of Rev.16:18-21³⁵), and mountains and islands are moved out of their places.

Utter consternation reigns. Kings, princes, chief captains, the rich, the strong, bondmen and freemen are in flight to the mountains and to the rocks, as perchance men fled before the flood waters of Noah for safety, but there was none. So there will be no hide-out for man when He rises to shake mightily the earth. There will be no safety for men then, save for those that trust in Him and call upon His name; such will be saved according to His sure promise. As the coming events of Revelation are not given in serial form, it is vain to attempt to make this scene something other than the Lord's coming to earth in judgement.

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.2-4>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.16.18-21>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

7

Rev.7¹

In Rev.7:1-3² four angels are seen standing in the four corners of the earth holding the four winds that they should not blow (in divine judgement), and they are commanded not to hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees, until the servants of God are sealed upon their foreheads. These servants of God are from the twelve tribes of Israel, Dan being excepted. To what purpose is this sealing? we may ask. Are these all of the tribes of Israel that will be saved and left to populate the land of Israel in the Millennium? I would answer, No, to this question, for Dan, who is not mentioned in Rev.7³, is the first to be mentioned in the apportionment of the land, in Ezek.48⁴: In the land Joseph has two portions, Manasseh and Ephraim (Ezek.47:13⁵; Ezek.48:4^{6,5}⁷).

In consequence of the inclusion of both of the sons of Joseph, Levi is left out of the twelve portions of the twelve tribes; the Levites having their portion next to the priests (Ezek.48:12⁸,13⁹). Israel

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.1-3>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.48>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.47.13>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.48.4>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek%2048.5>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.48.12>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek%2048.13>

is ever twelve tribes, and the different enumerations of the twelve tribes is an interesting study. God made provision to meet the consequences of the sin of Israel in the oracular blessing by Jacob of Joseph's two sons, whom Jacob adopted into his family, in view of the rejection which was yet to take place of the firstborn sons of Israel, when they committed idolatry in the matter of the golden calf. At that time Levi, who took the LORD'S side and went forth to Moses and executed the LORD'S judgement, obtained the nearer place of the firstborns in the service of God (Ex.13:2¹⁰,15¹¹; Ex.32:26-29¹²; Num.3:40-51¹³). Thus it came to be that Israel was thirteen, but Levi was not numbered with the twelve; this tribe was sanctified from the others and had a place of service apart from them. This was true of their place around the tabernacle, and will also be true in the Millennium. Levi is present in Rev.7¹⁴, and Dan is left out.

Why is this? Was it because of Dan's idolatry when they took Micah's graven image as they migrated northwards in the days of the Judges (Jdgs.17¹⁵,18¹⁶) and set it up among them? This continued all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh. But not only so, for we read of Jonathan, who had been priest to Micah, that he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Dannites until the day of the captivity of the land. It makes sad reading, that Jonathan was the

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.13.2>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2013.15>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.32.26-29>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.3.40-51>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Judg.17>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jdgs%2017.18>

son of Gershom, the son of Moses. How quickly may sons throw away their father's riches! Let sons of worthy fathers hear and fear! If these 144,000 are not all of the tribes of Israel who will be preserved of Israel for Millennial blessing, then the sealing must be for another purpose. The sealing, we are told, is that of the servants of God; they are sealed for service and for protection in that service from the dire judgements that will come upon others.

This seems to be implied in the words of the angel, who is commissioned to seal the 144,000 on their foreheads (see Rev.9:4¹⁷), to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (see Rev.7:4¹⁸). It will be remembered that in the land of Egypt Israel was preserved from certain of the plagues that fell upon the Egyptians. It would be grievous to think that God's servants should bear their part of His judgements on the wicked as well as the dire persecution of the wicked because of their faithful testimony. This would be a double portion of suffering at the hands of God and men. It seems to indicate that those who are sealed of God in their service are sealed also for protection from the judgements of God.

There are twelve thousand sealed of each of the tribes with the exception of Dan, as we have seen. Saints today are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. We do not think that this is done by an angel, nor does the sealing, in Rev. 7¹⁹, seem to be the same. Nevertheless we are set apart by our sealing and empowered by the Spirit for service, as well as being assured by the Spir-

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.9.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.4>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.%207>

it of that inheritance that lies before us (Eph.1:13²⁰,14²¹). While we have, in Rev.7:4-8²², this sealed company of 144,000 out of the twelve tribes, we have, in Rev.7:9-17²³, a vast unnumbered company, a multitude, which no man could number. These, in contrast to those of the twelve tribes, are from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues. Those whose souls were under the altar, in Rev.6:9-11²⁴, who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus, and who were given a white robe, seem to be similar to those mentioned here. They seem also to be the same as those indicated in Rev.15:2-4²⁵; Rev.20:4²⁶,6²⁷.

No doubt in this martyred host are both Jews and Gentiles, for they are of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. They are identified by one of the elders as, "These are they which come out of the Great Tribulation." The AV/KJV says, "out of great tribulation," which might be thought to mean tribulation at any time. The definite article before tribulation shows that it is tribulation of a certain time and kind. They are the hosts martyred by the beast, such as would not worship him or his image. The scene is a most delightful one and is calculated to fire the imagination of God's saints of that coming time with an unquenchable fervour to resist to the last the wicked idolatry of the time of the beast. One cannot but feel

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.13>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.14>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.4-8>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.9-17>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6.9-11>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.2-4>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.6>

within one's being a rising courage to stand for God in the light of the valiant stand others will take in times yet to come. Here is seen the vast host of martyred saints "standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands". They ascribe, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

As one tries to visualize the scene one is overwhelmed with its vastness. Besides the innumerable host of the martyrs, here are gathered all the angels round about the throne and the elders and the living creatures. The greatest of earth's concourses is but as nothing to this heavenly scene. All these heavenly beings fall on their faces before the throne and worship God, saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." It is said of the martyrs, "They washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Their robes were not themselves. Robes signify their habits, their behaviour. They applied the blood of the Lamb to their way of life; being saints they were also saintly in their manner of life. "Therefore," it says, "are they before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them." Because they washed their robes they are before the throne. They serve (Gk. *latreuo*) God night and day in His temple; this is the same temple as in Rev.11:19²⁸; Rev.15:5²⁹.

Neither the AV/KJV nor the RV gives a correct rendering of the last part of verse 15: It should read, "He who sits upon the throne shall tabernacle over (or upon) them." Their days of thirst and

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.19>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.5>

hunger are over. The Lamb shall be their Shepherd and guide them to the fountains of the waters of life; how tender will be the compassions of God to them, for He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes! This is one of the touching statements of Scripture. It seems to me that those who are in view in this part of the chapter are such as have not yet been raised from the dead. Such as die after the Church has been caught up into the air are not raised until the coming of the Lord to the earth.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

8

Rev.8¹

After the silence in heaven for about half an hour, and the seven angels had received the seven trumpets, another angel stood over the altar having a golden censer, and there was given him much incense to add to the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. This golden altar is again referred to in Rev.9:13²: We read of both an “ark of His covenant” (Rev.11:19³), and “the golden altar.” In the tabernacle we have the earthly copies of these things. Both the ark and the golden altar belonged to the Holy of Holies, though the golden altar was placed outside, immediately in front of the veil, so that the priests might be able to burn incense at the hours of prayer, at the time of the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices. Heb.9:3⁴,4⁵ and 1 Kgs.6:22⁶ show that the golden altar belonged to the Holy of Holies. Lk.1:10⁷ makes plain the relationship of the burning of incense and prayer.

There is no reference to any golden altar in connection with the prayers of saints in this dispensation. Prayer in this dispensation is

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.8>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.9.13>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.19>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%209.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kings.6.22>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.1.10>

in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father (Eph.2:18⁸; Eph.5:20⁹; Eph.6:18¹⁰; Col.3:17¹¹; Heb.13:15¹²; Jn 15:16¹³; Jn 16:23¹⁴,24¹⁵;

Matt.6:9¹⁶; Rom.8:15¹⁷). Here in this chapter the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints went up to God out of the angel's hand. After offering the incense and the prayers the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar and cast it upon (into) the earth, and there followed thunders, voices, lightnings and an earthquake. There may be in this an evidence of divine displeasure in consequence of the prayers of the saints, because they were being oppressed by the wicked. David speaks of the great commotions which had taken place when God delivered him from the hand of Saul and from all his enemies (Ps.18:1-17¹⁸). Certain have thought that the angel of verses 3-5 is the Lord. I do not share this view.

With the sounding of the angels with the seven trumpets follow fearful outpourings of divine judgements on the earth. The first sounded and there were cast into the earth hail and fire mingled with blood, and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of trees and all green grass was burnt up. Is this actual

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.18>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.20>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.18>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.17>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.15>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.16>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.23>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2016.24>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.6.9>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.15>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.18.1-17>

or symbolic? If we say it is symbolic, we are faced with a great difficulty to explain what the hail, fire, blood, trees and grass signify. It seems that the literal meaning of these things is the right one, and that this divine judgement falls upon the earth because of the wickedness of mankind. The second angel sounds and another judgement falls. This time a great burning mountain is cast into the sea and the third part of the sea became blood; in consequence of this the third part of the living creatures therein died and the third part of the ships was destroyed. It is not for us to enquire how the salt sea water became blood. In His judgements upon Egypt in the days of Moses, God turned the water of the Nile into blood and also the water in the pools and ponds of Egypt (Ex.7:19-21¹⁹); if God can give such power to men (see Rev.11:6²⁰), it is no difficulty for him to turn sea water into blood.

When the third angel sounded, a star called Wormwood fell on the third part of the rivers and fountains of water, and they became wormwood, and men died from drinking the bitter water. The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, were smitten that they should not shine for a third part of the day and night. These violent and fearsome judgements are followed by events yet more fearful. The sounding of the last three angels are the three Woes which are pronounced by an eagle (probably an angel) flying in mid heaven (Rev.8:13²¹). The sounding of the seventh angel, which is the third Woe, is the worst of all judgements for the earth, for it is the coming of the Lord to earth in judgement (see Rev.11:15²²).

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.7.19-21>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.6>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.8.13>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

9

Rev.9¹

When the fifth angel sounded, John saw a star (probably an angel) fallen from heaven upon the earth. This star was given the key of the pit of the abyss or bottomless pit, and he opened the pit of the abyss. There went up out of the pit of the abyss smoke as from a furnace, and out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth. These locusts had the power of scorpions. They were not to act as ordinary locusts to hurt any vegetation, but only such men as had not the seal of God upon their foreheads. We see here the confirmation of what we said on the sealing of the 144,000 in Rev.7², that the sealing protected those who were sealed from God's judgement which would fall upon the wicked.

The scorpion poison of these locusts was not to kill men, but to torment them for five months. The pain of the poison was so severe that men in their torment would seek death, but would not find it, death would flee from them. This is a unique event. Though these are not the ordinary kind of locusts, thus far the narrative seems simple and straightforward. What follows is not so easy to understand when John describes what the locusts are like. A locust has a head somewhat the shape of the head of a horse, but the other descriptions of these locusts leave us wondering what God is saying to us by the pen of John. In verse 11 we are told that these locusts have

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.9>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

over them as king the angel of the abyss. Solomon tells us that locust have no king (Prov.30:27³), but these have.

Who is he? In Hebrew he is called Abaddon (Destruction), and in Greek Apollyon (Destroyer). Some have said that Appolyon is the devil, and the star that fell from heaven in verse 1 is the antichrist. The antichrist never fell in any sense from heaven, nor do I think that “fallen” is to be understood in a moral sense. For myself I shall reserve judgement on who these two persons are until one knows more. Speculation in the interpretation of Holy Writ is a very doubtful method of dealing with the Scriptures. Many questions arise in one’s mind as to this part of the Scriptures, which, possibly, cannot be cleared up in our time, but may be understood, when these events transpire, by those to whom they are revealed. This is the first Woe. When the sixth angel sounded there followed a plague much more terrible than that of the locusts which had tails and stings like scorpions, as happened with the sounding of the fifth angel. Here is a scene of world-wide death, not merely of those who are inhabitants of Palestine or within the bounds of the Roman empire.

The voice from the golden altar commands that the four angels which were bound at the river Euphrates should be liberated. These angels had been prepared for an exact time in connection with divine judgement on men, for the hour, day, month and year. We are not told at which point on the Euphrates the angels are bound (the Euphrates is 1,780 miles long), nor are we told the year when they are loosed. It may well be that this fearful judgement is in the time of the beast’s kingdom, in the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week, for the sounding of the seventh angel, which follows this,

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.30.27>

brings us to the Lord's coming to earth, as we have already pointed out (Rev.11:14-18⁴). There are certain things in this vision which are literal, the river Euphrates, the hour, day, month and year, and the killing of the third part of men.

But are the horses literal? And who are the riders? Is this vast army of 200,000,000 cavalry in the ordinary sense? We must dismiss the idea that these are ordinary horses and men, as we must dismiss the thought that the locusts of the previous vision were ordinary locusts. At the same time it is wise not to attempt to rename these creatures that appear in these two visions. No such horsemen have ever been seen on earth before, which had breastplates of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone, and horses which had heads like lions, and tails like serpents, tails which had heads, and mouths from which proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. Some have tried to spiritualize these things, and have reduced such a fearful vision to but a weak picture of symbolism and conjecture. Indeed many who have written on the Revelation, whose minds seem to have wandered in a land of dreams, have given the most fanciful explanation of these things.

For ourselves we see in the killing of the third part of men a most appalling divine judgement, and it may be that in the time when those things occur enlightened men may understand what is taking place, though it may well be that none of the wicked shall understand. For despite the widespread destruction of human life, those that were left continued in their demon worship, idolatry, murders, fornication, and thefts. Surely we are on the borderland of such times, for such things are becoming rampant in our time. Men become like mere beasts, for though they see their fellows die, it has

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.14-18>

no reaction upon them, and they rush on greedily in their quest after sin. The second Woe is past.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 10

Rev.10¹

In this chapter we are introduced to another strong angel who is arrayed with a cloud, a rainbow is upon his head, his face is as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. It is a magnificent description of a celestial being. One interpreter says that the angel of Rev.8:3-5² is the Lord, and that here in this chapter the strong angel is the Lord again. We think that this is entirely fanciful and believe that it is an angel. He has in his hand a little book open, which is a different book from that of Rev.5:1³: that was given to the Lord. The angel set his right foot on the sea and his left on the earth (the sea and earth are literal), and he cried as it were with a lion's voice, and swore by Him that liveth for ever, who created heaven and earth and the sea and all things therein, that there would be time (delay) no longer.

This does not mean the end of time, as we know it, or of eternal times, but that in dealing with things on the earth there would be no longer any delay. John was told to go and take the little open book out of the angel's hand. He was given the book and was told to eat it up and that it would be in his mouth as sweet as honey, though it would make his belly bitter. He ate it, and he found it sweet to his taste, but it made his belly bitter. Then he was told, "Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.10>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.8.3-5>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.1>

tongues and kings.” The first part of his prophesying ends with the sounding of the seventh angel (Rev.11:15⁴) which is the third Woe.

The second prophesying begins with Rev.12⁵: The sounding of the seventh angel, the third Woe, brings us to the Lord’s coming to the earth. We must not think that chapters 6 to 11 deal with the events in the first part of Daniel’s prophetic seventieth week, and that in chapters 12 to 19 we have the events of the second part of that week. That is not so. As we have said already, we have an overlapping of events in the book of the Revelation. With the sounding of the seventh angel, then is finished the mystery of God (Rev.10:7⁶), according to the good tidings which were declared or preached (evangelized) by the prophets, for their good tidings ended with the Lord reigning. This is what we have in Rev.11:15-18⁷.

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.15>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.10.7>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.15-18>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 11

Rev.11¹

As in Rev.10² we have a parenthetical portion coming in between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh angel, so also here, in verses 1 to 13: These verses deal with Jerusalem, the temple, the testimony of the two witnesses in Jerusalem, their being slain by the beast, and their resurrection and ascension to heaven. We have here, in verses 2 and 3, the same period of forty-two months or one thousand two hundred and threescore days. In the understanding of the passage, it is necessary to determine whether the forty-two months are the first half of Daniel's seventieth week or the second. Some interpreters, perhaps most, say it is the second half, but is this so?

Some light may be cast on the problem if we consider what happens at the end of the first half of the week and what happens at the end of the second half. At the end of the first half of the week we have the rise of the beast, who comes up out of the abyss (Rev.11:7³; Rev.17:8⁴), and he has authority to continue for forty two months (Rev.13:5⁵), which covers the second half of Daniel's week. This authority to continue for forty-two months is, I believe, divinely given, for I cannot see that the dragon, from whom he received his

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.10>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.7>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.5>

power, throne and great authority, would limit his time of world dominion to so short a period. At the end of the second half of Daniel's week the Lord comes to earth, first to fight against the beast and his armies, and to cast him and the false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev.19:19⁶,20⁷). The testimony of the two witnesses continues for one thousand two hundred and threescore days and it is not until these days are ended that the beast who ascends from the abyss makes war with them. If this were the second one thousand two hundred and threescore days, then the beast would not be on earth to slay the two witnesses, for he would then have been cast into the lake of fire. I am convinced therefore that the testimony of the two witnesses is during the first half of Daniel's week.

Then again, as to the measuring of the temple, the altar and those who worship therein, this appears to me to be the worship that was proper to the temple. In the middle of Daniel's week there will be the doing away with the altar and its sacrifices. Dan.9:27⁸ says that "for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Instead of the altar with its sacrifices, there will be set up in the holy place (which does not mean inside the temple, but in the court where it can be seen) the abomination that maketh desolate (Matt.24:15⁹; Dan.9:27¹⁰; Dan.11:31¹¹; Rev.13:14-18¹²). When the beast rises with his confederate the false prophet, then

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.19>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2019.20>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.9.27>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.15>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.9.27>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.31>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.14-18>

will come to an end the Jewish sacrifices, and an end of the witnesses who will be slain by the beast. Then this king of the north shall do his pleasure and corrupt everyone who can be corrupted.

Who are the two witnesses? We may be sure about one of them that he is Elijah, from the prophecy of Mal.4:5¹³. We can only venture an opinion as to the other. Firstly, we would emphasize that the witnesses are first of all witnesses to Israel to call God's people to repentance. Moses the greatest of all the prophets (we speak not of John the Baptist) seems to be indicated in the miracles which the witnesses do, such as turning water into blood, a miracle which Moses wrought in Egypt. In Elijah's time the heaven was shut up and there was no rain. Moses and Elijah were seen together on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord. No prophet would carry more weight with the Jewish people than Moses, if he appeared again to them calling them to repentance; so it seems to me.

However, there are those who think that one of the two prophets will be Enoch, because he never died. There the matter rests, but that day will reveal who they are. They are clothed with sackcloth, that is, mourning apparel. They are both olive trees to produce the oil of testimony, and lampstands to give light in the darkness. They are said to be standing before the Lord of the earth, and are speaking on His behalf. The beast who comes up out of the abyss (we shall write more about this when we come to Rev.17¹⁴) shall make war with them and kill them. Their bodies are not allowed to be buried, but will lie in the street of Jerusalem, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, an indication of the fearful state of Jerusalem at the time of the rise of the beast; and this state of

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.4.5>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

utter depravity is seen in the fact that earth's inhabitants rejoice, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because they are now rid of these two prophets whose words and works were a torment to them, for they wanted to go on in their sinful course.

One can see in this how they will welcome the rise of the beast, whose rise will add tremendously to the corruptions of those times. After three days the breath of God enters into the two witnesses and they stand on their feet, and great fear falls on all who see them. They are commanded to come up to heaven, and they go up to heaven in the cloud and their enemies behold them. Though no enemy saw the Lord ascend to heaven, the ascension of the two witnesses will be a public event. At that time there is a great earthquake and the tenth part of Jerusalem falls and seven thousand persons are killed. The rest, we are told, are affrighted and give glory to God. Thus ends the testimony of the two witnesses at the end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's prophetic week.

In Rev.11:14-19¹⁵ we come to the last section of the first part of the prophecy of the Revelation. With the sounding of the seventh angel we reach the third Woe. This Woe is the most serious time in all the judgements which fall upon the earth at the end of the age, for then the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever. Upon this the twenty-four elders which sit before God on their thrones fall upon their faces and worship God. Their words of thanks sum up what will take place at this time, at the coming of the Lord to earth:

“We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because Thou hast taken Thy great power, and didst

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.14-19>

reign. And the nations were wroth, and Thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.”

(1) The time has come for the Lord to reign. (2) It is the time when the nations are wroth with God and His Anointed, when the Lord will appear in His wrath to destroy them that destroy the earth. (3) It is the time for the dead to be raised, judged and rewarded (Dan.12:2¹⁶,3¹⁷; Rev.20:4¹⁸,6¹⁹), and to enter with the Messiah into His kingdom. What relationship verse 19 has with the beginning of the reign of the Messiah is not clear. Here we are told that the temple of God in heaven was opened, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant. This is an ark which is proper to the temple in heaven, and not the ark that Moses made which was in the tabernacle and temple of old. It may be this is that to which the psalmist refers in Ps.119:89²⁰: “For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.”

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.2>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2012.3>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.6>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.89>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 12

Rev.12¹

We come now to what the angel said, in Rev.10², “Thou must prophesy again.” Most of this section (Rev.12-19³), though not altogether, deals with what transpires in the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week. In the middle of this week of years the woman who brought forth the Man-Child flees into the wilderness from the dragon (Rev.12:6⁴). The dragon, that is the devil, is cast down from heaven by Michael, and when he is cast down to the earth he persecutes the woman, and when she escapes from him he persecutes her seed. At that time the beast (the man), ascends from the abyss (Rev.11:7⁵; Rev.17:8⁶), and also the beast (the system) ascends out of the sea, from the mass of unstable and turbulent humanity.

This period of the Great Tribulation is variously described as one thousand two hundred and threescore days (Rev.12:6⁷): time, times and half a time (Rev.12:14⁸), and forty and two months (Rev.13:5⁹). Rev.12¹⁰ begins with a vision of a woman gloriously ar-

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.10>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12-19>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.6>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.7>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.6>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.14>

rayed. She is arrayed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, and she is crowned with a crown (Gk. *stephanos*) of twelve stars. She is in the pain of travail and is about to give birth to a child. Another sign is seen in heaven, that of a great red dragon, which has seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems (not crowns as in the case of the woman). His tail draws the third part of the stars of heaven, and these he casts to the earth. He stands before the woman that he might devour her child. She is delivered of a Son, a male, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. The Child is caught up to God and to His throne. What do these great signs mean? Bearing in mind that the book of the Revelation does not give events in serial form, the birth of the Man-Child does not take place at the middle of Daniel's seventieth week.

We have here Israel, the chosen and honoured nation by whom the Messiah was to come into the world, as the apostle when writing of Israel says, "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom.9:5¹¹). This was the greatest work ever performed in Israel, that through Mary the espoused wife of Joseph, of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah and nation of Israel, Christ was born (Matt.1¹²; Lk.1: 26-56¹³; Lk.2:1-21¹⁴). "Salvation is from the Jews," said the Lord to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:22¹⁵). Though Israel had sunk in unbelief and formalism and sin

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.5>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.5>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.1>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.1.%2026-56>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.2.1-21>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%204.22>

at the time of the Lord's birth, yet this did not stay the fulfilment of the divine promise given in the Scriptures.

The time of His appearing in the world was foretold (Dan.9:25¹⁶,26¹⁷), where He would be born (Mic.5:2¹⁸; Matt.2:6¹⁹), of whose seed He would be, according to the flesh (Acts 13:22²⁰,23²¹; Rom.1:3²²), and how He should enter the world, through a virgin (Matt.1:22²³,23²⁴); all was clearly foretold by God, as to this the greatest world event up to the time of the incarnation of Christ. Israel, pictured in association with the Lord's birth, is seen gloriously attired, not because of her worthiness or holiness of conduct, but solely because of divine choice, that by her the Redeemer should enter the world. The crown of twelve stars is indicative of Israel in her twelve tribes. No other person than the Lord has been caught up to God and to His throne. The devil, as the red dragon, shows him in his relationship to earth's powers, especially to military powers. He was the power behind Herod who thought to destroy the Lord after His birth, and who slew all the male children from two years and under around Bethlehem

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.9.25>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%209.26>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Micah.5.2>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.2.6>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.22>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.23>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.3>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.1.22>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%201.23>

(Matt.2:13-18²⁵), and he was the power behind Pontius Pilate and Rome when the Lord was condemned, and slain at Calvary.

But He escaped their hand, and in resurrection power He ascended to God and sat down on His right hand. The long time of the alienation of Israel from the death and resurrection of the Lord to the middle of Daniel's seventieth week is passed over, and we are told of the flight of the woman at the beginning of the second half of Daniel's week, when she flees from the dragon, the beast, and the worship of the beast, into the wilderness to the place which God has prepared for her. Then we are told of certain who will nourish her. Who these are we are not told. This flight of Israel, and the encouragement of each to the other, is described in Isa.35:3-10²⁶, and also the sojourn in the wilderness, where the thirsty ground will become springs of water; and then in the last verse we have the return of this ransomed people to Zion when the Lord shall have come.

Joshua of old led the people into the Land, but the Lord, the true Joshua, will lead up His ransomed into the Land again, and they will come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy, and the days of their sorrow and sighing will be past. In Rev.12:7-12²⁷ we are told of the casting down of the devil from heaven to earth, of certain things about his character and his works, and of his great wrath. In Dan.12:1²⁸ we are told that at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of Israel. This agrees with the time of the going forth of Michael and his angels to fight with the dragon and his angels. We read in Jud.9²⁹ of an

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.2.13-18>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.35.3-10>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.7-12>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.1>

earlier contention between Michael and the devil and in that contention they disputed about the body of Moses; so Michael and the devil are well enough known to each other as disputants.

Here in this chapter it is not simply that they dispute, but it is war, and this war is in heaven. Here will end the devil and his angels having any place in heaven for ever. Though they warred against Michael and against being cast down from heaven, they were defeated, and the dragon was cast down. He is clearly identified. He is the old serpent, who is called the Devil (accuser or slanderer) and Satan (adversary), the deceiver of the whole world, and the accuser of the brethren. He is the cause and source whence all the mischief and the evil of the world have sprung. What a relief to heaven to be rid of these disturbers of the peace! Thus heaven proclaims its deliverance with a loud voice, "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ."

There was no relief from the devil's accusation of the brethren. It says that he "accuseth them before our God day and night." But it says that "they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death." Thus these verses tell us that the devil will be defeated in two senses, by Michael and his angels in heaven, and by God's faithful saints on earth. The heavens and those that dwell therein are told to rejoice, but woe to the earth because of the great wrath of the devil. His humiliation to the earth stirs the devil's wrath to awful intensity. From this will come the time of the Great Tribulation. The fight between the devil and God's saints will be furious, but the issue of the fight is not in doubt, as this book reveals. In verses 13 to 17, the dragon, when he saw that he was

cast down, persecuted the woman (Israel) which brought forth the Man-Child (the Male). The speed of her flight is described in pictorial language, that the woman was given the wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place.

This brings us back to verse 6, where the flight of the woman is referred to. It also brings to mind the flight of Israel from Pharaoh, of which God said, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself” (Ex.19:4³⁰; Deut.32:11³¹). The place to which the woman flees has for many years been identified by students of prophecy as those lands in Dan.11:41³², Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. These will be delivered out of the hand of the king of the north, who is the beast. The nourishing of Israel in her place is again referred to, but who will nourish Israel in the wilderness is a secret which God has not revealed. In Rev.12:15³³,16³⁴ we are told how God will help the woman in her flight from the serpent, the devil. He will cast out of his mouth water as a river, so that she might be carried away by the stream.

But there will be an earthquake and the earth will open her mouth and swallow up the river that the dragon cast out of his mouth. I am disposed to the view that we have not a river of ordinary water here, but an army of men who will be sent after Israel in hot pursuit to bring them back. It seems to me that we have a somewhat parallel event here to what happened in Israel’s case when they left Egypt

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.19.4>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.41>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2012.16>

in haste in the time of Pharaoh. Pharaoh led his chariots and horsemen in hot pursuit of Israel to bring them back, and in their case the sea helped them, for Pharaoh and his host went into the Red Sea through which Israel had gone, and they were overwhelmed and perished in the sea. Here it is not the sea, but the earth which swallows up the army of the dragon, which I take to mean the army of the beast. See Dan.11:10³⁵,22³⁶,26³⁷,40³⁸, regarding a flood of soldiery.

It may well be that after the destruction of this army the beast and the devil will make no further attempt against Israel in the wilderness, and this may account for the lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, where Israel will be, being delivered out of his hand. When the devil was frustrated in his purpose to destroy the woman, he went away to make war with the rest of her seed. Not with all the Jews elsewhere, but with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus. These are Jewish believers in Christ who faithfully carry out His word. Thus the battle between these saints and the devil will be carried on vigorously, and, as Rev.12:11³⁹ says, they will overcome him, though in the battle many, many will lay down their lives for the Lord.

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.10>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2011.22>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2011.26>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2011.40>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.11>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 13

Rev.13¹

The picture drawn by the Spirit in Rev.13² is that of the beast and the false prophet during the second three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week. We read in verse 5 that the beast had authority to continue for forty and two months, the divine limit set to this bestial kingdom. There are certain things stated about the beast in Rev.17³ that it will be well to consider along with what is given in this chapter, so that we may have as full a picture as possible of this dread system and man. The beast is first of all a system of Gentile government, and this government is set forth as a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Both the heads of the beast and the horns are kings. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings" (Rev.17:9⁴,10⁵). "The ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour" (Rev.17:12⁶).

The beast is also a man, the confederate of the second beast, the false prophet; these two men are destined to be cast into the lake of fire (Rev.19:20⁷). Thus care must be taken when thinking and

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.9>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.10>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.12>

speaking of the beast that we distinguish which we have before our mind, the beast as a system of world government or the man. It will be noticed that in Rev.12:3⁸ the diadems are on the heads of the dragon, which shows world government before the beginning of the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, but when we come to Rev.13:1⁹, the diadems are on the horns, which shows that the ten kings (horns) have received authority as kings with the beast. The beast here is the man. (See Rev.17:12¹⁰). Prior to the time of Rev.13¹¹, seven kings, of whom the beast is one, have reigned, supporting Babylon, the mother of harlots.

This woman is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev.17:18¹²). When John saw these kings in prophetic vision, five of the seven had fallen, one was reigning, and one was yet to reign, and the beast who was one of the first five kings, who had gone down to the abyss, was an eighth, in his second term of office, but he was out of the seven (Rev.17:10¹³,11¹⁴). The beast who comes up out of the abyss, and who is destined to go into perdition (the lake of fire) (Rev.17:8¹⁵), is the man, but the beast that comes up out of the sea, in Rev.13:1¹⁶, is the revived Roman empire. It may

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.20>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.12>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.18>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.10>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.11>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

be well for us to state here what we mean by the words “the revived Roman empire.” It will be remembered that in the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, in Dan.2¹⁷, there were four metals indicated, gold, silver, brass and iron, and the feet and toes part iron and party clay (Dan.2:32¹⁸,33¹⁹,41²⁰,42²¹,43²²).

There are but four kingdoms envisaged (verses 38,39,40), and the last phase of the fourth kingdom, was by the admixture of clay with iron to be partly strong and partly broken. The chief thing to note is, that there are but four kingdoms. There has for many years now been no doubt that these four kingdoms are the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman, so that the Roman is seen to continue until the Stone (the Lord) destroys this colossus of Gentile power. The same facts emerge in the four beasts of Daniel’s dream, in Dan.7²³, and here again we have the four empires already alluded to, and the fourth beast is that which has ten horns, which agrees with the beast as a system, of Rev.13²⁴ and Rev.17²⁵, one of whose heads, the one smitten to death is the person of the beast, in whom and in the confederate ten kings the Roman empire will be revived.

In his first appearance before his death he is one of the seven kings who will support Babylon, but when he ascends from the abyss,

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.2>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.2.32>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%202.33>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%202.41>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%202.42>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%202.43>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.7>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

Jerusalem, quite evidently, will be his seat, for there he sits in the temple of God, claiming the worship which is due to God alone (2 Thess.2:3²⁶,4²⁷). The beast of Rev.13:1²⁸ bears resemblance to the three world empires seen in vision by Daniel, and found in Dan.7:3-6²⁹: It is like a leopard (the Grecian empire), has feet as of a bear (the Medo-Persian), and has a mouth as of a lion (the Babylonian). It is described by Daniel as great and terrible, without giving any similitude as to what it is like. The head of the revived Roman empire is the man who comes up out of the abyss. He is seen as one of the heads of the beast, one of the seven kings. He is seen as though he had been smitten unto death, with the stroke of a sword (Rev.13:3³⁰,12³¹,14³²).

The words death-stroke do not mean that he received a death-stroke, but did not die. This head or king was “slain unto death”; the wound he received was “the wound of death.” When he was so wounded and died, he went down into the abyss. In order to live again his wound had to be healed, so we read of the death wound being healed. Here is a great wonder, the return of the beast to the earth. It will become a world wonder. It says that the whole earth wondered after the beast (13:3). This wonderment is repeated in 17:8: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.4>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.7.3-6>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.3>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.12>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.14>

dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall be present” (17:8). “Shall be present” is the correct rendering here. The rise of the beast from the abyss is no ordinary happening. The beast, who is also the antichrist, after dying will rise from the dead, and in him there will be an imitation of the real Christ.

Some have thought and taught that the antichrist is the second beast of Rev.13³³: This is quite incorrect. The second beast is not slain; he has no death-stroke. He is not worshipped, but encourages with all the powers at his disposal the worship of the first beast. Some have claimed as proof of their views that the Jews would not accept a Gentile king as their Messiah, and therefore the first beast, being a Gentile king, would be unacceptable. But there is nothing in this chapter or any other in Scripture to prove that the first beast is a Gentile and the second, the false prophet, is a Jew. What is there to hinder the first beast being a Jew by race? Indeed we do not know that the seven kings follow each other by heredity. They may be elected to the office of kings of Babylon. Ezek.21:25³⁴ gives help in this matter of the beast, who is the antichrist: “And thou, O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end.”

The prince of Israel is the deadly wounded one, which I take to mean, the beast with the death-stroke. The first beast is also “the man of sin ... the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God” (2

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.21.25>

Thess.2:3³⁵,4³⁶). The devil's triumph will seem to be complete with the rise of the beast, but it will be short-lived. He has long hankered after the worship of humanity. Thus we are told in Rev.13:3³⁷,4³⁸, "The whole earth ... worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" Devil-worship will be joined with the worship of the beast. The beast is also the king of the north, which is the king of Babylon, and of the king of the north it says, "Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers ... for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his place (or office) shall he honour the god of fortresses: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a strange god" (Dan.11:37³⁹,38⁴⁰).

Can we doubt at all, in the light of the fact that the dragon gave to the beast "his power, and his throne, and great authority," that the strange god he honoured, and by whose power he dealt with the strongest fortresses, is the dragon, the devil? His prowess will be such in dealing with the strongest fortresses that men will say, "Who is able to make war with him?" Besides his warlike ability there is given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. He opens his mouth and blasphemes God, His name, and

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.4>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.3>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2013.4>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.37>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2011.38>

them that dwell in heaven, who form God's tabernacle. What a mouth! He will be a spellbinder who will carry away earth's masses by the enormity of his words and blasphemies. It was also given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. It will be a sad day for the Lord's followers. The words of the Lord to His disciples not to fear them who kill the body will have a potency for the saints of those days, and many will endure the killing of the body rather than have the mark of the beast and be cast into Gehenna.

The beast is given authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. All shall worship him, save those whose name has been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. From the text and the marginal reading of the RV, this verse 8 may be read as in the text that it was the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (slain in divine purpose and foreordination), and also the writing of the names of the redeemed was from the foundation of the world. Comparing this verse with Rev.17:8⁴¹, where the same people are in view, one would be inclined to lean to the thought that the writing was from the foundation of the world. These also include those who are the blessed of Matt.25⁴² of the living nations who will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt.25:34⁴³). Resistance of evil, but non-resistance of evil-doers, will be the course for saints to pursue. Those who are for captivity or encourage captivity, theirs will be captivity, and those who kill with the sword, they will be killed with the sword. In non-resistance of evil-doers will be seen the patience, that is, the endurance, of the saints. It may be well that we should

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.34>

tabulate for the quick assimilation of the reader, what we have just outlined as to the first beast of Rev.13:1⁴⁴.

The term beast (wild beast) is applied to a system of world government. This system bears resemblance to the three world empires which went before, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian. The beast has seven heads and ten horns: these are seven kings and ten kings respectively. The seven kings reign consecutively (in unbroken succession), but the ten kings reign concurrently (all at the same time). II. The term beast is applied to a man, who is seen as one of the heads (kings) of the system of world government, also called the beast. This king receives a death-wound by a sword, dies, and goes down to the abyss. This king is one of the seven kings who uphold the city of Babylon, one of the first five who had fallen before John saw the vision of Babylon and the beast (Rev.17⁴⁵).

III. In Rev.13⁴⁶, the beast, the system of world government, rises from the sea, the sea being indicative of the unstable and turbulent state of humanity. This is also the figure used of the rise of the four beasts, in Dan.7:2-6⁴⁷, which arose from the sea. At the same time the beast, the man, comes up out of the abyss, and becomes the head of the system of world government, which is the revived Roman empire. This revived Roman empire is ruled by the beast and his ten confederate kings, who come to power with him for one hour – three and a half years – (Rev.17:12⁴⁸). IV. These kings with the beast destroy the great city Babylon, the mother of harlots,

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.7.2-6>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.12>

which is also rent into three parts by a great earthquake (Rev.16:17-19⁴⁹). An end is put to this centre of world-commerce, of political power, and of world idolatry (fornication) and all manner of wickedness. Following this, Jerusalem becomes the centre of world power and idolatry; the most fearful form of idolatry the world has ever known is the worship of the beast and his image.

There the beast will enter into the temple and sit there as God claiming the worship of mankind. They will make an image of the beast and set it up as an object of worship in a holy place, which I would understand to be the temple court, where it can be seen. V. The beast, the man, is the antichrist, the deadly wounded wicked prince of Israel (Ezek.21:25⁵⁰). (There is no reference at all in Scripture to the second beast, of Rev.13⁵¹, being wounded. He is the false prophet, not the antichrist). The antichrist is the one who would come in his own name, whom apostate Jewry will receive (Jn 5:43⁵²). The false prophet speaks in the name of the first beast. The first beast is also the man of sin, the son of perdition, the lawless one, who claims the worship of mankind, as in 2 Thess.2:3⁵³,4⁵⁴: A few people have thought that the first beast is Judas, the betrayer, because both are called the son of perdition, but we might as well say that Judas is the devil, because the Lord called him diabolos (Gk for devil) in Jn 6:70⁵⁵:

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.16.17-19>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.21.25>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.43>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.3>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.4>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.70>

The first beast, at his second appearance on earth, is the political head of the revived Roman empire, but he is also the religious head, and, as Roman emperors claimed of old to be Augustus, that is, they were to be venerated with the veneration which is due to God only, even so will the first beast claim the worship of humanity. Rev.13:11-18⁵⁶ gives us a description of the person and work of the second beast. He is not a system; he is a man only. He rises out of the earth. He is of the earth and of the earth he speaks. He has two horns like a lamb, innocent enough in appearance, but he betrays his character when he speaks. He speaks as a dragon. It is said that he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. We are told that the first beast got his authority from the dragon (verse 2), so that the second beast got his authority from the dragon also, and this he exercises before the first beast.

He makes the earth-dwellers to worship the first beast, the beast whose death-stroke was healed. The second beast does not claim worship for himself. He is a prophet, though a false one, who represents a god, the first beast, and speaks on his behalf. He seeks to prove the rightness of his words by works, for he does great signs, even to bringing down fire out of heaven in the sight of men. In this way he deceives those that dwell on the earth. He also commands that they make an image of the first beast that was killed by the sword and lived. We are not told specifically who the earth dwellers are who make this image, but it must be men of knowledge, the men of science, for what they make will be a very close imitation of a man; so much is this the case, that the second beast will give breath to it, so that the image will both speak and cause all who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed. This sec-

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.11-18>

ond beast causes all the worshippers of the beast and his image to receive a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead.

Those who receive the mark of the beast or the number of his name are marked for divine judgement, to be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever (Rev.14:9-11⁵⁷). But those who have not the mark or number of the beast will not be able to buy or to sell. Their suffering may be great, but it will be brief, but that of the beast's worshippers will be for ever. Many may barter present ease for future pain. The Greek word for mark (*charagma*) means a mark cut in or impressed, something that is engraved. There will be no washing away the mark. Many ingenious attempts have been made to make the names of various world rulers fit in with the number 666, but there will be no doubt of its true application when the beast is revealed. We are told that this number is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day of Gen.1⁵⁸, and there are other sixes in Scripture that are significant.

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.9-11>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

14

Rev.14¹

In Rev.14:1-5² we have an entrancing scene in contrast to that which is presented in Rev.13³: Here the Lamb is seen standing on the heavenly mount Zion, the same mount as we have in Heb.12:22⁴: With the Lamb are 144,000 who have the Lamb's name and that of His Father written on their foreheads. The voice of this great multitude as they sing was as to its volume like thunder and as to its sweetness like harpers harping with their harps. They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one could learn this song but themselves. There have been many choirs at many times, but here is one which should stir a longing in any honest heart to hear this holy, heavenly song. The sweetness of it must be overwhelming. No mind can conceive it now.

Who are these? They are not the saints who compose the Body of Christ, for that company of saints is much more numerous, comprising as it does the saints of this entire dispensation of grace, from Pentecost until the Lord's coming again for the Church. These are not the 144,000 of the twelve tribes of Israel which are sealed in Rev.7⁵, who in their sealing are protected from the judgements of

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.1-5>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.22>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

God which will fall on the earth. The explanation of who they are is given in Rev.14:3⁶,4⁷, which is as follows: “The hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb.” As we have here the virgin companions of the Lamb, we have in Ps.45:14⁸,15⁹, the virgin companions of the Bride. “She (the Bride) shall be led unto the king in broidered work: The virgins her companions that follow her Shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be led: They shall enter into the King’s palace.” Despite what some have said about spiritual purity and so forth, we are of the view that the description of the virgins of Rev.14¹⁰ is to be understood as given.

These are male virgins, for they were not defiled, with women. If it were spiritual or moral purity that was to be understood other words could easily have been used by the Spirit. In the understanding of Scripture, we should accept the obvious meaning of a passage and avoid spiritualizing its plain meaning, thus taking from the Scripture its evident lesson for us. These virgins were purchased (the same word as in Rev.5:9¹¹; 1 Cor.6:20¹²; 7:23¹³). The purchase

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.3>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2014.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.45.14>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2045.15>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.9>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.20>

was effected with the blood of the Lamb. They are first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb of the harvest indicated in Rev.14:14-16¹⁴, the harvest of the righteous. The company of 144,000 belong to the period between the Lord's coming to the air for the Church and His coming to earth to reign. They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth and give to Him great delight by the song they sing. In their mouth was found no lie and they are without blemish. Meet companions for the Lamb, truly!

Rev.14:6¹⁵,7¹⁶ tell of an angel who will fly in mid heaven having an eternal gospel to proclaim. The substance of this gospel is, "Fear God and give Him glory; for the hour of His judgement is come: and worship Him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters." This is what the Creator requires from all created intelligences – "Fear God, and give Him glory." This is a gospel which has for ever obtained, and men on earth have obeyed it where the gospel of a crucified Christ has not reached. Peter stated its effect when he visited the house of Cornelius, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him." No one can fear God who has not first repented of his sins, and there can be no working of righteousness apart from repentance. John the Baptist said that the Sadducees and Pharisees were to "bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance."

In the gospel of God's grace there is proclaimed "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21¹⁷). In

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%207.23>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.14-16>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.6>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2014.7>

view of the deceptions imposed on men in the time of the beast's kingdom, how gracious of God to send an angel to call upon men to acknowledge Him! This eternal gospel will reach to every tribe and tongue and people. Despite the diverse languages of men, every tribe will know the meaning of the angel's message. Verse 8 tells of a second angel who announces the fall of Babylon: "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great." This is similar to what we read in 18:2: She drinks the cup of wine of the fierceness of God's wrath because of her sins, for she made the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication. Rev.14:9-11¹⁸ reveal another angel, a third, who with a great voice warns men on earth against the worship of the beast and his image. Such as worship the beast will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

The smoke of their torment will go up for ever and ever. It is grace on God's part to warn men of the serious consequences of this worship which will be a popular thing in the kingdom of the beast. In contrast to this we have the endurance of the saints, for they will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and will not yield to the deceit and lying wonders of those times. Another voice from heaven says, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." In this dispensation we read of those who fall asleep in Christ (1 Cor.15:18¹⁹), who are the dead in Christ (1 Thess.4:16²⁰), but in that future day the blessed dead die in the Lord. Those who die in the Lord, rest from their labours, for their

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.21>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.9-11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.18>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

task in that day will be no easy one, but they are assured that their works will follow with them to be rewarded by the Lord with such honours as He knows how.

After this follows the reaping of the earth, first of the righteous (rev.14:14-16), then of the wicked (Rev.14:17-20²¹). Some have concluded that the person sitting on a white cloud with a golden crown on his head, who is like a son of man, is the Lord Himself, but the words of Rev.14:15²² make this doubtful. It says that “another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle and reap.” “Another angel” suggests that he is another angel in addition to the one who sat on the white cloud. Further, it does not seem fitting that the Lord, who is the Lord of all angels, should be commanded by an angel that He was to reap, because the harvest of the earth is ripe. Indeed the Lord speaking of such a time of reaping at the end of the age says that He, the Son of Man, shall send forth His angels to reap His field, the world (Matt.13:30²³,41²⁴).

Another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven having also a sharp sickle. Another angel came out from the altar (I judge, the golden altar), he who had authority over [the] fire. As it is “the fire” in the Greek, it may indicate that it is the fire of the golden altar that is in view, and not fire in general. This angel says to the one with the sharp sickle that he is to gather the clusters of the vine, for her grapes are fully ripe. He cast his sickle into the earth and the earth was reaped of its vintage, and it was cast into the great wine-

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.17-20>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.15>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13.30>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.41>

press of the wrath of God. The winepress is trodden, but we are not told here by whom. Blood came from the winepress unto the bridles of the horses, and extended as far as one thousand and six hundred furlongs.

This scene seems to have reference to Rev.19:15²⁵, where it says of the Lord that “He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.” It indicates the Lord’s judgement of the earth, which begins with the destruction of the armies of the kings of the earth under the beast (Rev.19:19-21²⁶). The carnage of that day’s battle will be fearful, the battle of Armageddon, when men will feel the weight of the Lord’s displeasure. On that day mercy retreats behind the throne, mercy rejected by men.

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.15>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.19-21>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

15

Rev.15¹

This chapter brings us to the seven last plagues, when it is said that the wrath of God will be finished, that is the wrath of God which has been poured out on men in different judgements and plagues. God's wrath against hardened and unrepentant sinners will never cease, such shall know His displeasure in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. First of all we see in this chapter a glorious company of the martyrs, who come victorious from the beast, standing on the glassy sea (see note on Rev.4:6²). This sea, which was like crystal before, is now mingled with fire. It may be that this sea, which was before clear as crystal, is now revealing the fire of divine wrath against men, which is about to burst on men on earth, because of how they have treated His saints, who now stand on the glassy sea.

God in one of His judgements is about to give men blood to drink, because they had shed the blood of His saints and prophets. God in His righteousness causes men to reap as they sow. He is not mocked. This glorious company which no doubt contains those of Rev.7:9-17³, their tears and sufferings over, sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses is that which he sang with Israel by the Red Sea concerning the LORD being a Man of war, and of His having cast the horse and his

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.6>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7.9-17>

rider into the sea. Thus the martyrs sing, “Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest” (Rev.15:3⁴,4⁵). Isa.26:9⁶ says, “For when Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”

Alas, some will forget that God is a God of judgement and will revolt and bring upon themselves the severity of divine judgement (Rev.20:7-10⁷). In Rev.15:5-8⁸ we read of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven being opened, and there came out of the temple the seven angels with the seven last plagues. They were arrayed with stone or linen pure and bright. (Gk. lithon, stone; linon, linen: though authorities differ, I lean to the view that the angels are clothed with linen pure and bright. See Rev.19: 8⁹.) They are girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven bowls (vials of the AV/KJV is simply the Greek word phialas. A phiale is a bowl or goblet) which were full of the wrath of God. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, so that none could enter until the angels had finished the seven plagues.

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2015.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.26.9>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.7-10>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.5-8>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.%208>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 16

Rev.16¹

A voice from the temple commanded the seven angels to pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God. The first poured out his bowl into the earth and it became an evil and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image. Though the beast's worshippers had privileges on earth, such as freedom to buy and sell in the beast's kingdom, and were free from bestial persecution, they were not free from divine judgement even in this life. The righteous need to learn that godliness has its profit even in this life, as well as in the life to come, for they are free from many things that the wicked bring upon themselves. Many bring wicked and wasted lives in this world to a sad and miserable end. Thus it will be with the beast's worshippers, for the devil has no estate to offer in the world to come to those whom he has deceived in this world.

The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became as the blood of one who is dead. The result of this was that every living soul died that was in the sea. If the sea here includes all the oceans of the earth, we can only faintly imagine what a universal catastrophe this will be. The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of waters, and they became blood. The righteous judgement of God in this act is declared by the angel of the waters: "Righteous art Thou, which art and which wast, Thou Holy One, because Thou didst judge: for they poured out the blood of saints

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.16>

and prophets, and blood hast Thou given them to drink: they are worthy." In response the voice of the altar said, "Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgements." Men then, as now, forget that God will be perfectly just in His punishment of sin. Every sin will meet its due recompense, and the greater the sin and the knowledge of the sinner, the greater will be the punishment.

The Lord showed that the punishment of the fishing towns in Galilee would be greater than that of Sodom and Tyre and Sidon (Matt.11:20-24²). The fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it scorched men with fire. This would make the earth like a furnace, and would be a pre-taste for many of the eternal burnings. Though men were scorched with heat, men blasphemed God and repented not to give Him glory. This may reveal the hardened and unrepentant attitude of the lost to God in eternal punishment. No glory will rise for ever to God from lost souls. The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, so that the beast himself comes in for a share of this judgement. His kingdom also was darkened and they gnawed their tongues with pain. Men must be in excessive pain when they intentionally bite pieces from their tongues.

Yet despite their pain they repented not of their works, but blasphemed the God of heaven. What a state the devil, the beast and the false prophet will then have brought the world to! Then the sixth angel poured his bowl on the river Euphrates. The result of this was that this great river was dried up, and a way was made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. Then from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet issue three unclean spirits, as it were frogs. These we are told are the spirits of demons,

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.20-24>

working signs, and they go forth to gather the kings of the whole world to the battle of the great day of God, the Almighty. They were gathered at a place called in Hebrew Har-Magedon, or more commonly known by the word used in the AV/KJV, Armageddon. This is a place supposed to be situated in the Plain of Esdraelon, which stretches across Palestine from mount Carmel to the river Jordan. Here will be gathered the massed forces of the kings of the earth under the beast and the false prophet to oppose the descent of the Son of Man to Jerusalem.

Then the Lord will take up men's challenge, and, as Zechariah says, "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought (or fighteth) in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech.14:3³,4⁴). Rev.19:11-21⁵ gives greater details than Zechariah does of the battle and of its sequel. The battle will be short and the carnage fearful. (See Rev.17:12-14⁶). In the light of this battle and the imminent manifestation of the Lord, the saints of that time are warned to watch, as they are in the Gospels which tell of the Lord's coming as Son of Man. "Behold I come as a thief (see 1 Thess.5:1-5⁷). Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

The seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and there came forth a voice out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." It would seem from what is said here, that the throne of God is in

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.14.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech%2014.4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.11-21>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.12-14>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.1-5>

the heavenly temple. Rev.4⁸ may present the view of the heavenly temple, then beyond that we read of “them that dwell (or tabernacle) in heaven” (Rev.13:6⁹), and then in Rev.15:5¹⁰ we have “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.” These statements provide food for meditation for all who have an interest in heaven. “It is done” would seem to refer to the seven judgements which fell consequent upon the outpouring of the wrath of God from the seven bowls.

Then followed lightnings and voices and thunders, and a great earthquake, the greatest since men were upon the earth. This great earthquake rent the city of Babylon into three parts, for God remembered her wickedness and gave her the cup of the fierceness of His wrath. Besides, the cities of the nations fell. God had truly arisen to shake mightily the earth. Also every island fled away and the mountains were not found. Such an earthquake would produce a scene of unspeakable terror of world-wide extent. Then we are told that hailstones fell from heaven on men, each the weight of a talent. No doubt it is of this hail that the LORD asked Job, “Hast thou seen the treasuries of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war” (Job 38:22¹¹,23¹²). The weight of a Jewish talent was 125 lbs., Egyptian and Greek talents were about 86 lbs. We can understand in a slight way the devastation these masses of ice will cause as they are hurled down from heaven upon men. But the effect on men is no better

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.6>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.15.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.22>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.23>

than the previous plagues, for men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 17 & 18

Rev.17¹,18²

It seems necessary that we should deal with these two chapters together as they deal with Babylon the great and its fall. Some have tried, but without success, I think, to make out two Babylons in these chapters, a spiritual and a material Babylon. It will be seen in Rev.16:19³ that the great city of Babylon was divided into three parts by an earthquake, at which time the cities of the nations also fell. Then the words of Rev.17:18⁴ are quite conclusive on the point of Babylon being a city: “And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” This great city is the same as that of 16:19: It is the centre of world government, of world trade, and of world religion. These are the three main avenues along which the thoughts of mankind flow.

Often these three streams flow together between the same river banks, and commercialized religions have their dignitaries in seats of political power. The church of Rome has been viewed as Babylon since the days of Luther by Protestant expositors of different brands of religious opinion, and some have also with Luther spoken of the Pope of Rome as the beast. There can be no doubt that the church of Rome is a phase of Babylon, and many popes have

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.18>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.16.19>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.18>

been bestial enough both in their mode of living and in persecuting Christians for their faithfulness to God and His word.

But the Babylon of these chapters is something greater than Rome, and it may well be that Rome and other forms of apostate Christianity, with pagan religions which number their followers by the million, will at last converge upon this iniquitous centre, Babylon, which as yet is not in view. This city is a harlot, a city given to lewd and idolatrous practices. The kings of the earth are the most notorious offenders, for they committed fornication with her, that is, not literal fornication, though that, we may be sure, will not be lacking in this city of wickedness, but spiritual fornication, as idolatry is often called in the Old Testament. As a result of the actions of earth's kings, their peoples will, because of their leadership, be made drunken with the wine of her fornication. This state of spiritual drunkenness will lead to utter spiritual confusion on earth. Earth's peoples will stagger about in the dark of Babylonian confusion, save those who find in the Scriptures a lamp for their feet and light for their path. The harlot sits on many waters.

These are explained in Rev.17:15⁵, as “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Then John is carried by the Spirit into a wilderness; this was the state into which Babylon had brought the world, into a spiritual wilderness almost void of life. There he saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. We are here back again at Rev.13⁶, where we saw the beast as a system with seven heads and ten horns arising out of the sea. In Rev.17:9⁷

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.15>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.9>

-10 the woman sits on the heads of the beast, but we are told that in contrast the ten horns hate the woman (Rev.17:16⁸). The woman is gorgeously arrayed in purple and scarlet, colours which speak of royalty and earth's glory, but there is no blue, the colour we see when we look toward heaven on a clear day. She is decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. This is all outward show and covers the corruptions within. She holds in her hand a golden cup brimful of abominations, which are the unclean things of her fornication. The woman herself is drunk, but what with? She is an inebriate. What is her drink?

The answer is, the blood of saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It is said that "in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth" (Rev.18:24⁹). God tears aside her gorgeous apparel and reveals her infamy. She has had a long ancestry stretching back to Gen.11¹⁰, and in every presentation of Babylon in the Scriptures, she is ever the opponent of God and His people. In her final phase, when the judgement of God shall fall upon her, she shall be found to be the inheritor of the blood of God's faithful saints in all ages, and when His judgement finally falls upon her she shall nevermore be found. From Rev.17:7¹¹, the angel begins to tell John the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carried her, which has seven heads and ten horns. When John sees this vision he is transported into the future, to a time when five of the seven heads (kings) had fallen. We have in Rev.13¹² pointed out that the beast as a system comes up out of

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.16>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18.24>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.11>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.7>

the sea, but the beast as a man comes up out of the abyss. Rev.17:8¹³ to 13 are of very great importance in the understanding of the mystery connected with this man called the beast.

We are told that “the beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition.” He was, that is, he which had reigned but was not now reigning, as one of the seven heads. He received a death-stroke with a sword and died and went down into the abyss. He comes up out of the abyss in the middle of Daniel’s seventieth prophetic week of years. It is evident that he is one of the first five kings who had fallen before that point in the visions which John was shown, as he was neither the one who was reigning when John saw the vision, nor was he the one who was to come, who was to reign but a little while. He is said to be an eighth, that is, in his second term of office, but it is also said that he is out of the seven. This shows that he has two terms of kingly office. Twice over (Rev.17:8¹⁴,11¹⁵) he is said to go into perdition. He is also called “the son of perdition.” These signify what is said of the end of the beast in his fell work on earth, for the beast and the false prophet were cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev.19:20¹⁶).

When the beast rises from the abyss, then will arise the revived Roman empire, as seen in the ten diadems being on the horns, in Rev.13:1¹⁷: The ten horns, which are ten kings, will receive author-

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.8>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.11>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.20>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.13.1>

ity with the beast for one hour (3.5 years). They have one mind to give their power and authority to the beast. These ten horns, with the beast, shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate, that is, they will plunder her of her wealth and make her as a wilderness. This fact is emphasized, that they will make her naked and eat her flesh, indicating the sacking of Babylon by the beast, his ten kings and their armies. Finally, they will set her on fire. God will put in their hearts to do His will, to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God shall be finished.

Finally the beast and these ten kings shall war against the Lamb, as in the great battle of Har-Magedon, as described in Rev.19¹⁸: Of the coming beast, the “king of fierce countenance,” it is said, “He shall magnify himself in his heart, and in their security shall he destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes (who is the King of kings); but he shall be broken without hand” (Dan.8:25¹⁹). The Lamb shall overcome them, for He is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him, who are called and chosen and faithful. Faithfulness during their life on earth will be a factor in the character of those who shall be with the Lord and share in His triumph in the great battle of Har-Magedon. All the saints of the Church which is Christ’s Body will be with Him in His coming to earth, but not all these will be amongst the faithful. The faithful have a special place and reward. Babylon’s fall and destruction are given in detail in Rev.18²⁰: An angel of great authority and marvellous glory cries with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.”

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.8.25>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18>

Her lewd corruptions given in Rev.17²¹ are repeated in Rev.18:3²², and in addition we are told that the merchants of the earth had become rich through her luxury. In her fall she had now become a habitation of demons, unclean spirits, and of every unclean and hated bird. Some of God's people who for one reason or another, perhaps to share in her luxurious prosperity, are in Babylon, are called by a voice from heaven, "Come forth, My people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Her sins like those of Sodom of old had reached to heaven. She is to receive double punishment for her works. She had glorified herself and waxed wanton. She thought of herself as a queen and not a widow, but torment and mourning were to be her portion. In one day her plagues were to come upon her, and she was to be burned with fire, which, as we have seen in Rev.17:16²³, is to be carried out by the beast and the ten kings.

In this they carry out God's judgement on Babylon. Earth's kings, other than the beast and the ten kings, shall weep and wail over her, when they see the smoke of her burning, and standing afar off shall say, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgement come. And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." Then in Rev.18:12²⁴, 13²⁵ we are given a list of the goods and slaves that were bought and sold in Babylon. This list also clearly indicates that Babylon is a literal city. The kings and merchants

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18.3>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.16>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18.12>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2018.13>

are real men and God's people are real people. The whole scene in these two chapters (Rev.17²⁶ and rev.18) is intensely literal behind the signs used, such as a woman for a city and heads for kings. Note how in Rev.18:16²⁷ it says that the great city was arrayed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls; it says in Rev.17:4²⁸, that the woman, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots was decked with this finery and jewels.

This is yet another evidence that the woman is a literal city and not simply a religious system. We may also dismiss the erroneous idea about Rome being the city. It has been called the seven-hilled city, as though Rev.17:9²⁹ gives encouragement to this idea. The heads are mountains, and the mountains are kings. The RV renders Rev.17:10³⁰ correctly. "They are seven kings," not, "There are seven kings"! (AV/KJV). The grief and consternation of the merchants and shipmasters are graphically told in Rev.18:15-19³¹ as they weep and mourn and cast dust on their heads, as they watch the burning of this rich and luxurious city. But in contrast to this weeping and mourning by those whose interests were entirely worldly, we have this word, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgement on her." A strong angel casts as it were a great millstone into the sea, and says that thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. Her day of mirth

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18.16>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.4>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.9>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.10>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.18.15-19>

and music, of craftsmen and their craft, the voice of the millstone and of the bridegroom and the bride shall no more be heard in her.

Her merchants were earth's princes and with her sorcery all nations were deceived. The worst of all her sins was that in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all them that have been slain on the earth. Thus shall come to an end Babylon the great, the city that is yet to be. Where shall she be built? To such a question one would not seek to prophesy, but one sees no reason to question that she will be seen at last in the same land that saw her rise of old, in the land of Chaldea by the Euphrates.

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 19

Rev.19¹

Following the destruction of Babylon heaven is filled with rejoicing and the voice of a great multitude is heard saying, “Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong unto our God: for true and righteous are His judgements; for He hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and He hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And a second time they say, Hallelujah.” Then we are told that “the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah.” A voice from the throne said, “Give praise to our God, all ye His servants, ye that fear Him, the small and the great.” Then responded a great multitude with a voice as of many waters, “Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth.” Such was the rejoicing in heaven over the righteous judgement of God upon Babylon the great, the city which shall yet corrupt the earth, one of whose kings had been the beast in his first term of office (see Rev.17:10²,11³). During his second term of office he shall with the ten kings destroy her. It is said that the smoke of Babylon goeth up for ever and ever (Rev.19:3⁴); this must be the smoke of the torment of the people of Babylon, not of the materials of which the city itself was built. It is said

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.10>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2017.11>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.%203>

in Jud.⁷⁵ that Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities are “suffering the punishment of eternal fire.”

This does not mean that the materials of which these cities were constructed are still suffering, or that materials suffered at all. It means the people of those cities. See also Rev.14:11⁶: After this is seen another woman of quite another sort. She is the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. What is said about her is altogether beautiful. “Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” What saints are indicated in the words, “the righteous acts of the saints”? These saints are quite evidently those who are comprised in the Bride, as it would be inconceivable that the Bride would have a garment made of the righteous acts of other saints.

We have already seen in our notes on Rev.⁴⁷ that there are those who hold that the four and twenty elders are the saints of the Bride of the Lamb. The ordinary reader of this chapter would never arrive at such an opinion, for the elders are again seen associated with the four living creatures, and quite clearly they are a distinct company from the saints of the Bride. Who are the saints of Bride? At the time of the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, Old Testament saints have not yet been raised from the dead. This is clearly seen from Dan.12:1-3⁸ and Rev.11:15-18⁹, also Rev.20:4-6¹⁰: The com-

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude.7>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.11>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.1-3>

ing of the Lord for the Church, for all in Christ, takes place before Daniel's seventieth week begins, before the calendar of events connected with the Jewish people commences. The Lord may come for His Church at any time, as it is not necessary for any prophetic events to transpire before He comes for the Church. As 1 Thess.5:1-5¹¹ shows, times and seasons have to do with the Lord's coming to earth and with the day of the Lord which is ushered in with that coming. That day cannot overtake the saints of this dispensation. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

In addition to the saints of Old Testament times not having been raised when the marriage takes place, the remnant nation of Israel is in the wilderness, having escaped from the dragon and the beast, and her scattered seed of faithful men and women are undergoing the severity of the beast's persecution. Besides these there are a vast number of believing Gentiles on the earth, as is indicated in Rev.7¹²: All these not being present in resurrected bodies will form no part of the Bride. A composite Bride of saints of all dispensations or of the Jewish nation and the Body of Christ is an entirely unscriptural conception. The Church the Body of Christ, which is the Bride of the Lamb, is a unique body of saints which cannot be amalgamated, confederated, coalesced with any other group of saints whatever. There can be no marriage involving the saints of the Body of Christ then present and saints of other dispensations not present, and besides those of Israel who are on earth undergo-

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.15-18>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4-6>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.5.1-5>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.7>

ing the suffering of bestial persecutions, there are those millions of children of Israel who will be born during the Millennium who will not be present either.

The Scriptures plainly teach from the typology of Adam and Eve, and other brides of the Old Testament, and the apostle's exposition in Eph.5:22-33¹³ makes abundantly plain, that the Church which is Christ's Body is the Bride of the Lamb. The marriage of the Lamb causes great joy in heaven. Here the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus (Eph.3:7-11¹⁴) will be revealed to the wonder and admiration of all in heaven, and God is glorified. The Lamb's wife had made herself ready, for it had been given to her to array herself in fine linen, bright and pure. This fine linen is the righteous acts, or righteousnesses, of the saints. This is not the imputed righteousness of Christ, but acts or works of righteousness done by the saints themselves. It seems evident from this that the judgement seat of Christ is past when the marriage takes place. The unworthy, carnal works of the saints have been burned up, as 1 Cor.3:15¹⁵ shows. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so a through fire."

The Bride will have no purple and scarlet garments like the harlot of Rev.17¹⁶; neither will she have jewels of gold, precious stones and pearls: she will appear in the pure spotless garment of bright and pure fine linen. She will be a sight to dazzle every eye that sees her as she takes her place beside her Divine Bridegroom. What a day it will be! She had been a true spinster when she waited for the com-

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22-33>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.7-11>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.15>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17>

ing of her Bridegroom, when in earth's night with lighted lamp she spun the linen of her marriage dress. Much that saints have done unseen to any human eye will be revealed in that great day. May we each be spinsters while we wait for His coming. It seems quite clear that the marriage and the marriage supper of the Lamb are two different events. While the marriage takes place in heaven, the marriage supper takes place on earth. The parable of Matt.22:1-14¹⁷ shows the marriage feast or supper. The people of Israel were the first of the invited guests, but they would not come. Then other messengers were sent to them, but they would not come, but went to their several employments. The rest were more antagonistic and shamefully treated the servants of the King and killed some of them.

Whereupon the King sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then a much wider invitation was sent out to the highways and the marriage feast or supper was filled with guests. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that guests, as in verse 10, do not form the Bride or part thereof. The destruction of the opposing and murderous Jews, and the burning of the city, took place in the years 70 A.D., when Titus, the Roman emperor, slew countless Jews and burnt Jerusalem. All the saints of the Church will share in the fine linen of the Bride's attire, and there can be none in the Bride like the man who had not on the wedding garment provided for all the guests at the feast. None of the saints in the Bride will ever be bound and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then in Matt.25:1-13¹⁸ we have the marriage feast again and the coming of the Bridegroom. Here it

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.1-14>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.1-13>

is accentuated, that in connection with this some will be ready and some not ready.

Such is the picture of the kingdom of heaven at the end of the age, at the time of the coming of the Son of Man to earth. Those who are ready for His coming will go into the marriage feast or supper, and, as it says in Rev.19:9¹⁹, “Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Such a feast at the Lord’s coming to earth is indicated in Isa.25:6-8²⁰, as also is the resurrection and restoration of Israel: “And in this mountain shall the LORD of Hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”

Following this we are told that John fell down before his feet to worship him, that is, the angel that showed him these things, as in Rev.22:8²¹: He was told not to do this, for the angel was his fellow-bondservant, and that of his brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus, which testimony is the spirit of prophecy. That is, what Jesus testified was in its nature and meaning prophecy. The Lord said that His words were spirit and were life (Jn 6:63²²). His words were living as all the oracles of Scripture are, and His words are the an-

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.9>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.25.6-8>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.8>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.63>

swer and fulfilment of all prophecy. John was told to worship God, a work which is proper to all created intelligences; the opposite of which is idolatry; the giving to that which is created what is due to the Creator only. “And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” He who will be a Bridegroom and Lover to some will be a Judge and Man of war to others. Happy indeed are those who share in His everlasting love, whether as Bride or friend. His eyes are a flame of fire: such was His character when He judged the condition of the seven churches, in Rev.2²³ and Rev.3²⁴: Now He comes to judge the world in righteousness, and to war against the beast and his armies (Acts 17:31²⁵; Rev.17:14²⁶).

On His head are many diadems, tokens of royalty, for He is King of kings. He has a name written which He only knows (see Phil. 2:9²⁷; Rev.3:12²⁸). His garment is sprinkled with blood, perhaps the better rendering is that of the AV/KJV, “Dipped in blood”. His name is called the Word of God. The Lord as the Word is shown in the writings of John in four ways: the Word who was in the beginning with (towards, or in fellowship with) God; the Word who created all things; the Word who became incarnate and was manifested among men, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:1²⁹,2³⁰,14³¹). Now He

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.31>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.14>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%202.9>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.12>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

appears as the Word of God in judgement. In all senses He is the true and full expression of the mind of God. The armies of heaven follow Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. They are clothed in garments similar to those of the Bride on her marriage day. In the one case the linen is bright (Gk. lampros, shining) and pure, and in the other the linen is white and pure. It is too much to say that those armies are the saints of the Bride, because they are arrayed in fine linen.

We are told that when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, ALL the angels shall come with Him (Matt.25:31³²). We are also told that He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in ALL them that believed (1 Thess.3:13³³; 2 Thess.1:10³⁴); and from this we deduce, that all the saints of the Church which is His body will be with Him. But we also believe that the saints of the Church who have been faithful will have a special place in the battle, when the Lord wars with the beast, the ten kings, and other kings, and their armies. See Rev.17:14³⁵ where it speaks of those who are with Him, as “called and chosen and faithful.” We see these things at the moment from afar; we shall understand more about them in due time. The Lord shall smite the nations with the sharp sword of His mouth, which sword is the spoken word, as in Eph.6:17³⁶ and 2 Thess.2:8³⁷; and those of the na-

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.2>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.14>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.31>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.3.13>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.10>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.14>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.17>

tions that are left after His judgement is past, He shall rule or shepherd with a rod of iron; this bespeaks the strong, unbending character of His righteous rule over men. No lawlessness will be tolerated then.

He shall then tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. The vintage of the earth is reaped, in Rev.14:17-20³⁸, and cast into the winepress. It is the Lord who treads the winepress. See what is said in Isa.63:1-3³⁹, about the Lord treading the winepress, and of His blood-stained garments. On His garment and on His thigh is written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. He has a perfect right as the divinely appointed Ruler and Owner of this earth to show His authority and to subject all things to His will; He is not a limited Monarch, but one who is absolute. His word is law and His will the standard of human conduct. Before the marriage feast, where all the guests will be blessed, comes the great supper of God. This is for the carrion birds that fly in mid-heaven. They are gathered together to eat the flesh of kings and of captains, the flesh of mighty men and of horses, for great will be the carnage in that battle of Har-Magedon, the last battle that will be fought on earth, for with this the Lord will make wars to cease to the end of the earth (Ps.46:9⁴⁰).

The destruction of Gog and Magog will be like to that which fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, when they were completely devoured by fire and brimstone from heaven. In contrast to the slaughter of the armies of the beast and his confederate kings, the beast and the

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.8>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.14.17-20>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.63.1-3>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.46.9>

false prophet were taken and cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone, and they are still there in torment a thousand years after, when the devil is cast into the lake of fire (Rev.20:10⁴¹). This is but the beginning of eternal torment, which goes on day and night perpetually. Let all hear and fear before God Almighty whose punishment of the wicked will be eternal. His judgements will be perfectly just. He cannot do wrong, whatever wicked men say about His judgements.

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.10>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 20

Rev.20¹

At the time of this battle an angel comes from heaven with the key of the abyss (see Rev.9:1², the key of the abyss is in the hands of God's angel and not in the hands of the wicked), and a great chain in his hand. He lays hold of the dragon, who is the Old Serpent, the Devil and Satan, who is given his full description, so that there is no doubt who he is. He is bound for a thousand years, and cast into the abyss, which is shut and sealed over him, that He should deceive the nations no more during the thousand years of the reign of Christ with His saints (Rev.20:4³). After the thousand years he is loosed for a little time, and he goes forth to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog (Rev.20:8⁴). His powers of deception are beyond description. He is able to deceive men in the face of the most hopeless consequences of wrongdoing. Thank God, there are those who adhere to the truth of God's word, the elect who cannot be deceived.

The devil's long imprisonment in the abyss does not soften him or change his mind in the least. Such gives us some idea of the awfulness of a reprobate mind, a mind which is wholly given up to sin, in which all virtue is lost. Such is the mind of the devil and of all lost souls in eternity. In Rev.20:4⁵, things which will be true in the Mil-

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.9.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.8>

lennium come into view. First John sees thrones set and they that sat upon them. He does not tell us who these are; but we learn from the words of the Lord that certain of these thrones will be occupied by the twelve apostles. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk.22:29⁶,30⁷).

Besides the apostles there will be many other crowned heads in that day. Each will receive his place of authority in the coming kingdom according to his faithful labour during the time of the Lord's rejection and absence. See Lk.19:12-27⁸; also Rev.2:26⁹,27¹⁰; Rev.3:21¹¹: The rewards will be far more than adequate for what saints have done. Some of the faithful will be highly honoured. Those who come triumphant from the beast come in for special mention. God will set high value on the faithfulness of such. It is not only what they did do, but what they did not do, that brings them unfading honour; they did not worship the beast or receive his mark on their forehead or on their hand. Then there were others who stood up for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus and suffered martyrdom, they were beheaded for their testimony. These all shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Those will then feel as the hymn says, "It were a well-spent journey, Though seven

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.22.29>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2022.30>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.19.%2012-27>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.26>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.27>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.21>

deaths lay between.” The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This, we are told, is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection seems to relate to those who are raised in connection with the Lord’s coming to reign as the Son of Man. The resurrection of those who are in Christ, at which time the living in Christ will be changed, when the Lord comes to the air, is a resurrection before the first resurrection. The Lord comes to the air, at least seven years before He comes to earth. It may be that His coming to the air is very much longer than seven years before He comes to earth. The seven years of Daniel’s prophecy are not related to the Lord’s coming for the Church, but to His dealings with Israel. Indeed if the seven years were related to the Lord’s coming for the Church, we could not look for the Lord to come at any moment, for as so many things are yet to transpire on earth, we could not expect the Lord to come for the Church at any time. But times and seasons are not connected with the Lord’s coming for those in Christ.

Whilst things on earth are hastening on to a climax, and heading up for the end of the age, much is yet to transpire before the Lord can come to earth. The Lord spoke to His disciples of things which would transpire, which would be signs of His coming and of the end of the age. Such are enumerated in Matt.24:3-28¹². They were told that they were to learn the parable of the fig tree, the application of which parable is, that when they see these things come to pass, then they were to know that the Lord was at the doors. Some have said that the fig tree is Israel. The fig tree in this parable has nothing to do with Israel at all. The rest of the dead does not mean all who are unsaved, for many will rise in the resurrection at

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.3-28>

the time of the judgement of the Great White Throne and will find their names written in the book of life. Amongst those who shall rise then will be the repentant men of Nineveh, and the Queen of Sheba, who shall rise in the judgement and condemn the unbelievers of the Lord's time and others. Where are those who will receive eternal life at that judgement? (Rom.2:6¹³,7¹⁴).

The answer to this question must be that they are in that blessed place in Hades, called Paradise, otherwise Abraham's bosom (Lk.23:43¹⁵; 16:23¹⁶; Acts 2:27¹⁷,31¹⁸), the place to which the Lord went at death. All who have part in the first resurrection are both blessed and holy and over these the second death (which is the lake of fire) has no power. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years. Their priesthood will, I have no doubt, be different from the priesthood of the house of Aaron in the house of God, as described by Ezekiel, when the sacrifices of slain beasts will be offered on the altar in that house (Ezek.43:13-27¹⁹, etc.). After the thousand years are finished Satan will be loosed out of his prison for a little while, as we have already seen. He will be at his old ways of deception.

Whether it means that the haters of the Lord have removed as far from the Lord as possible as to be in the four corners of the earth, as some have suggested, we cannot say, but there are Gog and Magog,

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.6>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.7>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.23.43>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2016.23>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.27>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.31>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.43.13-27>

who are referred to in Ezek.38²⁰, and this chapter shows how they go up against God's people who have been dwelling securely for a thousand years. God will plead with the hordes of Gog from the land of Magog with pestilence and blood, and will rain upon his hordes an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone (Ezek.38:22²¹). There can be no doubt that Ezek.38²² describes what Rev.20:7-9²³ also reveals. The hordes of Gog and Magog are like the sand of the sea, and they went up over the breadth of the earth. They were bent on war, and their objective was first, the camp or castle of the saints, and second, the beloved city of Jerusalem.

What was their purpose? Ezek.38:12²⁴,13²⁵ reveals what they are after. They were going "to take the spoil and to take the prey." They were come "to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take great spoil." Here is revealed the covetousness of the heart of man, which has been the cause of almost all wars that have brought little else but ruination in their train. Upon this covetousness Satan has ever played. Satan well knows that men are ever after something for nothing, and in the hearts of men he finds an agreeable seedplot in which to sow his poisonous seeds. This he will find in the hearts of Gog and Magog and their peoples. The end of this revolt is, that fire came down out of heaven and consumed them. So ended earth's last revolt against God.

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.38>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.38.22>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.38>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.7-9>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.38.12>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek%2038.13>

Following this, the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, and there for a thousand years the beast and the false prophet have been, and it finishes with the solemn and awful words, "And they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Here is "the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt.25:41²⁶). "And I saw a Great White Throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne." Here we reach the scene of the last great day of judgement. There have previously been various judgements; the judgement-seat of Christ, at which the saints of this dispensation of grace will receive the rewards which they have merited. All at this judgement-seat will be saved people, but the works of some may be burned up.

This will take place following the Lord's coming to the air for all who are in Christ (2 Cor.5:10²⁷ etc.). Then at the Lord's coming to earth we have the judging and rewarding of the Old Testament saints, and such as die after the Church has been received up to meet the Lord in the air (Rev.11:18²⁸; Dan.12:3²⁹, etc.). Then we have the judgement and purification of the sons of Levi (Mal.3:3³⁰), the judgement of Israel (Mal.3:16-4:3³¹), and the judgement of the living nations (Matt.25:31-46³²). Then after the thousand years of

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.41>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.10>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.18>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.12.3>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.3.3>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.3.16-4.3>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.31-46>

the Lord's reign on earth comes the final judgement of all the dead who were not raised before the Millennium. There is a point and an important one, which does not seem to be revealed in any scripture, so far as the writer knows, and that is, what happens to the people who are alive on earth at the end of the Millennium? We know what happens to Gog and Magog, but what of the rest?

This may be one of the secret things that belong to the Lord. At this final judgement "books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." The books contain a record of the works of the dead. All of reasonable mind will be held accountable for their deeds and the spirit in which the deeds were wrought. All will receive inflexible justice. Who is the Judge? He is the Son of Man to whom all judgement has been given (Jn 5:22³³,27³⁴). "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." The sea and death will give up the bodies of the dead, and Hades will give up their souls, and here it is repeated that the judgement was according to their works. Then we are told that if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. This clearly indicates that there may be some at this judgement, there may be many, whose name will be found in the book of life. This is clearly indicated by the Lord in Jn 5:24³⁵; He first speaks of that translation from death into life, which takes place when a sin-

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.22>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.27>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.24>

ner believes the message of the gospel, in which is the testimony of the Father and the Son, and the witness of two is true.

This is the spiritual experience of the soul of every believer. Then in Jn 5:25³⁶ He says that “the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God”; and they that hear shall live.” Here it is the physically dead, such as Lazarus was, in Rev.11³⁷. Lazarus is a type of all who shall share in the resurrection from (out of) the dead, who shall be raised before the Millennium. All such are blessed and holy, as we have just seen. After this, in Jn 5:28³⁸,29³⁹, the Lord says, “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement.” It is quite clear that in this portion we have the final resurrection of all that are in their tombs, all who will be raised to stand for judgement before the Great White Throne. Here will be revealed those who have done good, and those who have done ill. This is not a judgement to settle whether they will be cast into the lake of fire or not. That was settled before they passed from the earth; it is a judgement to settle the measure of the punishment and to reveal the justice of it. In that judgement it will be more tolerable or bearable for Tyre and Sidon and for Sodom, than for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Matt.11:20-24⁴⁰).

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.25>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.28>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.29>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.20-24>

In that judgement shall stand up the Queen of Sheba and the repentant men of Nineveh and condemn the unbelieving Jewish people (Lk.11:29-32⁴¹). No one can do good who has not first repented, nor can they fear God without repentance. See Acts 10:34⁴²,35⁴³, and Rom.2: 4-11⁴⁴, as to how God will deal with those to whom the gospel has not come in the power of the Spirit. The goodness of God should lead men to repentance. The goodness of God in superabundance is seen in the gospel of His grace, but besides, He is good to all. Finally, death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire, and every one whose name was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire also. Those already there are the beast, the false prophet and the devil (verse 10). Though they are not mentioned in this chapter, the devil's angels may be there also, and such as stood under the figure of goats, in Matt.25⁴⁵, on the left hand of the Lord, may be there as well. Here ends the sad and ruinous course of sin and death which entered the human family in Gen.3⁴⁶: Death will disappear for ever from the redeemed of the human race. It is the last enemy to be abolished (1 Cor.15:26⁴⁷).

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.11.29-32>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.34>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.35>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.%204-11>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.3>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.26>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION 21

Rev.21¹

John, who saw the awful day of judgement, now sees the rapturous sight of a new heaven and a new earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. “New” in each of the three cases is the Greek word *Kainos*. There are two words in the Greek for “new,” *kainos* and *neos*. *Kainos* means new, recent, recently made, not had before. *Neos* means new, fresh, young, youthful. The old heaven and earth are not put through a refining process and turned out new, rejuvenated in youth and freshness. We are told that the first earth and heaven passed away, and in Rev.20:11² we are told that “there was found no place for them.” In 2 Pet.3:10³,12⁴ we are told that the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and that the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Again it is said that we look for new heavens and a new earth (*kainos* in both cases) wherein dwelleth righteousness. There can be no doubt that “new” in these cases does not mean the renewal of the old earth and heaven, but new in the sense that they were not before. This fact is strengthened by what is said in Heb.1:10-12⁵, where we are told that the earth and the heavens shall perish, that

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.11>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.10>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%203.12>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1.10-12>

they shall wax old a a garment, and be rolled up like a mantle, and as a garment they shall be changed. We know what is meant by changing a worn-out garment. It is not renovated to become a new one. It is put off and changed for a new one, one that we had not before. It is more difficult to understand what heaven shall pass away.

There are three heavens:

(1) the firmament or expanse which was made on the second day of Gen.1⁶, which God called heaven; this was a heaven for the renewed earth;

(2) the heaven which God created with the earth in the beginning;

(3) and the third heaven (Paradise) (2 Cor.12:2⁷,4⁸), which is heaven itself (Heb.9: 24⁹), where the throne of God is (Rev.4:2¹⁰,3¹¹).

It may be that it is the heavens (1) and (2) that will be dissolved and pass away, and their place will be taken by a new heaven. About this we would not be definite, but leave it to the reader to consider. God says, "Behold, I make all things new," which must not be read, "Behold, I make old things new." Trench says of *kainos*, "new, not under aspects of time, but of quality, the new as set over against that which has seen service, the outworn, the effete or marred through age, and this is *kainos*." The city, the new Jerusalem, is called, "The Tabernacle of God." The word tabernacle (Gk. *skene*) does not

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.12.2>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2012.4>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.%2024>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.2>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%204.3>

mean in every use of the word a temporary building or tent, as Heb.8:2¹²; 9:11¹³ shows. God will at last realize fully His desire that He should dwell with men (Ex.25:8¹⁴; 29:45¹⁵; 1 Kgs.6:13¹⁶; 8:27¹⁷; 2 Cor.6:16¹⁸). In the past, God's dwelling among His people in the tabernacle and the temple was conditioned on their obedience.

The building of the tabernacle as proposed by God, in Ex.25:1-9¹⁹, followed Israel's acceptance of the covenant conditions, when they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken will we do, and be obedient" (Ex.24:7²⁰; 19:5-8²¹). Because of their disobedience, God forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh (1 Sam.2:12-4:22²²; Ps.78:60²³,61²⁴). Similarly, the temple built by Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, because of the disobedience of Judah and Benjamin (2 Chron.36:1-21²⁵), and for seventy years they languished in Babylonish captivity. Then a remnant returned and built again the house

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.8.2>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%209.11>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.25.8>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2029.45>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kings.6.13>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kgs%208.27>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.16>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.25.1-9>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.24.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2019.5-8>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.2.12-4.22>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.78.60>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2078.61>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Chron.36.1-21>

of God, as is described in the book of Ezra. The condition of obedience to God's revealed will is still fundamental to God dwelling among His called out and gathered together people. Thus Paul wrote to the church of God in Corinth, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor.3:16²⁶,17²⁷). "Destroyeth" (Gk. *pheiro*) means to corrupt either by evil doctrine or practice, or both, for the latter follows the former.

Paul says, "Evil company doth corrupt good manners" (1 Cor.15:33²⁸). Where are the good manners when they are corrupted? They exist no longer. So also the temple of God, which was the church of God in Corinth, the dwelling place of God in that city, if it was corrupted by evil doctrine and practice, and so destroyed, it ceased to be God's temple. The temple of God is ever a conditional thing. Utter confusion has existed and still exists in almost all religious literature on the difference between the Church which is Christ's Body, and the church and churches of God, which together form the temple of God. It ought to be clear to all who have a modicum of understanding of the Scriptures, that the Church which is Christ's Body, the Bride of the Lamb, cannot be corrupted. In that new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell for ever, the holy city, new Jerusalem, the Bride and Wife of the Lamb, shall be God's tabernacle, His dwelling with men on the new earth; "They shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev.21:3²⁹).

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.16>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.17>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.33>

Here the present and ancient desire of God shall be fully realized, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Cor. 6:16³⁰; Lev.26:12³¹). In this holy city will be found, what has so frequently been thwarted by men’s carnal, rebellious hearts, that obedience and worship which are ever a people’s due to their God. Men have so often vainly presumed to worship God without regard first of all to the vital matter of obedience, and often men’s precepts have taken the place of God’s word. The Lord touched on this weighty matter when He quoted to the Pharisees and scribes the words of Isa.29:13³²: “This people honoureth Me with their lips; But their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Matt.15:8³³,9³⁴). When the time of Rev.21:3³⁵ is reached the results of disobedience will have passed away; for Rev.21:4³⁶ says, “And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.” What a state of blessedness is here unfolded!

All these things which entered through man’s disobedience, and were experienced in succeeding generations of those who were disobedient, will then have come to an end. A completely new state

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.3>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.%206.16>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.26.12>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.29.13>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.15.8>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2015.9>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.3>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.4>

of things will have come, in what is called the day of God, a day which we should earnestly desire (2 Pet.3:12³⁷), the day of eternity (2 Pet.3:18³⁸, RV marg.). These faithful and true words will then have come to pass. As is the Father, so is the Son – the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev.21:6³⁹; Rev.22:13⁴⁰), He will give to all thirsty ones (Greek, present participle), who are even now thirsty, of the fountain of the water of life freely, gratuitously, for nothing. The sole condition of the gift is that we are thirsty. “He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” In what sense are we to understand “overcometh” here?

The word “overcometh” is used frequently in Rev.2⁴¹ and Rev.3⁴², and, in regard to overcoming there, rewards are offered; saints may overcome by divine strength or be overcome through human weakness. If this is the sense in which “overcometh” is used in verse 7, then it may well be that few will inherit the things mentioned previously in the chapter, and we may ask, What will be the portion of the rest of the saints? I am disposed to the view that the overcoming here is that of 1 Jn 5:5⁴³: “And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” “Our faith” is the victory that overcometh the world. That faith is identified, that Jesus is, as Pet. confessed, the Christ, the Son of the living

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.12>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.18>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.6>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.13>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.5>

God. Such a believer is built by the Lord into the Church, against which the gates of Hades cannot prevail. All the members of the Church which is His body are overcomers by their faith that Jesus is the Son of God, and will be presented sinless and pure by the Lord to Himself (Matt.16:15-18⁴⁴; Eph.5:22-27⁴⁵), they are overcomers in the absolute sense over all the powers of earth and hell.

Hence what they will receive as in these verses is an inheritance, not a reward. The things offered to the overcomers of the seven churches were rewards, not inheritances. Inheritance in these verses is the inheritance of the saints in light. If the overcoming is for saints in churches of God, then I can conceive that inheritors will be few compared with the rest of saints. What will the rest of the saints inherit? God will be the God of the inheriting overcomers and they will be His sons. But in contrast to those who will be God's sons, there is this company of unbelievers of various grades of wrongdoing.

There are the fearful or timid, who ever saw dangers in believing in Christ, because of the enmity of the world against Him: the unbelievers who are a numerous class, who for one reason or another failed to believe in Christ: the abominable, morally and religiously filthy, the loathsome and detestable: the murderers, a class never few, but greatly on the increase in these days: the fornicators, this is one of the kind of sinners that Paul says, God will judge (Fornication is one of man's immoral members, and exceedingly prevalent): the sorcerers, in the Greek this signifies one who prepares drugs, with which was associated in the past enchantment, magic, and association with spirits, evil spirits (A crude form of this still exists

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.15-18>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22-27>

in the “medicine-men” of pagan countries): the idolaters, these are an exceedingly numerous class [Education has not swept the world free of idolatry. The Roman church is full of it, and also the vast pagan religions. The world is also full of it, in “covetousness, the which is idolatry” (Col.3:5⁴⁶); the liars, the world is well stocked with these; there are religious liars, political liars, business liars, social liars, and one might go on in an interminable list, for liars are of all shades and grades.

All these unrepentant and unforgiven sinners shall find their part in the lake of fire, that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. Then came one of the angels, who had the seven bowls with the seven last plagues, to show to John the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb. He carried John to a mountain great and high, and forward in prophetic vision to the time of Rev.21⁴⁷: The new Jerusalem was not descending out of heaven in the time in which John lived. The Bride of the Lamb is a city, even the holy city, the new Jerusalem. What is a city? It is not simply a pile of buildings, but signifies a people who are dwelling together and have houses in the buildings of the city. It may seem unnecessary to say this, but there are so many opinions in existence about the new Jerusalem, that it seems necessary to say that we do not believe that this city is simply a people of no fixed abode.

In Rev.19:7⁴⁸,8⁴⁹ the Lamb’s Wife is seen in her marriage dress of fine linen; here in Rev.21⁵⁰ she is seen in the city in which she lives.

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.5>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.7>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2019.8>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21>

Her marriage dress is of her own righteous acts, but her home is a city whose Builder and Maker is God (Heb.11:10⁵¹). This city descends out of heaven from God its Maker. “The Wife of the Lamb,” of Rev.21:9⁵², is undoubtedly “His wife,” of Rev.19:7⁵³: The description here surpasses anything else in Scripture, except heaven, as in Rev.4⁵⁴: The glory of God radiates from this city, the light or luminary of it is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. This is like the glory of God in Rev.4⁵⁵, which is mixed with the red colour of a sardius. The inherent and radiated light of the city is as clear as crystal. We have already indicated definitely our view, that the Church which is Christ’s Body is the Bride of the Lamb, as to the saints who are comprised in it. Which is also the view of most expositors of the Word and of hymn-writers. Even so great a servant of God as John the Baptist called himself the friend of the Bridegroom (Jn 3:29⁵⁶), but overcoming saints of this dispensation, who were members of Christ’s Body, were promised that they would have the name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem, written upon them (Rev.3:12⁵⁷).

We have also shown, in our notes on Rev.19⁵⁸, that Old Testament saints or Israel are not part of the Bride. The city had a wall great and high. It had twelve gates or portals, three on the east, north, south, and west, and at the gates twelve angels, and written on the

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.11.10>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.9>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.7>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.29>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.12>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19>

gates or portals were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The wall had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This is no millennial scene, but an eternal order established by God, which will not give place to another, as the Millennium will. Twelve angels stand on guard at the gates as heavenly sentinels, it would seem. In the east, a gate (Gk. *pule*) was a place of considerable size, "it was in the gate that the Orientals assembled to pass away time, and to hold their market and their courts of judgement." If we conclude, because the names of the tribes of Israel are written on the several gates, that there the redeemed of the tribes of Israel will be found, the gates or portals of the city may extend far beyond our feeble conception now. What will be their functions at the gates is not revealed.

We may think of the number twelve, as some have done, as being a governmental number, but even if it is, what assignment of government is given to the tribes is not revealed. It is well not to try to fill in, in our present ignorance and part knowledge of things, what God has left out. We may be perfectly sure of this, that the Bride is not an amalgamation of two or more groups of saints belonging to different dispensations. Then on the twelve foundations were the names of the twelve apostles. What are the names of the twelve tribes? Are the names according to birth, the names of Ephraim and Manasseh being left out and that of Joseph their father in? Can we be sure? Again there are fifteen apostles that we know of. Is Matthias the twelfth, or who? We shall be better able to say when we read the names on the gates and foundations. The wall of the city marks the extent of the Bride; all those within are the Bride and those without are not, and the foundations with the names of the apostles form the dividing line between those within and those

without. The wall cannot be for protection from attack from enemies, for the day of enemies is past for ever. The twelve foundations are adorned each with a particular precious stone.

What is the first foundation? Is the first foundation the topmost one? If we think of the first foundation being adorned with jasper, this would agree with the wall which was jasper, so that we begin with a foundation like crystal. Sapphire may be white or of a bluish colour. Chalcedony is a grey colour, with a mixture of purple, blue and yellow. Emerald is green, brilliant as the rainbow round about the throne (Rev.4⁵⁹). Sardonyx is whitish with red veins. Sardius is red. Chrysolite is a golden colour. Beryl is of bluish green colour. Topaz is a yellowish green colour. Crysoprase is a golden green, green, the colour of a leek. Jacinth violet colour with a mixture of yellow. Amethyst of deep purple colour. We have only to think of this galaxy of gems to have some little conception of the grandeur of the adornment of the foundations.

The height of the wall is immense, 144 cubits high, at least 216 feet. The length, breadth and height of the city are equal, twelve thousand furlongs (Gk. stadion), (the Greek stadion or furlong was 606 feet, the English furlong 660 feet). What kinds of gates or portals will be needed for a city so immense and a populace so numerous? It is well however not to be dogmatic about these measures in our equivalents, when it is stated that the cubits are according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. This statement may seem somewhat ambiguous to us. Does it mean that the measure is according to how a man measures with accurate measuring, or is it according to the scale of human measurement. What these measures are given for may be to teach us on the one hand that the city is a

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4>

place of measurement, and that the measures are immense. The wall is of jasper and the city itself of pure gold like pure glass. This kind of gold does not belong to this earth. It will be brilliant and possibly translucent.

The twelve gates were of twelve pearls, each gate was a pearl. The street also of the city was of gold as transparent as glass. There was no temple of material kind in the city, for, we are told, “the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.” We read of overcomers being made pillars in the temple of God (Rev.3:12⁶⁰). Here we are in the realm of faith and not of reason, where we must believe implicitly what God says, for it is beyond our minds to conceive what is meant. Here the true worshippers shall in the fullest sense worship God in spirit and truth. Ritual and buildings will be done away with, and in a holy nearness, yet with holy reverence, and recognition of the distance which must ever be between the Creator and His creatures, whether angels or men, the true worshippers shall for ever worship God. True worship is of the spirit, and not of the flesh, which, alas, is often decked in the fantastic garments and make-up of ancient times, as though it is the clothes that make men holy. The city will not be lighted from above, as the earth is by sun and moon now; it will be illuminated from within by the glory of God, and the lamp that sheds that glory, through all its vastness of gold and glass, is the Lamb.

The nations which dwell on the new earth outside of the city will walk in the light thereof, that is, the earth will also be illuminated by the glory of God which will shine outward from the city. The AV/KJV has “the nations of them which are saved,” but the better rendering is that of the RV, “the nations shall walk,” etc. Though

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.12>

“of them that are saved” should be omitted, yet this is an implied fact, in the light of the fact that they are dwelling in the new earth. The kings of those divinely constituted nations will bring their glory into the city in acknowledgement of what is due to their Creator and Redeemer. Though men have ever been failures in giving to God His due (Ps.29:1⁶¹,2⁶²), that will never be so any more. Then the selfishness of the human heart will have gone for ever, and men will gladly give in sinless and unhindered service what is God’s due from them. It is further said, “And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.” This holy service will go on continually, for the gates shall not be shut by day, and there is no night there. It will be an eternal day.

Nothing unclean, abominable or a lie shall ever enter there, and only such as are written in the Lamb’s book of life will have the privilege of entering the city. What all this will mean we can with our poor minds dimly perceive. Nothing that was ever thought or penned by men can compare even faintly with the glorious vision of this chapter, of the Lamb’s Bride and Wife, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, whose Builder and Maker is God, and this Bride as to its personnel are the saints of the Church which is Christ’s Body. The redeemed of mankind are seen in this chapter in three immense groups: (1) the Bride comprising the Church which is Christ’s Body; (2) the redeemed of the twelve tribes of Israel whose twelve names are on the portals of the city; (3) the redeemed of Gentile peoples now constituted under kings. These three groups should not be confused.

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.29.1>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2029.2>

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

22

Rev.22¹

Here John is shown a river of the water of life, which is bright as crystal, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is different from Ezek.47², where the waters of the river issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, and ran down on the right side of the house of God, on the south side of the altar [the north side of the altar being the place where the sacrifices were killed (Lev.1:11³; Ezek.40:35-42⁴).] This river shall flow from the house of God to the city of Jerusalem, for the millennial temple shall not be in Jerusalem, but in the priests' portion of the land. The river shall divide when it passes through Jerusalem, the one half of it shall go to the eastern sea (the Dead Sea), and the other half to the western sea, the Mediterranean (Ezek.47:1-11⁵; Zech.14:8⁶; Isa.33:21⁷; Ps.46:4⁸).

This river of Rev.22:1⁹ issues from the throne of God and the Lamb, for in the new Jerusalem there will be no temple. It flows in

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.47>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.1.11>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.40.35-42>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.47.1-11>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.14.8>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.33.21>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.46.4>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.1>

the midst of the street of the city, but where it flows to we are not told, for there is no more sea. On both sides of the river there is the tree of life (not trees of life). This takes the mind back to the garden of Eden, in the midst of which was the tree of life (Gen.2:9¹⁰), but here there will be no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life will bear twelve manner of fruits, a different kind each month. This also is different from Ezek.47:12¹¹, where we are told that on the bank of the millennial river grows every tree for meat, and they bring forth new or first fruits every month, because the waters of the river issue from the sanctuary. “Every tree” does not mean the tree of life. The fruit will be for meat and the leaf for healing. The water of the river which flows to the Dead Sea shall heal the water of that sea and it shall swarm with fish. The leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations.

What does the “healing” of the nations mean? The word for “healing” in the Greek is *therapeia*, the first meaning of which is “service”. In the eternal state there can be neither disease nor death. If there is no disease, then what does the word healing mean? I am of the opinion, that whereas there will be no disease, there may be some draining of their strength from their employments and some measure of exhaustion, and the leaves of the tree of life will have a vivifying effect upon them. In contrast to the use of the leaves by the nations, the overcomers will have the right or privilege to come to and eat of the fruit of the tree of life (Rev.2:7¹²; Rev.22:14¹³). There will be no more curse, for there will be no more disobedi-

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.2.9>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.47.12>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.7>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.14>

ence. The one thing followed upon the heels of the other. Here again we are told that the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city. His bondservants shall serve (Gk. *latreuo*, to render divine service) Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

What an honour and what a joy this will be! Here will be realized to the full the hopes of all His servants. Night shall be no more, so that neither lamp nor sun will be needed any more. The Lord God Himself shall give them light and they shall reign for ever and ever. Such will be the portion of God's servants. Thus closes the description of the Lamb's Bride, and those who shall surround her, Israel and the redeemed nations. These words are faithful and true. Then we are told that the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass. He says, "Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." Whilst the book of Revelation was sent first of all to the seven churches to show the servants of God what would come to pass in the future, it has, like all Scripture, a wider application than to those to whom it was written at the first. Paul lays down this principle in regard to what God spoke to Abraham, "It was not written for his sake alone ... but for our sake also."

God would have His servants know what He intends doing in regard to things on earth, so that they might follow the course of His actions, and so be saved from the error of the wicked. He expects them to keep His word as a sacred trust and a means of their deliverance from evil. The greater part of the book will be of vital importance to those saints of God who will live in the period between the Lord's coming to the air for the Church and His coming to

earth as the Son of Man, when His feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives. John assures us that he heard and saw these things, and who can doubt that this faithful and suffering apostle is a credible witness? He fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed him these things, as he did in Rev.19:10¹⁴, but he was told to worship God, for he (the angel) was a fellow-bondservant with John, and with the prophets, and with such as kept the words of the prophecy of this book. Further, John was told not to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time was at hand.

This is the opposite of what Daniel was told: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Who can doubt that we are in the time of many running to and fro? Time and space on this earth seem well nigh eliminated by the swiftness of the means of travel on and over the earth. Then, the increase of knowledge in the last few decades has been enormous. For long centuries human knowledge remained static, but in recent years it has bounded forward with breath-taking speed. This is all according to the sure word of prophecy. How far the preparation for these events will be advanced before the Church is caught up to meet her Lord is not revealed. We have seen in recent times Israel restored to the land of their fathers and constituted a nation among the nations of the earth, an outstanding event in the fulfilment of prophecy, and how much more saints of the Church may see is hidden from us, but saints of the Church are assured by Scripture that they will not live in the days of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel’s seventieth week, the last three and a half years of which is the time of the great Tribulation.

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.10>

Here we have the solemn fact as declared by Solomon: “His own iniquities shall take the wicked, And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin” (Prov.5:22¹⁵). It would seem that the speaker of Rev.22:11¹⁶ is the Lord, for in Rev.22:12¹⁷, He says, “Behold, I come quickly.” The words of verse 11 are both solemn and precious. “He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still.” The sinner who refuses the grace of God in Christ and the cleansing and delivering power of the blood of the Lamb becomes fixed in a permanent and unchangeable state. He can do nothing but continue in the doing of unrighteousness and become more filthy by his thoughts and deeds. This will be his condition for ever and ever. There is no repentance and forgiveness for the sinner who rejects God’s one remedy for sin, the death of His Son. As with the sinner, so it will be for the saint. “He that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still.” Here also is a state of permanence in righteousness and holiness; there will be no change in the condition of the saint throughout eternity. The change wrought in him by God’s grace remains throughout eternity.

There will be for him no falling away from the gate of heaven to the pit of hell, as some have thought to be possible. It was to this end that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, “that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love” (Eph.1:4¹⁸). The Lord says that He is coming quickly. The Greek

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.5.22>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.11>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.12>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.4>

word *taxu* has the thoughts of quickly, suddenly, and soon, in it, hence He expects that His own will be in a state of expectancy of His coming. His coming is not simply a doctrine that we hold, but the coming of One we love, who cheers us in the night of our waiting with the thought that He is coming quickly. There is no delay on His part. The prophetic word is, that He shall not tarry (Heb.10:37¹⁹,38²⁰). The Greek word for “come” is *erhomi*, a verb of movement, in contrast to *parousia*, presence, usually translated by “coming” with reference to the Lord’s coming, which signifies His arrival.

When the Lord comes He is bringing His reward with Him to give to every man according as his work is. Thus we learn that the Bema or judgement seat of Christ will take place immediately after His coming. Each will receive according to the deeds done in or through the body. The Lord Jesus, equally with God the Father, is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. As is the Eternal Father, so is the Eternal Son, and so also is the Eternal Spirit – one God. The Lord Jesus Himself said, “Before Abraham was (Greek, was born) I am” (Jn 8:58²¹). It is not, before Abraham was, I was, which would mean simply that He lived before Abraham, but it is “I am,” and the truest definition of God’s Eternal Being is, “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex.3:14²²), and what God is, He was, and will be. “Blessed are they that wash their robes.” The AV/KJV has, “Blessed are they that do His commandments,” but “wash their robes” of the RV is a text that we may safely follow. The

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.37>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2010.38>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.58>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.3.14>

robes are not themselves, but their habits, they are what people see, the things that are done. Such as washed their robes had the right to the tree of life and also to enter by the gates into the city. The cleansing of robes is something that men do in this life and not in the life to come.

It seems clear enough that those who wash their robes are not such as dwell in the city, the saints who compose the Bride, but such as dwell outside the city. Here in Rev.22:15²³, we have again those whose characters are mentioned in Rev.21:8²⁴, whose part will be in the lake of fire. These will be in that awful “without” for ever, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt.8:12²⁵). “I Jesus have sent mine angel.” As the Lord used the name the Son of Man much more frequently than Son or the Son of God, He seems to take pleasure in the name Jesus. He said to Paul, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” But Paul did not say in reply, “What shall I do, Jesus?” but, “What shall I do, Lord?” Jesus is to us the Lord, the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though exalted on the throne of God, He is still the same humble, lowly, loving Jesus, who lived and walked and talked with men on earth. He is “this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven” (Acts 1:11²⁶).

This Jesus sent His angel to testify these things for, or over, the churches, so that they might know the things that were yet to come to pass. The Lord is the Root of David, the Divine Being from whom David sprang, and the Offspring of David, being of the seed of David according to the flesh. He is also the bright and the morn-

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.15>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.8>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.8.12>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.11>

ing Star, the One who is coming for the Church just before day breaks over this earth, at His coming as the Sun of righteousness, who shall arise with healing in His wings. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” The Spirit who began His work by moving upon the dark waters, in Gen.1:2²⁷, and who moved in dark hearts in convicting and regenerating power (Jn 16:7-11²⁸; 3:5²⁹,6³⁰), joins men in testimony with Him, in Jn 15:26³¹,27³²: Here we have the joint invitation of the Spirit and the Bride for men to come. The call to come goes out in ever widening circles, “And he that heareth, let him say, Come.” Then, “He that is athirst, let him come,” and “He that will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

How gracious and how free is the invitation to come to the water of life, both now and for ever! The words of the book of Revelation must not be tampered with, nor added to, nor any words taken therefrom. This is true of all Scripture. Moses said, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deut.4:2³³). This is repeated in Rev.12:32³⁴, and in Prov.30:5³⁵,6³⁶, we read, “Every word of God is

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1.2>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.7-11>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%203.5>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%203.6>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.26>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2015.27>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.4.2>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.32>

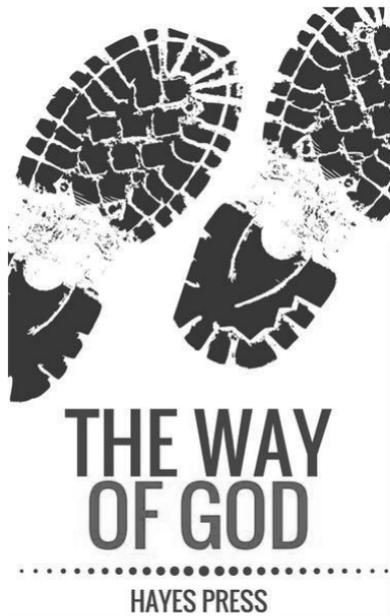
35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.30.5>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2030.6>

tried (Heb. purified): He is a shield unto them that trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Adding to or diminishing from the words of the book of Revelation has serious penalties, (1) "God shall take away his part from the tree of life," and (2) out of the holy city," (3) and "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

These words do not, I judge, refer to any saint in the Church, the Bride of Christ, for such saints will not be on the earth when the plagues of the book of Revelation fall upon the earth, but relate to those of that serious time after the Church has gone to be with the Lord. The Lord who testifies the things of Revelation says, "Yea: I come quickly," and John, the beloved, responded, "Amen" (his assent meaning, "Come quickly"): "come, Lord Jesus." How touching! and how personal! as though the old man's heart leaped up to the heart of his Lord, with that nearness that he knew when he lay in His bosom at the last supper. Let us learn too to say from the heart, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." Until that glad day of His coming may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints, grace in its manifold application to suit every need. "Amen."

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