

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. II)

STUDIES IN REVELATION

VOLUME 42

**Published by
NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE
ASSEMBLY HALL, GEORGE LANE,
HAYES, BROMLEY, KENT**

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BIBLE STUDIES

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11). '

VOLUME 42

JANUARY 1974

EDITORIAL

Our study for 1974 of the second main section of the book of Revelation appropriately follows last year's study of the books of Zechariah and Malachi with their closely related prophecies of end-time events. Also the recent publication of "The Finger of Prophecy" provides an invaluable companion volume to our studies in the coming months in the Lord's will. Fellow-students will find the contents full of guidance on many of the matters we shall debate in writing.

All of this convergence of study interest on the end-time prophecies of Scripture could not be more significantly timed in the immediate context of world events. As the international spot-light focuses ever more sharply on Israel, the lover of Holy Scripture is drawn to a re-examination of many of the forward pronouncements of the Word regarding this beleaguered little nation. Even taking the fullest account of wise caution in interpreting contemporary events, the new and direct concern of the major world power blocks in Israel-Arab peace negotiations is surely significant. As we follow the closing fortunes of Israel's chequered history in the book of Revelation our thoughts will often revert to Paul's words to the Romans. "Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (Rom. 11. 12).

Indeed to those of us spiritually nurtured in the churches of God it seems a little strange that so many evangelical commentators can interpret such passages as we examine this month in terms other than of Israel as a nation. Reference is made in papers to the common assumption that "the woman" of Rev. 12 is "the church". The central role of Israel in this and subsequent chapters of Revelation seems to fall into place very clearly when the New Testament teaching on the Church which is His Body is appreciated in terms of a unique divine purpose encapsulated, as it were, as

to its earthly expression, in **the period from Pentecost to the Rapture** (1 Thes. 4. 16, 17). The fulness of the **Gentiles** having **then come in** (Rom. 11. 25), **the stage will be set for the final drama of Israel's history**, leading through **the time of Antichrist's rule to the tribulation and the ultimate triumph of Israel's delivering Messiah**. The prophecies of Daniel, which clearly distinguish the roles of **Gentile nations and of Israel**, seem to **fit so closely**, especially in relation to **the weeks "decreed upon thy people"** (Dan. 9. 24). **While** it is only to **be expected that the line of prophetic interpretation very sketchily indicated above will be afforded full exploration and discussion to mutual profit**, it is the wish of editors that fellow-students submitting papers should be free to present a wide variety of thoughts and suggestions. Papers submitted **this month reveal a serious application to the passage and an approach**, at once scriptural and imaginative, to both principle and detail examined.

J. D. T.

CHRONOLOGY OF MALACHI

The split 69 weeks—A comment on C. L. Prasher's article in November, 1973 issue.

The **first period of seven weeks must have significance**. The phrasing of **Dan. 9. 25 would doubtless warrant assigning to this period the complete rebuilding of the city with its moat (or ramparts)**. C. L. P.'s suggestion that it commenced with the instruction to **Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign has sound scriptural support and is in line with many authoritative views**. There is also considerable support for dating this instruction as around **445 B. C., two useful examples being the Newberry Bible and Anderson's "The Coming Prince"**. This takes the **seven weeks to 397 B. C., and again these two authorities give their support**. We are therefore indebted to C. L. P. for suggesting as an additional reason for the split that **the seven week period may well take us to the close of Old Testament revelation, leaving the 62 week period to cover the silent years**.

J. L. F.

REVELATION 12

SATAN AND ISRAEL

From Nottingham: Rev. 12 can be divided into three sections—vv. 1-6, 7-12 and 13-17. Many conjectures have been made as to

the identity of the woman, e. g. that the woman symbolizes—

- a) The virgin Mary, and the Man child the **Lord Jesus**.
- b) "The church", and the Man child an increase in the prosperity and growth of "the church".
- c) Israel, and the Man child the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must ask in what way can v. 5 be applied to each one, i. e. ". . . and her child was caught up unto God, and unto His throne"? The corresponding views to (a), (b) and (c) above on this point are: —

- a) the reference *is* to the exaltation of the Lord after His resurrection.
- b) ". . . a symbolical representation. Some event was to occur or some divine interposition was to take place, as if the child thus born were caught up from the earth to save it from death, and was rendered secure by being in the presence of God and near His throne" (Dr. Albert Barnes).
- c) The same as for (a).

We can reject view (b) at once. Without entering into detail as to the ambiguous use of the term "the church", *it* is clear from Rev. 2 and 3 that the time of John's writing was far from being a time of spiritual growth and prosperity. Further, we are dealing with a period when the Church the Body will have been taken up to glory.

The view (a) seems more worthy of thought but in the light of certain scriptures we reject it. It is true, of course, that the Lord was born of a virgin (Mat. 1. 22, 23) but Mary, blessed though she was among women, was only a channel through whom the blessing of God came.

When we consider such scriptures as Rom. 9. 5, John 4. 22, Acts 13. 22, 23 and Rom. 1. J we see that God chose Abraham to make of him a nation through which blessing would flow to all mankind. Consequently we accept without hesitation the view (c). The woman symbolizes Israel and the Man child *is* the Lord; of Him only can it be said that He was "caught up unto God, and unto His throne", and that He will "rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12. 5). We must realize that there is a considerable gap between the events of verses 5 and 6. V. 5 we think refers to the birth of the Lord, that is the bringing of the Lord

into **this world through the instrumentality of the woman**. There is also reference to **His ascension and His future rule**. Note the tenses used: **"she was delivered"** (past), the **"child was caught up"** (past), but is to rule (future).

In v. 6 we have the fleeing of the woman into the wilderness. The period of 1, 260 days in v. 6 is described as **"a time, and times, and half a time"** (v. 14), and as **"forty and two months"** (13. 5). This we view as the second half of Daniel's 70th week, although we must not think that the child was born and caught up at the start of this period of three and a half years.

The following interpretation of some further symbols in the chapter is suggested: - **"Arrayed with the sun"** (v. 1). If the woman is Israel, the sun is the Sun of Righteousness, the Lord [Comment 1], Then **"the moon under her feet"** suggests derived glory. She was called by divine choice, and her glory was that which God gave to her. **"Twelve stars"** (v. 1); these suggest to us the twelve tribes. Contrast these with the seven diadems on the heads of the dragon (v. 3). The crown (Git. *Stephanos*) of twelve stars speaks of triumph. The seven diadems on the head of the dragon show power and authority, and we think that they have reference to the power over the nations which the devil will have especially at that time. V. 3 **"a red dragon"**. The dragon is Satan (v. 9) and red may symbolize the blood he will cause to be shed in war and murder for his cause. V. 4. The drawing down of the third part of the stars of the heaven is possibly a further symbol of the power which Satan will exercise over the nations, especially in those last days. He knows he has but a short time (v. 12) and his wrath and evil work are full. The stars may speak of the nations, i. e. Gentile nations which God will allow to be in authority; and the drawing down may speak of their utter degradation under Satan's evil hand [Comment 2].

V. 5: **"Water as a river"**. This suggests a great host of nations energised and controlled by Satan in their war against Israel. V. 16: **"The earth opening her mouth"**. This may refer to an earthquake which will so alter the physical structure of the area concerned as to open the ground and swallow up the attacking nations. With reference to these last two signs, if we take the **"water as a river"** to be purely symbolic, are we justified in taking the **"earth opening**

her mouth" to be far more literal? [Comment 3]. *R. Hickling*

From Hayes: This chapter is mainly concerned with the Great Tribulation which occurs after the rapture of the Church which is Christ's Body.

The woman (v. 1) represents Israel as symbolized in the twelve stars for the twelve tribes. Probably the sun refers to "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mai. 4. 2); for He was One who "hath sprung out of Judah" (Heb. 7. 14), and this woman (Israel) brought forth "a man child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (v. 5), undoubtedly referring to the Lord Jesus [see Comment 1].

The red dragon referred to in 12. J is clearly a symbol of Satan who instigated the move by Herod and, later, the envy of the priests (Mat. 27. 18) to bring about the death of Jesus. He, however, was caught up unto God and His throne (v. 3) when He was raised again from the dead.

The time will come when Israel will have to flee into the wilderness (v. 6) and be there for the first half of the tribulation, i. e. 1260 days (v. 6) [Comment 4]. It is predicted in vv. 7, 8 and 9 that Satan and his angelic followers will be cast out of heaven. According to Job 1. 6 he used to have access there. However, because of his descent to earth (v. 9), it will be particularly obvious that "the whole world lies in the evil one" (1 John 5. 19), and he will especially concentrate his hatred against Israel (v. 13).

G. Grattidge

From Vancouver: It does not seem unnatural for Satan to be seeking the ultimate destruction of God's people. John sets this attempt in the form of a sign and not as a picture of the real thing. The woman with the sun, moon and twelve stars adorning her speaks to us of Israel and also reminds us of Joseph's dream. The red dragon refers primarily to Satan himself but in a wider scope we see the operation of the man of sin in this chapter as the tool of Satan [Comment 5]. The child patently speaks to us of Christ and this account reminds us of three things: (i) the discomfort Christ caused Israel when He was here (v. 2); (ii) Satan's attempt to thwart God's plan of salvation (v. 4); (iii) Christ's return to His Father to await His rule of the nations (v. 5).

There were two schools of thought as to the application in time of v. 6. Although all thought that Israel will be nourished during

the first half of the tribulation years, some wished to equate the fleeing into the wilderness with that in v. 14 [see Comment 4]. Others felt that Israel's fleeing into the wilderness (v. 6) has a present application in Israel returning to the land (the place prepared of God) to escape the dominance of countries like Russia [Comment 6],

We find in vv7-9 that Satan is no longer allowed access to heaven and so wreaks more havoc than ever here on earth. All agreed that this will take place midway through the seven years. The main point in this chapter seems to be that Satan is not yet defeated. He still has much to do but we are reminded by the voice to look to the future, "knowing that he hath but a short time". He knows it, too.

The next few verses concern the second three and a half years. As we are aware, at this point the severe persecution of Israel begins. It would seem from v. 13 that the reason for this is that Israel brought forth the Christ. What irony! We are taught from Mat. 24. 16 that a number of Jews flee for refuge to the mountains at this time. This is alluded to in v. 14. Satan vents his fury on these first. Some felt that the water refers to armies and that the earth helping the woman would be an earthquake, perhaps, to destroy the armies. Others referred to the natural rift that exists in the eastern Mediterranean area. Satan, being aware of the discrepancy in levels between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas could use Arab engineers to attempt to flood southern Palestine and blot out these Jews. This is a distinct possibility in modern times; we are acquainted with similar feats of men to change the course of nature. The distance between the seas is only about forty miles. However, God doubtless uses a natural phenomenon in the form of the rift mentioned above for the earth to open up and swallow the water and protect His people [Comment 7]. Having been foiled here, Satan turns his wrath on the rest of Israel. We take it from v. 17 that these will include the many Jews who accept the Christ in the tribulation.

J. C. Bell

From Melbourne: The symbolic language of Rev. 12 deals with both past and future, but not in chronological order. As frequently found in the prophetic writings, the day of grace is by-passed. We are introduced to the figure of a woman, which is readily ident-

fied as Israel because of that with which she is arrayed, being vividly reminiscent of Joseph's dream as related in Gen. 37. 9.

One of God's great purposes through Israel was the bringing into the world of His Son, the destined ruler of the nations of earth. Of the metaphor used in v. 2, which speaks of travail in birth, there are at least two interpretations. One view taken is that it represents the sorrows of Israel under Gentile rule from Assyria or Babylon downwards to the birth of Christ. The other view is taken by directing our thought to Is. 66. 7 where a woman is said to give birth before her travail; the travail here being the time of the great tribulation yet to come, when at least two millennia will have passed after the birth of the Man child, Christ [Comment 8]. The great red dragon is stated to be the old serpent, the devil and Satan. The instrumentality which he uses in his abortive attempt to destroy the child can be seen in Herod's decree to slay the male children of Bethlehem. The ascension of the Lord to the throne of God is seen in v. 5. Then follows a timeless period, including "the day of grace", before the ushering in of the great tribulation upon the woman, Israel, when a place is prepared by God for her refuge and sustenance. This place prepared would appear to be those lands referred to by Daniel: Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon (Dan. 11. 41), which in the purposes of God will not come under the rule and authority of the persecutor of Israel, Antichrist. The time of her sojourn here is stated to be 1260 days or 3½ years which we understand to be the period during which the great tribulation will take place. Then follows war in heaven and the casting down of Satan and his angels to earth, the number of which is, we suggest, referred to in v. 4—"the third part of the stars of heaven" [see Comment 2]. Satan is referred to as the accuser of the brethren, which takes our thoughts back to Job 2. Those who are accused by him will, we judge, avail themselves of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin; its efficacy will still be available under the Gospel of the Kingdom, which we believe will be the word of their testimony, and for which many of God's witnesses will lay down their lives. The casting down of Satan and his angels will greatly increase demoniacal activity on the earth; it will also be the prelude to the reign of earth's rightful King who will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

We judge that the Satanic persecution of v. 13 will be of Israel through his representative, the Antichrist, during the great tribulation, with a view to blotting out the name of Israel from off the earth. The flight into the wilderness is evidently the same event as referred to in v. 6, and to the lands previously mentioned [Comment 9], Some have suggested that the two wings of a great eagle may refer to an air-lift by friendly nations favourable to Israel. The flood of water as a river would appear to suggest a vast army sent out after the fugitives who have fled in response to the warning of Mat. 24. 15-22, The earthquake of v. 16 we judge to be literal, possibly in the Jordan valley, completely engulfing the pursuers.

The frustration of his plans will cause the wrath of the dragon to increase against the rest of Israel's seed which keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus. This may refer to Jewish believers outside the land of Israel who have heard and believed the Gospel of the Kingdom [see Comment 11].

P. W. A., DM., T. W. F.

From Liverpool: In studying this chapter it is evident that the woman is seen as Israel in her twelve tribes and also as a **remnant** of faithful ones who will die rather than bow to the dictates of the Antichrist. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9. 6). John the Baptist came to "turn many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God... to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him" (Luke 1. 16, 17). What John did in his day, others will do in a coming day. In Rev. 12 God sees Israel as the woman arrayed with the sun, the twelve stars reminding us of her founders, the twelve sons of Jacob. From her would come the Christ who would reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Luke 1. 53). We know from Rev. 20. 2 that the Dragon is the old serpent, the Devil, and Satan. He is mentioned as the Dragon twelve times in this book. In the historical account of the birth of Christ, the Devil sought to destroy the child through Herod the King (Mat. 2).

In Rev. 12 the dragon is now cast down to the earth with his angels and seeks to take vengeance on the woman. The time of this persecution is stated as a time, and times, and half a time.

This works out as $3\frac{1}{2}$ years or 42 months or 1260 days. As far back as Dan. 9. 27 we read of one coming who will make a firm covenant with many for one week. In the middle of the week he breaks his covenant and causes the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. This one week we understand to be a week of years or seven years. Half of this week is $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

The Lord Jesus warned His disciples in Mat. 24. 15-31 of the conditions that would prevail in those days. Satan's man is on the earth as seen in 2 Thes. 2. 3-11. The falling away has come and the man of sin is revealed. He sits in the Temple of God, setting himself forth as God. The abomination that maketh desolate is in a holy place where everyone can see it. This cannot be inside the Temple. The word for place (*topos*) is never used of the holy place in the Temple [Comment 10]. The warning is to flee. The Dragon is cast down to the earth and is persecuting the woman, the woman here being the faithful remnant who will not bow to the Antichrist or receive his mark. A place is prepared for this remnant, namely Edom and Moab and the land of the children of Ammon (Dan. 11. 41). There they will be safe by the power of Almighty God. It is also clear from Rev. 20. 4 that many will lay down their lives rather than submit to the claims of the Antichrist. These are they who loved not their life even unto death. The earth helping the woman would find fulfilment in this safe retreat. Water as a river would surely be the awful time of tribulation coming upon the faithful remnant of those days.

The rest of her seed means the elect scattered throughout the nations. When the Lord Jesus returns as Son of Man, He will send forth His angels to gather His elect to Jerusalem (Mat. 24. 32) [Comment 11].

G. S. W.

From R. A. Parker (Stoke-on-Trent):- The sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel ends at Rev. 11. 18. V. 19 begins a new phase of revelation by the angel to John. The Temple of God that is in heaven opens. As a result there follow lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. Such things "proceed out of the throne" as Rev. 4. 5 shows. This is a point of climax. A similar result occurs when the seventh bowl is poured out upon the air—lightnings and voices and thunders... and a great earthquake... and great hail (Rev. 16. 17, 18, 21).

In Rev. 4. 5 we have a statement of fact whereas in Rev. 11. 19 and Rev. 16. 18 they are the results of an open Temple. At what point does the Temple open? Surely at the time when **the Temple** on earth is closed by the breaking of the covenant, i. e. at the middle of the 70th week. We suggest therefore that the seventh bowl relates to the middle of the week [Comment 12].

Rev. 12 deals with Satan's supreme effort to frustrate the work of God being wrought on earth through Israel. Through this nation came the written Word and also the Word Himself became flesh. The unique privilege of the woman, seen as a great sign in heaven, is linked with the opening of the Temple in heaven. There would be no ark of His covenant in heaven if it were not for the Incarnation, the work through a woman subject to the power of God [Comment 13]. Vv. 3-6 show the operation of Satan over a long period from the time of Christ's birth to the middle of the 70th week. He is directly related to the seven heads and ten horns. Since the period of the passage is from Christ to the middle of the week it is feasible to conclude the seven heads and ten horns relate to this period also. We know, however, that there is a time gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. The ruling kingdom during the 69th week was Rome and during the 70th week it will be a revived phase of the same empire. The heads, we suggest, are consecutive rulers of the kingdom, six of which are now past and one has yet to come (Rev. 17. 10).

The final departure of Satan from heaven is vividly told in vv. 7-12. This event we believe will occur also at the middle of the week because it coincides with the woman being given two wings that she might fly into the wilderness (12. 14). We conclude therefore that the whole of the passage (Rev. 11. 79-12. 17) deals with matters having a direct relationship to the middle of the 70th week [see Comment 12].

R. A. Parker

IMPRESSIONS FROM OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Papers were also received from Atherton and Leigh, Birkenhead and Derby. Below are a few thoughts culled from these.

While all agreed that the woman of Rev. 12 stands for Israel (her twelve tribes seen united in the crown of twelve stars), one view was that she was a symbol of a God-fearing remnant of Israel as God saw them, clothed with their Messiah Saviour's glory. Again

the Man child born to the woman was taken to be the Christ Himself, but one paper suggested a secondary interpretation, viz. that the travailing in birth refers to Israel's great persecution and suffering out of which she will give birth to a more healthy and godly nation which the Messiah will lead with singing into Zion (Isa. 35. 10). The figure of a woman in travail is used to illustrate national suffering in such scriptures as Ps. 48. 6, Jer. 6. 24, 13. 21, Mic. 4. 9, 10 etc. [Comment 14].

Each paper notices the 2000-year gap between the end of v. 5 and the start of v. 6. This gap, which includes the era of the Church the Body, is to be seen in several prophetic scriptures (e. g. Dan. 9. 25, 26; Is. 53. 10, 61. 2). Thus from the prophetic viewpoint Rev. 12 presents Israel as having not long given birth to the Christ. Ascended presently to God's throne, Israel's great Offspring awaits the hour to deliver her from His and her enemies. Meanwhile she must pass through her bitterest experience of all, to prepare her to receive Him. It is striking that her rejection of Him in life and her demand for His death are not even hinted at; despite her past attitude He will finally respond to her fearful outcry and save her from utter extinction.

The casting out of Satan from heaven (v. 9) was clearly distinguished from what the Lord Jesus referred to when He said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10. 17-18). One paper suggested that Satan's battle with Michael (vv. 7, 8) will take place in Satan's domain, i. e. "the air" (Eph. 2. 2). In other words, the term "heaven" in v. 7 was taken to mean "the air", not the dwelling-place of God [Comment 15].

The archangel Michael seems to be closely linked in Scripture with the people of Israel. In Dan. 12. 1 he is referred to as "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (see also Jude 9). These words are particularly applied to the time of Jacob's trouble; and while it may be difficult to ascertain the actual role of Michael and his angels in relation to Israel during the period, the Rev. 12 context of the battle with Satan indicates that the casting down to earth of Satan is somehow related to Israel's destiny. Certainly the casting down is regarded as a victory for those who had been faithful "unto death" (v. 11). However, for the people remaining on earth, the devil's fall to earth will be fearful

in the extreme. Because of the setbacks he has **suffered**, and because he knows he has little time left, he will **unleash the severest** forms of suffering ever known by **a remnant of Israel**.

The reason for the devil's implacable **hatred** of Israel is clear from v. 13. It is because she is "the **woman** which **brought forth** the Man child". As she flees into the wilderness, **the serpent follows** her, it is suggested, with his vast flood of soldiery, which **will** be destroyed by divine intervention rather as **Pharaoh and** his chariots were in the Red Sea. However, "the rest of **her** seed" (v. 17) will continue to suffer fearfully. Presumably they remain in Jerusalem and in the land [see Comment 11]. *Eds.*

COMMENTS

1. (Nottingham): I would be hesitant about identifying **the** sun in v. 1 as the "Sun of Righteousness" (**Mai. 4. 2**)—**the Lord** Himself. His specific identification in the passage is as **the** "man child". More than one paper recalls Joseph's dream (Gen. 37. 9). The picture there of the family origin of the Israel nation seems to be reflected in this resplendent presentation of the **woman**.

2. (Nottingham): The interpretation of "the third **part** of **the** stars of heaven" (v. 4) seems to present two main possibilities to us. One suggested in this paper is that the reference is to **Satan's** power over the nations. However, it seems to me that there **must** be some significance in the fact that these "stars" were "**of** heaven" and were cast "to the earth". The passage in Dan. 8. 9, 10 seems very closely parallel where there is reference to the "little horn" (Antichrist, I suggest)—"and some of the host and of the stars *it* cast down to the ground". I suggest that this also relates to Rev. 8. 6-13 where the term "one third" probably indicates a **large** minority, and Satan's activity is released upon the earth. In this view the Dragon's tail drawing and casting to the earth would be a slightly different pictorial presentation of upheavals among the heavenly bodies, affecting the earth. This rather supposes, it is true, that this "drawing" and "casting" *is* not pin-pointed in time before the birth of the man child as the text of v. 4 might well be thought to infer. Perhaps this violent activity is, however, more generally descriptive here of Satan's evil powers in the universe. I have difficulty in seeing the stars of v. 4 as angels confederate

with the Dragon (v. 7—"his angels"). He would not surely be doing them violence?

3. (Nottingham): Most contributors do see the "water as a river" as symbolic of military forces, and Dan. 11. 22, 26 is adduced in support since the same metaphor seems to be in mind there. Is it not much more difficult, however, to envisage a figurative interpretation of the earth opening her mouth? Where can we envisage forces capable of swallowing up the Dragon's armies in a scene of such domination by the evil One? The question raised is perfectly valid, of course, but I feel the indications are of a figurative interpretation in the first instance and literal in the second. The analogy of Israel fleeing from Pharaoh via the Red Sea is suggestive too.

4. (Hayes): When speaking here of the "first half of the tribulation", I take it the reference is to the first half of Daniel's 70th week? The same expression and thought are contained in the contribution from Vancouver. Yet I think all will agree that the period of the great tribulation commences in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, with the breaking of the covenant by the Beast. It may be a little confusing to speak of the *first* half of that week as part of "the tribulation". The main issue raised by Vancouver friends, however, is whether the nourishing of v. 6 is in the *first* 3½ years of that great prophetic "week". I suggest that it is very clear that the nourishing referred to in v. 14 is in the *second* half of the week, i. e. the time of the great tribulation, following the Dragon's expulsion from heaven. Now is it not true that the people of Israel will be for the most part peacefully getting on with living and Temple worship in Jerusalem during the *first* half of that week—albeit in a false sense of security soon to be rudely shattered? They will be in unbroken covenant then with the Beast. How then can v. 6 picture Israel *fleeing* to a place of refuge for nourishing during this period? It is when the covenant is broken that the tribulation breaks out and Israel needs to flee. This seems to me to indicate that vv. 6 and 14 refer to the same events and period.

5. (Vancouver): Presumably the operation of the man of sin which is thought to be seen in chapter 12 is his reflection in such characters as Herod in the out-working of v. 4—"that he might devour her child".

6. (Vancouver): Is it not a little difficult to think of **the land** being described as a wilderness, even taking the point about divine preparation?

7. (Vancouver): This is an interesting theory based on the geography of the land of Israel and the surrounding terrain. While it does not seem possible to rule out some such explanation and fulfilment, I should have thought that, even by the standards of modern technology it would be hard to bring about the flooding of southern Palestine by anything short of an earthquake. Still, as our friends infer, yesterday's human impossibilities are today's commonplaces!

8. (Melbourne): The travail of the woman representing Israel must, I would say, refer to circumstances and conditions of the nation *before* the birth of Christ. This seems more true to the symbolism described here, although it is true that Israel's national experience can be depicted as travail at many points in her history. The Man child "caught up unto God, and unto His throne", can surely only be the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. (Melbourne): I would agree that the flight into the wilderness is the same event as that referred to in v. 6. This, however, does not tie in with the suggestion made by Melbourne friends in their preceding paragraph where they say about the great tribulation "*then* follows war in heaven". Surely it is the casting down of Satan from heaven which unleashes on earth the great tribulation—as indeed their later sentence seems to agree in reference to v. 13. The key seems to be the "pause", as it were, at v. 7 to describe the conflict in heaven which triggers the tribulation before the narrative returns to the flight into the place prepared for Israel.

10. (Liverpool): Whilst appreciating the interesting point that the term *a* holy place (Gr. *topos*) is nowhere else used of the Temple, how can 2 Thes. 2. 4 ("*he* sitteth in the sanctuary of God") be interpreted other than in terms of the desecration of the Temple itself? Does the "ye see" of Mat. 24. 15 necessarily imply that everyone can see the "abomination"?

11. (Liverpool): In trying to determine the scope of the term "the rest of her seed" (v. 17), I suggest that the main criterion should be that given, viz. "which keep the commandment of God

and hold the testimony of Jesus". Whether in Jerusalem or elsewhere such believing Jews would be the enemy's target.

12. (R. A. P. Stoke-on-Trent): I myself have difficulty in seeing how the seventh bowl (Rev. 16) relates to the middle of the "week". Surely 16. 20—"every island fled away, and the mountains were not found"—is not a scene from the middle of the week?

In support of this comment, may I add that 11. 19 does not seem to me to be linked with 12. 1, but with what had gone before, as the chapter arrangement suggests. 11. 19 fittingly concludes the phase of divine judgements presented in the seven trumpets. Then begins an entirely different subject in 12. 1, focussing attention on *Israel* at the time of the end. *G. P. Jr.*

13. (R. A. P. Stoke-on-Trent): Is it really clear that there is a definite link between the opening of the Temple (11. 19) and the delivery of the man child (12. 2), or between the Incarnation and "the ark of His covenant"?

I hardly think so. The Mosaic tabernacle was a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Heb. 8. 5), yet this was established 1500 years before the Incarnation. I also see no necessary connection between the opening of the Temple of God in heaven and Anti-christ's interference with Jewish worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. *G. P. Jr.*

14. ("Impressions"): While the symbolism of the woman in this chapter seems clearly to point to Israel, the significance of her resplendent array is variously approached in our papers this month. I feel that written large over Rev. 12. 7 could be the words, "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4. 22). Israel as the "mother" of the Christ is before us, and as such God cannot but see her in splendour and glory. This latter is seen most clearly at certain periods (e. g. Solomon's days and in the Millennium), while darkly veiled in association with Messiah's rejection and the entail of that national tragedy. I would hesitate to pin-point the beautiful array of v. 1 to a particular time.

15. ("Impressions"): Does not the reading of Rev. 12. 7-12 present to our minds the spectacle of conflict in the very courts of heaven itself? To read "the air" for "heaven" here would be to import a new meaning for "heaven" in the book of Revelation from that which the vast majority, at least, of the other references

describe, i. e. the celestial dwelling place of God. The point is well made about Luke 10. 17, 18, the judicial expulsion of the Adversary from a place in heaven by right. Yet, as contributors this month point out, Job 1. 2 as well as Rev. 12. 10 itself, indicate a certain *access* of Satan before our God. I see this passage as an arrogant assault by the Devil and his host on the very stronghold of the Most High. His overthrow there was a cause of vast rejoicing in the heavens and an omen of fearful terrors for the earth, the target of the Dragon's final fury compounded by his frustration in the heavenly conflict. J. D. T.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Atherton and Leigh:

(a) Why is Israel (the woman) visualised as in travail, because of the Roman yoke, her spiritual depravity, or the Devil's persecution?

See Comment 8. The state of the nation at the time of the birth of Christ was a sad one whose sorrow was compounded, I suggest, of all the factors mentioned in the question.

(b) Please comment on v. 4—"the third part of the stars of heaven". See Comment 2.

(c) Who are "they" in v. 11 and how did they overcome? Is martyrdom involved in their victory?

I submit that the overcomers mentioned in vv. 10, 11 may include, in anticipation, the martyrs of the great tribulation, just as the announcement by the "great voice" (v. 10) carries us forward in thought to the final visible triumph of Christ. The final scenes of His manifest conquest were opening up.

(d) Do vv. 14-16 indicate that people of other nations assist Israel in her flight so neutralising Satan's attempt at destruction?

See Comment 3 on the river and the earth (vv. 15, 16). I agree with the suggestion from Melbourne and Liverpool about the probable role of Edom, Moab and Ammon (Dan. 11. 41). *J. D. T.*

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario
Primed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11). '

VOLUME 42

FEBRUARY 1974

EDITORIAL

This month's study involves one of the main difficulties of interpreting the prophetic Scriptures—how to understand the tenses of the verbs used in certain passages. A well known example is **the** use of the past tense in Is. 53 although Messiah's sufferings lay 700 years into the future at the time Isaiah wrote. Why was **the** past tense used? We understand that the prophetic word **in that** chapter is presented as an utterance of repentant Israel when the Lord Jesus has been revealed as her Messiah. So the past tense is used, viewing the Lord's sufferings from th? perspective of **the time** of Israel's mourning (Zech. 12. **10, 11**).

It emerges then as a principle of prophetic interpretation that in many instances situations are viewed from the perspective of the times to which the prophecies apply, and the tenses of the verbs in such passages are in harmony with this perspective.

In considering the seven heads of the beast in Rev. 13 this point becomes vitally important. For in explaining the mystery of **this** beast and its heads and horns, the angel that talked with **John in** chap. 17 said: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; **and** is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition". While of the heads in particular he added: "They are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come" (17. 8, 10). Are we to understand these sentences as related to the time John was writing? If so, we may be attracted to the suggestion **that** the five heads which had fallen, and the one who had power at **the** time John wrote, each represented a Roman Emperor—Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius. Caius, Claudius and Nero have been cited in one paper this month as possibilities. This theory would imply that one of these ancient Roman Emperors will emerge again from the abyss at the time of the end and assume control of a **revived** Roman Empire.

Or are we to understand the angel's interpretation as related to a point in time after the re-emergence of the great end-time power-bloc in the old Roman Empire area? Applying the principle as stated in paragraph two of this editorial, we may validly suggest that the angel spoke from the perspective of say year two of Daniel's seventieth week. In that case, the five heads (kings) who had fallen could well be five successive rulers of the re-emerged Roman power, including the first term of office of "the prince that shall come", during which he would have established his firm covenant with many of Israel (Dan. 9. 26, 27). A sixth king (head) is said to be ruling at the time the angel speaks; a seventh is to follow and continue for a little while. Then mid-way in Daniel's seventieth week will emerge the "beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven". His first term of office had been ended when he received the death stroke, and the whole world will wonder at his healing and return from the abyss. He will break the covenant made with Israel in his first term of office, and initiate the world-wide reign of terror known as "the great tribulation".

Consideration of Rev. 17. 8 would favour, I suggest, the second interpretation proposed. For the beast that was, and is not, is stated to be "about to come up out of the abyss". This seems hardly aporoDriate when 1900 years have passed since John wrote the book. Moreover, the verse reads as though the earth dwellers who wonder at the beast, "how that he was, and is not, and shall come", were witnesses of his death stroke as well as of his re-emergence. We are given the impression of a dramatic, fast-moving series of events at the time of the end, including Satan's masterly simulation of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. *G. P. Jr.*

THE ANTICHRIST

World problems today centre largely in the need to relieve international tensions and to revise the monetary system in order to provide greater economic stability. These urgent considerations call for a person strong enough to impose the necessary changes. We know that such a Person will be found when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to earth to reign for 1000 years (Rev. 20. 4). But the question arises, "Will this be the direct outcome of present universal problems"? In the following comments we shall seek to show

from Scripture that before that great day of peace on earth dawns, another will try to create such conditions and will fail.

The Person.

Men of today, educated to be specialists in every field to a standard unknown heretofore, and with technical "know-how" beyond the wildest dreams of our forefathers, cannot begin to grapple with the problems. What manner of person, therefore, will dare to cope with such a task?

In the writings of Daniel much is said about this, but it is our purpose to gather our material from the New Testament. From the outset we must clearly separate two things—the man and the spirit he embodies. In 1 John 2. 18 both these are mentioned: "Anti-christ cometh... even now have there arisen many antichrists". The spirit of antichrist has been manifested down through the years, and will culminate when *the Antichrist* arises. He is clearly identified as an individual, being described in 2 Thes. 2. 3 as "the man of sin,... the son of perdition", one "whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders". This links up with Rev. 13. 4, 5. "They worshipped the dragon (Satan), because he gave his authority unto the beast... there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months". So we can summarise this section as follows:

1. This will take place at the time of the end.
2. Prophecy foretells a time to come when a man is seen as head of a world system.
3. The man will be a follower and tool of Satan.
4. He will be allowed by God to have great power, but for a limited time only.

The System.

1 John 2. 18 confirms that there have arisen many antichrists. When *the Antichrist* comes, what then? His power will give him authority over ten kingdoms, either by conquest or by the rulers submitting to him. In all things he will dominate and succeed. It is suggested that a unified monetary system will reduce economic barriers and so facilitate his rise to power; also that his peace formula will reconcile even Jew and Arab for a time. He will dominate the

economic scene. As today many workers are dependent on a trade union card to continue in employment, so in that day none will be able to buy or sell unless they carry on their person the mark of the beast (Rev. 13. 16, 17). Some will boldly show the mark, the mystic number 666, engraved on their forehead; others will carry it secretly on the palm of their hand, only to be shown or exposed in case of emergency or at will. Does this foreshadow a further extension of secret police methods?

In his continued domination the Antichrist will be ably supported by his assistant, the beast of Rev. 13. 11. Despite his horns, this is no lamb in character, but the offspring of the dragon. Eventually this false prophet will persuade the people to "make an image to the beast" (v. 15), and to worship the image. This will mark the beginning of the end. In his rise to power the Antichrist will have pacified the Jews by covenanting to allow the worship of Jehovah to continue in the land. The sacrifices of the Old Testament will again be offered in Jerusalem, and the associated Aaronic/Levitical services will be renewed. But a crisis will develop—to worship the image of the beast or die (v. 15). In their day the companions of Daniel faced a similar threat, and conquered. What will the godly Jews of that day do? They will defy the order. As a consequence their treaty will be broken, sacrifices to Jehovah will cease, the image of the beast will be set up in the Temple at Jerusalem for the peoples to see and worship, and the devout Jew will flee (see Mat. 24. 15-22).

The great dictator will then war with and persecute the Jews for forty-two months. All nations will be drawn to do battle in Palestine against Israel, unaware that this great and final battle is set so that the purposes of God can be fulfilled. The holy city will be compassed about, and for Israel all seem lost. When we consider the instruments of war available today, what will be available in the way of armaments in that day?

His Judgement.

The final overthrow of this dictator is graphically described in Rev. 19. 19, 20. He made war against Him that sat on the horse, the Lord Jesus Christ. As for the beast and the false prophet—"they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone". So all the grandiose schemes of the dragon, put into ex-

ecution by the beast (the Antichrist) and promoted by the false prophet, will finally collapse. His rise is sure, his time of power is sure, his ultimate end is also sure. Tension is not overcome by **him** despite all his power and authority. A unified system of **foreign** exchange does not give peace of mind to earthly peoples. He shows the ultimate folly of many antichrists, and the destruction of his government paves the way for the Prince of Peace who shall rule in righteousness.

Conclusion.

As it has been from the beginning, he that opposeth God is eventually overruled by the power of the One so opposed. We see the day approaching, for who can fail to be aware of the signs of the times as we observe world events in our days, all pointing to **an early** fulfilment of the prophetic word? We look for the promised return of our Ruler, who will take us to be with Himself before the end-time. What manner of persons ought we to be, the more so as we see the day approaching? Our time is short, and is shortening day by day. Let us the more earnestly raise the warning cry to flee from the wrath to come! For we are assured that "the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass". *T. Hope.*

THE FIRST AND SECOND BEASTS

REVELATION 13

From Atherton and Leigh:

The resemblance of the first beast to a leopard, a bear and a lion (v. 2) links this beast with the first three beasts of **Dan.** 7. 3-7, which were also a leopard, a bear and a lion (though not in that order). These three beasts stood for the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The seven heads of the beast of Rev. 13 represent seven mountains and seven kings (17. 9, 10). If we take 17. 10 to refer to the time of John's visions ("the five are fallen, the one is, the other is yet to come"), it appears that the heads refer to kings of the Roman kingdom [Comment 1]. This kingdom followed the kingdom of Greece and *is* the fourth of the kingdoms mentioned so much in Daniel's prophecies (e. g. **Dan.** 2). The beast of Rev. 13 also has ten horns, which again stand for kings "which have received no kingdom as yet" (17. 12), i. e. at

the time of John's writings. These ten kings are presumably the same as are referred to by the ten toes of the image of **Dan. 2** and the ten horns of the fourth beast of **Dan. 7** (v. 7), which **stand** for kings who shall reign in the end-time in the revived Roman Empire.

Thus in the first beast of **Rev. 13** we have a composite symbol of Gentile dominion in the past and future. It is easy to see, then, why the first beast is often taken to be a system. However, apart from its physical description in vv. 1, 2, the beast is uniformly spoken of as a person in the rest of the chapter. On balance we favour the view that the first beast is a person, a man, and not a system at all [Comment 2]. In some way not made clear to us in Scripture, the man called the first beast enshrines within himself the main characteristics, and is the successor of, the four great Gentile kingdoms of history. He will draw together various threads, the absolute power of the Babylonian kingdom, the organisation of the Medo-Persian, the culture of the Grecian and the military genius of the Roman, and use them all to bind the nations. One problem is that the beast is said to be one of his own heads (compare vv. 3, 12). Some have countered this difficulty by saying that the beast with seven heads is a system but the beast who dies and lives again is a man, part of the system. This does not really answer the difficulty, however, that in v. 3 the one and the same "beast" has seven heads and is wondered after because his death stroke was healed [Comment 3]. It seems better to say that the beast is a man, purely and simply, and that that man is a symbol of Gentile rule, past and future, of which, of course, he is himself a part [see Comment

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If we take the tenses of **17. 10, 11** to refer to the time of John's writing [see Comment 1], then the beast had already lived and died by that time ("... that was, and is not...").

He had been a king, presumably one of the great Roman emperors. No hint is given as to which one, except that he is one of five who "are fallen". The sixth king was still alive as John wrote. The seventh king was yet to come to power, and would "continue a little while". Then an eighth king will arise, but he will already have lived and been a king, for he "is of the seven". The eighth king is "the beast", a resurrected Roman emperor.

According to 13. 3 the beast was "smitten (RVM: Gk. "slain") unto death". So the beast died violently ("of the sword", v. 14) at the end of his first life. But "his death-stroke was healed". This miraculous event lies behind the words "the beast that cometh **up** out of the abyss" (11. 7; see also 17. 8). **He had previously** died unregenerate and had gone into the abyss (i. e. **Hades**). **Scripture** is silent as to how he will be released from the abyss, **whether by** Satanic power or simply by divine permission.

We are told in 13. 5 that he will be given "authority to continue forty and two months". Seeing that the beast will certainly continue until the end of Daniel's seventieth week, we take this to mean that he will come out of the abyss half-way through the week. If this is so, we have difficulty in seeing how this first beast **can** be the same as "the prince that shall come" (Dan. 9. 26), as is commonly stated because this prince will make a covenant for the whole week with many (v. 27) [Comment 4], *D. S. Jones*

From Denmark Hill:

Because of the many common factors found among the first beast of Rev. 13, the beasts of Rev. 17 and 19, and the man of sin (2 Thes. 2. 3), it is strongly suggested that they refer to the same sinister figure. So does Dan. 9. 26, where he is described as "the prince that shall come" relative to the abomination of desolation. The Lord Himself refers to this in Mat. 24. 15. Note the wide reference in Scripture, which indicates the importance **the Holy** Spirit attaches to an understanding of this enemy of all that is God's.

His origin is "out of the sea", which Rev. 17. 75 explains for us as meaning "from among the peoples". Hence the first beast is taken to be a man, consistent also with 2 Thes. 2. 3 [see Comment 2]. The symbolism associated with the term "beast" is evil **and** destruction. The prime symbol in the vision is that of a leopard, perhaps the most dangerous of all wild animals because of its stealth, speed and killing power. The bear is introduced relative to the feet. Although the bear is not carnivorous, it has tremendously destructive strength in its paws and limbs. Finally comes the symbol of the lion in respect of the mouth. The roar of the lion is fearsome; so **will** be the great swelling words and blasphemies of the direct agent of Satan.

The further symbolism of the ten horns and seven heads is explained in Rev. 17. 9-12. The ten horns stand for kings who are in league with the beast. Taken in conjunction with the world-wide sway which the beast will enjoy (13. 7), it would appear that he will head a ten-kingdom confederacy (17. 12, 13).

The second beast comes out of the earth. What does this signify? Is a man or a spirit agency implied? [Comment 5], His characteristics are those of a lamb rather than a wild beast, but he will speak forcibly on behalf of the first beast (13. 11). His chief role will be that of deception, leading to the worship of the first beast. The culmination of that worship will be the abomination of desolation, when the first beast will set himself forth as God in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Saints faithful to God will find living difficult, because the false prophet will cause the number 666 or the name of the beast to be imprinted on the forehead (for all to see) or on the hand (more secretly). The number 6 is man's number; it is just short of 7, which seems to be associated with divine perfection in many instances. Perhaps the trinity of evil, the dragon (Satan), the first beast (the man of sin) and the second beast (the false prophet), are represented in the thrice repeated 6 of the numerical symbol? *C. L. Prasher*

From Derby:

In our study of Rev. 13, we found help from Rev. 17. 7-13 and Dan. 7. 2-8. The beast is first seen as having seven heads and ten horns, thus being viewed as a system of government controlled by the beast (a man), assisted by a confederation of ten kings which are said to constitute the revived Roman Empire. These ten kings are said to have no kingdom of their own as yet, but receive authority with the beast for one hour (Rev. 17. 12). We are told this period of time is forty-two months (Rev. 13. 5).

The beast (the man, antichrist) is said to be one of the seven heads of which five are to be eliminated either by death or otherwise. God also is Sovereign and ruler over the dragon (Satan). The beast is said to be one of the five fallen heads (kings). The one who "is", we thought, might be the beast of verse 11 (the false prophet) and the first beast, when he comes up out of the abyss, then becomes an eighth, having become king for the second time (Rev. 17. 10, 11) [Comment 6].

Resuming our study of chap. 13, it would appear that the whole earth becomes aware of the unique circumstances of a man receiving a death stroke (that is actually being killed) and coming back from the dead and that this seems to settle the choice for world leadership. Having in view the claim of the Lord Jesus Christ in Rev. 1. 18, "I have the keys of death and of Hades" it is assumed that if in any way Satan was allowed to bring the slain beast up out of the abyss it must have been by the express permission of Him who has the keys. However, the dragon's choice of the tool most suited to his purpose was granted but only because it was God's purpose as well. God had already fixed the eternal destiny of the "son of perdition" from eternity past, as recorded in Dan. 11. 45 and Rev. 19. 20. It does seem, on the surface, that Satan is imitating the Godhead in having a king slain, raised from the dead, and exalted to universal kingship, for it is written that the dragon gives him his power, his throne and great authority. The deceived people of the world make a boast: "Who is like unto the beast, and who is able to war with him"? The period of the beast's authority is limited to forty-two months (three-and-a-half years), **which would** complete the second half of the final seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy and the end of Gentile dominance. The beast blasphemes those he can no longer hurt, but makes war with the saints still on the earth, and is allowed to overcome them. There was given him to have authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. We noticed that all that dwell on the earth shall worship the beast, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world.

We are now introduced to the second beast, "another beast" out of the earth, who is also called the false prophet (Rev. 19. 20), who wrought the signs in the sight of the Beast. The details of this are recorded in vv. 12-15. This beast is the instigator of much of the wholesale slaughter of the saints. His power seems to be very great. To the image of the beast, it is given to breathe and to speak and to condemn to death all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor. All must submit to the mark of the beast or perish.

L. Foster, S. R. W.

From Lagos'.

The two beasts of Rev. 13 are ministers of Satan who is him-

self signified under the name of the dragon (Rev. 12. 9). To the first beast arising out of the sea Satan delegates his power, and throne and authority (Rev. 13. 2). The man of sin will reappear on the earth after having been smitten with a death stroke that was healed, a great wonder to the whole earth (see 2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13. 3).

"I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5. 43). Having rejected the love of the truth, men and women will exclaim: "Who is like unto the beast"? and will worship him that is not God.

The Antichrist will oppress the world for forty-two months. We note that it will be for the same period of time as the woman will flee into the wilderness (Rev. 12. 6, 14). During this period the second beast will arise out of the earth. He fulfills the role of a prophet for the first beast, and will enforce the worship of the first beast and his image (see vv. 11, 12). By signs, and power to give breath to the image of the beast, the second beast will deceive the world. He will defile the holy place by setting up the image of the beast to be worshipped instead of the only true God (vv. 14, 15). Here is a breach of the principle of worship (Mat. 4. 10; Rev. 4. 10, 11; Phil. 2. 10, 11).

At the time of the Antichrist "the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond" will have to choose between serving God or the beast. All will have to be identified with the mark of the beast to have access to the world of commerce.

From Birkenhead:

The period of the action is during the last half of Daniel's 70th week. Our study concerns the two beasts. They are evidently agents of the Devil, who is pictured standing on the sand of the sea (v. 1).

The first beast is shown rising out of the sea—the mass of the nations. Although the term "beast" is used it is obviously a figurative reference to a human being. It appears that he will be terrible, combining all the worst aspects of the world empires depicted in the image of Daniel 7. Reference to Rev. 17 leads us to the conclusion that he is a king. We identified him as the Antichrist (1 John 2) and concluded that he will rise from the dead ("come up

out of the abyss" Rev. 17. 8) and after God's judgement **upon** him go finally to perdition. His activity will be **under the authority** of the Devil and will be directed against God and all that is His. It was felt, however, that God is **referred** to in 13. **5 (latter part)** as the source of authority for the period of forty-two months.

Whether we can determine the geographical origin or nationality of the Antichrist is a difficult problem. We would draw attention to a reference in Ezek. 21. 25 where he is referred to as the Prince of Israel which may lead to the opinion that he will be a Jew [Comment 7].

The second beast is the false prophet (Rev. 19. 20) whose appearance is comparatively benign, but evidently he operates under the influence of the Devil ("he spake as a dragon" v. 11). His activities are aimed at promoting the cause of the first beast and in no sense are they in opposition to him. Therefore, it follows that he is not a king, and no references help us as to his origin in the nations of the world. The highlight of his activities in the deceit of mankind is the image of the beast which is made under his authority. It appears to be a very good reproduction of a human being but we had difficulty in accepting that actual life was given to it, because there is no reference to God's dealing with the image in His judgements.

The mark 666 given to all the adherents of the false prophet was discussed and we concluded that with our limited knowledge its significance was to indicate man's shortcomings in God's sight, which compared with the perfections associated with the Scriptural occurrences of the number seven. The idea that the beast's number could be used to arrive at his identity by using numbers to denote letters of the alphabet and totalling them, did not have support.

R. D. Williams

IMPRESSIONS FROM OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Papers were also received from Hayes, Liverpool, Melbourne, R. A. Parker (Stoke-on-Trent) and Vancouver B. C. and the following thoughts were gathered from these:

Rev. 13 begins the description of the war in the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, when the Dragon goes away to make war

with the rest of the woman's seed. The sand of the sea, the place on which the Dragon stands, may indicate the seed of Abraham which he is determined to tread underfoot.

In Rev. 13 there is a beast kingdom and in relation to that kingdom there are two persons whom we designate the first and second beasts.

The beast is seen in Rev. 17 as carrying a woman, Babylon, who sits on seven mountains, and the seven heads of the beast are seven kings. The ten horns are ten kings who will reign at once and for a short time during the reign of the eighth king (i. e. the second term of power of one of the first five "heads").

Interest was shown in the diadems which were seen on the heads of the dragon (12. 3) and on the horns of the beast (13. 1). The diadems on the dragon's seven heads may illustrate Satanic power behind the political system of which the heads are successive kings. The ten horns having the diadems were thought to be "men raised up out of the final phase of the fourth Gentile kingdom, and who receive authority with the beast for one hour".

The sea from which the beast comes up represents a confederacy of peoples. Rev. 13. 3 (17. 11) shows that one of the heads is a person. This person can be identified with the "prince that shall come" (Dan. 9. 26) and with the "little horn" of Dan. 7. 8, namely the last great Gentile monarch.

The little horn plucks up three of the ten horns in the fourth beast of Dan. 7. 23, 24 (see also Dan. 8. 9). Below are points of identification of the "little horn" and "the prince" with the first beast of Rev. 13: -

Daniel

Revelation

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) The little horn had "a mouth speaking great things" 7. 8, 20 | "There was given unto him (the first beast) a mouth speaking great things." 13. 5 |
| (2) He "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them". 7. 21, 22 | "It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." 13. 7 |

- | | |
|--|--|
| (3) "He shall speak words
against the Most High ".
7. 25 | "He opened his mouth for
blasphemies against God. "
13. 6 |
| (4) "They shall be given into
his hand until a time and
times and halt a time".
3½ years. 7. 25 | "There was given to him
authority to continue forty and
two months. " 3½ years. 13. 5 |
| (5) For the half of the week
"he shall cause the sacrifice
and the oblation to cease".
9. 27 | The beast begins to persecute
the saints in the middle of the
week seeing it is for forty-two
months this persecution
continues. 13. 5-7 |

The power behind this last great world empire is the Dragon. It has the characteristics of the three kingdoms that precede it, being like a leopard (Grecian), with feet of a bear (Medo-Persian) and having the mouth of a lion (Babylonian). The revived fourth empire, that of Rome, is now described in its final form as it will arise in the closing days of Gentile rule.

During the Lord's temptation the Devil offered him the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them; and it is the Devil who gives power to the beast, so that he is worshipped by the whole earth, all except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. The beast has his prophet who, though resembling a lamb, betrays his real character in his dragon's voice. False Christs are forerunners of the Antichrist (see Mat. 24. 24) and false prophets are forerunners of the False Prophet.

In the healing of the death stroke Satan produces a counterfeit of the great event of the ages, the resurrection of Christ, the eternal Son of God. Moreover the False Prophet gives a counterfeit of creation. Concerning images Ps. 115 says, "They have mouths, but they speak not". The most deceiving sign of the False Prophet is his power to *give* breath (though not life) to the image of the beast, causing it to speak.

That the counsel of God is being accomplished even amid the counterfeits of the Devil is evident from Rev. 17. 17, "God did put in their hearts to do His mind... and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished". The world will willingly accept this man with his organisation,

little realising that in a very few years it will bring their final doom. They will be ready to accuse the God of heaven as being responsible for their woes and sorrows.

The power given unto the beast will enable him to make victorious war on the saints. The saints are those who from among the nations have believed the testimony of the 144, 000, namely the proclamation of the impending return of God's King, and the call to repent. The proper attitude of the saints of that day will be similar to that which is enjoined in the present day under the Gospel of the grace of God; and in keeping with the meekness and submissiveness of Him "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously". To take up the sword in self-defence will not be in keeping with the patience and faith of the saints.

The young men who refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image had their lives protected by God. But martyrdom **overtakes those** who do not worship the image of the beast.

The responsibility to enforce the decree for all to have the mark of the beast is assigned to the false prophet, thus linking the religious and economic worlds. He will make no allowance for human rights. All who refuse to accept the mark of the beast will have their names written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 13. §). But all who accept the mark shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and the smoke of their torment shall go up for ever and ever.

COMMENTS

1. (Atherton and Leigh): Attention is invited to points discussed in the Editorial in this connection.

2. (Atherton and Leigh): It is useful to have this difficulty ventilated. Most contributors consider that the beast described in vv. 1, 2 indicates a political system, and that one of its heads represents a person who will be the final ruler of that system, he himself also being called "the beast". This I personally find a more satisfactory solution of the problem than to say that the whole imagery of vv. 1-3 represents only a man who is the "symbol of Gentile rule, past and future". I am strengthened in the view that both the system and the man are represented because of similar imagery in other prophetic visions. For instance, both Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom were represented in "the head of gold"

(Dan. 2. 38, 39). The rough he-goat of Dan. 8 is the "king of Greece", yet the first king is said to be one of his own horns! (Dan. 8. 5-8, 21). So it is a typical pattern to find a political power generally represented by a wild beast, and certain parts of the beast denoting leading personalities of that power.

3. (Atherton and Leigh): To me this difficulty is resolved by seeing the man represented by the smitten head so closely identified with the system of which he is supreme ruler that the term "wild beast" (*therion*) is applicable to him personally as well as to the power-bloc he controls.

4. (Atherton and Leigh): Our friends have lucidly analysed this problem. A suggestion is given in the Editorial that the beast makes his covenant with many of Israel during his first term of power and revokes that covenant on his emergence from the abyss for his second term of power.

5. (Denmark Hill): It seems clear that the second beast is the false prophet of Rev. 16. 13 and 19. 20, indicating that the beast represents a man and not a "spirit agency".

6. (Derby): If five heads had fallen, then number six would be the one who is, and number seven would be "the other... not yet come" who must continue a little while. Then follows number eight, the second term of power of one of the first five—the head that had received the death stroke but had been healed. So it does not seem that the false prophet could be "Head Number 6", since he is introduced in Rev. 13 as subordinate to the first beast during the latter's second term of power after coming out of the abyss.

7. (Birkenhead): There has, of course, been much speculation on this point. It will be understood more clearly by those whom it will more directly concern—the godly living at the time of the end. But may there not be a general lead for us in Daniel 8. 8-12, 21-25? Is it not implied in this vision that Antichrist will arise from one of the four divisions of Alexander the Great's kingdom? And is not the most likely division the one controlled by Seleucus, who took over Syria, Babylon and Media? If so, would this encourage the *view* that Antichrist is the king of the north (Dan. 11. 36-45) with his centre of power in Babylon the Great? These thoughts are offered tentatively for consideration. Whether Antichrist will be of Jewish blood would not be affected by this line of deduction, but in any case the term "prince of Israel" (Ezek. 21. 25) could

apply to his political status in relation to Israel under the terms of the seven-year covenant.

8. Extract from Paper by R. A. P. (Stoke-on-Trent):

"Nowhere do the Scriptures say they (the ten kings represented by the ten horns) are heads of separate kingdoms, or that the **beast's** kingdom (7th head) is a ten-kingdom confederacy (Dan. 7. 24). It is *one* kingdom out of which ten men shall arise. From Dan. 7. 8 we see how the little horn arises *after* the ten".

It has been pointed out in Editorial and Comment 6 that the seventh head is the one who is to come and continue for a little while. **The** beast must necessarily be one of the first five heads, because "he was, and is not" at the time the sixth head reigns.

It does seem to me also, that the non-scriptural term "ten-kingdom confederacy" has justification. The final expression of Gentile **rule** is expressed by ten toes of the image, by ten horns and a "supremo", the eighth king who is one of the seven heads. If the ten kings give their power and authority to the beast, they must have had an independent status and authority to yield over to him. The very fact that the little horn overthrows three of the first horns would seem to confirm this.

9. Extract from Liverpool's Paper:

"We are not at all sure that the first beast of Rev. 13 is the coming Antichrist. We are sure that he is the coming Prince, the last **great** Gentile monarch".

The suggestion that the Antichrist is the beast described in vv. 11-17 of Rev. 13 rather than the first beast of that chapter has **been** much debated. I suggest that a weighty point in favour of the first beast being the Antichrist is a general comparison of the place given by God to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the place given by Satan to the first beast. For not only is the death and resurrection of the Lord simulated in the bringing of the beast up from the abyss, but he is given power and his throne and great authority. In this lay Satan's supreme attempt to oppose the Christ of **God**. Any lesser figure would seem inadequate to be *the Antichrist*.

G. P. Jr.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario
Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11). '

VOLUME 42

MARCH 1974

EDITORIAL

That part of Revelation chapter 14 which we study this month is concerned with the setting apart of a very special group of worthy men to accompany the lamb in these eventful and end-time days leading up to His great unveiling in power and glory; and in divine appeal and warning to those who will live on earth in those days. Once again matters arise on which thoughtful suggestions have been made in papers although scripture does not appear to offer conclusive answers. Occasionally contributors make statements and suggestions which could be a little more fully supported by reasoning from scripture references. Much thought and discussion have gone into these, we feel sure, and their content might benefit fellow-students more if this point were given attention. It is good to have fellowship in the magazine with the Lagos study group. *J. D. T.*,

THE 144, 000 AND DIVINE JUDGEMENTS REVELATION 14. 143

From R. A. Parker (Stoke-on-Trent): -

The 144, 000 of Rev. 7 are not the same body of persons as the 144, 000 of Rev. 14. because:

- 1) In ch. 14 they are with the Lamb on Mount Zion (v. 1) whereas in ch. 7 they are on earth.
- 2) While both have identification marks on their foreheads those in Rev. 14 are male virgins (vv. 4, 5) whereas in ch. 7 they are servants of our God without specifying sex.
- 3) The 144, 000 of ch. 14 follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (v. 4).
- 4) In ch. 14 they are "purchased" from among men to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb whereas in ch. 7

they are "sealed" out of every tribe of the children of Israel.

Clearly **these in ch. 14 are companions of the Lamb, whose song is sung before the throne and before the four living creatures and elders (v. 3). Their work or service is quite distinct from that of the 144, 000 in Rev. 7. No indication is given as to when they are "purchased" or the duration of their song in relation to the seventieth week [Comment 1].**

The first and third angels' messages (vv. 6-11), to be of any value as warnings, must be given prior to the setting up of the image of the beast, before the initiation of branding" and before the world-wide worship of the beast. They must therefore be given at or near the middle of the week. Thus again we cannot escape the emphasis and prominence given in chapters 12, 13 and here in 14 to events occurring at or near the middle of the seventieth week.

Because of the setting of the second angel's message in relation to the first and third we are led to conclude the fall of Babylon the great must occur at or near the middle of the week [Comment 2].

From Liverpool: -

The Lamb is seen standing on Mount Zion, this being the earthly Zion which was so dearly loved by the godly Israelite—although some think it is the heavenly Zion [Comment 3], The 144, 000 are with Him, having been preserved through the Great Tribulation. These 144, 000 we thought to be the same as those in chap. 7. There they were seen sealed; now they are preserved. They are the firstfruits of the great multitude that will enter the Millennium. They will have preached the gospel to the four corners of the earth, and are the elect who will be gathered to Jerusalem by angelic beings when the Son of Man returns to judge the living nations [see Comments 1 and 4].

"Not defiled by women" could be taken literally. These gospel preachers will make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Mat. 19. 12). The words "not defiled" have the thought of not having committed adultery or fornication (Vine). Some, however, thought that the 144, 000 will keep themselves clear from the pollutions connected with the great religious system under Antichrist, being faithful to their Lord. They will be without blemish, being purchased by the Lamb, as others (see Eph. 1. 4) [Comment 5]. Together with the great multitude of saved Gentiles who are

seen in heaven in chap. 7, they will enter into the enjoyment of millennial blessings on earth.

We wondered when the eternal gospel would be preached by the angel, for in Mat. 24. 14 the end comes after the gospel of the kingdom is preached to the whole world. Now the end comes with the descent of the Son of Man with power and great glory (v. 30), followed by the separating of the sheep from the goats. Will this gospel by the angel be proclaimed towards the end, simultaneously with the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom by the 144, 000? [see Comment 6].

M. S. E., G. S. W.

From Melbourne:-

The Mount Zion on which the Lamb stands with the 144, 000 is the heavenly Mount Zion referred to in Heb. 12. 22. The Name of the Lamb and of His Father written on the foreheads of this company is in marked contrast to the mark of the beast. Therefore although we are unable to identify this group, it would appear that they are a special company of the redeemed who have been faithful to the Lamb throughout the great tribulation and have come out victorious therefrom. We are of the opinion that they are not identical with the 144, 000 in chap. 7.

The sound of the great voice from heaven, as of harpers harping with their harps, combined with the new song of the 144, 000 would, to the aged apostle in his Patmos exile be a foretaste of what he would hear in heaven when in the presence of his Lord. We judge that the theme of this new song is not the same as that which is referred to in chap. 5. 9. In chap. 5 the singing is by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, and the theme of their song is given; but in our portion the new song of the 144, 000 is known to them alone,

In vv. 6, 7 we are told of an eternal gospel proclaimed by an angel flying in mid heaven. None of the dwellers upon earth will fail to hear this testimony. During the reign of Antichrist nations and peoples throughout the earth will have intensified their opposition to any knowledge of the basic facts of the handiwork of the Creator. In our day the theory of evolution has been much used by the god of this age to eradicate the knowledge of God from the minds of men, whether that knowledge be conveyed by the testimony of nature or through divine revelation. In that day it will be

true as never before, "They refused to have God in their knowledge". We understand that the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed by the 144, 000 of chap. 7 will have gone forth through all the earth, bearing fruit in a great multitude which no man can number out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues. The eternal gospel will be the final testimony to the remainder of men who have refused the kingdom, and whose attitude is described in Psa. 2 [see Comments 5 and 6].

A second angel announces the fall of Babylon the great, the political-religious system, the centre of which would appear to be a city unsurpassed for magnificence and which has made the nations "drunk" by her splendour, wealth and might. Drunkenness is a metaphor used to describe the delusions of men and nations.

A third angel follows and proclaims with a great voice to men the consequences of worshipping the beast and his image, and receiving the fatal mark. The delusion of mankind is complete, and eternal doom inevitable.

Great patience and faith will be seen in those who during those awful days will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. In contrast to those whose fate is described in vv. 9-11, there is a strong word of encouragement for those who remain faithful in the presence of the strong delusion of Babylon the great, the beast and his image. Their faithfulness is not overlooked by the One to whom they remain faithful. They are evidently slain for their testimony and are described as "blessed", having owned the Lordship of God's Christ in the midst of Satanic delusion. Their works are recorded, and while they rest from their labours, awaiting resurrection, their works follow them, to be revealed and assessed by Him for whom they have suffered. Like Daniel they will "stand in their lot", which He will apportion to them for the Millennium and eternal ages to come.

W. H. F., T. W. F.

From Methil: -

It will possibly be the largest male voice choir in the universe! Only they will be able to learn the song, which will be entirely new, sung in heaven before the throne. As 144, 000 virgin men sing in unison it will surely sound magnificent. These 144, 000 will be close companions of the Lamb, for they follow Him whithersoever He goeth. They have not lied and are without blemish. Where have

they come from? Are they Jews? We are not told, but they have been purchased out of the earth and from among men. So they have been redeemed from earth and are now in heaven [see Comment 1]. However, they are not the saints who compose the Body of Christ. Their lives on earth have fitted them for special service in heaven. The 144, 000 belong to that period between the Lord's coming for His Church and His later coming back to earth to reign in glory. Each of them has the Lord's and His Father's name written on their foreheads. They unquestionably belong to God; so different from those in Rev. 13 who have the mark of the beast!

Rev. 14 refers to three angels. The first of these three is seen flying in mid-heaven. Does this imply that angels have wings? [Comment 7]. This angel proclaims an eternal world-wide gospel, its message being simply: "Fear God, and give Him glory", with added warning of approaching judgement.

The second angel has a message of doom: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great". Despite its greatness Babylon is a doomed city. Those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark will drink of God's wrath. What a picture of eternal torment is seen in v. 11 and Is. 34. 8-10, a complete contrast to the everlasting life offered today in the gospel. God's divine judgements are as sure as His blessings.

N. Coomer

IMPRESSIONS FROM OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Papers were also received from Atherton and Leigh, Birkenhead, Derby and Lagos, and a few thoughts culled from these follow.

There was disagreement as to whether "the mount Zion" (v. 1) is the earthly or the heavenly Zion. Verse 3 seems to help on this point. If the latter part of the verse means that none but the 144, 000 can sing the new song, then those who sing "before the throne" in the earlier part of the verse must be the 144, 000 themselves. If, however, verse 3 means that the 144, 000 learn the new song from the singers who sing "before the throne", then the 144, 000 must themselves be present in heaven in order to learn the new song. In either case it follows that the 144, 000 are in heaven, and "the mount Zion" is the heavenly Zion (as in Heb. 12. 22). Certainly the clauses "they... had been purchased out of the earth" (v. 3) and "These were purchased from among men"

(v. 4) suggest that the 144, 000 have finished their normal earthly life. As one paper points out, however, the fact that they have foreheads (v. 1) may indicate that they are in physical bodies (though this point is not conclusive since the rich man in Hades had "eyes" an "a tongue"—Luke 16. 23, 24). Possibly the 144, 000 have experienced a resurrection or have been caught up to glory without dying. We must remember, of course, that what John saw was a vision. It is suggested that the Mount Zion appeared to be above him, and that when he heard the great host of voices singing the sound appeared to come "from heaven" (v. 2) [see Comments 3 and 5].

There was also disagreement as to whether the 144, 000 of ch. 13 are to be distinguished from the same number of men in ch. 7. 3-8. The descriptions of the two groups are certainly different, but there appears to be nothing irreconcilable about them. In ch. 7 the number 144, 000 is broken down into twelve times 12, 000 and related to the twelve tribes of Israel. It would be at least surprising if the number 144, 000 in ch. 14 had no similar significance; so that although the fact that there are 144, 000 in each case does not prove they are the same group of men, it strongly suggests that they are [see Comment 1].

A connection is seen by one group between the prophetic words of Psalm 2 and the events of this chapter depicting the Lamb on the heavenly Zion [Comment 8]

Some viewed the 144, 000 as having been martyred and possibly resurrected to this unique place of nearness to the Lamb, although it was also acknowledged that Luke 16 was cited as an example of physical features being referred to in respect of the disembodied dead [Comment 9],

COMMENTS

1) (R. A. P. Stoke): The question arises here and in other papers of the possible identification of the 144, 000 of Rev. 14 with the same number of persons mentioned in chapter 7. A substantial case is made out for regarding these as two separate groups. Practically every descriptive feature is different in the two chapters, except of course, the very striking correspondence of the number 144, 000 and the fact that in both instances we are thinking of redeemed,

"saved" persons. Perhaps the strongest reason for viewing the two groups as different is the assumption by many of an earthly ministry for those of Rev. 7; and the apparently heavenly setting of Rev. 14. It must be granted, however, that there is no evidence which would definitely preclude the two groups being identical. Those in chapter 7 are all from the tribes of Israel—those in chapter 14 *could* be even though they are drawn from "among men". Similarly, those of chapter 14 are all males—again those of chapter 7 *could* be all males, though not so described. "Sealed" and "purchased" are far from being mutually exclusive—and so on. Surely another of the many matters in this area of study on which finality seems impossible, and we hold our own view with appropriate tolerance and respect.

2) (R. A. P. Stoke): It is true that, in order to be meaningful, the messages of the first and third angel must be made available to men and women on earth *before* there is any question of divine judgement falling on them. This means that the appeal and warning must go forth initially not later than the middle of the "70th week" period. They would continue to be preached, I should imagine, throughout the subsequent period of the beast's supremacy and persecution. This being so, we cannot think of these three angelic pronouncements as being in any sense sequential in time, but surely rather as all three centred on the ultimate judgement of God according to human attitude to Him and to the Adversary. Babylon, supremely representing apostacy, has its doom settled, but I see no clue in this passage as to the exact timing of the overthrow of Babylon. Surely we need to look in a wider scriptural context for this? Some of the many intriguing questions about Babylon will be commented on later in the course of our Revelation study.

3) Liverpool: Is the Zion referred to on earth or in heaven?—yet another point raised by several papers. I feel that the overall reading of the passage would suggest a heavenly scene. It seems clear that the "harpers" (v. 2) are in heaven. If it is they who are also the "singers" (v. 3) then they must be the teachers of the 144, 000 who alone of men can learn the song. If it is the 144, 000 themselves who are the singers of v. 3 then they must be "before the throne". Either way it would seem that they, with the Lamb, are in a heavenly setting.

4) Liverpool: Are our friends not reading rather much **into the** passage when they suggest that the 144, 000 of this chapter are the "elect" associated in Mat. 24. 31 with the gathering by **the** Son of Man at his coming? It seems to be implied in the passage that these 144, 000 are close companions of the Lamb from some point in time well before His return of Mat. 24. They are, of course, themselves "elect".

5) Liverpool: The physical characteristics of the **144, 000** are mentioned separately from their moral qualities, although they match well together. This would seem to suggest a literal interpretation of the physical features. These were men of rare moral excellence as evidenced by their unimpaired honesty. Would not "they are without blemish" be a reference to their state in the presence of the Lamb? I would submit that by that time they would have known a fulfilment in their own experience of 1 John 3. 2—"we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is". Some, however, have suggested that these will enter the Millennium in their natural bodies after a special ministry of witness, as will the blessed of My Father", who inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Mat. 25. 34). This brings us back again to identifying them with the 144, 000 of Rev. 7 who are sealed for service. This service, though not so specified in Scripture, has often been linked with the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (Mat. 24. 14) [see Comment 1].

6) Liverpool: It is suggested in Comment 2 that the universal gospel of this angel will be heard throughout the period of tribulation. Now it seems clear from Mat. 24. 14 that the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed, if not throughout, then in the latter part of, the tribulation period. This would suggest at least some overlap of the angel's gospel proclamation and that of human witnesses.

7) Methil: We know from Scripture that some, at least, of the angelic beings have wings (Is. 6. 2). It would seem that those mentioned in Rev. 14 are among those so equipped. Friends are referred to the helpful article on Angels in B. S. Vol. 40 (1972) p. 65 by W. Bunting.

8) "Impressions": The suggestion that there is an application of Psalm 2 in Rev. 14 seems perfectly valid. The principles of this Psalm are seen in operation here, though the complete, supreme

fulfilment will surely be the universally evident exaltation of Christ as King of kings (Rev. 19. 1146).

9) "Impressions": Whether the 144, 000 are martyrs or not does not seem to be revealed. I suggest that either a resurrection or translation seems to be involved [see Comment 5 on "without blemish"].
J. D. T.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Atherton: What *is* the significance of the two horns of the second beast? (Rev. 13. 11).

No contributors have offered suggestions on this point, and I personally have no light on it. Any ideas available from other readers?

From Denmark Hill: What is meant by the "death stroke" in Rev. 13. 3, 14?

Our suggestion would be that the seven heads of the beast represent seven successive rulers of the end-time revived Roman power. According to 17. 9-11, one of the first five of these "kings" will "fall", go down into the abyss, and re-emerge as an eighth king; actually he is one of the seven, but has a second term of office. It would seem that he will receive a death stroke (assassination?) which will terminate his first term of office, but will re-emerge by a miracle of resurrection in the middle of Daniel's 70th week to hold power again for the final 3½ years of Gentile rule. This answer assumes, of course, that the beast mentioned at the end of v. 3 and in v. 14 refers to the man (Antichrist) and not to the political system.

From Derby: Will the beast be able to reach all peoples throughout the vast areas of all the Continents of the world?

Also, has the spread of Communism any bearing on our subject? It seems to me that Rev. 13. 7 should be taken literally, and that with evil supernatural power at his disposal as well as modern scientific skills the beast's control will extend world-wide. As to the bearing of Communism on our subject, we have no means of anticipating how this will affect the political situation at the time of the end.

From Lagos: Who are the saints of Rev. 13, and what does it mean that the beast will "overcome" them?

The saints in this context are people who have responded to the

message of the gospel of the kingdom (Mat. 24. 14), **and they** will be overcome in the sense that the beast will **have power** to persecute them to such a degree that an innumerable multitude will suffer martyrdom (7. 9).

From Liverpool:

1. Does the beast arise from the abyss to commence his reign?
2. Is he a previous emperor resurrected?
3. If so, does the dragon resurrect him?
4. What is meant by "his death stroke was healed"?

As will be seen more fully on perusal of last month's issue, it is suggested:

1. that the beast will arise from the abyss to commence the second term of his power as head of the revived Roman Empire;
2. that he had been one of the first five "kings" heading **the** revived Roman Empire at the time of the end;
3. that since the beast's "coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (**2 Thess. 2. 9**) it seems clear that the dragon will be deeply involved; yet the ultimate sovereignty of the Lord Jesus as having "the keys of death and of Hades" would suggest that He will control this development;
4. that there is the possibility of the Antichrist (first beast) having been assassinated by the sword at the close of his first term of office, and on his emergence from the abyss this deadly wound is seen to have been healed. *G. P. Jr.*

From Derby:

What difference is there between the words "anger" and "wrath" in Rev. 14. 10?

The first word used, wrath, is *thumos* in Greek—"an outward burst of wrath from inward indignation". The second word, anger, is from the Greek word *orge*—"a more settled or abiding condition of mind" (Vine). It would seem, then, that we have shades of difference in closely related words, as is characteristic of all rich languages.

From Liverpool:

Will those entering the kingdom without dying be changed bodily?

Presumably this question is mainly centred on those living who enter on the Millennium with the Lord after His unveiling and conquest. There is no suggestion in Scripture that such are other than in their natural bodies. This would seem to be essential for normal human generation in the 1000-year period.

From Birkenhead:

Once a person has taken the mark of the beast, is it possible for him to repent if he realizes the judgement awaiting him? Or is the decision to follow the beast irreversible?

The language of Scripture here seems quite uncompromising. A decision to worship the beast and accept his mark is a seal for divine judgement.

J. D. T.

THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

(continued from page 184, Volume 41)

Turning for a moment to some scriptures which touch *the Person of the Holy Spirit*, we find that the RSV for the most part seems satisfactory from the point of view of sound doctrine. The following scriptures might be noted: -

Deut. 6. 4—"The Lord our God is one Lord". This is a basic statement on the essential unity of the Godhead.

John 14. 16, 17—"The Father... will give you another Counsellor . . . even the Spirit of truth".

John 16. 8—"he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement".

Mat. 28. 19—"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

Acts 2. 1-4—"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit".

2 Cor. 13. 14—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all".

Heb. 9. 14—"Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God".

Again, on *the subject of sin* we find many relevant passages supportive of fundamental truth, as in the following: -

- 1 Kin. 8. 46—"For there is no man who does not sin".
- Psa. 51. 5—"Behold... in sin did my mother conceive me".
- Mat. 7. 11—"if you then who are evil".
- Rom. 3. 9, 10, 23—"all men... are under the power of sin, as it is written", "None is righteous, no not one", all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".
5. 12—"Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned".
5. 19—"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous".
- Eph. 2. 1, 3—"And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked".
- "We were by nature children of wrath".

Following on to the truth of *salvation through the atonement* of Christ, we again find a largely reassuring situation in the RSV. After noting with disappointment the relevance to this subject of the John 3. 16 scripture where, as we have seen, "only begotten Son" is rendered "only Son", we note with appreciation the following passages: -

- Mat. 20. 28—"the Son of man came... to give his life a ransom for many".
26. 28—"this is my blood... which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins".
- John 5. 24—"he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement but has passed from death to life".
- Acts 4. 12—"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven give among men by which we must be saved".
16. 31—"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved".
- Rom. 3. 24, 25—"they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus"... "whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith".
5. 6, 8—"While we were yet helpless... Christ died for the ungodly".
- "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".

- 1 Cor. 15. 3—"Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures".
- 2 Cor. 5. 21—"for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God".
- Gal. 1. 4—"who gave himself for our sins to deliver us".
3. 13—"Christ redeemed us . . . having become a curse for us".
- Eph. 1. 7—"In Him we have redemption through His blood".
2. 1, 8—"And you He made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked". "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. "
- Heb. 9. 14—"Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God".
- Heb. 9. 26—"He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself".
- Heb. 10. 10—"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all".
- 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19—"you know that you were ransomed... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot".
- 1 Pet. 2. 24—"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree".
- 1 John 1. 7—"and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin".
- 1 John 2. 2—"he is the expiation for our sins".
- 1 John 4. 10—"he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins".
- Rev. 1. 5—"him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood".

Mr. L. Burrows has contributed the following note on the terms "propitiation" and "expiation":

"The Greek in 1 John 2. 2, and 4. 10 is *hilasmos*, translated "propitiation" in RV and AV and implying the turning away in mercy of the wrath of God from the sinner on account of the death of Christ. But "expiation" means merely the payment of the penalty required, so that this word does not convey the thought of the wrath of God nor has it the personal application of propitiation (see the helpful articles on these two words in the New Bible Dictionary). Since modern religious thought denies the conception of divine

wrath, as being inappropriate to a God of love, the RSV use of "expiation" is significant and may reflect the influence of present-day liberal scholarship in the translation. "

On the subject of the *eternal nature of our salvation*, we find that in Mat. 16. 18 the RSV says "the powers of death shall not prevail against it", so taking the liberty of assuming "gates of Hades" to be figurative; the result is misleading. Otherwise, the following scriptures seem satisfactory.

John 3. 36—"He who believes in the Son has eternal life".

John 5. 24—"he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life".

John 10. 28-30—"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand... no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one".

Eph. 1. 13, 14—"you also, who... have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it".

1 John 5. 13—"I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life".

Coming to the matter of *baptism and discipleship*, the sense is altered in Rom. 6. 5—"For if we have been united with him in a death like his"—baptism is not a death but a likeness of death. Apart from this, most relevant scriptures once again are supportive of sound doctrine on these subjects.

Mat. 3. 16—"And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened".

Mat. 28. 18-20—"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

John 4. 1—"Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples".

Acts. 2. 41, 42—"So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers".

8. 12, 38—"But when they believed Philip... they were baptized, both men and women".

"They both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch,

and he baptized him".

10. 48—"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ".

Rom. 6. 3, 4—"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life".

Gal. 3. 27—"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ".

Col. 2. 12—"And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him, through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead".

References to the subject of the *Church which is His Body* seem to be, in the main, translated in terms which present the relevant truths clearly. See, however, the earlier references to Mat. 16. 16-18 with regard to the use of "you" in addressing the Lord. The words "on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" in the same passage, are quite close to the RV. In 1 Cor. 12. 13 we read, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body". The RV has "in one Spirit" which is undoubtedly correct (see Notes on the Epistles p. 56). A few other scriptures which touch on the truths of the Body, and the related matter of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, are: -

John 1. 33—"This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit".

7. 39—"Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive".

Acts 2. 33—"Having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear".

10. 44—"The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word".

Gal. 3. 2—"Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?"

Eph. 1. 13—"You also, who have... believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit".

Eph. 2. 18—"For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father".

Eph. 3. 6—"How the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel".

Eph. 4. 4—"There is one body and one Spirit...".

Eph. 4. 11-13—"And his gifts were... for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God...".

Eph. 4. 25—"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...".

Some scriptures might usefully be cited, in conclusion, on the subject of *the Fellowship, Churches, House, Kingdom of God*. These would appear to be mainly satisfactory in terms of our understanding of these truths. The comments on three of the verses are by Mr. L. Burrows:

Mat. 6. 10—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven".

Luke 12. 32—"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom".

John 10. 16—"And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice".

Acts 2. 41, 42, 47—"So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers".

"And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved".

5. 14—"And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women".

20. 28—"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood" (It seems a pity that here the word "guardian" is substituted for bishop" or "overseer"; and the term "church of the Lord" used instead of "church of God").

Issued by the **Churches** of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, **BR2 7RA**

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

APRIL 1974

EDITORIAL

"Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages... Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15. 3, 4).

These are among the words to be sung by those who come victorious from the Beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name. They express the triumphant joy of assured victory. Those who sing the song will have passed through the most fearful times in human history, and maintained their faith despite all that will be brought to bear on them. When undergoing the ordeal of suffering they may at times be tempted to feel like the Psalmist, "How long, O LORD, wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever"? But now they look back in the fuller light of God's presence and pay tribute to the righteousness and truth of His ways. He is the King of the ages, and develops His purposes in perfect wisdom. What may seem all wrong in terms of permitted injustice to God's saints is now seen in the perspective of eternity. God's righteous acts have been made manifest. To disciples reproached for the name of Christ Peter sent the word: "Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator". Our study together of the attitude of those persecuted at the time of the end confirms that in such extreme trial this will be their expression of faith also. They will be sustained by the realisation that, Antichrist notwithstanding, "The LORD reigneth" and has set His king upon His holy hill of Zion.

G. P. Jr.

STUDIES IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 14. 14—15. 8

From Atherton and Leigh. —As we consider the tremendous work of the angels, the words of the Psalmist are fitting: "Bless the LORD, ye angels of His: ye mighty in strength, that fulfil His word" (Psa. 103. 20). We, the sons of men, are left to marvel at the

great work of God wrought in judgement through the angels of His power.

We offer two suggestions as to the identity of the one sitting on a white cloud (14. 14):

- (a) the Son of Man—had it been an angel the text would have said so, as elsewhere; see vv. 6, 8, 9 and 15.
- (b) an angel, since "another angel" (v. 15) says to the person on the cloud, "Send forth thy sickle". The argument in favour of this suggestion is that the other angel would not speak thus to the Son of Man.

However, most thought that suggestion (a) was correct [Comment 1].

In verses 14-16 and 17-20 we have two reapings. In the first no mention is made of judgement, whilst in the second those gathered are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God. Blood from the winepress would signify the fierceness of God's judgement. The word "fierceness" is used in 19. 15 where we have the extreme expression, "He treadeth the . . . fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God". We note also that the RV uses the expression "a great voice" in vv. 15 and 18, whereas the AV gives a "loud voice" (v. 15) and a "loud cry" (v. 18). The noun in the former instance is *phone*, a Greek word which signifies a sound, tone or voice; but in the latter it is *krauge*, meaning an outcry, scream or shriek. A minority of translators favour the use of *phone* in both cases, but it seems that the context of the verses implies the distinction between the voice of salvation and an outcry of judgement. Is there a likeness here to the parable of the tares? (Mat. 13. 24-30) [Comment 2].

The persons seen in Rev. 15. 2, 3 are martyrs, we suggest, who like their Lord are victorious in the suffering of death. Do they sing this song—a double song joined into one—in resurrection life (7. 9-17), or from their souls, their bodies not yet having been raised (c. f. 6. 9-11)? [Comment 3]. They sing of God's holiness, righteousness and truth. Their song is brief. Have we a lesson here, to be exercised to brevity in praise to God; and also to be engaged with the glorious attributes of Him whose is the victory? All God's enemies must be defeated and finally judged, for He

remains "King of the ages" and He "liveth for ever and ever".

G. A. J., E. B.

From Birkenhead. —The view that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Person spoken of as a "son of man, having on his head a golden crown" was considered, but it was rejected on two counts—(i) that the person was given a command by an angel, and (ii) it would leave an incomplete sequence of angels. For we thought the one on the cloud to be another angel, which would bring the number to seven in all, a number frequently mentioned by John in the book of Revelation [see Comment 1].

The command is given twice to send forth the sickle. Firstly there is a harvest reaped, which referring to Mat. 13. 30 was thought to be the gathering together of the righteous [Comment 4], On the second occasion the gathering of the vintage is evidently the time of judgement for the wicked, when the wrath of God will be poured forth (see Joel 3. 13).

With the commencement of chap. 15 the scene of activity moves from earth to heaven. The seven plagues or calamities are the culmination of the wrath of God. Final victory over the Devil and his followers will be celebrated in song. It is notable that linked together here are the first song; recorded in Scripture as sung consequent upon the Lord's triumph over Egypt, and that which extols the virtues of the Lord God and His Son who triumphed on our behalf—the final victory!

Mention of "the Temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven" caused us to realize that this is evidently the pattern which Moses had to copy in his construction of God's earthly dwelling place, the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 25. 40, Heb. 8. 5). We noticed that throughout the passage a significant part is played in the purposes of God by angels in the execution of His judgements.

R. D. Williams

From Derby. —There was considerable discussion as to who was sitting on the white cloud (14. 14)—the Lord Jesus or an angel. Some thought that if he had been another angel the Holy Spirit would have indicated this, but John was led to change from the term angel to words "one like unto a son of man (RVM—the Son), having on his head a golden crown" (Newberry—"victor's

crown"). **In support of the view that it was an angel who sat on the cloud, we noted the force of the words "another angel" in v. 15. There are five other occurrences of this term in the chapter. Moreover the angel of v.15 apparently issued a command to the one sitting on the cloud, and some felt that an angel would not address the Lord in this way. Others thought that the angel's words could be regarded as a request rather than a command. In Mat. 13. 39 we read, "The reapers are angels"; nevertheless we believe that the "Lord of the harvest" would Himself be in over-all control [see Comments 1 and 4].**

It was generally agreed that vv. 14, 15 and 16 indicated the harvest of the righteous, of whom the chosen "firstfruits" were seen in v. 4. **In these righteous ones on the earth do we see part of the judgement of the nations? Such as had been martyred for their faithful stand against the Beast and his mark are seen in heaven in ch. 15. See also Mat. 24. 31 or 25. 34, whichever may apply; help would be appreciated on this point [Comment 5].**

Verses 17-20 are thought to have in view the harvest of the wicked, who are cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. The dreadful carnage involving such bloodshed would suggest Armageddon, as distinct from the judgement of the living nations. The Lord's words in the latter judgement are: "These shall go away into eternal punishment"—no mention of bloodshed.

Chapter 15 commences with the words: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last", yet in chap. 14 we see the harvest of the earth. The book of Revelation is not presented in consecutive order, as chap. 16 also clearly shows, for men are still seen there as the sufferers beneath the final plagues.

John records: "I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire". He saw victorious ones standing by (RVM—upon) this glassy sea. The sea is described as being "before the throne" (Rev. 4. 6). No being could approach the thrice-holy God without passing over this "crystal sea", which is called in Ezek. 1. 22 "the terrible crystal". We were reminded of the perfect cleansing power of the blood of Christ, by means of which the Church which is His Body is "purged from every spot and stain", entirely without blemish (Eph. 5. 27).

The "song of Moses" was taken to refer to Ex. 15, a song of triumph. The words of the song of the Lamb follow in vv. 3, 4. In vv. 5-8 we learn that John beheld what Moses had seen when commanded to make a copy of the things in the heavens (see Heb. 8. 5).

The seven angels came out of the Temple arrayed in splendour, as befitted their audience in the divine presence and their commission relating to the finishing up of God's righteous judgements. The glory-filled Temple was then closed to all until these judgements were finished.

G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Lagos. —The harvest of the earth (v. 15) we suggest has to do with its judgement. In John 5. 22, 27 we read: "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgement unto the S o n . . . And He gave Him authority to execute judgement, because He is the Son of Man". We therefore identify the One sitting on a cloud with the Man whom God has ordained (Acts 17. 31) [Comment 6].

We suggest that vv. 15, 16 introduce a phase of God's judgement different from another phase presented in vv. 17-20. It would appear that the winepress trodden without the city envisages the crushing of the servants of the Beast (Rev. 13).

They triumph in heaven who are victorious from the Beast. They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. "Yea, none that wait on Thee shall be ashamed" (Ps. 25. 3).

From Methil. —The one who is described by John as like unto a son of man sitting on the cloud appears at first sight to be none other than the Lord Himself. V. 15 would, however, if this were so, indicate a lack of reverence towards the Lord if an angel cried to Him in this way or commanded Him. We concluded therefore that this was simply another angel, and Mat. 13. 41 supports this thought [see Comments 1 and 4].

Chap. 14 depicts the harvest on earth and chap 15 the triumph in heaven, and we believe that the events of chap. 14 will take place after the Rapture of the Church the Body. Chap. 14. 14-16 deals with the reaping of righteous persons, while the remainder of the chapter deals with the reaping of the unrighteous. Judgement is clearly seen in these verses, fire (v. 18) and the winepress (v. 20)

both being figuratively expressive of God's judgement [Comment 7].

Harvesting or reaping takes place in the field, and the field in this instance is the earth or the world, and so our thoughts are turned to the parable of the tares (Mat. 13. 28-30) [see Comments 2 and 4]. The theme of the parable and the fate of the tares (the unrighteous) are very much akin to the scene in Rev. 14, though the fate of the unrighteous here is seen as a terrible bloodshed, the like of which has never before been known, resulting from their being trampled in the "winepress" of God's wrath. Their blood will flow outside the city (presumably Jerusalem) for a distance of approximately 200 miles and to a depth of three or four feet. This scene reminded us of prophecies in Is. 63. 3 and Joel 3. 9-20.

Those that come victorious from the Beast we believe to have survived or died without acknowledging the Beast or taking his mark. Having passed through this (Rev. 13. 7) their joy is full, so there is little wonder that they sing not only the song of Moses, the servant of God (Ex. 15), but also the song of the Lamb, conveying the thought of His great and marvellous works (c. f. Ps. 105. 5, 22).

The filling of the Temple with smoke reminded us of the account in Exodus where we read that the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle (Ex. 40. 55). *A. R. Smith, Alistair Coomer*

The Root and the Offspring of David

Paul addressed the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. Referring to David he said, "Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus". Isaiah foretold the coming forth of a shoot out of the stock of Jesse and a **branch** out of his roots who should bear fruit (Is. 11. 1). The root of Jesse (Is. 11. 10) is Israel's Messiah, who in that day will stand for an ensign of the peoples, and unto Him shall the nations seek.

When Nicodemus came to see Jesus, that ruler of the Jews was directed to the scripture in Num. 21. 8, 9 where Moses set the serpent of brass upon a standard. So it is that the Son of Man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in Him have **eternal** life (John 3. **14, 15**). The house of David and the inhabitants

of Jerusalem shall look unto Him whom they have pierced (Zech. 12. 10) and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him (Rev. 1. 7).

As Son of God the Lord is David's root (Rev. 5. 5), and as son of David (Mat. 1. 1) He is his offspring. The exultation of David was in the banner of the Lord (Ps. 60. 4, 6), and Moses called Jehovah his banner (Ex. 17. 15).

Though the King came to the daughter of Zion and Jerusalem lowly and riding upon an ass, in that day He will lift up the saved ones high over His land as gems in His crown (Zech. 9. 9, 16) while thorns of Belial are burned with fire (2 Sam. 23. 7). Shiloh who is the source of prosperity for Judah and for those who love Jerusalem, will yet reign over Israel.

The Spirit through Paul in Rom. 15. 12 stresses that the Gentiles shall also glorify God for His mercy. Thus, with access to a heavenly Zion (Heb. 12. 22) those in churches of God today, among the people of God, are themselves a kingdom, priests (Rev. 1. 6). So, as the Book of Revelation is wound up, we read in 22. 16: "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things *for the churches*. I am the Root and Offspring of David, the bright, the morning star".

Eric Archibald

From R. Darke, Victoria, B. C.:

Comments in papers in the February magazine suggest that the mark of the beast, when associated with the hand (Rev. 13. 16; 14. 9) is a secret thing. Is it not clear from 13. 16 that the mark is on the hand and upon the forehead, and not in, or inside, the hand, since the Greek pronoun used is "epi"—upon?

Although the word "or" (Rev. 13. 16; 14. 9) suggests that some would choose to have the mark in a place which could be concealed at will the palm or the back of the hand would both serve the purpose (Ex. 4. 7). It is interesting, however, to note that, in Hebrew, "caph" represents the palm of the hand, while the whole hand is "yad". "Caph" is used in 2 Kin. 4. 34 whereas "yad" is used in Ex. 13. 9. In both instances the Septuagint translates "hand" by "cheir" and "upon" by "epi", just as we find in Rev. 13. 16 and 14. 9. It is therefore difficult to demonstrate that "epi" should inevitably indicate "upon" in the sense of "on

the back of" the hand. Might there not be a counterfeit on the part of the Antichrist to the commandment concerning wearing frontlets between the eyes and binding them on the hand, even if the wearing of them is not spiritually understood (Deut. 6. 6-8)?

E

Archibald

THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION (*cont.*)

20. 28—"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood" (It seems a pity that here the word "guardian" is substituted for "bishop" or "overseer"; and the term "church of the Lord" used instead of "church of God").

Comment: The translation of *episcopon* here by "guardian" seems unwarranted, especially as RSV translates the same Greek word in 1 Tim. 3. 2 by "bishop". The latter part of the verse has been the subject of much controversy amongst scholars because, as rendered in AV and RV, it appears to attribute the blood of our redemption to God rather than to Christ. Obviously with this difficulty in mind, RSV and other modern versions prefer to rely on some ancient manuscripts in which Lord appears in this verse instead of God. Mr. J. N. Darby, in his New Translation renders the passage "the Church of God which He purchased with the blood of His own"; and supplies a lengthy marginal note on the subject. This solution to the difficulty was favoured by Mr. J. Miller (see *Needed Truth* 1958, p. 162).

- 1 Cor. 1. 9—"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord".
- 1 Cor. 5. 9, 13—"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men;... Drive out the wicked person from among you".
- 1 Thes. 2. 14—"For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus".
- 1 Pet. 2. 5—"And like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".

Comment: At first sight "be yourselves built" seems to place the emphasis wrongly on the believer's action and not on God's, in building God's house. But on careful examination, it is seen that the beautiful parallel thoughts of the Lord Jesus, the Living Stone, the Chief Corner Stone, precious to God; and ourselves, living stones, accepted by God, to be built into His house, are highlighted by the word "yourselves" which does not appear in AV or RV.

1 Pet. 2. 9—"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people".

1 Pet. 5. 2, 3—"Tend the flock of God that is your charge... being examples to the flock".

1 Tim. 3. 15—"You may know how one ought to behave in *the household of God*, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth".

Comment: *Oikos*, a house, a dwelling, is sometimes translated "household" in AV and RV if the context indicates that the members of a household are in view (e. g. Acts 16. 15; 1 Cor. 1. 16). Such does not seem to be the case here, but Marshall's literal translation gives "household". The doctrinal difficulty is that in Eph. 2. 19, "household" (Gr. *Oikeioi*) is taken by some to refer to all who are born again (see Notes on Epistles, p. 173 by Mr. J. Miller).

It would appear that in response to criticisms some changes for the better have been made in later editions of the RSV. From the following statement in the preface of the latest editions, we gather that further important changes are unlikely: "These principles (i. e. the principles which have guided this revision) were reaffirmed by the committee in 1959 in connection with a study of criticisms and suggestions from various readers. As a result a few changes have been authorised for the present and subsequent editions. Most of these are corrections of punctuation, capitalization and footnotes. Some changes of words or phrases are made in the interest of consistency, clarity or accuracy of translation".

The following is a list of some of these changes: -

- a) Job 19. 26—"without my flesh" changed to "from my flesh".
- b) Mat. 7. 9 and 1 Cor. 10. 17—"loaf" changed to "bread".

- c) Mat. 21. 9—"Blessed be he" changed to "Blessed is he".
- d) Mat. 27. 54 and Mark 15. 39—^{ft}"a son of God" changed to "the Son of God".
- e) John 16. 23—"ask me no questions" changed to "ask nothing of me".
- f) 1 Cor. 15. 19—"If in this life we who are in Christ have only hope" changed to "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ".
- g) 1 Tim. 3. 2, 12: 5. 9: Titus 1. 6—"married only once" changed to "the husband of one wife" or "the wife of one man".

It will be realized that most of these changes tend to confirm the accuracy of the RV.

(Concluded)

J.

D.

Terrell

THE R. S. V. and Mat. 1. 16

Editors are indebted to Mr. R. Armstrong of London, Ontario for drawing attention to the presentation of Mat. 1. 16 in the RSV. (No attempt was made in the study of the RSV in this magazine over recent months to deal with marginal references or footnotes). Quoting from a very full comment on this verse by believing scholars in America, he points out that the footnote to this verse which appears in the RSV published in 1952 (entire Bible) was not present in the RSV New Testament published in 1946. In view of the serious doctrinal issue raised by this footnote it is suggested by the scholars quoted that it was slipped into the later translation by the translators in the hope of its passing unnoticed by the more critical observers; and indeed itself reflecting an alleged antipathy on the part of the translators to the doctrine of the virgin birth of the Lord. The offending footnote reads: "Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, was the father of Jesus who is called Christ".

Now part of the verse concerned reads, in the RSV: "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ". (Attention is called by the American scholars to the fact that the Greek pronoun "whom" in the text is singular and feminine, and points clearly back to Mary). Since it is obviously of the greatest importance to establish whether there is any

real authority for the inserted footnote, we quote rather extensively below from Bruce Metzger of Princeton University. He is one of the editors of the most up-to-date texts of the Greek New Testament, which takes account of fresh evidence and texts used for N. E. B. and other modern versions. This quotation is from "A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament" (United Bible Societies, London/New York, 1971), and for providing it we are indebted to Mr. Martin Archibald.

"There are three principal variant readings:

(1) "and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ"—supported by a wide representation of textual families in early Greek and versional witnesses.

(2) "and Jacob begot Joseph, to whom being betrothed the virgin Mary bore Jesus, who is called Christ"—supported by Caesarean and several Old Latin witnesses.

Similar to this are the readings of the Curetonian Syriac manuscript, "Jacob begot Joseph, him to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, she who bore Jesus the Christ"; and the American version, "Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, from whom was born Jesus who was called Christ".

(3) "Jacob begot Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called Christ"—Sinaitic Syriac manuscript. Other witnesses have sometimes been supposed to support reading (3).

"What now are the relative merits of the three principal readings? The external evidence in support of (1) is extremely good: it is read by all known Greek uncial manuscripts except one, and by all other manuscripts and versions except the limited number that support (2) and (3). Transcriptional probabilities suggest that reading (2) arose (perhaps at Caesarea) because the expression "the husband of Mary" was thought to be misleading in a genealogical context. Lest the hasty reader assume that Jesus was the physical son of Mary and her husband Joseph, the text was altered to bring it into conformity with verse 18 where the verb meaning "to be betrothed" is used to describe the relationship of Mary to Joseph. On the other hand, if reading (2) be supposed to be original, it

is exceedingly difficult to imagine why any scribe would **have** substituted reading (1) for such a clear and unambiguous declaration of the virginity of Mary.

"There is no evidence that reading (3) ever existed **in** a **Greek** manuscript of the first Gospel. The Committee judged **that it arose** either as a paraphrase of reading (2)—this was **Burkitt's** view—or as a purely mechanical imitation of the preceding **pattern** in the genealogy. Since every name in the genealogy up **to Joseph** is written twice in succession, it may be that the scribe of **the** Sinaitic Syriac (or an ancestor of this manuscript) carelessly followed the stereotyped pattern and in v. 16, having made the initial mistake of repeating the word "Joseph", went on to produce reading (3)-"

This quotation from Metyger clearly discredits the unsound footnote under consideration. The allegations referred to earlier, however, about the motive of the translators in inserting it in **the** 1952 edition of RSV while not in the **1946** edition, **need** perhaps to be regarded with a little caution. If the motive **were as** suggested by the American commentators it would **indeed** make questionable the claim of the RSV translators to be willing **to make** changes between editions in response to valid criticism. **It must** in fairness be observed, however, that the latest edition of the **RSV**, embodied in the "Common Bible" (1973), once again *omits* the offending footnote to Mat. 1. 16. The preface to the "Common Bible", however, says, "The Revised Standard Version Bible Committee has become both ecumenical, and international, with Protestant and Catholic members". Thus, evaluation of such a version as the RSV requires continuing caution and vigilance as edition succeeds edition.

J. D. T.

COMMENTS

1. (Atherton and Leigh): Contributors are about equally divided on the identity of the "one sitting like unto a son of man" (Rev. 14. 14). Two papers take for granted that it is the Lord Jesus. Others debate whether it is the Lord Himself or an angel. The expression "like unto a son of man" is reminiscent of Daniel 7. 13 and Rev. 1. 13; in both these instances the Lord Jesus is clearly referred to; nor is this term used elsewhere of angelic beings.

Moreover the Lord's glorious appearing is elsewhere associated with the clouds (Rev. 1. 7). The wearing of the victor's crown is appropriate to Him, but do we read anywhere of angels being so crowned? So from these indications I would personally feel that the Lord Jesus is referred to. John frequently uses the expression "another angel" even in contexts where there has not been an immediately preceding reference to angels (e. g. 14. 6). In the course of his receiving the revelation he saw so many angels in vision that the expression "another angel" can readily be understood. The words of the angel in v. 15 might be regarded as giving the signal for casting forth the sickle—fulfilment of a duty assigned rather than the initiation of authority.

2. (Atherton and Leigh): The parable of the tares certainly uses the imagery of a harvest at the consummation of the age (Mat. 13. 39), but it is a harvest of judgement and the reapers are angels. So if we regard the one like unto a son of man as the Lord Jesus, and do not consider his action in casting the sickle as an act of judgement, the parallel with the parable of the tares is rather obscure.

3. (Atherton and Leigh): In Rev. 6. 10 the souls of certain who had been slain expressed themselves "with a great voice" as they cried for divine retribution on their enemies. This suggests that although disembodied the soul may communicate with God. But those in 15. 2-4 are not spoken of as "souls" in the same way, which would seem to indicate that they were seen by John as in glorified bodies. He was given an impression of the ultimate triumph of those who had come victorious from the Beast and from his image and from the number of his name.

4. (Birkenhead): While taking the point made from Mat. 13. 30, I have felt that in the interpretation of the parable (vv. 36-43) the emphasis is primarily on the judgement of the unrighteous. This would be out of character with Rev. 14. 15, 16 if a reaping of the righteous is there prefigured.

5. (Derby): It seems to me that Mat. 24. 31 is more clearly related because it fits in with the concept of an ingathering of the righteous almost simultaneously with the visitation of judgement

on the Beast and his supporters at the time of the Lord's manifestation as Son of Man. Whereas Mat. 25. 34 would seem appropriate to a slightly later phase when the nations have been assembled for judgement.

6. (Lagos): This is a thoughtful point, but weight will doubtless be given by our friends to the fact that in many places in Revelation the angels do carry out certain judgements (e. g. 16. 1-21). All judgement is given unto the Son in the sense of ultimate judicial authority, but certain aspects of its outworking will be through others, including angelic activities in acts of punishment. But please see Comment 1 for discussion of 14. 14.

7. (Methil): If this reaping is of the righteous (a view supported by Methi's paper) Mat. 13. 41 would hardly help to establish the identity of the one in Rev. 14. 14, because in Mat. 13. 41 the angels are likened to reapers harvesting the wicked: see also Comment 1.

8. ("Impressions"): What evidence is there that man was originally placed in Eden in the autumn?—would seasonal conditions in Eden answer to later Palestinian sequences? Again, how can we know that the Son was sent forth on the first of Abib? Or that believers of the gospel of the kingdom will all be "reaped" before the middle of Daniel's 70th week? And is it really the case that "the ingathering" refers to the death of those who die in the Lord? I suggest that Mat. 24. 31 refers to a great reaping and ingathering of the righteous at the time of the Lord's advent in power to overthrow the Beast. This seems to answer to the reaping of Rev. 14. 15, 16 just as the judgement on the Beast's massed supporters answers to the vintage of vv. 18-20. Care is needed lest we attempt to deduce too much from unestablished premises.

9. ("Impressions"): I do not understand that the opening of the Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is timed to coincide with a desecrated Temple on earth, or that we can deduce from this that the events surrounding 15. 5-8 begin around the middle of Daniel's 70th week. I consider that one reference to the opening of the Temple in heaven takes place at the close of the week, associated with the climax of the seventh seal being

opened (11. 19). John also saw the Temple in heaven opened (15. 5) just before the seven last plagues were to be poured out, presumably well into the course of the second half of the week. At other times he saw certain things associated with the altar (6. 9, 8. 5, 16. 7). So references to the Temple in heaven occur at different junctures, as would be expected in the overall plan of the book, and it is in my view unsound to associate each reference with the middle of the 70th week.

G. P. Jr.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Methil:

(a) Is there scriptural support for the suggestion that the four living creatures as seen in Rev. 4. 7 indicate the four aspects of the gospels, namely, the lion (Matthew), the ox (Mark), the man (Luke) and the eagle (John) ?

This suggestion is based on interpretive analogy rather than direct scriptural statement, but it has had a fairly wide appeal.

(b) In Rev. 14. 15 and 17 we read that the angels come out from the Temple. Can we assume from this that the cloud referred to in v. 14 was also in the Temple?

I do not think so. I envisage the one like unto a son of man and sitting on a cloud as in a situation distinct from the Temple in heaven. Then an angel comes out from the Temple to address him.

From Lagos:

(a) To which phase of God's judgement is the harvest of the earth in Rev. 14. related?

It will be seen that there is broad agreement by most contributors that the "harvest" of 14. 14-16 prefigures the gathering in of the righteous at the time of the Lord's advent as Son of man, and the "vintage" of vv. 17, 18 to the crushing of the Beast's supporters at that same time.

(b) What significance is conveyed by the "glassy sea" of Rev. 15. 2? Please see suggestions made in Derby's paper, with helpful reference to Ezek. 1. 22.

(c) For what purpose is the Temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven? Is it associated with the judgement of God?

Several contributors **have** pointed out **that the** Temple in **heaven** is **that** of which **the** Mosaic tabernacle **was a copy and shadow** (Heb. 8. 5). Our **present** understanding of **this** is necessarily limited, **but** while it is frequently linked in Revelation **with** divine **judgement, it has** evidently wider associations, including **the approach** of God's people **in** spiritual worship (**Heb. 9. 23, 24**).

G. P. Jr.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

MAY 1974

EDITORIAL

As we reach chapter 16 of the Revelation we have a sense of the accelerating advance of divine activity in both judgement and deliverance; judgement of the forces of arrogant wickedness which have by then over-run the earth, and deliverance of God's persecuted, beleaguered, yet still unbelieving, people. An atmosphere of impending climax pervades this fearful portion of the Word. In the plagues recorded, the likeness to the plagues of Egypt has been commented on in several papers and indeed it is quite striking. Both occasions are dominated by the might of an invincible God and the intransigence of men totally committed to evil.

Very useful reference back is made in one paper to our 1972 study of the earlier chapters of Revelation where the subject of the seals, trumpets and bowls was commented on in some detail. One impression which is received strongly is of the might and status of the angelic beings involved in these events. We can little imagine the reality of the legions of heaven who here execute the righteous will of God. We pause in wonder before such a statement as, "We behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus " (Heb. 2. 9).

J. D. T.

SOME TITLES OF THE LORD IN REVELATION

The Alpha and the Omega

In these letters which come first and last respectively in the Greek alphabet the Almighty makes known His eternal character within the compass of human language. God graciously interposed in our lives when He shined in our hearts by the power of His word (2 Cor. 4. 6), and made the beginning of a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17). Three times the Spirit caused John to pen the words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 1. 8; 21. 6; 22. 13), thus expressing the perfection of the Word of God.

"I am the first, and I am the last... ye are My witnesses", God said to Israel (Is. 44. 6-8), and this was their responsibility as having received the oracles of God. Within the breastplate of judgement Moses placed not only the Lights but also the Perfections (Lev. 8. 8, which is the middle verse of the Torah). Yet if the perfection of the Law found no answering perfection in the lives of Israelites, the word of faith still directs the heart to Christ as the end of the Law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth (Rom. 10. 4). Last among the verses which begin with the letter Tau in Ps. 119 is the confession, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant" (v. 176).

As head of the body, the Church, He is the beginning (Col. 1. 18, 19) and the fulness (Eph. 1. 23). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever (Heb. 13. 8). We know that it is God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ (Eph. 1. 10), for He is before all things and in Him all things consist (Col. 1. 17).

When Babylon threatened to overthrow Israel, Jehovah reminded them, "I am the first, I also am the last" (Is. 48. 12). Thus God declares the end from the beginning (Is. 46. 10). The fact that He is the former of all things makes the portion of His worshippers distinctive (Jer. 10. 16). He has promised that to him that is athirst He will give of the fountain of the water of life freely (Rev. 21. 6).

In the days of His flesh the Lord said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away (Luke 21. 33). The One who was still the God of Abraham in the day when He made Himself known to Moses as the "I am" (see John 8. 58) has brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10).

Whatever the reward for each man's work when He returns, the hymn strikes a note of trust and affection:

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

Eric Archibald

REVELATION 16

THE SEVEN BOWLS

From Derby. —The words "Go ye" (16. 1) were once spoken to inaugurate this present day of God's grace (Mark 16. 15), **but now** the words are a command to God's angelic servants to **pour out** His bowls of divine judgement upon the earth. The figure of bowls is obviously symbolic but the dreadful judgements they contain will be literal and actual. The number seven is a symbol of **divine** completeness, for in the seven bowls is finished (completed) the wrath of God (15. 1).

The first bowl is directed against the centre of Satan's activities, as is also the fifth against the Beast and his kingdom. All who have the mark of the beast and worship his image are stricken with a noisome and grievous sore. That this judgement is literal is clear from v. 11 and the record of God's judgements in Egypt (Ex. 9. 9). "Noisome" we thought to mean painful, repugnant and unsightly.

The second bowl is poured out into the sea and it becomes blood as putrid as that of a dead man, in which not even **the fish can** survive.

The third bowl is directed against their drinking water, the rivers and fountains of water. That this also was literal can be seen from v. 6. They who shed the blood of saints and prophets will be made to drink blood, reminding us of the voice of the martyrs in 6. 9; see also 16. 7: "I heard the altar saying... ". It appears that the blood will not foul the rivers and fountains as the sea is fouled under the second bowl.

The fourth bowl causes the heat from the sun to be intensified far beyond its normal heat, even in midsummer in equatorial regions, a phenomenal heat that literally burns!

The fifth bowl, darkness as that in Egypt (Ex. 10. 21, 22), upon the throne of the Beast and his kingdom has no time limit stated (unlike the three days in Egypt). Men will gnaw their tongues for pain.

In the sixth bowl God brings about the drying up of the great river Euphrates that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun-rising. This will further aggravate the Beast's military difficulties, with enemies to the north and south,

and now to the east [Comment 1]. It would seem that the Beast will emerge victorious over his foes but the Lord Himself will overthrow him.

The seventh bowl is poured out upon the air, and there comes forth a great voice out of the Temple from the throne saying, "It is done", reminding us of the Lord's loud cry, "It is finished", at which divine powers were manifested—the veil of the Temple was rent, the rocks were rent, the tombs were opened, there was a great earthquake (Mat. 27. 52-54). But to signify the finish of pouring out of the seven bowls we read of lightnings and voices and thunders, and a great and mighty earthquake, the greatest ever! "The great city" we thought to be Jerusalem (see 11. S) [Comments 2 and 2a]. Jerusalem might well look like a ploughed field, level, through which the living waters will flow in a scene of peace and joy at a later date.

A. Smith, S. R. W.

From Liverpool. —These bowls of wrath are evidently limited to the sphere of the Beast's power (v. 2). The first brings physical torture, but only on his followers (see Ex. 9. 9). The word "noisome" is *kakos*, translated "evil" in other places. Perhaps here it refers to evil-smelling or noxious sores.

The second bowl turns the sea into blood (see Ex. 7 19). The third bowl does similarly for fresh waters. Notice that the waters of the Euphrates are not affected (v. 12) [Comment 3]. This is followed by a justification of the ways of God (vv. 5, 7). The punishment is according to the offence, blood for blood (see Luke 11. 49-50). The fourth bowl causes the sun to have intensified scorching heat, but no repentance follows (v. 9). We noted the word "him" in the margin of v. 8 and wondered if it could refer to the angel [Comment 4].

The fifth bowl fills the "throne of the Beast" with darkness. His throne must be in the West as he is the last Roman Emperor, probably in Rome itself, and rules over the empire of ten kingdoms (v. 10) [Comment 15]. This darkness will be literal darkness as it was in Egypt in the past.

Under the sixth bowl two different gatherings are seen: (1) the kings from the east with their armies (v. 12), and (2) the *kings* of the whole world, probably Roman or western nations (v. 14).

Unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet, possibly in fulfilment of 1 Tim. 4. 2, where we read of "doctrines of demons" [Comment 5]. We considered these under three heads:

- (a) *Spiritism*: this is the direct power of Satan to deceive multitudes.
- (b) *Scepticism*: in its various forms this results from wilful unbelief. The Lord Jesus asks the question in Luke 18. 8: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth"?
- (c) *False religions*: the False Prophet will be the instrument employed by Satan to delude through false religion the world's systems culminating in the apostasy of the Antichrist [Comment 16].

We considered the great city divided into three parts to be Jerusalem, on account of 11. 8 [see Comments 2 and 2a]. The cities of the nations may be those nations gathered against Jerusalem. Great Babylon we considered to be the religious system which is remembered by God in judgement. The power and influence of Babylon over the nations that supported her ("the Beast that carrieth her" 17. 7) will first of all be destroyed by those nations themselves (17. 16) [Comment 17].

M. S. E., J. W., G. S. W.

From Birkenhead. —The events of the chapter bring vividly to mind the similar judgements which came upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the similar response of the people in not repenting (vv. 9, 11).

As to the sequence of the events when considered with the seals and the trumpets we draw attention to the discussion in *Bible Studies* 1972, pp. 22-27.

The Psalmist declared, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. 33. 6) and here we see that same voice controlling the elements to bring judgements upon the unrighteous.

The mention of the angel of the waters (v. 5) suggests that some angels have certain authority over the material creation. The angel declares an eternal verity concerning the righteousness of God as displayed in His judgements. There is encouragement for all who may feel downcast at the apparent prosperity of evil in the procession of judgements here recorded, firstly on those who prosper as a result of taking the mark of the beast (v. 2) then on the throne

of the beast and his kingdom (v. 10).

It is remarkable **that**, in spite of the ferocity of the judgements and the resultant agony, the Devil is able to marshall his forces and gather the nations together for the great battle of Har-Magedon in the plain of Esdraelon. The way for this confrontation is opened by the drying up of the Euphrates, the river which is first mentioned as flowing out from the garden of Eden. The mention of the coming of the thief links with 1 Thes. 5. 2 to indicate the ushering in of the day of the Lord when He will come to rescue His ancient people when the battle seems to be lost (Zech. 14. 3, 4).

The pouring of the bowl of the seventh angel upon the air heralds the completion of the judgements (v. 17). The result is a tremendous disturbance in the heavens with hailstones approaching 100lb in weight falling on the earth, and the greatest earthquake ever experienced. As to the identity of the great city two suggestions were put forward, namely Sodom and Egypt (see Rev. 11. 8) or Rome [Comments 8 and 15].

R. D. Williams

From Vancouver. —The same great voice that commands, "Go and pour", announces the completion of the judgements, "It is done". The whole earth, not just one locality, is the recipient.

Judgement in action is seen in the pouring of the vials. There are several points comparable to the plagues sent by God upon the Egyptians when the Israelites were in bondage. The Old Testament incidents are accepted as true. Are these judgements to be taken literally? [Comment 6],

The victims react by blaspheming and turning away from God. No call for mercy is uttered. No glory is given to God. The Anti-christ is accepted instead of Christ. They have changed the truth of God for a lie.

These judgements take place after the rapture, and just before the coming of the Lord to earth. The first six judgements seem to occur in rapid succession. The battle of Armageddon is announced. The seventh vial is poured out into the atmosphere. The events which follow are without parallel in human history. The judgement of the earth is done. The tribulation is almost over.

In v. 15 is a solemn warning: "Behold, I come as a thief". Why is this strange announcement here? Is it the voice of the Lord Jesus? For whom is Jesus coming? [Comment 7]. The Church which is His Body has been raptured some years previously. In 15.

2 there is a picture of the group for whom Jesus is coming at this stage in the pouring out of the seven vials. These are the faithful ones who have refused to worship the beast or to receive his mark. In 6. 9-11 the martyrs are depicted, faithful to the end. The final judgement cannot be poured out until every righteous one is out of range of God's fury. A similar example is where Noah and his family were in the ark before the rain fell. Another example is Lot, the righteous man, who was safely outside the city of Sodom when the city was destroyed [see Comment 13]. *John Robinson*

From R. A. Parker (Stoke). —The seven angels having the seven last plagues are again directed by a great voice out of the Temple. Such a sight is described (15. 1) as another sign great and marvellous. There is, however, no suggestion in the chapter that the word "last" means the plagues occur at the end of the 70th week. Careful consideration shows there is no point of time or duration of time mentioned in the passage [Comment 9], The pouring out of each bowl brings about a condition or state of persons or things. This also applies to the first four seals and trumpets. Such conditions appear to prevail over many months. A summary may help to emphasize this point.

<i>Bowl</i>	<i>Into</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Who Affected</i>
1.	the earth	it <i>became</i> a noisome and grievous sore	the men which had the mark of the beast
2.	the sea	it <i>became</i> blood as of a dead man (coagulated blood)	every living soul in the sea
3.	the rivers and fountains	it <i>became</i> blood (flowing blood)	men who had poured out the blood of saints and prophets
4.	the sun	it scorched with fire	men, scorched with great heat
5.	the throne of the beast	his kingdom was darkened... gnawed their tongues for pain	men (of his kingdom)
6.	the river Euphrates	three unclean spirits working signs go forth to gather kings together	the kings of the whole world

<i>Bowl</i>	<i>Into</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Who Affected</i>
		thunders, a great earth- quake and great hail out of heaven	
7.	the air	lightnings, voices,	men generally

An understanding of the passage can probably best be derived by asking "What are the seven last plagues"? We suggest they are: - 1) sores, 2) coagulated blood, 3) flowing blood, 4) fire, 5) darkness and pain, 6) three unclean spirits working signs, 7) great hail. With the revelation of the 6th and 7th plagues certain events are also mentioned. Linked with the sixth bowl is the drying up of the great river and the gathering of the kings of the whole world unto war. Such events may well take months, possibly as much as two years to accomplish, remembering this will be the greatest, mightiest gathering of all time [Comment 10]. Linked with the seventh bowl is a great earthquake, the division of the great city (i. e. Jerusalem; cf. 11. 8; 16. 19; 17. 18; 18. 10) into three parts, the fall of the cities of the nations, the fall of Babylon the great and the removal of mountains and islands. We suggest these events show that the bowls are poured out symbolically near the middle of the 70th week [Comments 11, 11a].

A consideration of the passages mentioning great earthquakes leads us to suggest that only one great earthquake (16. 18) occurs in association with the final judgements of God in the earth. The five references to this are Rev. 6. 12; 8. 5; 11. 13, 19; 16. 18. From Rev. 11. 13 we are given the precise moment of time: "in that hour". This refers to the ascension of the two witnesses and occurs at or near the middle of the week. For this reason also we see the 6th Seal (6. 12) and the 7th Seal (8. 1) referring to the middle of the week. The above references deal with the great earthquake from four different aspects in relationship to: -

- (i) the heavenly bodies (6. 12)
- (ii) Jerusalem, the great city (11. 13; 16. 19)
- (iii) previous earthquakes in the earth (16. 18)
- (iv) the temple of God in heaven (8. 5; 11. 19; 16. 18)

[Comment 12]

Impressions from other Contributors. —Papers were also received from Atherton and Leigh, Denmark Hill, Lagos, Melbourne and Methil, and below are impressions from these.

While some of the earlier judgements of Revelation (e. g. chapters 8-11) are described as affecting only a part of the earth, in Rev. 16 much the same plagues appear in a much more severe form, some of them affecting all the earth—crushing "natural disasters" of the greatest magnitude. At least some of the plagues, however, will affect only those who have yielded to the Beast's authority (e. g. the first and fifth). One paper suggested that some of these judgements will affect God's saints still alive on earth, but another *view* was that the seven last plagues will only fall on mankind after the reaping of the righteous harvest of 14. *14-16* has taken place [Comment 13].

A dual purpose was seen in the divine judgements of this end-time period, the just punishment of the nations and the deliverance of Israel (c. f. Is. 49. 26 with Rev. 16. 6). Ps. 79 will once again fittingly describe Israel's feelings when the nations are pressing hard the city of Jerusalem before forming up to oppose the King of kings at Har-magedon. Indeed this whole Psalm (see vv. 1, 3, 6, 9, 10) seems strikingly appropriate to the setting of Rev. 16.

It is customary nowadays to decry the element of retribution in punishment as against those of deterrence and reformation. In the divine judgements of the seven bowls, however, the main, if not only, purpose is retribution (see particularly v. 6). Men will reap what they have sown. It will be too late, events will have progressed too far, for men to be deterred from their evil by judgements, no matter how severe. No reformation is indicated in Rev. 16; there will be no repentance, but more blasphemy (vv. 9, 11, 21). The judgements will have a hardening effect, as with Pharaoh. As never before in the entire history of the race, men will have tasted the freedoms for which they have longed: scope for their materialistic ideologies, licence for their carnal lusts and pleasures, and liberty to worship the idols of their choice. Now, with quickening suddenness, the heavy blows of divine anger fall, and all is threatened. The responses will be most bitter hatred and increased rebellion.

It has been suggested that at least the first three bowl judgements represent in symbolic form the misuse by man of the earth's natural resources; thus harmful material in the air affects mankind (first bowl), sea life is destroyed by pollution (second bowl) and drinking water is contaminated (third bowl). It is highly likely that some

such explanation will be made at the time of these calamities, but we must not forget that the events are here presented as divine judgements and were foretold many hundreds of years before their occurrence.

One paper emphasized the extensive food shortages which must result from the judgements of the second, third and fourth bowls. Certainly if the second plague results in the death of all marine life, the food supply will be greatly diminished. The same may be said to result from the contamination of the world's water supplies under the third bowl's judgement. As a consequence of the scorching of the fourth judgement, the earth's provision of food will be even further reduced and surely famine conditions will prevail with inevitable death by starvation of multitudes. Such scorching heat, however, will not be allowed completely to destroy the earth's vegetation, for during the Millennium, which will shortly follow this period, the earth will yield her increase in abundance.

One paper suggested that one of the purposes of God in His judgement is to bring men to repentance and recognition of His sovereignty [Comment 14].

As to the sixth bowl, the reference to the "kings that come from the sunrising" was thought to refer to armies from the east of Israel, presumably from China, Japan or India, etc. Dan. 11. 44 was thought to indicate that these forces may arrive at the siege of Jerusalem as part of the gathering together of the nations at Har-Magedon. As if to assist the free passage of these oriental armies to the small country of Israel, God will cause the river Euphrates to be dried up (v. 12). That this should be necessary seems strange in an age of air-transportation, but there may be something in the suggestion that the present-day energy shortages will have become so acute by the time of the end that much more dependance will have to be placed on overland transportation of troops. If this is so, the drying up of the Euphrates will remove what was in ancient times a formidable barrier to invading armies from the east.

"The great city" of v. 19 mentioned under the seventh bowl, was thought to be either Jerusalem or Babylon. The same term refers to Babylon in 18. 10, but to Jerusalem in 11. 8 ("where also their Lord was crucified"). That reference is made in the same verse (v. 19) to "the great city" and "Babylon the great" seems to show that in this verse the two are distinct; this tends

to the view that here "the great city" is Jerusalem [see Comments 2 and 2a].

Eds.

COMMENTS

1. (Derby): It is an interesting suggestion here that the armies from the north, south and east are enemies of the Beast. It seems clear that the Beast, in mobilising the earth's military forces, has forcefully to bring many under his dominion. This is the picture in Dan. 11, a passage which is related to these verses in Rev. 16 by friends from Denmark Hill. I would agree with this, though from the Adversary's point of view, all is being contrived towards the overwhelming destruction of Israel.

2. (Derby): What city is referred to in v. 19 as "the great city" which was "divided into three parts"? Two main suggestions emerge, viz. Jerusalem and Babylon. In 11. 8 we read of Jerusalem as "the great city" and in 17. 18 and 18. 10 the same term is applied to Babylon. Rev. 16. 19 seems to be a verse full of judgement. Since these great events will effect the *deliverance* of Jerusalem, I feel that the "great city" here is Babylon, suffering divine wrath.

J. D. T.

2a. Vv. 19-20 have appealed to me as an impression of the massive disruption caused by this earthquake, v. 19 referring to cities, the great centres of civilisation, and v. 20 to the islands and mountains. From this viewpoint it seems to me that v. 19 includes major cities of the world—first "the great city", Jerusalem; then other major capitals, the cities of the nations; then "Babylon the great", this reference presumably being amplified in 18. 21-24. That the topography of the whole area around Jerusalem will be radically altered is clear from Zech. 14. 4, 5. If we accept that the seventh bowl brings us to the climax of the Lord's advent as Son of Man, it may well be that the earthquake of 16. 18 develops from a focal point of disruption when the Lord's feet touch the Mount of Olives.

G. P. Jr.

3. (Liverpool): This is an interesting point. The verse (12) certainly speaks of the "water" of the Euphrates. Might it be that the events of verse 4 were temporary in duration since continuous replacement of drinking water sources with blood would be rapidly fatal to all involved?

4. (Liverpool): Whether the sun itself or the angel involved is

referred to seems to make little real difference here?

5. (Liverpool): Does not 1 Tim. 4. *I* have its main application to the "later times" of *this* dispensation of grace? It will indeed, however, be a massively escalated activity on similar lines which will be seen in the Beast's days.

6. (Vancouver): I think we must regard these as literal judgments. The scorching (v. 9), the pain (v. 10) and the earthquake must surely have been literal—and therefore surely the others also?

7. (Vancouver): The Lord is seen as coming for the deliverance of the oppressed saints of that time. An exhortation to watchfulness seems appropriate at this point.

8. (Birkenhead): Presumably it is Jerusalem, as described in 11. 8 as spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, which is suggested here; and Rome as an alternative. It does seem that the term "the great city" must be of significance and this is used of both Jerusalem and Babylon (see Comment 2 and 2a).

9. (R. A. P. Stoke): Even apart from the expression "the last" (15. *I*) the intensive seventy of these plagues seems to indicate a rapid movement towards the climax of the Lord's appearance in power, and therefore to their concentration in the latter part of the 70th week period.

10. (R. A. P. Stoke): Even if we assume, as suggested in one paper (see "Impressions") that modern transport methods had reverted to more primitive ones, it still suggests to me a period of months, at the most, rather than years.

11. (R. A. P. Stoke): Editors and fellow-students are by now well acquainted with our brother's thoughts on the significance of the *middle* of the week and these have been discussed and answered in various recent issues of *Bibles Studies*, J. D. T.

11a. May I further point out two particular difficulties which seem to me to invalidate the suggestion that the sixth and seventh seals and the pouring out of the bowls signify events reaching their climax and completion at the middle of the 70th week?

First, that the Beast's period of power during which he imposes his mark, is for 42 months (13. 5). At the end of this period he is overcome by the Lord Jesus (19. 20). Is it not therefore clear that such references as 16. 2 could not apply before the middle of the week?

Second, it is surely significant that the sixth seal, the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl are each accompanied by similar catastrophic "natural" convulsions—see 16. 12-14, 11. 19 and 16. 18. The earthquake is mentioned in each of these contexts, and will constitute, I submit, a major feature of the fearful accompaniments of the coming of the Son of Man. But the earthquake of 11. 13 quite clearly occurs about the middle of the week, because the two witnesses are slain by the beast that cometh up out of the abyss (11. 7). Since only 7000 are killed by it the earthquake of 11. 13 could not be the same as that of 16. 18, because the latter is to be the worst in human history, whereas many earthquakes in the past have had a death toll of more than 7000 (e. g. 143, 000 in Tokyo earthquake in 1923). *G.P. Jr.*

12. (R. A. P. Stoke): I do not agree that all of these references to earthquakes can refer to a single event. For example, that of 11. 13 is associated with a time when men "were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven"—quite out of character with the days of 16. 9, 11 leading up to the climax of 16. 18, 21.

13. ("Impressions"): Since the Lord appears in power for the deliverance of His persecuted saints, the latter will obviously have lived through the fearful days which see the judgements of the bowls. No indication is given of their being specifically spared *all* of the effects of the plagues. Would not the solar effects of vv. 8, 9 affect all to some extent? If we assume that the reaping of 14. 16 is a reaping of the righteous, it does not, I suggest, necessarily imply a taking *away* of such people *before* the reaping of the ungodly (14. 19); rather a separation of the two, a "tares and wheat" situation.

14. ("Impressions"): In vv. 9, 11 men appear to be reproached for their lack of repentance. Yet repentance for all who have the mark of the Beast could only glorify God; it could not lead to forgiveness (14. 9, 10). *J. D. T.*

15. (Liverpool): I must confess to some diffidence about the deduction that the throne of the Beast "must be in the west... probably in Rome itself". For while there is a clear link between the fourth great Gentile Empire and the final phase of Gentile rule under the Beast, the prophetic scriptures seem also to indicate a focal centre of power in the Middle East rather than in the western area of the old Roman Empire. It would seem feasible

that the ten kingdoms comprising the "power-bloc" on which the Beast's authority rests should broadly occupy the geographic area of the Roman Empire, yet be administered from a centre in the Middle East. I have in mind that in Dan. 8. 8-10, 21-25 the Antichrist is depicted as "a little horn" emerging from one of **the** four divisions of Alexander the Great's dominions. Of the four areas represented by the "four notable horns", that governed by Alexander's general Seleucus (i. e. Syria, Babylon and **Media**) **would** seem best to answer to the vision: in which case one would expect the centre of administration to be in that area. This would be confirmed if it is accepted that the Antichrist is "the king of the north" of Dan. 11. 36-45, and Babylon the great would be the obvious centre of his administration. If this were so, it would account for the prominence given to Babylon in Rev. 18, and the direct judgement from God by which it will be summarily destroyed.

16 (Liverpool): Is there any scriptural confirmation that the False Prophet will promote religious systems prior to the Beast's demand for universal worship? The False Prophet's activities as described in Rev. 13. 11-15 would appear to be in opposition to all alternative forms of worship.

17. (Liverpool): Comment 2a suggests an alternative view for consideration, namely that Babylon the great in 16. 19 is the city destroyed by God rather than the religious system destroyed by the Beast and the ten kings. If we accept that the judgements of the seventh bowl take place at the close of the 70th week, and the words "It is done" (v. 17) suggest that they do, this would seem to preclude a reference to the judgement of the harlot, the religious system. For the destruction of the harlot takes place at the time the ten kings give their kingdom to the Beast (17. 17), i. e. about the middle of the 70th week. G. P. Jr.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Birkenhead: The seventh bowl is poured out on the air. Is this a judgement on "the prince of the power of the air"? (Eph. 2. 2).

It is in keeping with the pouring out "upon the air" that earth-shaking atmospheric effects are seen. Yet the thought of a connection with the Adversary as "prince of the power of the air" seems valid.

From Lagos: What is the significance of the drying up of the river Euphrates?
*

Verse 12 states that this phenomenon is to facilitate the way for "the kings that come from the sunrising". It is most interesting to note that it is an act of God which appears to facilitate the gathering of armies which will contribute to the oppression of Israel. Yet we know that, over and above that, God is gathering them for destruction.

From Melbourne- Will the second bowl judgement affect only the kingdom of the Beast (say the Mediterranean) or will it be universal?

We cannot say with finality but we must remember that the Beast's dominion extends world-wide. J. D. T.

Editors' Note: It is regretted that this section was inadvertently emitted last month. For comments therefore please refer to April issue.

REV. 14. 14-15. 8.

IMPRESSIONS FROM OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Papers were also received from Liverpool and R. A. P.. (Stoke-on-Trent), and the following thoughts are taken from these:

It was thought that Rev. 14. 13 is related to vv. 14-16. During the present dispensation believers in the Lord Jesus die "in Christ" (1 Thes. 4. 16), and as to their bodies they are "asleep in Jesus" (1 Thes. 4. 14). Those who "die in the Lord" are associated with the seventieth week prophesied by Daniel. In Mat. 13. 39 (see also Mat. 25) the harvest is the end of the age. Accordingly some identified the reaper of Rev. 14. 14 with the Sower in Mat. 13, and regarded the cloud as a symbol of the glorious presence of the Son of Man. Others felt that the one like unto a son of man is an angel, because the narrative continues "and another angel", and this other angel is one who gives instructions to the being on the white cloud. The golden crown in this instance would indicate supreme authority invested to reap [see Comment 1].

The interesting suggestions in the paragraph following are included for consideration although many will feel they are open to considerable question, as is further expanded in Comment 8.

A distinction was drawn between harvest and vintage. On the basis of Gen. 2. 16 it was thought that man was originally placed in the Garden of Eden in the autumn, so that vintage gathering

must have been first and harvest reaping would be in spring. But at the time of the Exodus, Abib was declared the beginning of months (Ex. 12. 2), so that in His love and! wisdom God now placed harvest reaping before vintage gathering. The thought was also expressed that God's year began on the first of Abib with the sending forth of the Son, who died on the fourteenth of Abib. Resulting from His death a vast harvest of believers is to be reaped. Believers of this dispensation will not experience the judgements of the seventieth week, and believers in the gospel of the kingdom will be reaped in the first half of the seventieth week, before the final judgements of the second half, that is, before the vintage (c. f. B. S. Vol. 1933, page 82). The ingathering of the reaped harvest occurs when those who have believed "die in the Lord" and thus are gathered to rest from their labours. This is distinct from the reaping [Comment 8].

The opening of the Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven coincides with a desecrated Temple on earth where witness for God has ceased. The seven angels having the seven last plagues prepare to obey the great voice. These events begin around the middle of the week (Rev. 8. 5, 11. 19, 15. 5, 16. 7) [Comment 9]. The RV reading of 15. 6 suggested to some that the seven angels are of the same order of cherubim as Satan was before he fell (Ezek. 28. 13), arrayed in precious stones. The Temple filled with smoke (15. 8) speaks of judgement, rather than incense, for there will be no prayer to avert the doom of the ungodly then.

Rev. 15. 2-4 was viewed as a scene before the throne (c. f. Rev. 4. 6) at the end of the seventieth week, including those who endure to the end of the week and are saved from the Beast by the coming of the Son of Man. (c. f. B. S. 1971, pp. 163, 164). The sea of glass mingled with fire was seen as the emblem of what the saints have come through. The extra seventy-five days of Dan. 12. 12 are taken up with the judgement of God. The Messiah suddenly appears as Deliverer (Zech. 14. 3, 4). With the armies of heaven He fights against the nations assembled at Armageddon, the great vintage of the earth (Rev. 19. 19; Joel 3. 9-16; 2 Thes. 1. 7-9; Mat. 25. 46)._____Eds.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11). '

VOLUME 42

JUNE 1974

EDITORIAL

This month's study exposes once more the deceit and cunning of the Antichrist in his pursuit of absolute world power, for he uses his outstanding abilities as diplomat and statesman to establish an alliance with the world of so called religions. Our contributors are unanimous in identifying the great harlot as a worldwide religious organisation, and it is likely that the ecumenical movement will gather pace and unite apostate Christendom with the great religions of the masses. Organisations presently separated by language, deities, ordinances and liturgy will adjust to each other under pressure from the Antichrist. The picture of the harlot suggests temporary but mutually profitable alliances between religious and political systems on a worldwide scale, and the Antichrist and his confederates actually support the system for a time. He is the great friend and guarantor while he is gaining control, and chapter 17 shows the arrangement was not to perpetuate but destroy the religious system. It is too much for him that religion "hath a kingdom (RVM) over the kings of the earth". He must destroy that too.

Contributors offer three main suggestions for the location of the city—Rome, Jerusalem and a new Babylon on the Euphrates, and the case is argued for each, but, whichever the preference, students agree that the destruction of the city and the system by Antichrist and the ten kings is in accord with God's purposes. It is of interest to see confirmed in this chapter that authority and kingdoms are given to Antichrist, and all nations are committed to follow his course—"The Lord will have them in derision". *A. B. R.*

STUDIES IN REVELATION *THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS*

REVELATION 17

From Atherton and Leigh. —The vision that John saw was indeed vivid and astounding. Here was a great harlot, and she was ripe

for judgement. The waters upon which she sat were a representation of peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues, all under her sway. The kings of the earth over whom she reigned were guilty of spiritual fornication (i. e. gross idolatry) with the harlot, and multitudes of every nation were captivated by her allurements, and completely deluded in drinking of her cup. The scarlet coloured beast supporting her had seven heads and ten horns, referring to the revived Roman world-power of Daniel's prophecy. The woman was arrayed in gorgeous apparel, as a jewelled queen, and holding a golden cup the contents of which revealed her utter filthiness. But "all that glitters is not gold", for her jewellery was but gilded, a veneer calculated to mislead and delude. Her shameless name and character were openly displayed upon her forehead, "the Mother of the harlots"—a drunken woman, drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs who were victims throughout the ages.

The harlot sits upon seven mountains, which might suggest therefore that the seven-hilled city of Rome is in view here. In the light of our former observations, as verse 18 states that the woman is the great city, it may well be that the pomp and glory of the revived Roman world-power will reach its zenith at this particular juncture, with what has always been the headquarters of the Roman Catholic church now the city of lavish display and unsurpassed power under the fictitious name of "Babylon the Great" [Comment 11].

The chapter closes with the swift and fearful destruction of the woman. The Beast and the ten kings are the instruments in God's hand to bring about her absolute ruin. Whatever *their* objective, they were simply carrying out His sovereign will; for He put it into their hearts to do this, irrespective of what they had in view.

In chap. 19 we see a woman of excelling virtue and righteousness, the wife of the Lamb, dressed in fine linen, bright and pure. She stands in sharp contrast to the degraded and idolatrous woman whose designation is the Mother of the harlots.

In the light of the foregoing, we thought it feasible that Rev. 17 deals with the religious aspect and Rev. 18 with the material aspect of the fall of this great city. There was general agreement that Rev. 17 and 18 seem to have distinctive features, the former in the figure of the great harlot dealing specifically with spiritual

fornication, **which is idolatry, and its eradication from the face of the earth.**

We examined what reason the Beast and the ten kings have for their change of attitude toward the harlot, when in their loathing and disgust they cut her down summarily. We feel the supremacy of the harlot was an immediate challenge to the authority of the Beast. This could only be tolerated for a limited period, as compulsion was applied in the worship of his image. It was also in the divine plan that the ten kings should give their kingdom to the Beast.

We looked for any indication as to when this judgement takes place during the last 3½ years of the tribulation, and there appears to be some indication that the triumph of the Beast over Babylon the Great so inflamed him that he was prepared to mass his forces in the great challenge of Armageddon. We therefore concluded that the judgement of the harlot occurred near the end of the 70th week [Comment 12].

E. Birchall

From Birmingham. —We recognised the Beast that carried the woman to be the Beast of Rev. 13—the great Roman empire re-established in its final form, being a ten kingdom confederacy, the peaceful beginning of which could well be the Common Market. From this confederacy (signified both by the ten horns of the Beast and the ten toes, part of iron and part of clay, of the image of Dan. 2.) ariseth an eleventh King out of obscurity, who will dominate the empire and the whole world. This is the first of the seven heads [Comment 1]. The seven heads signify a succession of despotic monarchs also known as the Beast like the empire they represent. Five are fallen; one, in the vision, presently reigns and one is to come. He is to be followed by an eighth king, who is one of the seven, actually one of the five fallen whose death stroke is healed, who will live and reign again as despotic head before going into perdition.

This empire with its vast political and military strength and the kings thereof, under Satan's influence, actively support the woman, the Mother of harlots. This is seen in the words "The beast that carrieth her". In a different sense she sitteth on the many waters, peoples, nations and tongues, under her sway.

The question now arises as to what is signified by the woman,

the Mother of harlots, also spoken of as the great city Babylon. We had various thoughts on this aspect. Jerusalem is often spoken of in Scripture as the great city and Isaiah says "How is the faithful city become an harlot". Does the downfall of the woman therefore represent the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation as the Beast gathers his massed armies to battle against Israel, before the Lord descends to conquer at the Battle of Armageddon? [Comments 2, 2a].

It was alternatively suggested that in the great tribulation, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon, we have the destruction of ungodly men, [Comment 3] together with their kings, political and military organisations, whereas in the fall of Babylon we have the destruction of the world system of religion, which will characterize the end times. It will be a religion that will not belong to Christ but will be Antichrist in character and will persecute those that belong to Christ in that day [Comment 4]. This religious system will make affinity (commit fornication) with states, kings and empires, and wield considerable influence in the field of commerce. State religions exist to-day and as states will confederate in the end time so will apostate religions. Already the moves to join forces are afoot in the ecumenical movement of our time.

We suggest that the geographical centre of this world system of religion would be Jerusalem. The second Beast, the false prophet, the Antichrist, being a Jew [Comment 5], sets up the image of the Beast, "the abomination of desolation", in the holy place, and compels worldwide worship of his image. In this sense we see the woman sitting on the many waters. She is not only "Mother of the harlots" but also "of the abominations of the earth". The image and its subsequent worship, being the zenith of her reign over the kings of the earth, is also her downfall, the abomination of desolation [Comment 6, 6a].

There are various references to the fall of Babylon (the centre of idolatry where Nebuchadnezzar first set up his image of gold to be worshipped by all the peoples, nations and languages) in chapters 14 and 16 [Comment 7] before the detailed account in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. It would appear that the kings of the earth play their part in this desolation throughout the world

[Comment 8] **before gathering to battle against Israel and complete the matter in Israel just prior to Armageddon.**

Verse 8 also provoked some thought concerning names not being written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. Does this imply divine election (fore-ordination) or God's foreknowledge? [Comment 9].

D. H. Elson.

From Lagos. — **The Mother of harlots is also the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters (17. 1) "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Mat. 7. 20).**

John's vision in a wilderness reveals **the great harlot as a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication. And she sits upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns (verses 3 and 4). "The woman whom thou sawest is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17. 18). The Mother of harlots is the same as Babylon, the great city (v. 5), whose governing principles are best understood in the figure of "the great harlot". The beast upon which she sits is a political system enhanced with great glory, but of earth. The device is of the Man of sin in direct opposition and challenge to the only God "who is . . . glorious in holiness, fearful in praises" (Ex. 15. 11).**

As a world centre of commerce, religion and politics Babylon shall stand distinguished in the second half of Daniel's 70th week of prophecy. **To her the Man of sin will initially give support. But when her glory threatens to eclipse the glory of the Beast, the world dictator, she will suffer desolation and nakedness, the devouring of her flesh, and finally, burning with fire. "The ten horns . . . and the beast... shall hate the harlot" (17. 16).**

The desire to be rich, such as drowns men in destruction and perdition, will draw kings of the earth to Babylon, "the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17. 18). All that bear the mark of the beast upon their foreheads and on their right hands shall come to Babylon for "the fruits which thy soul lusted after... and all things that were dainty and sumptuous" (18.

14). The practice of covetousness reaches its zenith in Babylon, "the Mother of the harlots".

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4. 18). Faithfulness to this principle shall characterize many of God's saints whose blood will be shed in Babylon (17. 6).

S. A. Beyioku-Alase, E. I. Bassey

From Melbourne. —There has been much speculation regarding the identity of the great harlot. Protestantism has usually seen in her the ecclesiastical system of Rome. We doubt not that this system will be prominent when the woman clothed in purple and scarlet reaches full stature, and the ecumenical movement embraces not only the so-called Christian systems, but probably reaches out to other systems which have their adherents numbered by hundreds of millions. The ecumenical movement is gradually widening out towards such an objective; and the ultimate goal will be a vast system of earthly pomp and splendour which will captivate the souls of the multitudes of earth; its centre will be the revived Roman empire as seen in vision by Daniel the prophet. The system will be a combination of religion, power, wealth and commerce, and, sitting on the bestial empire, it will be in a position to dictate to the nations. It would appear to us that the symbol of sitting upon the beast indicates that for a time there will be co-operation between the system and the state. Although we would judge that the great world centre will evidently be somewhere within the boundaries of the bestial empire, we are only in a position to speculate as to its actual location. But may not the concluding portion of Zech 5. have a bearing upon this question, and if so, would it not indicate that the ancient land of Shinar is where the great capital of the Babylonian empire of the past was located? The city would then be in such a maritime position that she could be reached by the merchant navies of the nations. Whatever be its situation, it will be in a position to be reached by, and to control, the merchant navies and commerce of the world.

The symbolic rise of the beast which was, and is not, and shall come, we judge will have a dual fulfilment:

(a) in the ancient Roman empire which ceased about the middle of the sixth century A. D., and which since then has not been, but is to rise again.

(b) in the great final ruler of this empire, the Antichrist, of whom it will also be true, that he was, is not, and shall come; the evidence indicates that he will receive a death stroke in battle, go down into the abyss, and be raised to life therefrom. The ten kings which rule with and under the authority of the Antichrist for a short time, possibly a portion of "Daniel's 70th week", will commence to question the advisability of the great harlot being permitted to continue using them as a means to an end. Their hearts being moved by Him who raises up the wicked to fulfill His will when necessary, they will hate the harlot and destroy utterly both the system and its centre [Comment 13]. The Antichrist will now, we suggest, be reaching the zenith of his power and will tolerate no rival, for he is about to sit in the Temple of God setting himself forth as god and claiming divine honours, which will be readily ascribed to him because of the wonder which has developed among men as the result of his resurrection. Therefore he in conjunction with the ten confederate kings will tolerate the harlot no longer.

Identification of the seven kings revealed differences of opinion. Some see in them nations of the past combined with a rising of the coming empire: Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and Rome future. Others suggest that they are powers and their rulers yet to emerge from among nations of Europe; but none would dogmatise [Comments 10, 10a].

In the woman, drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, could be seen both political (Imperial) Rome and the ecclesiastical system bearing the name. Both have contributed their awful share to the martyrdom of multitudes of the saints of God; but combined with this will be the great harlot as she rules the world for a season, dictating to multitudes what they must believe, and for a time co-operating with Antichrist to bring about the martyrdom of a great multitude which no man could number, out of every kindred and nation and people and tongue [Comment 14]. *T. L. F., T. W. F.*

From Methil. —In our study of this portion we were of the mind that there could be little doubt that the "great harlot" is none other than the literal city of Babylon, the same city as seen in Rev. 16. 19, the seat of world government and commerce; and that the kings of 17. 10 are literal kings of the earth, one of whom is the beast who received the death stroke (Rev. 13.) but will come up out of the abyss as Satan's man in a day to come. The woman Babylon will rule over these other nations and kings and will play the harlot with them politically and commercially. These kings of the earth will, because of their fornication with the Great Harlot, cause their peoples to follow them into the wilderness of their wickedness and perverseness.

We considered the theory that Rome might be the great city, but were of the mind that this referred to something greater than Rome, though it could well be that Rome along with others will converge on the iniquitous centre of Babylon.

Many will be deceived by the outward beauty of Babylon, arrayed in purple and scarlet, and arrayed with gold, and will not see the ugliness that lies within her. The Mystery we understand to be rather a disclosure by God of the wickedness and adultery of this terrible city whose history and fame stretch back to the time of Babel (Gen. 11), and in every presentation of this city there is seen opposition to God...

From verse 11 we concluded that the Beast, having previously received the death stroke, will have a second and final reign, when many will take the mark of the beast that they might trade with the nations.

The Harlot (Babylon) we took to be Satan's woman and this we compared with God's woman, the New Jerusalem presented as the Bride of the Lord (2 Cor. 11. 1-4). The scarlet-coloured beast we saw speaking of sin in contrast to the white garments speaking of the righteous acts of the saints. The saints of v. 6, whose blood the harlot was drunken with, we considered might refer to those that were underneath the altar (Rev. 6. 9).

The final judgement in the second 3½ years of Daniel's 70th week will be swift and sure and Babylon will never more be found "she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God

which judged her" (Rev. 18. 8). *A. R. Smith, Lindsay Coomer*

IMPRESSIONS FROM OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Papers were also received from Birkenhead, Derby, Hayes, Liverpool and R. A. P. (Stoke-on-Trent), and the following thoughts are taken from these:

The name given to Babylon, "the Mother of the harlots", suggests that she has daughters, possibly religious or commercial unions or societies accommodating many shades of evil doctrines and practices. It was noted that the scarlet of the woman's clothing was in keeping with the scarlet colour of the beast which carried her. She represents humanly organised religion at its worst. Though she professes to serve God, she is content for a time to be in league with the revived Roman empire with all its blasphemy. In this her opportunism is evident. She will have power at any cost, and the beast consents to carry her, that is to support her, as long as it is to his own advantage.

It was suggested that the beast on which the harlot is carried and sits (17. 7) is another presentation of the fourth kingdom past and future. That is to say that in Rev. 12. 3 we see the power behind the kingdom past and future; in Rev. 13. 1 it is the kingdom as seen by men, having the characteristics of earlier kingdoms (Dan. 7); and in Rev. 17. 3-7 it is the kingdom in relation to the harlot past and future. The harlot was understood as the spiritual system of Babylon. The ten kings during the latter half of Daniel's 70th week give their power and authority to the beast, and do so as moved by God (v. 17). The woman has authority over the kings of the earth, so that any king seeking to be supreme must ultimately oppose her. The system does not include as much beast-worship as the beast requires, and so he proceeds to execute what is in fact God's judgement on the great city [see Comment 14]. Satan casting out Satan, his kingdom does not stand. The Lord intervenes to end the supremacy of idolatry and infidelity. The beast is finally brought into mortal conflict with the Lamb and His heavenly armies, only to be completely overcome and destroyed (Dan. 8. 25).

Rev. 17. 12-14 describes events given in greater detail in chap.

19. **The called, chosen and faithful (verse 14) will probably include a vast number who have come out of the great tribulation, and also many of the church which is the body of Christ who have been faithful, some even unto death.**

In verse 18 reference is made to the woman as the great city. Rather than take this as a picture of the literal city of Babylon, it is possible to view it as a system which is spiritually in opposition to God, having its centre in a city. One view was that this system was materially expressed in the past by the great city Jerusalem (11. 8; 17. 18), which in a sense was carried by the Caesars and will again be carried by the beast-kingdom. The distinction between the "is" of fact or interpretation (vv. 8, 18) and the "is" of the time of writing (v. 10) was not thought to exclude this allusion to the Caesars [Comment 15].

Others took the great city Babylon (18. 10) to be the great city of 17. 18, but identified it with Rome, holding that the judgments on the city of Babylon (Is. 13; Jer. 50, 51) are already completely fulfilled [Comment 16].

One paper, however, observed that the religious orders of the world to-day, though possibly still represented in the future, will eventually become indistinguishable in the utter confusion of spiritual Babylon.

Eds.

ISRAEL'S INVASION BY GOG (Ezek. 38 & 39).

We are indebted for the following contribution to D. Smith, Lerwick.

The recent trouble in the Middle East has again revived among Bible students an interest in the subject of Scriptural prophecy. Although the general order and succession of events that must come to pass after the rapture of the church is indubitable, and present world trends are recognised as an indication of the approaching end period, still many divine predictions evoke from disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ the age old question: "Master, when therefore shall these things be"? (Luke 21. 7).

The involvement of the Soviet Union among the adversaries of Israel is of startling interest to many Christians, who ponder the possibility of this mighty world power, an atheistic country of

240 million people, supported by the vassal nations of mid and eastern Europe, coming into conflict with the God of Israel. A part of the Scripture that serves this inquiry is Ezekiel 38 and 39 where the finer principles of geography and genealogy assert their prominence. Without examining in detail this instructive and relevant portion, we can rightly assume that present day Russia is referred to in these chapters, though not exclusively.

Most students agree that the time of fulfilment of this prophecy is prefigured by the place assigned to it in the book of Ezekiel. Preceded by the vision of the valley of dry bones, depicting the resurrection of Israel (ch. 37), and followed by the pattern of the millennial Temple, we may conclude that this great overthrow will take place before the Lord sets up His kingdom and comes to the place of His throne, as distinct from the final defeat of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20. 8).

The flow of these thoughts is, however, intercepted by the following questions, which I submit for thought and elucidation.

- 1. How much of chapter 37 has been fulfilled to the present time?**
- 2. Is there a break in time between verses 8 and 9?**
- 3. Will the great slaughter predicted in chapter 38 and 39 take place at the same time as Zechariah 14. 2-4 and Revelation 16. 1446 and 19. 1146?**
- 4. If not could it take place prior to the rapture?**

The above thought-provoking comments and questions relate broadly to our studies in Revelation and more particularly to chapter 16. By way of comment, editors would address themselves, in order, to the specific questions raised, as follows: -

- 1. There are two sections to Ezek. 37, the vision of the valley of bones and the parable of the two sticks. The former emphasizes the revived national hope of Israel, and the latter the reuniting of ancient Ephraim and Judah as one national entity. Both sections of the chapter lead to the climax of a restored Israel in fellowship with God (vv. 14 and 23-28). That climax will not be reached**

until Israel's **Messiah is revealed for her deliverance.**

Nevertheless **there has been revival of national hope and purpose, and a great regathering to the land, answering to verse 12. There has also been recovery from the old tribal disunity, representatives of all the tribes being in modern Israel—"they shall be one in Mine hand... I will take the children of Israel from among the nations... and bring them into their own land... and I will make them one nation in the land"** (vv. 19, 21, 22). **To this extent, it would seem, there has been a fulfilment of Ezek. 37, but the final phase remains yet future.**

Might it be that the break in the latter section of the chapter is at v. 23 where the picture of cleansing recalls **Zech. 13. 1—"a fountain... for sin and uncleanness"**. By this reckoning, everything after v. 24 would be future relative to today.

2. It would seem hardly logical to postulate a break between vv. 8, 9. The vision flows on in thought until **"they lived and stood up upon their feet"**. One could certainly envisage this imagery as applying to the modern revival of Israel.

Verses subsequent to v. 9 seem clearly related to the present-day regathering of Israel to the land.

3. and 4. This point has been frequently debated, and it is difficult to be quite certain how the various military movements of the great powers will dovetail together at the time of the end. In favour of the northern invasion occurring at the time of the final confrontation at the close of Daniel's 70th week it has been suggested—

(i) that this may account for the Beast's concern as recorded in **Dan. 11. 44.**

(ii) that the strong similarity between **Ezek. 39. 17-20** and **Rev. 19. 17-18** supports this view.

These points are not of course conclusive, but it does seem difficult to place the invasion at an earlier phase in the light of such statements as—"neither will I suffer My holy name to be profaned any more" (39. 7). "So the house of Israel shall know that I

am the LORD their God from that day and forward" (39. 22). If the northern invasion took place before the rapture, or even at an earlier phase of Daniel's 70th week, how could such statements be explained?

Looked at from a slightly different point of view, there seems no doubt that the slaughter of chapters 38 and 39 is certainly after the first three and a half years of the "70th week", i. e. not till after Antichrist has guaranteed frontiers (see Dan. 9. 27). Ezek. 38. 11 describes a people dwelling secure in the covenant and the strength of the guarantor. Even assuming the events of Ezek. 38 and 39; Zech 14 and Rev. 16 and 18 to be simultaneous or nearly so, it seems possible that they too may be separate geographically. There is no mention of Jerusalem in Ezek. 38. 8-13.

Further comments or questions on these topics from fellow-students and readers of *Bible Studies* would be very welcome. *Eds.*

COMMENTS

1. The ten kings are contemporaries of the Antichrist, but he is one of the seven heads. I doubt if we could be sure he was the first.

2. Chapter 17 *sees* the Antichrist and his associates break with the religious system and destroy it, and chapter 18 sees God finally obliterate Babylon and curse it. It is difficult to think that Jerusalem will be so treated when it has the major part to play in the Lord's return (Zech. 14). *A. B. R.*

2a. Scripture consistently contrasts Babylon as man's centre (Gen. 11. 4, Dan. 4. 30) with Jerusalem as God's centre (Ps. 48, 137. 1-4). Despite national rejection of the Lord Jesus as Messiah, the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the end *is* described as "the Temple of God" (2 Thes. 2. 4). This would seem to eliminate the idea of Jerusalem being identified with the spiritual harlot of Rev. 17. So would the reaction of the Jewish nation to the outrage of the abomination of desolation. From that point forward until Messiah appears for her deliverance Jerusalem will be compassed with armies, the focal point of fierce military conflict. How then can she answer to the great mercantile centre of Rev. 18. 12-20? More-

over, Babylon is to be "cast down" and "found no more at all". But Jerusalem will emerge from the agonies of the "time of Jacob's trouble" to be a "crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD" (Is. 62. 3). *CP. Jr.*

3. It is at the battle of Armageddon that the Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed—not the great tribulation.

4. Chapter 18. 24 shows the city to have been long established as the persecutor of the godly—responsible for "all that have been slain upon the earth".

5. More likely the Antichrist is the first beast of Rev. 13, and can we prove he is a Jew?

6. I think the city, the religious system, may have been destroyed before this. Will Antichrist not destroy the Mother of harlots and then set up his own worship in Jerusalem? A. B. R.

6a. I have not understood that the setting up of the image of the Beast will be in any sense initiated by the Harlot. Rather it seems to me that the Harlot is destroyed by the Beast and his associates about the middle of the 70th week, after which the False Prophet demands world-wide worship of the Beast and his image in substitution for all other religious concepts. Nor would I understand Jerusalem to be the geographical centre of the world system of religion, either under the regime of the Harlot or the Antichrist [See Comments 2, 2a]. *G. P.Jr.*

7. Only two reference to the city—14. 8 and 16. 19.

8. Only against the city, the religious system, under God. The other judgements have no such human agency.

9. Both.

10. Most would favour the view at the time of the end that the 10 horns symbolise the rulers who emerge from "European" nations and that the seven heads are successive rulers of the great final world empire, Antichrist being the eighth (17. 11). A. B. R.

10a. If the "composite beast" of Rev. 13. 1-3 and 17. 3 represents the great end-time revived Roman power (and most contributors think it does), the seven heads, which are stated to be

seven kings, would seem to be related to it, rather than to other past Empires such as Assyrian or Grecian. I would therefore commend the interpretation that they represent seven successive **rulers** of the end-time power.

11. (Atherton and Leigh). The identification of Rome with the great city of *17. 18* would be logical if the present tense of "reigneth" applied to the time at which John was writing. For the Roman Empire was then supreme; Jerusalem, incidentally, had no such status at that time. But as pointed out in the editorial of February issue, the present tenses of verbs in vv. 8, 10, 18 may validly be seen as referring to the time of their prophetic fulfilment, i. e. the time of the end: in which case the great city of v. 18 would indicate the world centre of power at that future time. How could this be Jerusalem when Antichrist will invest that city and virtually destroy her during the period under discussion? It could conceivably be Rome or some other major "western centre", though I question the significance of the seven heads of the beast in relation to the seven hills of Rome. It could be a great new centre of world power in the area which has been identified with Babylon since the days of the Tower of Babel. To me this seems much the most probable—a straightforward identification by the name consistently used in Scripture.

12. (Atherton and Leigh). I have difficulty in understanding how any religious system (and all contributors seem to favour this interpretation of the Harlot) could survive until near the end of the 70th week. Does it not seem clear that the Beast will claim universal worship at the time of his emergence from the abyss, and the resulting tribulation will last for forty-two months? (*Rev. 13. 3-8*). In harmony with this policy he will break the covenant with Israel, causing "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease", and also destroy the Harlot—i. e. liquidate all religions because they impede his own claim to universal worship.

13. (Melbourne). If, as para. 1 of our friends' paper submits, *Zech. 5. 11* points to the location of the world centre in Shinar, would it not follow that Antichrist and his associates will destroy the system represented by the Harlot, but not the city from which it operated? Indeed it seems possible that this city will be taken

over as the main centre of the worship of the Beast, leading to its destruction by God after 3½ years as described in Rev. 18. 21-24.

14. (Melbourne). Those forming the great multitude of 7. 9 have come out of the great tribulation (7. 14), i. e. they are the victims of Antichrist's tyranny rather than of the Harlot's power. I suggest we should distinguish between the martyrs of 17. 6 and those of 13. 10, since the religious system represented by the Harlot is destroyed about the middle of the 70th week. The link between 17. 6 and 18. 24 would seem to be that the religious system (the Harlot) and the Beast successively have Babylon, the city, as the centre of their power.

15. (Impressions). See Comment 11 re prophetic tenses: I suggest that the present tenses in vv. 8, 10, 18 should all be interpreted consistently.

16. (Impressions). The problem of whether judgements on Babylon have been completely fulfilled has been exhaustively debated (c. f. *Bible Studies*, Vol. 1971, pages 149-151). Many consider that such scriptures as Is. 13. 1-14 and Jeremiah 50. 1-51. 64 have not yet been fulfilled, so that a re-emergence of Babylon is imperative. It seems important also to give due weight to the fact that the Holy Spirit has plainly referred to Babylon in the Book of Revelation; is it really justifiable to regard this as a pseudonym for a different location? G. P. Jr.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office,

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

JULY 1974

EDITORIAL

Certain aspects of the interpretation of Rev. 17 and 18 will probably remain controversial until their fulfilment is seen by godly **readers** of Scripture at the time of the end. Meantime there is **difficulty** as to the inter-relationship of the two chapters. The Harlot is called "Mystery, Babylon the great" (17. 5), and is destroyed by the Beast and the ten kings (17. 16). She is also said to be "the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17. 18). Does ch. 18 then simply go on to describe in greater detail her destruction and its effects? Does ch. 17 emphasize the spiritual apostasy of a great religious system under the likeness of a harlot, and ch. 18 emphasize the material wealth associated with that system? Does the "burning utterly with fire" (17. 16) answer to the "utterly burned with fire" of 18. 8?

Or is ch. 18 describing a later phase of divine judgement on a great city, Babylon, with which perhaps the Harlot (representing a religious system) was formerly associated? This may be suggested by certain contrasts, such as the attitude of the kings of the earth (c. f. 17. 16 with 18. 9), and the indications that the Harlot is destroyed by the agency of the Beast and his associate kings about the middle of Daniel's 70th week, whereas Babylon (the city) is judged directly by God at the end of the week.

Another problematic question is the location of Babylon the great, if we conclude that a literal city is involved. Three suggestions are:

1) That the Harlot and the Antichrist will both have their systems centred on Jerusalem, and that Jerusalem is referred to as "Babylon" because of the spiritual apostasy involved.

2) That the Harlot represents a religious system centred on Rome, described in Rev. 17 as "Babylon" because of spiritual apostasy, but that ch. 18 refers to a literal revived Babylon, the centre of the Beast's power, and therefore singled out for special divine judgement at the end of Daniel's 70th week.

3) That a literal revived Babylon will be the great world-centre at the time of the end. During the earlier half of Daniel's 70th week the religious system represented by the Harlot will be centred there, and this is why she is described as "Mystery, Babylon the great". This system will be destroyed by the Beast when he himself claims universal worship. The Beast will nevertheless retain Babylon the great (the city) as his centre of power, so it will be marked out for special divine judgement at the end of the 70th week, 3½ years after the destruction of the Harlot.

Various views are reflected in this month's papers, and readers will be interested to reconsider the problem, and try to assess the relative strength of arguments put forward. If we do this in a spirit of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual", we shall doubtless be profited, though admittedly in such matters we see but as in a glass darkly.

It has been possible to include a major contribution from all papers received on this subject, so it has not been necessary to have an "Impressions" section. Editors propose to work towards this pattern as far as material submitted will allow.

G. P. Jr.

WARFARE—THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE IN A DISPENSATIONAL SETTING

Modern wars are largely the result of greed and folly. By almost universal consent they are condemned because of their evil consequences and their failure to solve the world's problems, but although the disciple would wholeheartedly share the general view, it would be wrong to conclude that Scripture supports it as a principle to be applied throughout man's history. It is our purpose to show that in this present era God forbids His people to engage in secular warfare, but when His dealings with the former nation of Israel are examined it is found that many of her wars had divine approval (Num. 25. 16-18, 33. 50-54; Judg. 6. 11-16). Israel's history largely concerns her campaigns against other nations and her desperate attempts to keep oppressors at bay. In all this God was intimately concerned because of His interest in the welfare of His people, with whom He had made a covenant as to an earthly inheritance and a place on earth where they were to worship Him (Judg. 3. 1-4).

The first account of war in the Bible is found in Genesis 14, where a campaign of four kings against five is described, and in

this Lot was taken captive. In a lightning expedition Abraham overtook the marauders, defeated them, and recovered Lot with his family and his goods. The ensuing ministrations of Melchizedec, Priest of God Most High, shows that Abraham's military expedition had divine approval. The subsequent word from the Lord, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" seems also to be a confirmation of this, reassuring the patriarch that his tiny band would be safe from enemy reprisals. It should be observed, however, that Jacob had a similar experience after his sons had deceived Hamor and Shechem and sacked their city in a foray which was rightly condemned by Jacob (Gen. 34. 30, 35. 5).

That God sometimes does approve war is more directly confirmed by His instructions to the people of Israel through Moses about Amalek: "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget" (Deut. 25. 19). This was Israel's part in the execution of the divine decree, "I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven... the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. 17. 14-16). David's challenge to Goliath, "I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied" (1 Sam. 17. 45) shows that he fought with God on his side in righteous combat against the enemies of the Lord. So time and again in the Old Testament God's people are recorded as resisting the invader and despoiling the enemy by force of arms with divine approval.

But sometimes the Lord forbade war. Rehoboam was not allowed to go to war with Jeroboam in revenge for the loss of part of his kingdom, probably because Jerusalem was not being threatened. Rehoboam was told, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is of Me" (2 Chron. 11. 4). Israel's legitimate wars were not the result of greed or jealousy. Sometimes they were God's just retribution upon other nations, and sometimes they had to be undertaken in self-preservation and to keep intact the service of God's house. The prerogative for such action rests with God alone; in that era men properly engaged in warlike acts, although strictly within the limits imposed by Him, for He has said, "Vengeance belongeth unto Me" (Rom. 12. 19, see also Deut. 32. 55). This principle often

acted in the reverse direction, that is, against Israel, in times of national departure from God, the Assyrians and Babylonians being used to chastise God's people (2 Kin. 17. 1-23; 2 Chron. 36. 11-21). But these nations in their turn were punished for their excesses (Jer. 51. 24). There is clearly a difference between such wars and those conducted by modern nations to satisfy their lust for power and for other similarly base causes. It must be conceded that it is proper for an omniscient God to weigh the actions of nations and make suitable arrangements to put into effect His righteous judgements, if necessary using other nations for the purpose.

In strong contrast to the foregoing, physical warfare is out of the question for the disciple of Christ in the dispensation in which we are living, for the holy nation is now a spiritual one.

(to be continued)

L.

Burrows

THE NATIONS—AT THE END TIME; IN THE MILLENNIUM; IN ETERNITY

AT THE END TIME

1) *The Western Empire.*

Central to any study of the End Times must be an understanding of the spiritual symbolism of Daniel's dream (Dan. 7). Arising out of the sea, Daniel saw four beasts. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings; the second was a bear, raised up on one side; the third as a winged leopard with four heads; and the fourth was a nondescript beast. It was terrible, powerful and exceedingly strong. But its most remarkable feature lay in its horns. There were ten of them—and, in addition, there arose yet another horn, a little one, before which three of the existing horns were plucked up by the roots. So this "little horn" became dominant; it had remarkable eyes, and a mouth speaking great things. Most commentators are agreed that these beasts represent world-empires. The lion was symbolic of the Chaldean empire; the bear of the Medo-Persians; the leopard of the Greek empire of Alexander the Great; and the final beast spoke of the Roman empire. This interpretation also applies to the four stages of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream in Dan. 2.

A study of the fourth empire, in Dan. 2 and 7, leads to the conclusion that certain of the details (e. g. the rise of the little horn)

have not been seen in past history, and that the Roman empire must still have a part to play in future world events. This is confirmed by the vision given to John (Rev. 13. 1-10) of the beast which came out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. Evidently, John's vision was of the same power as Daniel saw, and from both visions we learn that, unlike the other three, the Roman empire is not yet finished. It will reappear, in the end times, as a federation of ten kingdoms. There has, of course, been speculation as to which grouping of nations is referred to. Some have seen Sir Winston Churchill's dream of a "United States of Europe" as the coming Roman revival. Others have different thoughts.

What *is* certain, however, is that the dominant personality of this coming Confederation will be the ruler represented by the "little horn" in Daniel's vision. Not one of the original ten, he arises and violently puts down three of them, establishing himself as the undisputed leader. Clearly, he will be a man of magnetic personality, and of remarkable economic and political skills. Variouslly he is described as Antichrist (1 John 2. 18); the Man of Sin, the Son of perdition (2 Thes. 2. 3); and the Lawless One (2 Thes. 2. 8). As his lieutenant, Antichrist will have one described by John as "another beast" (Rev. 13. 11) and as "the false prophet" (Rev. 19. 20). The activities of these two evil individuals throughout the period of Daniel's 70th week have been the subject of much comment in *Bible Studies* this year, all consideration leading up to their destruction at Armageddon by Israel's Redeemer.

2) *The Kings of the North and South.*

The great western empire under Antichrist will not be alone on the prophetic stage at this time. Dan. 11. 40 introduces us to two more kingdoms, represented by the King of the South (Egypt?) and the King of the North. Who this latter king was is not clearly determined. Some students suggest he may be King of Syria. Others, looking to Ezek. 38, see Gog, Prince of Rosh, and references to "the uttermost parts of the north" as indication that this northern kingdom may be Russia. Current events may well lend support to this *view*. {The other view advanced elsewhere in our study is that Antichrist is himself the "King of the North"—Eds. }

3) *The Nations from the East.*

Rev. 16. 12 gives us an insight into yet another group of nations. When John saw the sixth vial of Divine wrath poured out, it was upon the Euphrates, the waters of which dried up to make ready the way for the kings that come from the sunrising. Waves of eastern invaders shall enter Israel's land, drawn, as are the others "unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (Rev. 16. 14).

4) *Armageddon.*

Thus, Israel shall once again become the arena of the world, invaded on all sides. But, in her darkest hour, Heaven will open and her Redeemer will appear, sitting upon a white horse and followed by the armies of heaven. Out of His mouth will proceed a sharp sword, with which to smite the armies of the nations. At the sight of Him, the Beast and the kings of the earth with their armies will unite to make war against Him, little recognising that God has brought them together to this day of cataclysmic judgement. At Har-Magedon the battle will be joined. It will be brief, but terrible, for the Lord Jesus "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God". The Beast and his false prophet will be taken, and cast into the lake of fire. The armies of the nations shall be utterly devastated, and the birds will sate themselves on the flesh of the slain. For Israel, it will be a glorious deliverance, at the hands of Him whom they have pierced; for Antichrist and the nations, a day of fierce judgement by the One against whom they had so arrogantly set themselves.

5) *The Valley of Jehoshaphat.*

Yet a further judgement remains to be executed upon the living nations. They will be gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3. 12), and there the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, and shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. (Mat. 25. 31, 32). Some will enter His millennial kingdom, while others will be consigned to eternal punishment.

IN THE MILLENNIUM

Following the final destruction of the Beast and his armies at Har-Magedon, Satan will be bound for 1, 000 years, during which time he will be languishing in the abyss, "that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished" (Rev. 20. 3). The Lord Jesus will reign over the earth and establish His

universal Kingdom of righteousness. It will be a time of unparalleled blessing for all nations.

In the Millennium, the nations will recognise that God has glorified Jerusalem and exalted His people. From all nations, men shall come to do service for Israel, and "all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD has blessed" (Isa. 61. 9). In that day the wealth of the earth shall be poured into Israel (Isa. 60. 11). A notable feature of the millennial period will be the willingness of the Gentile nations to "go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob" (Micah 4. 2), resulting in a constant stream of pilgrims to Jerusalem, where they shall share in the worship of the Lord.

Despite the binding of Satan and the Lord's rule of righteousness, sin can still be detected in the millennial state (Isa. 65. 20). Thus when, according to divine purpose, Satan will, at the conclusion of the thousand years, be released "for a little time", he shall once again be able to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, and shall lead them in one final assault on the beloved city. Those who follow him will be destroyed by fire from heaven (Rev. 20. 9) and Satan himself will be taken and cast into the lake of fire for ever.

IN THE ETERNAL STATE

The new earth will also have its nations. But now there will be no more sin, and the nations through all eternity will find their fulfilment in the service of God. They shall walk in the light of the holy city, and into it they shall bring their glory (Rev. 21. 24). From the leaves of the tree of life the nations will find their healing. Thus, throughout the eternal ages, all nations will find their existence centred on the City of God, in the midst of which will be the throne of God and of the Lamb.

R. Lindsay

STUDIES IN REVELATION

THE GREAT CITY, BABYLON

REVELATION 18

From R. A. Parker (Stoke). —The special articles in 1971 *Bible Studies* (p. p. 146-151) do not make any distinction between Babylon of Chaldea and Babylon the great [Comment 1]. We suggest, however, that Babylon of Chaldea is a physical entity, whereas Babylon the great is a spiritual entity. We believe this interpretation

to be more scripturally acceptable than to regard the Harlot as a future city rebuilt in Shinar as the centre of the Beast's empire. We view this as an assumption without a single scripture directly to support the argument of rebuilding [Comment 2]. A further assumption is made that Babylon of the past is coincident with and identical to Babylon of the future. Jer. 51. 61-64 states that Babylon of Chaldea will not be rebuilt. Moreover, the words Shinar, Chaldea and Euphrates are not used with the term Babylon the great in the New Testament. Isa. 13. 19 has been used to imply a sudden and complete destruction, and yet v. 20 shows it is the state of the place which is in view: not fit for habitation, a place to be no more inhabited. This is the meaning of the word "desolate" used in connection with Chaldea (see Jer. 50. 3, 13, 39, 40; 51. 37, 41-43, 61, 62). This state of desolation has continued and was true during the first century A. D. and still continues. For this reason it seems impossible to consider 1 Pet. 5. 13 as referring to a physical inhabited town or city named Babylon [Comment 3].

We would venture to make the following propositions:

1) Babylon of Chaldea is physical and material in concept. Babylon the great is essentially spiritual but having physical expression through a city.

2) The city through which Babylon the great finds expression cannot be the city Babylon of Chaldea because the harlot sits on a kingdom, which kingdom is seen in Rev. 12. 3; 13. 1; 17. 3. The kingdom is the fourth of Daniel 7 past and future [Comment 4].

3) The city through which Babylon the great finds expression already exists, a mystery to be revealed only to the initiated [Comment 5].

4) The fall of Babylon the great is not to be taken as physical but spiritual [Comment 6].

5) Only one city already existing, and called the great city (Rev. 11. 8), fulfills the following necessary conditions:

- a) At the incarnation Jerusalem was carried by Rome (Rev. 12. 5);
- b) From Jerusalem the Man-Child was persecuted (Rev. 12. 4);
- c) Jerusalem was carried by six Caesars until A. D. 70 (Rev. 17. 10);
- d) Jerusalem is the only city which has fulfilled and *can fulfil*

the condition of Rev. 18. 24. The city of Rome cannot fulfil this condition [Comment 7],

The distinction we are making can more clearly be seen by giving the following comparisons.

A—BABYLON OF CHALDEA (NATURAL ENTITY)

B—BABYLON THE GREAT (SPIRITUAL ENTITY)

1) A—Jer. 51. 63, 64

B—Rev. 18. 21

Both references indicate finality of the event, the one into **the river**, the other into **the sea**.

2) A—Jer. 50. 3; 51. 62

B—Rev. 17. 16; 18. 17, 19

Desolation of Babylon of Chaldea **relates** to "without inhabitant"—none dwell **therein**.

Desolation of the harlot **relates** to stripping her of her riches.

3) A—Isa. 13. 21

B—Rev. 18. 2

The places **after the fall** are occupied with undesirable, **natural things** (Chaldea); undesirable spiritual **things (the great)**.

4) A—Jer. 50. 8; 51. 6, 45;

Is. 48. 20

B—Rev. 18. 4

The flight from a physical place **and land can be** clearly compared **with** flight from a spiritual system.

5) A—Jer. 50. 15; 51. 44, 58

B—Rev. 17. 75; 18. 8, 18

Is. 4. 4

The physical possibilities of **the scriptures in Jeremiah** are without **dispute but** how does one visualize **the Revelation passages except to understand them as having** spiritual values? [Comment 8].

One of the **greatest** difficulties in accepting Jerusalem as the Harlot **lies in the statement** of Rev. 18. 21: "shall be found no more at all". **This**, however, cannot **be the** cessation of **the** identity of Jerusalem **and we suggest it can** only be understood by considering **the statements which** follow as a list of **things which**:

(i) **shall be found** no more at all *in thee*

(ii) **shall be heard** no more **at** all *in thee*

Rev. 18. 22, 23

(iii) shall be shine no more at all *in thee*

Whereas the term "no more at all" clearly indicates finality of the spiritual fall, the term "in thee" indicates continuance of the identity or entity for the statements to be true after the fall has occurred [Comment 9].

The use of the present continuing tense should be noted in verses 2, 10, 17, 18 and 19. The fiery judgement inflicted through the beast and ten horns strips her utterly, changes her riches into smoke of burning and avenges the blood of His servants at her hand (Rev. 19. 2; Is. 4. 4) [Comment 10].

Finally it is important to notice that the goods in vv. 12, 13 are *not hers* but belong to the merchants of the earth (vv. 11, 15). Such a consideration may well alter the views of many students of the Word [Comment 11].

R. A. Parker

From R. F. Robertson (Hayes). —If we look closely at Gen. 11. 1-9 we have the story of Babel which later in Scripture was known as Babylon. Genesis has been well called the seed plot of the Bible and what we see in principle as to the nature of this city is reflected in its later history and again in the spiritual counterpart of the vision of the Babylons in Rev. 17 and 18.

Babylon represents the pride of man and the enmity of mankind against God, substituting the worship of the true God by a counterfeit idolatrous system which brings confusion. The original Babel had a tower "whose top reached unto heaven" or "with the heavens", i. e. had a tower whose top had the heavens inscribed in it (viz. the Zodiac). It represented the idolatrous worship of Nimrod which cut across the true understanding of salvation and judgement that God had given up to the time of the Flood. We see the folly of the pride of man in its destruction, and also in the prophecies regarding the ultimate overthrow of the city of Babylon (see Is. 13. 19-22; Jer. 25. 11, 12; 50. 33-37).

When we come to Rev. 17. 5 we have the awesome title of this Babylon seen in John's vision. Many would agree with the view that this represents an idolatrous religious system world-wide in influence and power. The ten kings are subject to the Beast and they turn against the great whore (v. 16) and she is completely destroyed. It is evident that v. 14 relates to a period that is after the destruction of "Mystery Babylon" which was destroyed by the Beast and the hand of man.

The opening verse of ch. 18 is significant—"And after these things". This *is* no mere repetition as some would suggest, or another description of the same "Babylon" seen from a different angle. The destruction of Babylon the great is by the direct intervention of God, possibly by means of the angel (vv. 1, 2). There is an echo of Is. 21. 9 in this chapter.

What is described in this ch. 18 is the god of Mammon seen in the powerful economic system in which the kings of this world are inextricably linked together. That this is a different Babylon (i. e. the great) is clear from the reaction to its fall compared with the treatment of Mystery Babylon in ch. 17. In the previous chapter the Beast and the ten kings devoured "Mystery Babylon" whereas in ch. 18. 9 they bewail her fall and are distressed at the judgement that has befallen "Babylon the great". This vast economic system would seem to come into being after "Mystery Babylon" is removed [Comment 12]. "Babylon the great" is no less a tyrant than the "Babylon" she replaced. This economic power made many rich but at a price of submission to the Beast. Rev. 13. 16, 17 speaks of this period in time. Many of the saints suffer death because they refuse to co-operate with this evil economic system. The whole theme of ch. 18 is to do with the wealth that the merchants and the sailors receive in "Babylon the great".

Some commentators have suggested that Babylon is in reality Jerusalem. This view is clearly untenable if we compare with later events the statement of ch. 18. 21 (A. V.) "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all". What is presented is the utter destruction of the city. In Rev. 19. 19 we see the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies going up against Jerusalem. But if Babylon, the great city, was utterly destroyed, then the armies of the Beast and the kings cannot go up against something not there. They go up against Jerusalem (see Zech. 14. 1-9) and are defeated in the battle of Armageddon (see also Psalm 2).

R. F. Robertson

From Derby. —It would appear Babylon is a literal city to which a political and religious world system is connected.

In comparison with the previous chapter, here the great future city is exposed to the "magnifying glass". Reference was made to Jer. 51 and ancient Babylon, but this new city will be even darker and more corrupt than the earlier one. As with Sodom and Gomor-

rah certain judgement is inevitable; however the righteous are allowed to escape. In this city too, God's people will be invited to disassociate themselves from its sins and its coming punishment.

This proud metropolis will boast of its impregnability (v. 7) but when God intervenes it will only take one hour to destroy her. World leaders will be shattered at her downfall and greatly lament. The martyred saints of the tribulation, however, will rejoice to see their blood avenged. This surely is the answer to the cries of the saints heard in Rev. 6. 10.

After Babylon's destruction the city will reveal her hidden atrocities, namely the blood of the prophets and saints.

A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway

From Melbourne. — **The descendants of Noah were of one language and one speech. They had learned that from man's standpoint unity is strength. So confident were they in the knowledge of this that they knew nothing of dependence upon God. The result was an ambitious project, to build a tower, the top of which would reach to heaven. Then came the judgement which the God whom they had ignored brought down upon them.**

Towards the close of the age in which we are living, the Revelation given to John reveals something which we judge to be a counterpart of the tower which men builded: the great city Babylon, again the result of human ambition, religious and commercial. It will also we are inclined to think, be somewhere in the land of Shinar, as was the tower of Babel, a centre for the nations of earth, godless, and determined to know not the God of divine revelation. In great Babylon will apparently be found everything in which men trade. In her also will be found the sins and iniquities in which the lusts of men find delight, and in which they may indulge without restriction. Evidently a maritime city, the merchant navies of the world will converge thereon. Being known in God's sight as the great Harlot, we are constrained to think that in her will be found a great religious centre of worship foreign to divine revelation, a combination of the religious systems of men, the full fruition of ecumenicalism, by which the kings and nations of earth will be deceived. But in her also will be found those whom God calls "My people", and who are called to come out of her, that they should have no fellowship with her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues. Who are these? Are they sons and daughters of Israel? [Comment 13].

Heaven, saints, apostles and prophets are said to have judged her, and God has ratified their judgement. We can only suggest that the hatred of the Antichrist and his satellite kings for Babylon, referred to in the previous chapter, is the result of refusal to recognise any religious centre or system save that of which Antichrist is the head. The destruction of great Babylon is sudden and complete.

W. S., T. W. F.

From Lagos. —The city of Babylon (or Babel) marked the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom (Gen. 10. 10). It is an interesting study to consider the history of Babel of Shinar as a world centre at the confounding of men's language (Gen. 11. 1-9), the domination of Babel by the Assyrian and Persian empires, the splendour of Babel at its highest during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and her place to-day in fulfilment of the prophetic word (Is. 13. 19-23).

In Rev. 18 we have brought before us the Babylon that is yet to be built. The principles of sin characteristic of Babylon in every age emerge, her idolatry (v. 3), her pride (v. 7) and her profanity (vv. 3, 9, 16). "Her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (18. 5). Man looks on the outward appearance and sees that she is arrayed "in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl". But looking within what does God see? "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth" (18. 24).

"Thus saith the Lord God: because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered... so that in all your doings your sins do appear . . . ye shall be taken with the hand" (Ezek. 21. 24). Wherefore a mighty voice cries saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of devils, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird" (v. 2).

The judgement of the great city Babylon is by God and shall be carried out by the Beast and the ten kings confederate with the Beast (17. 16, 17). Her destruction shall be in one day, and she shall be utterly burned with fire (v. 8) [Comment 14]. The amassed riches in her and all the works therein shall pass through fire, that God might bring iniquity to an end.

Seven times repeated are the words "no more at all" (vv. 14, 21-23), an emphatic end to Babel. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your

judgement on her "(v. 20) *S. A. Beyioku-Alase. E. LBassey From Birkenhead.* —The chapter opens with the announcement by an angel from heaven of the ultimate doom of Babylon.

It appears that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt on a grand scale (v. 18) on its original site. Commencing with the building of the Tower of Babel it is possible to trace over the years on that site a centre of man's organised rebellion against God. The fact that it will be a literal city seems to be substantiated by vv. 21-24. The "calling forth of My people" (v. 4) is evidently addressed to those whom God has chosen, and may have a parallel in the rescue of Lot and his family before the judgement fell on Sodom. From Is. 13 and 47 it is evident that it is thought that Babylon and its activities will continue for ever, but God gives warning that judgement will fall. This coincides with the end of Daniel's 70th week.

In vv. 12, 13 we have a long list of merchandise. The obvious lack of acknowledgement that God was the Provider of all things is further evidence of man's feeling of self-sufficiency. Various classes of persons are mentioned—kings, merchants, shipmasters and mariners— as mourners over the destruction of Babylon. Their motive seems to be their loss of gain or livelihood rather than genuine sadness. Each is seen "weeping and mourning" (vv. 11, 15, 19), saying "Woe, woe, the great city" (vv. 10, 16, 19). *R. D. Williams.*

COMMENTS

1) (Stoke). Reference to the articles concerned will confirm the distinction made between ancient Babylon and the possibility of a new city of the same name being built on or near the same site at the time of the end.

2) Surely not mere assumption! Rev. 17. 18 states that the woman is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. That city is repeatedly called Babylon. Should we not accept the Spirit's direct statements in such scriptures unless there is the clearest reason to regard "Babylon" as a pseudonym? Is it not rather "assumption" to substitute Rome or Jerusalem for Babylon?

3) It is a matter of historical fact that Babylon was not suddenly overthrown and made desolate. Cyrus did not destroy it when he captured it in 539 B. C., although it was plundered and punished under his successors. Alexander the Great died in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in 323 B. C. "The city was not deserted... and as late as the Parthian period a school of learned astronomers flourished within

it". (Encyc. Britannica). There was gradual decay, not sudden obliteration. **Where** is the historical event associated with judgement on ancient Babylon which could be construed as fulfilling such prophecies as Is. 13. 943 or Jer. 51. 64?

4) It is the future, end-time aspect of this kingdom which is emphasized in Rev. 17, and if it should transpire that the power-centre of that kingdom is a rebuilt Babylon (i. e. in the area of modern Iraq), the religious system represented by the Harlot could also have its centre there (c. f. Zech. 5. 5-11).

5) No scriptural support is offered for this proposition. If Rev. 17. 18 is in mind, Rome was the city which reigned over the kings of the earth at the time John wrote. But see February Editorial for argument in favour of this verse referring to the centre of world power at the time of the end (i. e. use of present prophetic tense).

6) Proposition 4 seems to me to present insurmountable difficulties in view of scriptural emphasis on material aspects of the judgement.

7) Proposition 5 is largely based on the premise that the beast of Rev. 13 represents certain past phases of the Roman Empire as well as its re-emergence at the time of the end. A major difficulty with this view is that the beast that was and is not "is about to come up out of the abyss" (17. 8). How can this apparent imminence of the rise of Antichrist be reconciled with the passing of nineteen centuries? Would it not seem more logical to regard the vision of Rev. 17 as relating to the situation at the time of the end, in which case points (a), (b) and (c) of proposition 5 are invalid.

Point (d) is also debateable. Has not Rome claimed more Christian martyrs than Jerusalem? In any case Rev. 18. 24 must have some limitation! It cannot refer to all the slain of all ages from whatever cause. I suggest it should be understood in relation to its context, i. e. as referring to those slain for faithfulness to God during the end-time. In relation to that era, the main responsibility lay with Babylon. This would seem particularly appropriate if in fact a revived city of Babylon should become the centre of the Harlot's system (c. f. 17. 6) as well as being the centre of Antichrist's demands for the worship of his image (c. f. 13. 6-9).

8) Most contributors regard the material riches and physical judgements in the Revelation passages as literal, and I share this view. The attempt to interpret them as "having spiritual values" seems

to me unconvincing.

9) I find great difficulty in trying to follow the reasoning of this section. Rev. 18. 21 states that "Babylon", the great city... shall be found no more at all". The statements of vv. 22, 23, confirm the finality of the judgement, the obliteration from earth of a mighty centre of world power.

10) I submit that the judgement of the Harlot by the Beast and his associates (17. 16, 17) is clearly distinguished from the judgement of Babylon, the great city (18. 21). The former is at the hand of the Beast and the ten kings, taking place about the middle of Daniel's 70th week. The latter is a direct stroke of divine judgement, and is included in the last phase of judgements at the close of the 70th week (e. g. under the seventh bowl—Rev. 16. 19).

11) It seems difficult to understand how the merchants of the earth had been "made rich by her" (v. 15) if their merchandise had not been bought and therefore belonged to her.

12) (Hayes). The possibility has been suggested that a great new commercial and administrative centre of power will be developed at the time of the end in the area of ancient Babylon. This could well become the centre of the final phase of the Harlot's power (Zech. 5. 5, 11), and also the centre of the Beast's power and the worship of his image. This may appeal to students as more feasible than the suggestion of a vast economic system developing after the Harlot is removed, for such a system could not mushroom overnight; yet the prophecies give the impression of a rapid sequence of events. Moreover, there is such very close association between the Harlot of ch. 17 and the city of ch. 18 that the concept of the same city being the centre of both the Harlot's system and the Beast's power seems a realistic possibility.

13) (Melbourne). Mat. 24. 31 reveals that at the coming of the Son of Man He shall send forth His angels to gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. From such scriptures it is clear that God-fearing believers will survive in many parts of the world until He returns. I suggest that the call of 18. 4, recorded in Scripture, will have a powerful voice to many believers during the period of Babylon's domination. G. P. Jr.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office,

A sembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from The Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

AUGUST 1974

EDITORIAL

There has been recurring discussion throughout our study of Revelation, both in 1972 and this year, on the sequences of events in this prophetic book. However, at the point we now reach in chapter 19 we enter the terminal portion of the book where the sequence of the recorded events seems clear. The destruction of the Harlot is followed by the gloriously contrasting marriage of the Lamb and His Bride. Then the climax of the Lord's personal triumphant return takes place and the binding of Satan leading to the Millennium. Events flow on towards the consummation of heaven's purposes, with the unique 1, 000 years period intervening as a prolonged vindication of God's early purpose in this world and in man.

The subject of the Bride of the Lamb has always excited much discussion and debate. The majority of our contributors are agreed in identifying the Church, His Body, with the Bride. Although there will doubtless be useful debate when we come to chapter 21 on the features of the holy city which relate to Israel, the case for associating the Church with the Bride is very strong. The teaching of Eph. 5. 22-33 leaves us, in my view, with little room for doubt on this issue. The subject of Eph. 5. 31 is the union of husband and wife in accordance with the divine ordinance of marriage. Great as the mystery is, "I speak", says Paul, "in regard of Christ and of the Church". The beautiful characteristics of purity, union and subjection were to be the ideals of every Christian marriage; an elevation of a human relationship to a very high plane indeed.

J. D. T.

WARFARE—THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE IN A DISPENSATIONAL SETTING

contd, from p. 100

spiritual house... a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices... that ye may shew forth the excellencies of Him who called you" (1 Pet. 2. 5, 9). There is therefore no requirement to engage in physical combat to ensure peaceful occupation of land or city. That would be quite inappropriate for those whose *citi-*

zenship is in heaven (Phil. 3. 20). The Lord Jesus told Pilate, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight" (John 18. 36). He refused to resist or allow His disciples to defend Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, remarkably demonstrating how the principle should be put into practice. The immediate result was shame and death but the greatest victory in all this world's history followed. There are further victories to look forward to, both for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His disciples who suffer with Him. David and his men fought many a fierce battle with the Philistines, but the believer is called upon today to fight a more subtle and relentless foe. It is "not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6. 12). Satan's armies of the unseen are seeking out and attacking God's people in the weakest places. The effects of this warfare are experienced by each one of us in our daily lives and in the lives of the assemblies. Temptations of all kinds have to be resisted but the necessary armour and weapons are to hand and victory is assured if they are used (Eph. 6. 13-18; James 4. 7).

At this point the question may well be asked, if Christians may not take up arms today, what should a God-fearing nation do if subjected to unprovoked aggression? Clearly the scriptural teaching set out in the previous paragraph as to the conduct of God's holy nation is irrelevant to the political sphere as no earthly nation can properly lay claim to be God's people. However there is much teaching in Scripture about the divine protection that is given to those who trust in God. He has absolute control over the hearts of those who rule (Prov. 21. 1, Rom. 13. 1), and over all the circumstances which influence political decisions. Taking up arms as a matter of expediency for the reason that there is no alternative can therefore not be justified on scriptural grounds.

Satan's battleground today is this earth, but one day he will have to fight on more difficult terrain, for there will be war in heaven, Michael and his angels will war with the dragon and expel him from heaven, where he has stood as the perpetual accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12. 7-10). Although great joy in heaven will follow the defeat of the Adversary there will be more battles to be fought on earth before he is finally overthrown. Until then he will make a supreme effort to frustrate the purposes of God.

His tool, the beast, will make war with the saints and overcome them (Rev. 13. 7), but the upsurge of evil will be shortlived. The Lord Jesus Christ will intervene to slay all His enemies with the breath of His mouth, and a strong angel will bind Satan for a thousand years. During that happy Millennium swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks and Israel will learn war no more. At the end of the thousand years the implacable enemy of God and man will again emerge to attempt his last onslaught upon the holy city before being confined for ever in the lake of fire.

Thus will end the long conflict which began when Satan was removed from God's presence because of pride (Ezek. 28. 11-19). Since that day the mightiest created being has pursued relentlessly his objective of destroying God's creation and depriving Him of the satisfaction He looked for when He created all things and pronounced them "very good" and made man after His image. In the final issue peace will be permanently restored and eternal bliss will be the lot of the elect. Nevermore will any warlike act intrude to mar the service and worship of God's people.

L. Burrows

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

A study of delegated authority

Within the great eternal purpose of God the millennial day will be ushered in, bearing the same assurance as the day through which the land shall be cleansed: "Behold, it cometh, and it shall be done" (Ezek. 39. 8). Throughout the tribulation period angels will be instrumental in proclaiming the wrath of God, "having great authority" (Rev. 18. 1). Yet they little compare with the One who will come forth for Armageddon and for the judgement of the living nations having "all authority", thus making the scene ready for 1, 000 years of order and unparalleled peace. For such a programme it is first decreed, as if by way of an early delegation of authority, that there should be the binding, casting, shutting and sealing of Satan at the hand of an angel (Rev. 20. 1-3). All manner of deception will be dispelled and the day and the servant will take character from the One whose Kingdom it is. Every trace of earthly administration with its puny earthly personnel will be removed to make

way for the perfection of theocratic government. Then the truly Righteous. One (Psa. 1), the rightful King (Psa. 2), will take up His reign, for "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ...". Of this time, Scripture is expressive as to the character of His reign.

In Rev. 12. 5 we read "... who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron". The word "rule" (Gk. *poimaino*) indicates that whilst operating firmly as ruler He will do so as a shepherd. This firmness is in harmony with gentleness as seen in Isa. 40. 10, 11—"His arm shall rule for Him..."; and yet "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs in His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that give suck". Both psalmist and angel present the One who will reign (Psa. 93. 1; Luke 1. 33). The Lamb (Gk. *amnos*) who came as sacrifice will then come, still as the Lamb (Gk. *arnion*), but apparelled with majesty. At last, earth will know a time of certain rule for "He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth" (Psa. 96. 13). Only then will be revealed the fulfilment of prophecy and prayer as foreshown by Hos. 2. 21—"... the heavens... shall answer the earth", and by the Lord Himself—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven". Through the same prophet the word had been given that "Israel shall abide many days without king . . . prince, . . . sacrifice, . . . ephod . . ." (3. 4). In the millennial day, with these relationships restored, every man will be able to "sit under his vine and under his fig tree", illustrated in Solomon's day when "all the princes... gave the hand under Solomon" (1 Chr. 29. 24, RVM). Of the Lord, Zechariah has written, "He... shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13). So then, He who will return to take up His reign as King is also the promised Priest, appearing "a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28).

As King-Priest, His delegation of authority will therefore be two-fold, embracing those who will serve outwardly, as the exponents of His infallible judgements, together with those who in priestly capacity will serve inwardly in the charge of the sanctuary.

David as King.

Under the King-Priest, David will serve as the servant-king (Ezek. 37. 24). He is marked out by God as "My servant" but Israel's

king, in fulfilment of the covenant given through Nathan in 2 Sam. 7, relating to "... thine house... thy kingdom... thy throne" (v. 16). No doubt David wakened out of sleep to learn the content of the covenant, yet having served the counsel of God, "he fell on sleep" (Acts 13. 36), out of which he shall again wake to engage in its service. In that day the former servant (Heb. *ebed*, often signifying slave) will be prince (Heb. *exalted*). The character of his service is clearly seen in his being "over" as king and as shepherd (Heb. *roeho*). Twice God says "and he shall feed (Heb. *raah*) them" (Ezek. 34. 23), which is significantly linked with his rule (v. 24) (Heb. *nasi-prince*, ruler), to be continued A. McIlree, Jr.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

REVELATION 19. 1—20. 3

From Atherton and Leigh. —The descent of the Son of Man to earth (19. 11-16) will occur after the "marriage of the Lamb" (which takes place in heaven), but before the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (which takes place on earth).

The Lamb's wife is said to make herself ready. This possibly refers to the effect which the Judgement Seat of Christ will have on the saints comprising the Lamb's wife. There will be a deep afflicting of soul and a firm commitment to the eternal service of the One on the Throne.

She will be clothed in fine linen which is "the righteous acts of the saints" (v. 8). Cleansed from all defilement, the righteous acts of believers will now shine out. We often feel ourselves to be unworthy of our Lord, and rightly so, but acts of good, done for His sake, with the Spirit's prompting, will stand the fiery testing and adorn the Lamb's wife for ever.

The coming One is called "Faithful and True". The contrast is great between Him and such as dominate the world scene at that time, the covenant-breaking Antichrist and his false prophet. Full will be heaven's relief and joy, as well as of the waiting remnant on earth, as He finally arrives of whom it can be said, "In righteousness He doth judge and make war".

He is called also "The Word of God". A history indeed lies behind this name. All things were made by Him, and He became flesh. And now His garment is sprinkled with blood as He hastens to display this aspect of the divine character which was not seen to the full during His earthly life, namely "the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God". Now He comes "to proclaim... the day of vengeance of our God" (Is. 61. 2).

The third name, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (v. 16) belongs to Him not only by inherent right, but also by victorious conquest, not least at Calvary. He will descend to earth with an anger the like of which has never yet been. In His righteous fury He will trample on His foes without mercy, and their bodies will be given to the birds.

**Tremble, tremble, ye that hate Him;
Ye who love His name rejoice!**

D. S. Jones, G. A. Jones

From Birkenhead. —Moving away from the devastation on earth of the city of Babylon with the accompanying cries of "Woe, woe", we turn to heaven itself and the triumphant "Hallelujah" which is there sounded out.

There is then joy and gladness because the time has come for the marriage of the Lamb. Problems arise in many minds as to the identity of the wife of the Lamb. Our opinion was that Eph. 5. 22-33 gives strong support to the view that it is those who comprise the Church which is Christ's Body. The timing of the event lends weight to this in that it takes place before the Son of Man comes to earth to reign and before the righteous dead of the Old Testament are raised.

The main problem of our study arises from the subject of the marriage supper (v. 9). This, in our understanding, is an extension of the marriage and therefore a time of celebration. Mr. J. Miller in his notes is clear as to the details of the event, stating that it will take place on earth, this being supported by detail given to us in Mat. 22. 1-14 and Mat. 25. 1-13. Questionings arise, however, as to whether, because there is a mention of a "marriage feast", it is valid reasoning to relate the kingdom of heaven reference in these passages to the Rev. 19 portion [Comment 1],

With the heaven opened a majestic sight is revealed of the Son of Man coming in righteousness to judge and make war (see 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8; Luke 17. 30) against the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies.

We did conclude that the great supper of God is something which is a natural happening, when the birds will flock to feed upon the bodies of the defeated armies (Ezek. 39). This is obviously a judgment of God, and must not be confused with the marriage supper which is a celebration.

R. D. Williams

From Lagos. —Two events must have the clear distinction given to them in Scripture: (1) the coming of the Lord to the air and (2) the coming of the Son of Man to earth. Scripture assigns no preceding signs to event number 1 leaving the sure word of prophecy to be grasped by faith (John 14. 1-3; 1 Thes. 4. 13-18). But concerning event number 2 the voices of the prophets are clear, and our Lord Jesus underlines it for us in the gospels. We refer to scriptures which are to be considered alongside Rev. 19. 1 - 20. 3, namely, Joel 2. 30-3. 21; Zech. 14. 14; Mat. 24. 3-51; 25. 31-46; Mark 13. 14-27; Luke 21. 8-19, 25-28.

Israel will be under great oppression from the time the Beast shall break his covenant with them (Dan. 9. 27). Nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle saying, "Let us take to ourselves in possession the habitations of God" (Zech. 14. 2; Ps. 83. 12). At the time of Israel's extremity shall the Son of Man appear to the gaze of all (Zech. 14. 3; 12. 1-9; Rev. 1. 7). His appearing shall be with great glory (Mat. 16. 27). "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14. 4). "And His enemies shall lick the dust" (Ps. 72. 9).

He that rides on the white horse, arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood, upon whose head are many diadems, called Faithful and True, the Word of God, is the Son of Man (Rev. 19. 11-13). He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, with the authority to judge the nations and make war. With the multitudes in the "valley of decision" the Lord shall plead, and slay them with the sharp sword of His mouth. The armies of the Beast shall be slaughtered and great shall be their destruction (Rev. 14. 19, 20).

The Beast, the Antichrist, and his false prophet (Rev. 13) shall be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. The carcasses of his armies shall be given to the birds of the air.

In the chain of God's judgement of His enemies, "the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan" is bound and confined to the darkness of the abyss for a thousand years (Rev. 20. 1-3).

E. Bassey, S. A. Beyioku-Alase

From R. A. Parker (Stoke-on-Trent). —I suggest this portion of our study falls into three distinct parts. The title selected by editors covers in my view only the last section "C". The sections "A" and "B", I suggest, seem to have no direct relationship with the coming of the Son of Man, and concern the ushering in of the eternal state. The sections are as follows: -

- (A) 19. 1-4 Rejoicing in heaven over God's judgement of the harlot.
- (B) 19. 5-10 Rejoicing on earth (a) that the Almighty reigneth (b) that the marriage of the Lamb is come.
- (C) 19. 11-21 The triumphant return of the Lord Jesus to earth. 20. 1-3,

(A) This passage seems to be confined to heavenly beings in heaven who join in chorus to exclaim "Hallelujah" twice, and to proclaim the attributes of God in the light of the "true and righteous" judgement of the Harlot. To all such declarations there is only one acceptable response—"Amen; Hallelujah". This doxology we suggest has a post-millennial setting [Comment 2].

(B) The voice from the throne calls upon all His servants that fear Him, the small and the great to "give praise to our God" (v. 5). The language here is describing. I believe, an earthly setting. The great multitude (v. 6) is different and distinct from v. 1. The voice from the throne is the same voice "who saith unto me" (verses 9, 10) and before whose feet "I fell down to worship him" (v. 10). This is clearly an angel, a created being who says, "I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren". As John is physically involved in this incident we see it taking place on earth [Comment 3].

I believe the marriage of the Lamb does not take place in heaven as some have suggested but both marriage and marriage supper are matters related to the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The Bride makes herself ready and is adorned in heaven (21. 2). In the

earthly setting of v. 7 the tenses are important. "The marriage of the Lamb is come" (on earth) and His wife hath made herself ready in heaven. The revelation of the Bride in chap. 21 in my view is before marriage. She is made ready as a bride adorned for her husband (v. 2). One of the angels who had the seven bowls... laden with the seven last plagues shows John the Bride, the wife of the Lamb, not just the wife of the Lamb, indicating she *is* not yet married [Comment 4].

We suggest that the presentation of the Church, the Body of Christ unto Himself (Eph. 5. 27) is quite different and distinct from what we have here in Revelation. The presentation of a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, will take place in heaven. This presentation we believe is not marriage but a presentation on completion of the entity "the Christ". We suggest in Revelation we have a bride who is a separate entity and is to be married to the Lamb, a separate entity. Thus the mystery of marriage will find its perfect expression in the twain becoming one. The marriage will take place on earth as will the supper. We believe that much confusion has arisen from trying to fit in the Church, the Body of Christ, into the Revelation canvas. Revelation presents "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb". The epistles present "the Christ" [Comment 5].

(C) The person, Faithful and True, is our Lord Jesus who has, as yet, an unknown name (v. 12). Is this the name that is above every name, which God gave unto Him? (Phil. 2. 9). Where it is written we are not told. He is called "the Word of God", and He has a name written on His garment and on His thigh—"King of kings and Lord of lords". The invading armies (plural) are on white horses and in clothing suited to the revelation of the Lord Jesus to the world. As angels of His power (2 Thes. 1. 7) they will follow Him. It is my view that celestial and terrestrial phenomena will take place long before this occasion and be unnecessary when the Lord comes in flaming fire (2 Thes. 1. 8; Is. 66. 15, 16). His eyes are a flame of fire (v. 12). The sword which proceedeth out of His mouth (present and continuing fact, indicative of Deity) and the fire in which He comes, will be sufficient to deal with men and His enemies. I do not see a climax of judgements near the end of the week in the 7th bowl, i. e. earthquake or the like. I judge the great gatherings arising from the plague of the 6th bowl will proceed

without any interference of phenomena but with undiminishing purposefulness after the mighty judgements of the **earthquake, fire, darkness, pain and hail etc.** That is, **the bowls are not in my view** sequential events. The fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God (v. 15) will be executed by the Son of Man alone, even though the armies of heaven follow. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Is. 11. 4). The battle of Har Megiddo will be for Him a personal battle and also a personal victory. After the Beast and the false prophet are taken "the rest were killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of His mouth" (19. 21). To Him be the praise and the glory, Amen. [Comment 6].

R. A. Parker

From Derby. —The chapter begins with the glorious song ascribing the victory to God. The great multitude will be united in their praise ascending to God.

We thought of the term "true and righteous are His judgements" and remembered that with God there will be no mistakes. He is sovereign and as such His power will be absolute. We recall the words of Heb. 10. 30, 31 and realise the severity of dealings with God.

It was suggested that there was a difference between the fine linen of v. 8 and that of v. 14. In v. 8 the bride's garment is "bright" whilst in v. 14 it is only "white" for the armies of heaven [Comment 7]-

Although the marriage of the Lamb will take place after the Rapture it is thought that the marriage supper will take place at a later date and on the earth. Reference was made to the great supper in Luke 14. 16. Some of those invited would be Old Testament saints and faithful ones of the tribulation. If this is so **then** the marriage supper must take place some time after the first resurrection (see Rev. 20. 4-6).

From Mat. 25. 31 we see that when the Lord comes as Son of Man all the nations will be gathered before Him and the righteous ones will inherit the kingdom.

Some lean to the view that the Church which is His Body will be included in the armies of 19. 14 and that the Church, His Body is seen in Rev. 5. 9, 10. Others take the view that, for the Church to be called upon to engage in warfare such as the tremendous

slaughter of Har-Magedon is completely contrary to her peaceful calling which requires love to our enemies, and seems more in keeping with what is brought before us in Rev. 6. 9-11 where the souls of martyrs are heard to cry for vengeance upon their cruel murderers [Comment 8]. Account was taken of 2 Tim. 2. 12 which was felt to have wider reference than to Christ's millennial reign [Comment 9].

A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway, S. R. Whawell

From Vancouver. —The portion seems to be divided into two scenes, one heavenly and one earthly. The first ten verses with their four Hallelujahs are given by a multitude twice (all those who up to this point have been taken to heaven), and by the 24 elders and four living creatures once, as a result of the defeat of the great harlot, Babylon. It seems as if the activities on earth are being watched closely by those in heaven. As we have already read earlier, Babylon is destroyed because of an apparent rebellion in the city (Dan. 11. 44) against the Beast, and because the Beast had used Babylon to serve his immediate purpose and has no further use for it. Heaven rejoices since an evil city is destroyed in smoke, albeit by an evil man [Comment 10]. After these three paeans, a voice comes from the throne calling on all to praise God. Some thought this was God Himself speaking, while others dissented on the grounds that God does not personally call for praise and that the word "our" is used, as if the multitude were speaking as with one voice [Comment 11].

The last Hallelujah seems to be given by a larger multitude. The reason for this praise is the coming of the marriage of the Lamb. The marriage supper follows hard after, it would appear, in heaven still [see Comment 1]. John at this point is deeply impressed. Attention can be drawn to Mat. 24. 29, 30 with a view to comparison.

It could be submitted that the catastrophes in Mat. 24. 29 happen at the destruction of Babylon and that the sign of the Son of Man *in heaven* is the marriage and the marriage supper. These two events seem to be closely linked with the actual appearance of the Son of Man from heaven in these verses and also in our portion [Comment 12].

In v. 11 the scene changes to earth. The white horse He rides on was compared with that mentioned in 6. 2 and it was assumed they were not the same. The blood on His garment was thought to be His own, since the Lord has not yet begun His massacre [Comment 13]-

The accompanying armies are made up of the same ones who **have** just taken part in the marriage supper, the coming to **battle after** such an event being a rather unusual consequence [Comment 14].

We receive a preview into the Millennium concerning the rule with the rod of iron. The Lord will have unquestioned authority and although there will be complete peace, life will be a rigorous obedience to Him [Comment 15]. The great supper of God is in contrast to the marriage supper, the one for unclean birds, the other for saints dressed in their righteous acts. It would appear that the Beast and the false prophet are the first to be cast into the **lake** of fire, a rather dubious distinction!

As to what is meant by the abyss, speculation is useless as we are not told. Perhaps others had more light [Comment 16].

J. C. Bell

From Melbourne. —In Rev. 19 we are first introduced to a great multitude in heaven who join in the great Hallelujah (Praise ye Jah). The name Jah indicates eternal existence; and is a compound of the first and last letters of the Name Jehovah, with the central vowel "a". To Him alone belongs salvation, which the spiritually exercised of all the ages have known to be man's greatest need. To Him also the multitude ascribes glory and power. These attributes have been assumed by Satan, the great harlot, the Antichrist, multitudes of men and nations throughout all the ages of men on earth. But now all are stripped of any claim thereto. Salvation, and glory, and power belong only to Jehovah; and from henceforth will be manifested in the sight of all created beings.

We would understand the wife of the Lamb to be the Church, which is His body. The rapture of the Church and the Judgement Seat of Christ are past, and there remains the fine linen, those acts which have withstood the fire of the Judgement Seat. The eternal union of the heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride, which He purchased with His own blood, is to be publicly revealed before the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, together with all created intelligences. The array of the Bride is in marked contrast to that with which the great harlot had been attired.

We now reach the great and terrible appearance of the One who is called Faithful and True, who judges and makes war in righteousness. Upon His head are many diadems—in marked contrast to the crown with which men crowned Him at Golgotha. He is now about to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

We are told that the Beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies are gathered together to make war against the armies of heaven and their kingly commander. This brings us to Ps. 2, "Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing"? Completely deceived they must be, to fulfil the prophetic utterances of this Psalm. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision". In this Psalm the metaphor is used of dashing the nations in pieces as a potter's vessel, a terrible illustration of that which is elsewhere spoken of as treading the winepress.

In 20. 1-3 is revealed the fact of the binding of Satan, the god of this age, for 1, 000 years. His work of deceiving the nations will be eliminated during this period, and man will be placed on trial under the most favourable conditions, the reign of the Prince of Peace. The long looked for age of universal peace and plentiful provision for all man's needs will have arrived. Injustice and oppression and vice will be unknown, for a King shall reign in righteousness. The Scriptures place on record the facts concerning man's history on earth; his successive trials under innocence, under conscience, under law, and under grace. Now the final test commences, with the old serpent, the tempter, removed. The remaining portion of this chapter reveals the result. T. L. F., T. W. F.

The following Comment, omitted from last month's issue, refers to Lagos contribution on page 109.

14) (Lagos). Our friends will wish to consider the proposal that the destruction of the Harlot by the Beast and the ten kings takes place about the middle of the 70th week, and is distinct from the destruction of Babylon, the great city, at the end of that week. The latter judgement is associated with the seventh bowl (16. 19), the climax of the seven last plagues in which is finished the wrath of God (15. 1). If this proposal is correct the final judgement of the city (18. 8) would take place about 354 years after the judgement of the Harlot, the religious system (17. 16). G. P. Jr.

COMMENTS

1) (Birkenhead). **Our friends do not elaborate their difficulty about associating the events of Mat. 22 and 25 with the marriage supper of the Lamb. Is it not, however, hard to dissociate the occurrence of the thought of the King's Son and a marriage feast in the Lord's parables from these events in Revelation? Perhaps the difficulty arises because of the suggestion which seems to be implied in this paper, that the marriage supper, as "an extension of the marriage", takes place, like the marriage, in heaven. It is true that it is nowhere specifically stated in scripture that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place on earth. (If we accept the relevance of Mat. 25 then doubtless it will be agreed that that is an earthly scene). But, assuming the Bride to be the Church which is the Body of Christ, would not the main aspirants to be the "guests" be excluded if the supper took place in heaven in immediate association with the marriage? Mr. J. Miller, in his notes, makes in this connection what seems a very cogent point, namely, that the Old Testament saints have not yet been raised; the living nations not yet judged; nor the fugitive remnant of Israel (in refuge in the wilderness) returned at the time of the heavenly marriage ceremony. Is it likely that they are not among the guests? If not, who are the guests?**

2) (R. A. P. Stoke). **Why suggest a post-millennial setting for this expression of praise? Does it not fit perfectly where it is—coming immediately after the destruction of the Harlot? I do not follow the alternative suggestion given here.**

3) (R. A. P. Stoke). **There seem to me to be several assertions here without substantiation. What grounds are there for dissociating the great multitude of v. 1 and v. 6? True, that in verse 6 is not stated to be in heaven, but unless there is other evidence for an earthly setting of verses 5-10, is the continuity of a heavenly setting not much more likely? Whether the voice of v. 5 is that of the "he" of v. 10 seems to me uncertain but I cannot visualise other than a continuing scene in heaven up to and including v. 8. The speaker (presumably angelic) of vv. 9, 10 is simply instructing John on the recording of the heavenly scene he has been privileged to witness.**

4) (R. A. P. Stoke). We do not wish to anticipate the comments of other groups on Rev. 21 when we come to that chapter. However, this suggestion of an earthly setting for both marriage and supper refers back to the opening of this paper where Rev. 19. 1-10 are taken to be post-millennial and implies the marriage to take place *after* the events of 21. 9. It is advanced that the expression "*the bride*", the wife of the Lamb implies that she is not yet married. But surely the description "his wife" (without the accompanying expression "the bride") in 19. 7 is pre-nuptial as well—she had made herself ready for her marriage which was about to take place. I do not accept that, because she is portrayed still in bridal attire in 21. 2, 9 she is seen as not yet married.

5) (R. A. P. Stoke). It seems clear to me that the suggested presentation (allegedly different from the marriage of the Lamb) of the Church by Christ to Himself involves two separate entities being *united*, just exactly as a marriage does. The Eph. 5 passage provides a very strong case indeed for identifying the Bride with the Church. Fellow-students will be familiar with the more extended case for this point of view beginning with Eve and Adam.

6) (R. A. P. Stoke). I doubt the relevance of the thought that fearful physical judgements on the earth are unnecessary as accompaniments of the Lord's personal appearing. The case made extensively in recent numbers of this magazine in reply to the same argument by our brother, and asserting a convergence of physical phenomena with the Lord's return in glory, have not been based on the *necessity* for these but on what is considered a sounder interpretation of the prophecies and their sequence.

7) (Derby). Our friends don't suggest just what the difference might be. I would not care to speculate; it is not a very striking difference.

8) (Derby). Stress certainly seems to be laid upon the *personal* conquering power of the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes in invincible might—a point made by other contributors. The heavenly armies which accompany Him are seen less, I suggest, as a fighting army than as a triumphant train of those identified with His great Name. Perhaps this affects any reticence about a warlike mien for the Church?

9) (Derby). I would agree that 2 Tim. 2. 12 is of very general application and its fulfilment will be seen in the Millennium and

in the eternal state.

10) (Vancouver). Students in this group are referred to the comments in June and July Bible Studies setting out the case for a "mid-week" destruction of *religious* Babylon by the Beast and the subsequent (Rev. 18) overthrow of the city by God.

11) (Vancouver). The voice of v. 5 may well be angelic, in my view, since it calls for praise to God, and seems to mingle with the united voice of the heavenly multitude.

12) (Vancouver). See mention in the Editorial of the matter of the sequence of events in this latter portion of Revelation. The case is made elsewhere in this issue for an earthly setting for the marriage supper. Moreover, I feel that the suggestion about the sign of the Son of Man being identified with the marriage is rather tenuous. As is pointed out elsewhere the marriage and the marriage supper are joyful events; the terrible judgements of the Son of Man are fearful in the extreme. The destruction of Babylon seems to be a separate and prior event to those associated with Mat. 24. 29 and the immediate appearing of the Lord.

13) (Vancouver). I feel that the picture of vv. 11-16 is one of the Lord in action and does not, within these verses, present a sequence of events. Therefore, the blood with which His garment is sprinkled is that of His victims. I think Is. 63. 2 supports this.

14) (Vancouver). See earlier comments on the marriage and the marriage supper, their settings and timings. I would not visualise a close association between the nuptial joys and the fierce judgements.

15) (Vancouver). I have thought of the "ruling with a rod of iron" as part of His "day of vengeance" activities rather than a reference to the Millennium. Ps. 2. 9 says, "break" them with a rod of iron". It is true, however, that the Greek word *poimaino*, translated "rule" in Rev. 2. 27; 12. 5; 19. 75 means to act as a shepherd (see Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). It may therefore be that there is a dual significance of the term.

16) (Vancouver). Reference should be made to *Bible Studies* 1972 pp.137, 143 for discussion of the meaning of the term "the abyss".

J. D. T.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office,

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from the Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

SEPTEMBER 1974

EDITORIAL

As contributors have shown, a remarkable amount of information about the period in the study passage this month is in the Old Testament. It has been the hope of the godly down the ages that they would see God's Kingdom set up on the earth, and revelation, not imagination, has given us exciting information about the glories for men and creation in the Millennium.

There are important revelations in Rev. 20 about resurrections and who will share in them, but the overall impression is of haste to reach this world's final scenes. The astonishing rebellion after a thousand years of divine and beneficent rule is the final challenge to God's authority, and is dealt with rigorously and conclusively. There is now no repentance and no intercessor—the Son has been challenged for the very last time. The Deceiver is put away for ever, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel". It is no wonder that heaven and earth will flee from before the face of the terrible majesty of the Judge.

A. B. R.

SOME TITLES OF THE LORD IN REVELATION

The Amen

The Amen was used when one confirmed the word of another. Jeremiah, while condemning Hananiah for making the people to trust in a lie, said Amen to the part of the prophecy which dealt with the return of the vessels of the Lord's house (Jer. 28. 6). Another example of its use is where all the people had to confirm the curse upon idolatry by saying Amen (Deut. 27. 75). The word expressed a commitment with regard to the truth of what had been said or spoken. God would hear and witness the saying of Amen.

It is used at all the divisions between the books of the Psalms, perhaps with the thought of participation in the praises, prayers and thanksgivings in them. In the New Testament it is also associated with thanksgiving (1 Cor. 14. 16).

It appears many times in the epistles of Paul to confirm a blessing,

and it is to be found also in the writings of Peter and Jude (2 Pet. 3. 18; Jude- 25). While the saying of Amen implies a person's agreement with what is said*, the authority for the fulfilment of the word of Messing₄ lies with God. Thus Jeremiah answered and said, "Amen, O Lord" (Jer. 11. 5). The purpose of God who made the promises will alone accomplish them (2. Cor. 1. 20). Paul the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians, "God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9). There can only be failure for those who strive for blessing apart from the God of the Amen (Is. 65. 16).

Even when trustworthiness is lacking among men, the Lord is a true and faithful witness (Jer. 42. 5). The word Amen in Hebrew signifies what is trustworthy, what one can lean upon. Moses, who was faithful in all God's house as a servant, felt the burden of Israel leaning upon him as a nursing father (Heb. "omen", Num 11. 12; in the Sept Version *paidagogos* or tutor). Even earlier at Rephidim (Ex. 17. 12) with the help of Aaron and Hur the two hands of Moses were steady (*emunah*) until the going down of the sun.

The Hebrew words for faithfulness and for believing are from the same root. It was this quality of faithfulness which characterised the life of Daniel, when his enemies tried to find occasion against the law of his God (Dan. 6. 5).

From the same root also is the word "master-workman" (*amon*). In His character of Wisdom, the Lord was a master-workman in the beginning (Prov. 8. 30).

The marvel of God's love is that He hath spoken unto us in His Son, His true witness on earth. He it was who walked amid the lampstands, and His speaking to the Church in Laodicea continued to express God's unbounded love and the immensity of His faithfulness (Rev. 3. 14.). *Eric Archibald*

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

contd, from p.117

The Twelve Apostles.

"Ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22. 30). To those who had shared His rejection, and had continued with Him in His temptations (Luke 22. 28), the Lord gave the assurance of sharing with Him "when the Son of Man shall sit on

the throne of His glory" (Mat. 19. 28); a fitting reward to the faithful servants who had followed Him and heard the promise in reply to Peter's question, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee: what then shall we have"? (Mat. 19. 27), It is interesting to note in John 21. 15-17, the Lord's words to Peter "feed (Gr. *bosko*) . . . tend (Gr. *poimno*)... feed (*bosko*)", thus showing again, as with David, the importance of feeding in relation to ruling. In the days of His flesh they continued (Gr. *didmend*—to remain throughout) daily with Him, and having been marked out as His, they were also prepared to suffer (Acts 5. 41).

Saints of this Dispensation.

"Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6. 2). Whilst the apostles are in the forefront because of their singular association with the Lord, it is evident that the characteristics found in them must also be seen in those from this dispensation. One likeness is seen in Rev. 2. 26, 27—"he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron". A second condition is seen in 2 Tim. 2. 12: "if we endure (Gk. *hupomeno*. A. V. suffer), we shall also reign". Being therefore governed by such conditions, those selected will be given positions of authority which also will know gradation as expressed in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19.

Saints of the Great Tribulation.

The Lord Himself spoke of this time as "such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be". In this, the fiercest time of conflict, there will still be those who will remain true to the testimony of Jesus—unto the end—even if termination is through suffering and death (Rev. 20. 4). These will have held positively their faithfulness "for the testimony" and "for the word" whilst rejecting the call to false worship and satanic associations. With all brought together, marshalled by earth's rightful Sovereign, God will bring about His purpose so that "judgement was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7. 22). In a world that will know changes affecting topography, elements, and animals, men will see the greatest change in the formation and outworking of this great administration of which Isaiah wrote,—"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement" (32. 1).

Working out from Jerusalem these princes will operate in their delegated sphere, maintaining the standards of righteous rule, exercising it daily in the midst of successive generations so that "in His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace" (Psa. 72. 7).

The Sons of Zadok (Heb. Righteous).

Finally we come to the important area of priestly activity as outlined in Ezek. 44. To them will be given the charge of the sanctuary in appreciation of having kept the charge of a former day, in all faithfulness. They will be engaged in the offering of restored animal sacrifices—"offerings in righteousness"—offering the fat (Heb. the best) and the blood (v.15) and in the presence of the Lord they will fully see what was foreshown in those of the earlier dispensation. They also will have regulations to fulfil affecting their garments (v. 17), their hair (v. 20) and their marriage (v. 22) etc.

So then, in each setting we see something of the great reign of the King-priest of whom it is written: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" (Psa. 72. 6). In such a perfect setting He "shall reign in mount Zion... and before His ancients gloriously" (Is. 24. 23).

A. McIlree Jnr.

THE MILLENNIUM AND FINAL CONFLICT

Rev. 20. 440

From Lagos. —It must have been a great comfort and encouragement to all in the days of grievous rebellion against their God by the kings and princes in Israel to grasp by faith the vision given through Isaiah: "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Is. 32. 1, 2). The Spirit of Christ who was in the prophets showed beforehand who would be the King (Ps. 2: Is. 9. 6, 7), the blessings of His reign (Is. 11. 1-10; Ps. 72), the seat of His government (Ps. 2, 48) and the praises and worship of that time (Ps. 92-100). The duration of the period was not revealed until the vision was given to the apostle John (Rev. 20. 4). Thus a period of one thousand years is decreed which coincides with the time Satan shall be banished to the abyss (Rev. 20. 3).

Considering the reference to "thrones, and they that sat upon

them", questions arise as to (i) whether this would bespeak the judgment referred to in Mat. 25. 31-46 or (ii) whether the day to day administration of justice during the Millennium is envisaged here. We favour the latter view. And with this agree the Lord's words: "I appoint unto you a kingdom... and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22. 29, 30). A like reward shall also be given to faithful saints (see 2 Tim. 2. 12) [Comment 1],

The reading of Rev. 20. 4, 5 would appear at first to convey the thought that only the resurrected martyrs and the living saints will be appointed to the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that with them Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets shall have part, and also many Old Testament saints who by faith received the promise (Luke 13. 28; Job 19. 26; Dan. 7. 21, 22, 12. 13). Moreover, Scriptures give guidance about the part to be played by saints of this present dispensation in the Millennium (1 Cor. 6. 2, 2 Tim. 2. 12).

The Spirit of God spoke by the mouth of Jeremiah saying, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer. 31. 34). Against this background it is a marvel that men should again rebel against God and His King, yet this will take place (Rev. 20. 8, 9). This underlines for us the basic heart condition of fallen man—"the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 6. 5; 8. 21). Against this final rebellion shall God rain the fire of His judgment.

A. Alase. E. Bassey

From Liverpool. —When the ruling powers of the world are removed they will be superseded by the Kingdom of the Lord, as expressed in the triumphant utterances of the voices in heaven after the sounding of the seventh trumpet: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11. 75). Then the Millennium begins, and the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the King of the earth. Satan, who has reigned as the god of this world for nearly six thousand years, must as a matter of course be cast out of it before the Lord takes His throne. With regard to the inhabitants of the earth at large at the commencement of the Millennium, especially the nations

not named in the prophetic Scriptures, we have very little information.

We see, however, two companies of saints mentioned in Rev. 7 who "came out of" all the persecutions and troubles of the Great Tribulation to enter into the blessings of the millennial kingdom (Is. 26. 20). These two companies are the 144, 000 Israelites and the great multitude of Gentile palm-bearers who, it may be with many others that are not mentioned, will then enter upon the new order of things under the righteous reign of the divine King, the Lord Himself. A great many references appear in the Scriptures with regard to this glorious Millennium, especially in the Old Testament: Ps. 2. 8, Zech. 14. 9; Jer. 33. 5, 6; Ps. 89. 18-20; Al, 1, 2. (5-8; 72. 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12; 45. 6; Dan. 7. 14; Is. 9. 6, 7, and Luke 1. 32, 33. He will be the one all-wise and perfect Ruler, to whom absolute power and authority will be committed; and if evil shall then venture to assert itself, it will be checked and righteously judged, and the offender removed or otherwise dealt with in divine wisdom by the Lord and His servants [Comment 2]. Heavenly saints will rule with Him, for they will be His administrators (Is. 11. 2-5; Luke 19. 11-27). The first thing the disciples were taught to pray for was: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven", Men of every tribe, tongue, people and nation, purchased unto God with the blood of Christ, will reign upon the earth (Rev. 5. 9, 10). Paul says "The saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6. 2). In Rev. 20. 4, those sitting upon thrones judging seem to be saints who are raptured at the coming of Christ to the air; also the saints who are martyred during the Great Tribulation and others who come safely through the Great Tribulation. These reign with Christ a thousand years.

The provision of food will be no problem to Him who fed 5, 000 with five loaves and two fishes. There will be abundance for all as indicated in Is. 35. 1, 6, 7, 55. 13, Ps. 67. 6, Amos 9. 13, Ezek. 36. 29, 30 and Zech. 8. 12. There will also be a complete change in the nature and habits of the animal creation as indicated in Is. 11. 6-9 and Ezek. 34. 25.

When Satan is loosed out of his prison house at the end of the Millennium, he will be the same unchangeable and implacable enemy of God as before. Deceit and lying will be his main tactics as ever, for he is the father of lies (Rev. 20. 8). The pernicious results of

his evil work will soon become apparent in a widespread apostasy from the truth, and a determined rebellion against God and His people, the last that shall ever be permitted. This rebellion shows us that fallen human nature is ever the same, retaining its disposition to go astray, and to sin against God, even after a Millennium of familiar acquaintance with heavenly things and principles.¹

The last rebellion is similar in some respects to the gathering at Armageddon which takes place before the Millennium. The mode of destruction in the rebellion is different from the former. The direct judgement of God brings fire down from heaven that devours them. The Devil is taken and finally cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented for ever. *M. S. E., J. W., G. S. W.*

From Vancouver. —The statements in v. 4 regarding thrones are very interesting. John says, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them". In a normal kingdom there is one throne which is occupied by the king. In cases where there is a co-regency (or as when Solomon prepared a throne for his mother) we can visualize there being two thrones. An empty throne would indicate the lack of someone in authority, while one sitting on a throne but having no authority is a symbol of weakness. Here we have thrones and persons sitting on them having authority (judgement) given to them. This would be a millennial scene and we thought of such scriptures as 1 Cor. 6. 2 and Mat. 19. 28 from which we would gather that those who thus reign would be O. T. saints, those from the present dispensation and also from the Great Tribulation period. It is possible that those referred to were those of the Tribulation in view of the verses that follow. We would suggest that the words "judgement was given unto them" are characteristic of persons of any dispensation who have a God-given place of authority or responsibility. Whether it be Moses, David, Paul or persons from any other period, all judgement or guidance given by them must be according to the will of God. None have any right to rule on their own behalf—it is given them of the Lord.

Little is said in the book of Revelation regarding conditions pertaining to the 1, 000 years of peace. Isaiah the prophet reveals much detail of the glory and marvellous conditions that will prevail during those years when Christ will reign as King of kings. We gather that there will be four groups (apart from angels) who will know the joys of the Millennium: the believers of the present dispensation,

those martyred in the Great Tribulation, those of faith of a past dispensation and lastly those who will pass through the Tribulation period, and will hear the Lord say, "Come ye blessed of my Father". However, it appears that the group that impressed itself on John's mind was of those saints who were martyred during the Tribulation. This may be because of the vision he had just received of their terrible persecution.

The deceptive power of Satan and the instability of the heart of natural man are seen in that a multitude as many as the sand of the sea, who have known nothing but peace and blessing for hundreds of years, will allow themselves to be turned about to follow Satan to oppose the Lord and His people. These people would be the progeny of those who passed through the Tribulation period. Those of the other three groups as noted above will have glorified bodies and the power of the devil will have no effect on them [Comment 3], The same Adversary is carrying on his deceitful work to-day, and multitudes are being ensnared and their minds are blinded. We are not ignorant of his devices. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you", are the words of the apostle. J. B.

From Melbourne. —The thrones which John saw, we would suggest, will be occupied by those who had overcome the Beast, not in battle, but by their death, which they chose rather than to worship and pay homage to a false god. Their testing will have been severe during the brief years of bestial rule; but by faith they have seen beyond the period of sore trial to the glories that follow for the Overcomer. The honour which Christ now bestows upon them fully compensates for their sorrows patiently endured during the Great Tribulation. May it not be probable that the thrones will be occupied by those who will have endured the fiercest trials from among the great multitude which no man could number of Rev. 7 [Comment 4]? This reigning will, we suggest, be on earth. The last clause of v. 5 defines those who are here seen as taking part in the first resurrection. We would not confine participation in the first resurrection to Tribulation saints, but judge that this will take place over a period of time and will be shared by saints of many ages, whom we will not attempt to define—"each in his own order". We do not think that this resurrection described as "the first" includes "those who are Christ's, at His coming". The dead in Christ who will rise first will be like unto Himself "the firstfruits" of a great harvest. The rest of the dead

will not be raised until after the thousand years, when they will stand before the Great White Throne of judgement.

The thousand years of messianic rule on earth, described by the prophets, will be with Satan bound and the Prince of Peace reigning. Wars shall cease, the beasts of the earth shall be at peace and the earth shall yield her increase. The curse will be removed, the ravages of death restrained, and man will stand on trial under perfect earthly conditions. Man will, however, during the millennial age, require the experience of the new birth even as to-day. Human nature has descended from a fallen man, Adam. No perfect environment can cure it. There will be those who, notwithstanding the rule of heaven on earth, will yield feigned obedience to heaven's King whom God will set upon His holy hill of Zion. Human nature will be found to be unchanged and unchangeable apart from regeneration. A new creation in Christ will be just as essential in that day as it is to-day.

At the end of the thousand years, when Satan is loosed out of his prison in the abyss, he will find multitudes prepared to listen to him, the father of lies; they will be prepared to rise in rebellion against Him who has reigned in righteousness. The terrible effects of the Fall will be manifest in unregenerate man. From the four corners of the earth they will gather, as at Armageddon in the days prior to the millennial age, to do battle with the King of kings and Lord of lords. Again it will be around the city of Peace, but now to meet with final destruction as the deceiver of men is vast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet are, where they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. The unregenerate hosts will share the same fate as that of their great deceiver.

W. H. F., T. W. F.

From Derby. —John was given to see "thrones, and they sat upon them" (v. 4); no mention is made of how many or who sat upon them, but judgement was given unto them. Some thought this might refer to the Lord's promise to His twelve apostles (Mat. 19. 28; Luke 22. 30; see Dan. 1, 9).

Others besides the Tribulation martyrs will doubtless be included in "the first resurrection", as in the words of the Lord in John 5. 29 and of the apostle Paul in Acts 24. 15, which speak only of two resurrections; we judged they both refer to the same events. In v. 6 we have the conclusive statement: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no

power". In the resurrection unto judgement, however, we see two classes of people; those whose names are *not* found written in the book of life, and such whose names *are* found written therein. As to who such could be, we thought that few souls would remain alive for the full period of the Millennium, but their true faith in the Messiah and their works coinciding therewith, would constitute justifying faith.

We were all agreed that the resurrection and translation of the Church which Christ is in process of building has in no way a part in the first resurrection; this body of saints is absolutely unique and separate from all other saints. At the point of the fulfilment of the first resurrection, the Church which is Christ's Body will have been in heaven some years (some have suggested up to fifty). Our next point of interest was the subject of Gog and Magog. Gog was, of course, a man, no doubt a leader of men, maybe a king; Magog was the name of his kingdom or country where he and his posterity lived, according to available maps situated north of the Caspian Sea. Their mention in Ezek. 38 and 39 states that they came from the north, and Gog's hordes of soldiery will sweep down to the land of Israel, and there shall they fall by divine judgement. This king of the north of Daniel may contend with the Beast for world power, as also the king of the south; we believe Ezekiel's prophecy to be pre-millennial [Comment 5].

Gog and Magog of v. 8 of our study refer to the same type of peoples who will not only come from the north but from the three other cardinal points; they seem to be willing dupes of the Adversary who will deceive them into thinking they will be able to regain control of the world. The Scriptures foretell their dreadful end.

The Russians seem to be included in these inhabitants of Magog, as they occupy that territory at the present time, and have done so, maybe for many centuries. Russia is anti-God and a cruel persecutor of Christians and Jews, indeed of any who confess faith in the living God; the many slave-camps in the Soviet Union where many fellow-members of the Body, of Christ are cruelly treated testify to this.

The question was asked* 'Will the physical person of Christ be seen by mankind during His reign on the earth?' It was thought probably not. When Jehovah ruled in the midst of His people in the wilderness for forty years, His bodily presence was veiled by cloud or light, and only viewed at special times by special people such

as Moses and Aaron, etc. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1. 18; see Ex. 33. 20). When we have been transformed into Christ's image "we shall see Him even as He is" (1 John 3. 2) [Comment 6].

Graham Conway, S. R. W-

From R. A. Parker (Stoke-on-Trent). — 'The opening clause of v. 4 poses to our minds a number¹ of questions: —

- 1) Where were and how many were the thrones John saw?
- 2) Who are "they" that sat upon them?
- 3) What judgement was given unto them?

The latter clause of v. 4 appears partly to answer the questions and further help may be gained from Dan. 7. 10, 18, 22, 26; Mat. 25. 31-46; Rev. 11. 18. We believe the thrones were on earth, set up under the direction of the Ancient of Days and upon them sat the saints of the Most High. To them was judgement given. They received and possessed the kingdom at the beginning of the Millennium and took away the dominion of the king who wore out the saints of the Most High. The expression "Most High" is used to denote dealings with Gentiles and presents God as the Possessor or Maker of heaven and earth (see Gen. 14. 19; Deut. 32. 8). The judgement given to them appears to be related to: —

- 1) The dead who are raised at this time, called "the first resurrection" v. 5; 11. 18.
- 2) Rewards to "Thy servants the prophets" (Old Testament) 11. 18.
- 3) The reward of saints (living) 11. 18.
- 4) Them that fear Thy Name (living) 11. 18.
- 5) The small and the great (living) 11, 18.

Based upon 5 the Lord will effectively divide the living nations into two camps [Comment 8].

The consequences for each are spelt out clearly in Mat. 25. 33-46. We would suggest "My brethren" (v. 40) are those in 1), 3) and 4) above. Another question arises. Will all the saints of the Most High be engaged in the judgement or only representatives (Gentiles) be judges? (Is. 24. 23) [Comment 9]. From Mat. 19. 28 it is clear that the twelve apostles (of the Lamb?) will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the Regeneration, i. e. in the day when the veil lying upon Israel and all the nations is lifted (Is. 25. 7) This seems to be quite separate and distinct from what we have in Rev. 20 [Comment 10]. The first

resurrection seems to be confined to Old Testament saints both Jew and Gentile and also those who pass through the Great Tribulation. From 1 Thes. 4. 16, 17 we see that saints of the present dispensation of grace are raised when the Lord comes to the air. From Rev. 20. 5 we see that the vast number of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. We must conclude therefore that the first resurrection concerns men and women, who having died in faith outside the present dispensation, are raised to share with Christ in His millennial reign.

The prison of the abyss, sealed over Satan, will be unsealed to loose him to fulfil his final deceptive role. The use of the terms Gog and Magog in v. 8 are clearly referring to the nations which are literally "in the four corners of the earth". We do not understand this to be figurative of the Middle East arena. In Ezek. 38. 2 they are used of a prince and his land and from Gen. 10. 2 are seen to be related to Japheth as also are Gomer and Togarmah (Ezek. 38. 6). These are from the north only, allied to the sons of Ham (Africa), Persia, Cush (Ethiopia) and Put (Libya) (Ezek. 38. 5, 15; 39. 2). We conclude therefore in this instance, that the terms are used in a descriptive way of the hordes which will go up over the breadth of the earth, i. e. from every point of the compass. There is no battle, but devouring fire from heaven.

The nature of the lake of fire is beyond our finite minds to comprehend. We cannot conceive the idea of such a vast quantity of fire described as a "lake of fire and brimstone" (v. 10). The inadequacy of human language is demonstrated by the use of the word "lake". To us this means water. In such a volume of fire will persons be wholly "immersed", day and night unto the ages of the ages. Again, day and night are present terms used to define time, and fail to convey fully timeless periods of the future when day and night have ceased. Their bodies and persons will be fitted by God for such existence described in v. 14 as the "second death" or eternal death. By similar power our redeemed bodies will be fashioned to exist in a state of eternal-life. We should bow in humble thankfulness that we have been saved from such a fearful existence to share in a new heaven and new earth where "the former things shall not be remembered nor come into mind (heart)" (Is. 65. 17) *Le.* they will never be recollected.

From Atherton and Leigh. — **The Millennium is the direct administration of divine government on earth, by the Lord and His saints. The centre will be Jerusalem and Israel. The glory of the Lord shall be seen over the Temple by all flesh (Is. 4. 5).**

As the prince of this world rules now (under God's overall authority) so then, Christ the King of all the earth will rule with resurrected David as His prince.

God the Father will publicly honour His Son in Jerusalem, and set Christ His King upon His holy hill of Zion. He will see the knee bowed to His Son as He gives Him the throne of His father David [Comment 7],

God will see this as the final part of the divine trial of sinful man, a trial started at Eden and continuing on until Gentile rule is replaced by Christ's second coming to earth. He will prove man's supposed desire for perfect government is false, because men will rush to Satan's side again when he is released for a little season after the 1000 years.

The saints, of course, (presumably including the "Church", the martyrs beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and also such as worshipped not the Beast during the Tribulation) will experience a time of immense blessing—with iniquity put down, righteousness enthroned and their blessed Redeemer reigning.

For the nations the "golden sceptre" will be as a rod of iron, and although there will be peace between them, it will be enforced, and that by the meek One who once rode into Jerusalem on an ass, even that Child born and Son given of Isa. 9. 6. 7; the government shall indeed be upon His shoulder.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will at last receive the kingdom of the world which He has been constantly "expecting" while at God's right hand (Heb. 10. 12, 13) and will delight to reign in righteousness and share with His saints all the honour due to Him. Christ will be here in person, on His throne, King of all the earth, presumably with David as His prince.

But strange as it may seem, the peace of the Millennium does not last; Satan is released from his prison for a little season and men flock to him, ever the Deceiver, and are all gathered round the camp of the saints. God will finally devour them with fire from heaven, and cast the Devil into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are the Beast and the false prophet.

The more one thinks of such events as these, so increases one's wonder at the stable of Bethlehem and the Cross of Calvary.

H. Sands

From Birkenhead, —The first problem considered in our study was to determine the locality of the thrones. It is possible that since they are mentioned in connection with the Lord's millennial reign they are on earth. On the other hand, since John was called into heaven (Rev. 4. 1), it may be inferred that they are there [Comment 11].

Secondly, can we identify those who live and reign with Christ? A number of possibilities were put forward and we submit them for consideration—(a) the saints of the Most High (Dan. 7. 18), (b) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Luke 13. 28), (c) the saints (1 Cor. 6. 2; 2 Tim. 2. 12), (d) Daniel (Dan. 12. 13), (e) the souls of those who died, refusing to own allegiance to the Beast and his supporters (Rev. 20. 4); these souls appear to be disembodied (v. 4) [Comment 12].

In considering the term "first resurrection" it is concluded that this involves those who are raised in connection with the Lord's reign as Son of Man. Those who compose the Church the Body are not here in view, as the Rapture is an event which is apart from the prophetic sequence of Scripture; no signs of its imminent arrival are given. As to the identity of "the rest of the dead" it is wrong to conclude that those not raised are unsaved. To support this we draw attention to the Queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh (Luke 11. 29-32) and also those in Hades (Luke 23. 43; 16. 23), the place to which the Lord went when He died [Comment 13].

Those having a part in the first resurrection are blessed and holy (20. 6), and God will be glorified as the Son of Man reigns supreme. At this time the covenant God made with Abraham will operate in its fullest sense (Gen. 15. 18) and also God's covenant with David (Luke 1. 32) that One would occupy the "throne of His father David".

The priestly service mentioned in v. 6 appears to be in association with the Temple of Ezek. 44, although some commentators find difficulty in accepting the possibility of sacrifices being reintroduced.

It is remarkable that after 1000 years Satan is able to gain such support, but his freedom is only for a little time. By deceiving the nations he gathers them together from the four corners of the earth. Reference to Ezek. 38 and 39 mentions "Gog, of the land of Ma-

gog" and gives some idea of the areas from which the armies will come against the beloved city Jerusalem and the camp of the saints surrounding it.

However, just as all is seemingly lost, ' fire comes down and devours the enemy and the Devil is finally cast into the lake of fire.

R. D. Williams

COMMENT?

1) (Lagos). **The second view is surely right, for the judgement at His coming will be associated with the angels (Mat. 13. 39, 40). Perhaps it is better to think of those on the thrones as "just administrators" of the King than as "administrators of justice". They will be rulers in the kingdom, not only judges of the legislature.**

2) (Liverpool). **I have wondered if Is. 65. 20—"the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed" is an indication of a limitation on the longsuffering of God? Men will live and die in the Millennium and some be lost.**

3) (Vancouver). **Will not those who refused the mark of the beast, yet survived, be in glorified bodies? "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" has spiritual as well as physical salvation in mind, has it not?**

4) (Melbourne). **Authority will be delegated according to the divine principle—"if we endure we shall also reign" (2 Tim. 2. 12). There is also the matter of faithfulness, e. g. the parable of the pounds in Luke 19. Most contributors deduce from other scriptures that rule and authority will be given to groups additional to the Tribulation saints.**

5) (Derby). **There is the other view that the King of the North is the Beast.**

6) (Derby). **Certainly "we shall see Him, even as He is" (1 John 3. 2), and Rev. 1. 7 says "every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him". So all will see Him when He comes, either as Son of God or as Son of Man. During the Millennium "all the families of the earth" will go up "to Jerusalem to worship the King", and it may be He will be seen then (Zech. 14. 16).**

7) (Atherton and Leigh). **It will be the throne of the King of kings—something David never was.**

8) (R. A. P.). **I do not understand 3, 4, 5 here as "living" unless in resurrection. I do not think there is a sheep and goats comparison in "small and great".**

9) (R. A. P.) **When the Lord comes He alone is the Judge of men.** Only **after He has** completed His **judgement** will those appointed **assume** thrones to rule in His Kingdom.

10) (R. A. P.). **Most would agree that others not** listed in v. 4 will **reign with Christ** in His millennial Kingdom, **and cannot** therefore be **"separate and distinct"**. **Rather are** those in v. 4 **added to the list** of rulers.

11) (Birkenhead). **On earth** surely—Christ's Kingdom **is an earthly one.**

12) (Birkenhead). **Does this not identify them as the souls of Rev. 6. 9? They are not** now disembodied, for they **have** come from **the first** resurrection.

13) (Birkenhead). It is generally **agreed that** many of **those at the Great White Throne judgement** will **be saved, but** those mentioned—**Queen of Sheba, men of Nineveh, such as Lazarus** (Luke 16), **the repentant malefactor**—will **have been raised at the first** resurrection, **and so share in the Millennium.** **A. B. R.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 (Lagos). **We are** not clear about **the** order of priesthood **to which the priests of** v. 6 will belong—to **the** revived Aaronic priesthood or **to the present order of priesthood?**

Both **the Aaronic priesthood and the present order, I think.**

1). The Aaronic priesthood will **serve in the Temple** as in Zech. 14. **16 and Ezek. 44. 15-31 and be** concerned with animal sacrifices.
 2). I **judge we shall continue as in** 1 **Pet. 2. 5-9 and Heb. 12. 18-29, V. 28** says "receiving a kingdom **which cannot be shaken... we may offer** service well pleasing to **God with reverence and awe"**. Rev. 5. **13 would apply to us too perhaps? We shall surely continue** to develop our priestly **service?**

Question 2 {Melbourne}. It **has been suggested that the last sentence** of v. 4, combined **with** v. 5, could convey **the** thought of *two* periods of 1000 years.

Personally **I can see** only one **period** here.

A. B. R.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from the Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario
 Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

OCTOBER 1974

EDITORIAL

This month many fellow students will be directing their attention to a different area of study as proposed in the 1975 syllabus, which was issued with the August *Bible Studies*.

Editors hope that the life of Abraham, the friend of God, will prove to be a profitable theme for the next twelve months, and in some senses be less problematic than the prophetic books which have engaged our attention for several years.

We would encourage all assemblies or groups who are studying the subject with us to submit brief written contributions as often as possible. A variety of contributors adds to the interest of the magazine, and the preparation of papers has value for those who apply themselves to it. We take this opportunity of thanking those who have so consistently supplied a contribution on the monthly subject despite quite difficult study material.

The first paper on the new subject should reach Mr. E. Archibald by the 1st November. By this reminder we would assure all concerned how welcome their participation will be. *Eds.*

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

Our present study of this great subject will perhaps be best served by considering it under three headings: The King of the ages: The King of Israel: The King of kings. The Hebrew word for "king" is *melek*, meaning royal, and comes from *malak* which means to reign, to ascend the throne. The Greek word is *basileus*, and means foundation of power, a sovereign, a king.

KING OF THE AGES

The eternal kingship of Christ is clearly established in the Old Testament, as is also His being of one essence and equal with God the Father. The following scriptures show the divine titles used to denote the Father and the Son.

*God the Father**God the Son*

"Jehovah is King for ever and ever." Ps. 10. 16 of glory.

"Jehovah sat as King at the flood." Ps. 29. 10 My holy

"God is the King of all the earth." Ps. 47. 7 ments

"Jehovah is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King." Jer. 10. 10

"For I am a great King saith Jehovah of hosts." Mai. 1. 14

"The Lord of hosts, the King" Ps. 24. 10

"I have set My King upon hill of Zion." Ps. 2. 6

"Give the King Thy judgment." Ps. 72. 1

"Mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts." Isa. 6. 5

(quotations from ASV)

The equality of the Lord Jesus with God the Father in His eternal Kingship is fundamental to the future purpose of God to set Him as supreme Ruler of the universe.

THE KING OF ISRAEL

When God planned the ages to work out His eternal purposes, His selection of Abraham provided the single human link from which came the nation, and out of which came Messiah, the Child born, the Son given. This brought into the stream of humanity the God Man, both King eternal, invisible, and Man, eternal, visible, upon whose shoulders will rest the government of the universe.

Israel, by divine selection was the one nation amongst the nations which was to demonstrate to the world the divine ideal of theocracy, God as absolute Ruler over a holy nation, accompanied by the highest possible blessings and prosperity ever known to men on the earth. The fulfilment of this was not realized because Israel failed to see, by faith, the King invisible, and asked Samuel the prophet for a king like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8. 4-7).

Behind this desire lay the unfortunate rejection of God as their King, and it led to the disastrous course which was followed in Israel's subsequent history. Their ill-fated request postponed the royal mandate of divine Kingship in those formative years of the earthly kingdom of God, and God's purpose to develop a truly theocratic kingdom was held in abeyance.

"The gifts and the calling of God are not repented of. " (Rom. 11. 29); and after Saul's rejection as Israel's first **king**, **God moved** to establish a royal line in Israel through Judah, whence came David, a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13. 14). The historic Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 23. 3-5; 2 Chron. 7. 18) established a throne in Israel which was to remain a symbol of the future rule of God amongst His people. God's choice of David accorded with the popular desire for a visible king; because their faithless vision, obscured by the blindness of unbelief, prevented them from seeing Him Who is invisible (see also Jer. 33. 14-19). Yet in the deeper outworking of this plan, David's Lord would become David's son. Thus the angelic message to Mary concerning the birth of Christ was crystal clear, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1. 32).

This prophecy is the fundamental reason for the survival of what became known as "the throne of David" as it passed through the turbulent centuries of Israel's and Judah's kings. But for the covenant of God with David that "there shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel" (2 Chron. 7. 15), the throne of David would have crumbled in the idolatrous closing days of Solomon's reign. From the 70 years captivity in Babylon until the present time, Hosea's prophecy has been fulfilled, "Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince". Nevertheless the "throne of David" still stands, permanent and secure in God's keeping. Among David's least words he said, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. 23. 3-5).

At Calvary, Pilate wrote that historic title and placed it on the cross of Israel's rejected King, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews", and one day soon they will see Him whom they pierced. In the majestic terms of Psalm 2 we see the King in resurrection, holding the sceptre of power, for God has set His **King** "upon My holy hill of Zion".

After Armageddon when the Anti-christ is destroyed, and Israel is finally restored to the land God gave them in promise, the throne of David will be established, and Christ will reign over them as Messiah King, whose right it is by an eternal decree as touching His Godhead, and by succession in Judah's royal line, as touching His Manhood. David will be there too, in resurrection body, as a shepherd prince in vice-regal majesty. "My servant David; he shall feed them... and I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David prince among them" (Ezek. 34. 23, 24).

God preserved a human royal line for the King incarnate. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out" (Rom. 11. 33).

THE KING OF KINGS

In the book of Revelation there are several references to the Kingship of Christ, and these appear to be in association with His universal rule over the earth. He is "the Ruler of the kings of the earth" (1. 5), indicating that during millennial years and into the eternal ages there will be kings, no doubt men of faith who have obeyed the word as in Ps. 2. 10-12, "Now therefore be wise, O ye kings;... serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest He be angry...". These may reign as vice-regents among the saved nations, with Christ as supreme Ruler over all. Rev. 21. 24 shows the kings of the earth bringing their glory into the eternal city, new Jerusalem.

An earlier scene in Rev. 15. 1-4 shows the seven angels with the seven last plagues to be poured out on the earth at the close of the tribulation period, just preceding the Armageddon war (see chapters 15 and 16 for the unfolding of these events). The scene is in heaven and the victorious company who dared to resist the beast, refused to worship his image or receive his mark, stood by a glassy sea singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. "The Lord God, the Almighty, righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages" ("nations", ASV margin). There is prophecy in their song, looking forward to the time when all nations shall worship before the King. Vine notes that in Rev. 15. 3 the R. V. has "King of the ages", signifying a period of indefinite duration, "for ever".

The A. V. has "King of saints", based on *hagion* which appears in inferior MSS... There is good MS evidence for *ethnon* (nations) (A. V. margin), probably a quotation from Jer. 10. 7.

Whether the Lord Jesus is King of ages, saints, or nations, all are consistent with this revelation of His glorious kingship and His "all authority", because He is the Son of Man. Another view shows heaven opening, (Rev. 19. 11) and the Rider on the white horse, who is called Faithful and True, as touching His perfect Manhood, "the Word of God" as touching His Godhead and the King of kings and Lord of lords as to His universal authority. In this great downward sweep from heaven to earth He comes to destroy the Beast and false prophet in the final drama of Armageddon.

The only place we find the 1000 years mentioned is in Rev. 20, this representing the seventh day, or God's sabbath of rest. Satan is bound that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished. Then those who will be beheaded "for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand", will take part in a pre-Millennium resurrection, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20. 4, 5). They will be priests of God and of Christ, and this unique priesthood, under the King, who is "a Priest upon His throne" may function in a dual role, viz. administration in matters of the kingdom, and receipt of tribute and worship from the nations to the King. All nations will be required to come to Jerusalem from year to year to worship "the King, the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14. 16).

We conclude with Paul's masterly summing up, "For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (1 Cor. 15. 25, 26). When all things are subjected to Him, He Himself will be subjected to the Father, "that God may be all in all". Subordinate in office, but not in His deity; this is the eternal state. R. Armstrong

*THE GREAT WHITE THRONE AND THE
NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH*

Revelation 20. 11 - 21. 8

From Birkenhead. —At this, the final judgement, the rest of the dead are together before the throne. No matter what their station in life, all are equal on this occasion. Books are opened (v. 12) which contain a record of the works of the dead, and although mention is made of the book of life it was suggested that this was possibly to demonstrate the absence of names therein [Comment 1]. That there are degrees of punishment according to the works done seems reasonable to infer from Luke 10. 14 where Tyre and Sidon are mentioned.

The bodies of the dead come from the sea and death; [Comment 2] souls of the dead from Hades. These three places have to do with the present earth. We are told that death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. Also that the sea (21. 1) and death (21. 4) are to be no more.

Following upon the awesome day of judgement John is given a sight of a new heaven and a new earth. In our discussion of this point we reviewed Notes by J. Miller and "The Finger of Prophecy" and noted that differing views are supported whilst using the same scriptures to establish the meaning of the word "new". Evidently there are points for both arguments which made it difficult to align ourselves completely with either of them [Comment 3], John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. The possibility of it being in suspension above the earth at some stage has been propounded, but this was not acceptable to us. God's purpose to dwell on earth amongst men had its origin with Jacob in Genesis, and here finds its final expression in Rev. 21. 3. We wondered whether the giving of the water of life mentioned in 21. 6 can be linked with the Lord's experience at the well at Sychar in John 4 [Comment 4].

In the list of those who will be rejected by God are mentioned "the fearful". An initial reading may give the impression of harshness, but evidently in view is the idea of a conscious denial of allegiance to the Lord Jesus (2 Tim. 2. 12) [Comment 5].

R. D. Williams

From Derby. —Thoughts of God's majesty and the glory of his blessed and loved Master would fill John's heart as this awesome scene was brought before his very eyes. John had experienced His meekness and lowliness when in the upper room as he reclined on His breast, but in this vision he beholds the dreadful majesty of Him to whom all judgement has been committed, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"? (Gen. 18. 25). Standing before this thrice-holy Being John saw the dead, the great and the small, who were all to be judged according to their works. This is the climax of all human experience in time. God had previously dealt in judgement with others, the living nations, prior to the Millennium. Prior to this, the Beast and False Prophet were already in the lake of fire, but their slain hordes of soldiery we understand will be raised from the dead to stand for final judgement, where the degree of punishment will be assessed by the all-knowing and all-wise Judge according to what is written in the books. This judgement was foretold by the Judge Himself as recorded in John 5. 29, by Paul in Acts 24. 15, and also by Peter in Acts 10. 42: "This is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead". We felt sure that there would be many who had lived during some part of the thousand years of Christ's reign whose names would be found in the book of life. The word for life is *zoe*, which gives the thought of active continuing in well-doing as in Rom. 2. 7. They also became justified by faith, and were believers in the atoning blood of the Lamb of God.

Many would be the books opened to disclose the names and the works of the myriads of mankind who had been reserved for this final judgement. We remembered too that the writings of the holy Scriptures would also be one of the all-important books to be opened. The Lord did say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Mat. 24. 55); and, "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12. 48).

"The earth and the heaven fled away"; many will wish they could flee too, but there will be no escape then. Now is the time to flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, a hope sure and steadfast, which hope we (believers) have as an anchor of the soul.

The Lord Jesus is the One who said, "I am the resurrection" (John 11. 25). Thus all the myriads will have been raised by His power.

What Peter said we look for (2 Pet. 3. 13), John was permitted to see: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21. 1-8). Whatever is said about God re-modelling the present earth we feel to be irrelevant [see Comments 3 and 6]. This earth is the scene of rebellion, sin and the murder of God's Only-begotten. The new earth will be the dwelling place of righteousness with God dwelling with His peoples. The New Jerusalem is the abode of His heavenly saints. God's offer of the water of life is gracious even as the great offer of the gospel message still being made now. The fearful and unbelieving head the list of the other sins which mankind are subjected to. Their end is too dreadful to contemplate. Their judgement will be according to their works, the measure of actual suffering being controlled by the Almighty. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation from this fearful punishment. L. Foster, S. R. W.

From Vancouver. —John saw a Great White Throne upon which sits the King of kings who is also the Man of Calvary. It seems that the throne is not on earth, for from before His face the earth and heavens flee away. At this time the words of Rev. 21. 1 ("the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more") will be fulfilled, and also those of 2 Pet. 3. 12.

Thus all who stand before the Great White Throne will pass through death and resurrection (Dan. 12. 2; John 5. 28, 29). The earth and the sea will yield the bodies and Hades will yield the souls of every person as yet not raised from the dead. They stand before the Lord of whom Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"? Books are opened, which perhaps would contain an account of the thoughts and actions of all. Then another book, the book of life, was opened and if any was not found written there he was cast into the lake of fire. Each one of these myriads of people will be dealt with individually. The books will contain the records of all rejectors of Christ and the rejection or acceptance of God's testimony concerning Himself, whether in creation (Rom. 1. 20) or in any other way whereby He has revealed Himself. The righteous Judge will determine the lot of all, whether they were responsible in life, had a lifetime disability, or died in infancy; all will be dealt with in absolute righteousness. J. B.

From Lagos. —"In the cool of the day . . . the Lord God called unto the man . . ." (Gen. 3. 8, 9). It was a call to judgement—the first record of divine intervention in judgement. The answering call to that in Genesis will come from God the Judge of all in the day in which He will judge the world in righteousness (John 5. 28, 29). The solemnity of that day of judgement is unfolded in the vision given to John: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away . . ." (Rev. 20.).

We believe that the Judge upon the throne is the Son of Man (John 5. 22), for in all things He must have the pre-eminence. "He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory", in His immortal body bearing the marks of His passion, He shall bear the glory and the authority to give to every man according as his work is.

The final resurrection will include the human dead of all ages of time. Some exceptions will be (1) believers in Christ from the day of Pentecost to the rapture of the Church the Body of Christ (1 Thes. 4. 13-18; 1 Cor. 15. 51-57); (2) the pre-millennial living nations who were judged and separated into the "sheep" to go into life and the "goats" condemned to suffer eternal punishment (Mat. 25. 31-46); (3) those of the Old Testament saints who were raised in the first resurrection (Rev. 20. 6). We suggest the mass of humanity who died in the fiery judgement of Gog and Magog will be raised.

"God shall bring every work into judgement, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12. 14). "The work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways" (Job. 34. 11). Each man will be held accountable to God for his works on earth. The judgement will be without respect of persons, in perfect righteousness and in reference to God's revelation to man in every age (Luke 11. 29-32). Those who by patience in well-doing are seekers for glory and honour and incorruption shall hear their names from the book of life. The mouths of others will be stopped at the manifestation of the hardness and impenitence of their sinful hearts, and of their condemnation to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

"Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands... as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed" (Heb. 1. 10-12). 'The first things', descriptive of the present heaven and earth and all that in them is, shall pass away (Rev. 21. 4). New heavens and a new earth will replace them. "Behold I make all things new" answers to the prophetic word (2 Pet. 3. 10, 13).

The two promises interwoven in this phase of divine revelation are worthy of note (Rev. 21. 6, 7). "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely". "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son". "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

S. A. Beyioku, E. I. Bassey

From Liverpool. —This will be an awesome sight for all who are there to behold. The whiteness speaks of the righteousness of the judgement meted out by Him who sits upon the Throne, namely, the Lord Jesus (see John 5. 22; Acts 17. 31). This is the last great assize. All the rest of the dead are now raised (verse 5) to be judged according to their works. Paul wrote to the Romans about this day: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2. 16). Death that held them will lose its grip at the command of Him who calls them, as He called Lazarus and others when He was here on earth (John 11; see also John 5. 25). While it was a marvellous happening to see men raised from the dead during the ministry of the Lord here upon earth, He Himself said, "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" (John 5. 28). This saying of the Lord finds its fulfilment in Rev. 20, when all the rest of the dead are now raised to be judged according to their works. The dead are divided in this judgement. To some it is a resurrection to life (Rom. 2. 6, 7), and to others a resurrection to eternal judgement (Rom. 2. 8, 9).

The One who sits upon the Throne said, "Behold, I make all things new". Taking other Scriptures into account, it is difficult to know whether it is a completely new creation or a renewed one. Peter's account of the end of all things tends to the view that there will be the complete destruction of this earth. On the other hand Is. 65. 17 and 66. 22 mention the creation of new heavens and a new earth, but from the context it would appear to refer to the Millennium, and not to the period we are now considering so that the concept of a new heaven and a new earth could easily refer to a renewal. Eccles 1. 4 with Ps. 104. J and 119. 90 would give weight to this thought. 1 Cor. 15. 24-28 would also lend itself to this idea [Comment 6].

M. S. E., J. W., G. S. W.

From Melbourne. — He who sits upon the Great White Throne is the One who was God manifest in flesh. The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgement unto the Son. Because He is Son of Man, no charge of unrighteous judgement can ever be brought against the Judge of all the earth; for He has, while dwelling among men, witnessed and sympathised with the frailties of humanity. We suggest that His appearance to John as the latter described Him in ch. 1 was but a veiled manifestation of His glory as now displayed upon the Great White Throne. The scenes brought before John in this portion are so terrible that they cannot be fully grasped by the human mind. The heaven and earth passing away from before the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and no place being found for them, is language which can only be understood by the great eternal One. Now we are introduced to the thought of the dead, the great and small, kings and rulers, world conquerers, dictators and men of wealth are in company with those of lesser standing, of past and future ages. The record of all will be there, written in the books, according to their works. The myriad bodies of the dead, from the sea, and from the dust of the earth, reunited with their souls from Hades, are to be brought face to face with Him who sits upon the throne and with the record of their lives on earth, the things written in the books. Then with sentence pronounced many are to be cast into the lake of fire, to experience the awfulness of the second death, eternal separation from God. It is evident that the book of life will be there, and at the Great White Throne will appear multitudes whose names are written therein. They will not be those who have heard the gospel of the grace of

God in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and have turned away therefrom. They will be those who throughout the ages have had light from God and obeyed it, including the testimony of a Creator's handiwork. "For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. 1. 20). Having recognised Him thus, they have, their conscience bearing them witness, given Him glory, and by patient continuance in well doing, sought for glory and honour and incorruption (Rom. 2. 7). The names of such, we judge, will be in the book of life. It is evident that the appearance of their names therein will determine their eternal destiny amongst the justified of earth. Even though the message of justification through Christ may not have reached them, yet the merits of His work will be imputed to them through grace.

There are those who believe that the new heaven and earth replacing the present scene will be a completely new creation, and this would appear to be supported by the thought of the old passing away, no place being found for them. Others are not so certain but are inclined to view the new scene described as purged and purified by fire [see Comments 3 and 6]. Whichever be the correct view, on the new earth will be no more sea (the sea has often been referred to as the cleanser of the cities of men). The New Jerusalem, which will descend out of heaven from God, will be His dwelling place among redeemed men. Here on earth will at last be found that for which He has longed—His tabernacle among men, when they shall be His peoples, and He shall be with them, and be their God. Here will be the great fulfilment of the types seen in the Tabernacle, the Solomonic Temple, the rebuilt Temple, the New Testament House, and the millennial Temple. No longer will this dwelling place be capable of being defiled by men and their failures; no longer will there be cleansing required. The dwellers there and around it will be redeemed peoples in immortal bodies; and the former sorrows, due to sin, will have gone for ever. *M. McF., T. W. F*

From Nottingham. —The Great White Throne is the scene of the last judgement which will come upon the human race. After this event every single human being in this creation will have appeared before Christ and been subject to some form of judgement.

John saw the Great White Throne and Him **that sat** upon it. While **the** word *me gas*, translated **here as great**, is **used of size** (e. g. Mat. 27. 60—"a great stone"), it is **suggested that the sense here** is also of might, power and majesty.

The Scriptures show that the **Great White Throne judgement** will take place after time has finished, that is, in eternity. The heaven and the earth flee away from before the face of the One on the throne. All that is so familiar to man will have disappeared and he will be left without anywhere to hide, without being able to rely on any materialistic interest, left to face the Judge.

Rev. 20. 11 describes the fleeing away of the heaven and earth, yet v. 13 reads, "the sea gave up the dead which were in it". If the heaven and earth have fled away then the sea too must have disappeared. It seems likely, therefore, that these two events will take place simultaneously. Certainly in a way which we cannot now understand countless millions who will have been raised from the dead will appear before the Judge at this stage in God's eternal purposes.

What of those who will be born during the Millennium? There seems to be no direct scriptural statement about these people, but it is suggested they will stand before the Great White Throne judgement. When the heaven and earth flee away presumably there will be no living persons left (i. e. in natural bodies). All those who have not taken part in resurrection will be dead. These, as we have seen from Rev. 20. 72, will appear before the Judge, and therefore this would seem to include those who were born during the Millennium and were still alive at the end of time [Comment 7].

Although some Christian commentators think that Rev. 20. 15 indicates that everyone who appears before the Great White Throne will be eternally lost, this does not seem to be the meaning of the verse. It is those who were not found written in the book of life who were cast into the lake of fire, thus implying that there will be some who will be found written therein. There must have been many thousands of people who during the centuries since the day of Pentecost have never heard of the Saviour, but who have responded to God in repentance as they have heard or perceived His working with them in their consciences. Will they not be found written in the book? John 5. 28, 29: Mat. 11. 20-24: **Luke** 11. 29-

32; Acts 10. 34, 35 and Rom. 2. 4-11 are scriptures relevant to this point [Comment 8],

R. Hickling

From R. A. P. (Stoke-on-Trent).—In His foreknowledge, the heavens (plural) that now are and the earth by the same word have been stored with fire (mg) being reserved against the day of judgement and destruction (*apoleias*) of ungodly men (2 Pet. 3. 7, 10). The word "destruction" here has a meaning similar to "perish" in the previous verse. Apart from these verses and Rev. 20. 11 we are told nothing of the emptying of the earth of its inhabitants during the transition from the first earth to the new earth. In what way then will the fire stored in the present heavens and earth contribute to the judgement and destruction of ungodly men? Will this be fulfilled when Hades is cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels? (Rev. 20. 14; Mat. 25. 41) [Comment 9]. We understand Hades to be located in the heart of the earth (see Num. 16. 33), and to be a place of torment or trial by fire (Luke 16. 23, 24)—of a temporary nature until emptied before the Great White Throne judgement (Rev. 20. 23).

The scriptures relating to the passing away of the first heaven and the first earth seem to indicate they will not be used again. "They shall perish" (*abad*) Ps. 102. 26; "They shall perish" (*apolountai*) Heb. 1. 11; "and there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20. 11) [see Comments 3 and 6],

The Great White Throne will complete the day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3. 10) and usher in the day of God (2 Pet. 3. 12). The location and duration of the throne are matters not revealed.

We believe the first and most important book to be opened will be the Bible. The other books will be those recording "their works". The book of life will record those who have repented Godward and exercised faith in Him. To such will be extended eternal life on the basis of repentance and faith on their part, and in the shed blood of His Son on God's part. Into the lake of fire will be cast those not written therein. There will be no doubt whatever in that judgement of the Lord's longsuffering, "not wishing that any should perish (*apolesthai*) but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3. 9).

R. A. Parker

COMMENTS

1) (Birkenhead). This seems a rather negative suggestion. "If any was not found written" (v. 15) would surely imply that some

were found written.

2) (Birkenhead). It seems to me that death and Hades are linked together in relation to the souls of those raised from the **dead**. I suggest that the fact of a general resurrection is **declared in** v. 12. Then the sea is specifically mentioned in v. 13 as if to emphasize the inescapable truth of bodily resurrection, however the body may have been disposed of. The emphasis then changes to the accountability of "every soul of man" (Rom. 2. 9) by reference to death and Hades giving up the dead in them.

3) (Birkenhead). While investigation of the meaning of the Greek word *kainos* (new) is a useful aspect of this discussion, several other aspects must be considered. See Liverpool's paper for examples; also Comment 6.

4) (Birkenhead). "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1. 4). Since all life derives from the Lord Jesus there is a link between John 4. 14 and Rev. 21. 6. On the basis of His creative and redemptive work He can fully satisfy the longing soul.

5) (Birkenhead). 2 Tim. 2. 12 was written to believers, so we must be careful not to imply that a disciple's fearfulness to express loyalty to Christ might incur the judgement of Rev. 21. 8.

6) (Liverpool). The reference in Eccles. 1. 4 is a comparative statement, man's fleeting experience over against the indefinite continuance of the earthly creation. Ps. 105. 4 may be construed in a similar sense. But Heb. 1. 10-12 quotes from Ps. 102 and gives a vivid impression of the eternal existence of the Son in contrast to the earth and the heavens. They will be changed, wax old as a garment, be rolled up like a mantle. This does not give an impression of being renewed for further use but of being discarded, their purpose served. Linking this with 2 Pet. 3. 10-13 and Rev. 21. 11 I find it difficult to understand how such scriptures can be **reconciled** with the view that the present earth and its surrounding heaven are after all to continue to exist in a renewed form.

7) (Nottingham). Such general statements as Is. 45. 25. John 5. 22 and Phil. 2. 10, 11 confirm that those of every age, without exception, must appear before the Lord Jesus as Judge. Those who have died during the Millennium will therefore be raised to stand before the Great White Throne. Those still living at the end of the Millennium will presumably also have to give account to Him.

But would this necessarily involve their death and resurrection? I do not know of any scripture which reveals how the righteous of millennial times will be transferred to the new **earth**.

8) (Nottingham). I believe this is a valid deduction.

9) (Stoke). It seems to me that 2 Pet. 3. 7 associates the fire with the day of judgement of ungodly men, but this **does not mean** that the fire will necessarily be used to effect their personal judgement. They will be cast into the lake of fire. But **the present earth** will be burned up (2 Pet. 3. 10), perhaps as suggested by means of fire already "stored" within its crust. *G. P. Jr.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Nottingham:

1). Will the redeemed of this dispensation witness the scenes at the Great White Throne? Can we say where they will be when this takes place?

We are not told directly, but I suggest that when we are conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8. 29) we shall be able to say "Amen" to all His acts of judgement, in the spirit of Rev. 15. 3, 4. I personally take the view that all the redeemed will witness this scene, which will manifest the goodness and severity of God, and form the climax to His age-long purposes.

2). In what sense can death be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20. 14).

Death is referred to in 1 Cor. 15. 26 as "an enemy" to be abolished. This figurative "personification" of death is also seen, I suggest, in Rev. 20. 14, where death is represented as being cast into the lake of fire.

3). While it is generally accepted that children who die **before** reaching the age of responsibility are covered by the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, is there any scriptural guidance as to whether or not they will stand before the Great White Throne judgement?

This might be deduced from general scriptural principles such as John 5. 28. 29, but it has not pleased God to give a specific revelation on the point. *G. P. Jr.*

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent. BR2 7RA

Also from the Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125. Brantford, Ontario
Primed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11).'

VOLUME 42

NOVEMBER 1974

EDITORIAL

This month's study passage sweeps us into breath-taking vistas of eternal things. I regard the case as well made in some of our papers that the entire passage under consideration presents an eternal rather than millennial scene. And eternal things, in their very nature, transcend our comprehension in many respects. Concepts of space and time which will prevail then may differ from, **and** vastly exceed in scope, those of to-day. So we must be cautious with regard to dimensions, materials, and natural things such as rivers and trees. Yet I cannot see any reason why these matters should not be interpreted essentially in a literal fashion. The physical as well as the spiritual glories of that scene will surely present phenomena to our senses which have been unimagined hitherto.

Included, doubtless, in this will be our understanding of "time" and "eternity". (One paper refers to the fruitful "months" of the tree of life). Do we sometimes overstress the contrast between these two terms? In "eternity" we will surely be aware of "past", "present" and "future". Yet the effects of the passage of "time" as we think of it now, effects which are so often sorrowful because of human ageing, will be radically changed. The very words of scripture bear testimony to our present limited capacity to grasp what eternity offers, e. g. "the ages of the ages" (Eph. 3. 21 RVM), and "times eternal" (Rom. 16. 25). "Things... which entered not into the **heart** of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

J. D. T.

THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE—A COMPARATIVE STUDY

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgement" (Heb. 9. 27). In these words Scripture unites all men, of all ages, in a common bond regardless of their attitude to God **and** His Son. Scripture further makes it clear that God is the Ruler of men, Lawgiver, and Judge (Jas. 4. 12). All men will **face judge-**

merit and two such judgements are referred to as the Judgement Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne. Both are comparable in that God is Judge (Heb. 12. 23) and that judgement is delivered through the person of Christ (2 Tim. 4. 8; Acts 10. 42; Acts 17. 31). Men are judged "... by the man whom He hath ordained", but the unity of the Godhead in judgement is shown by the use of the terms "Judgement Seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 10) and "Judgement Seat of God" (Rom. 14. 10) for the same event.

The same *principles* of judgement apply to both; men are to be judged in accordance with the inherent justice of God (Rom. 3. 3, 4) which is unassailable. In its execution the inviolate righteousness of God ensures that judgement will be utterly fair (Gen. 18. 25; Acts 17. 31; Rom. 3. 6). The comparison extends also to the *basis* of judgement which rests on two main principles, namely a man's works, and his attitude to God and to Christ. At both the Judgement Seat of Christ and at the Great White Throne it is works that are to be judged.

Scripture speaks often of the "day of Judgement" and it is axiomatic that a man inevitably faces judgement, but faces it only once. There is therefore an apparent paradox in the Lord's words "He that believeth on Him is not judged" (John 3. 18) for no man can escape judgement. However, the word has the meaning of condemnation, and is virtually equivalent to the word *krima*, meaning a verdict or condemnation (Vine, 1940). The believer, by reason solely of faith in Christ, is assured that he need not appear before the Great White Throne; the verdict of that judgement was taken on his behalf by Christ, who is to be the instrument of judgement. But each will give to God an account of his life and be judged accordingly; for the believer this will be at the Judgement Seat of Christ. It is clear then that acceptance or rejection of Christ determines at which judgement seat those who live in the day of God's grace will appear. and equally no man will enter the eternal presence of God without the justification effected by the sacrifice of Christ. This being so, both the Judgement Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne have to do with works (2 Cor. 5. 10; Rev. 20. 13). The difference is that no condemnation awaits those who appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ (Rom. 8. 1), whereas eternal destinies are weighed at the Great White Throne. Those at the Judgement Seat of Christ may suffer loss (1 Cor. 3. 13-15) but no more.

The early chapters of the Roman letter give an insight into the way in which those at the Great White Throne will be judged. All kinds and conditions of men will appear and will be judged according to the light they had and to the revelation that was theirs (Rom. 1. 20). The judgement will be scrupulously fair; those who never knew the law will not be judged by it, but according to the law in their hearts and their conscience (Rom. 2. 12-16).

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude with the comment that believers will also be judged according to light, for judgement begins at the House of God (Heb. 10. 30: 1 Pet. 4. 17). *A. C. Bishop*

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Revelation 21. 9 - 22. 5

From Birkenhead. —Although some students of the Bible consider our portion to be millennial, there are things in the passage which have an air of finality, causing us to conclude that events are following in sequence from the previous paragraph.

John in a vision is shown the holy city Jerusalem, in which dwells the bride, the wife of the Lamb. We concluded this, believing that the angel was pointing out that the city contained those who compose the bride.

The details of the city which are given indicate something that is exceedingly magnificent, although whether the finer details are capable of translation into something comprehensible to us was questioned. For example, the height of the wall (1500 miles) seems out of proportion to the thickness [Comment 1, 1a]. The city is on the new earth. Various persons are mentioned as being alive at this time. Those who comprise the bride, the wife of the Lamb, are within the city. By virtue of the references to the "twelve tribes... of Israel" (21. 12) and "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (21. 14) there seems to be a link between Israel and those in the Church the Body at this time. The suggestion is that the redeemed of Old Testament Israel enjoy relationship with the city. Around the city we read of nations and kings, evidently those who will be justified, and yet outside the two categories already listed [Comment 2].

Within the city there will be no temple and no need of sun and

moon, because of the presence of the Lord God and the Lamb. Happily there will be no sin and no curse, for these have been finally dealt with. Also the throne of God and of the Lamb will be therein, from which will be executed all authority. It will be the privilege of all to render service to God and to reign for all eternity with Him.

The thought was expressed that here we read of access being granted to the tree of life and also the benefits which come from this; all in stark contrast to the scene in Eden's garden when man was banished because of sin, cut off from his communion with his Creator.

In Rev. 21. 27 our conclusions were (a) that this is a statement of fact and not an inference that outside the city there is sin [Comment 3]; (b) that there evidently are names in the Lamb's book of life other than of those who comprise the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

R. D. Williams

From Birmingham. —John, being carried away in the Spirit, sees with wondering eyes the bride dwelling in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. The city John describes is vast; 12000 furlongs, four-square. It is vaster far than any city man has built or even visualized. We wondered too about the absolute purity of the city. The foundations were of the purest, most precious stones imaginable, the gates were of pearl and the street was of pure gold as it were transparent glass. This purity, we mused, would not be transitory, for there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean (Rev. 21. 27). Neither shall there be any of this old earth's darkness, for the Lamb shall fill the city with heavenly light. The nations in the new earth will be able to visit the city and their kings shall bring their glory into it. We were agreed that the nations would be people who had been saved through the work of our Saviour but who did not form part of the bride of the Lamb. They visit, then, the holy city, being free from sin, but they are not citizens of it. We were puzzled over the exact purpose of the river of water of life (Rev. 22. 1) and the tree of life (22. 2), but it was suggested that the river of life and the tree of life would be the means by which God would fulfil His promise of everlasting life. In the new Jerusalem man shall take of the tree of life and eat and live for ever (see Gen. 3.

22) [Comment 4]. We were also concerned over the leaves of the tree which were for the healing of the nations. We were still not clear after some discussion what healing would be necessary, for sickness, pain and sin will have passed away (21. 4) [Comment 5]. We were cheered, however, to read "and they shall see His face" (22. 4), surely the most wonderful sight that eyes shall behold on that glorious day.

J. A. T. Russell

From Derby, —The angel who says to John, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb" may have been the same that also said to him in 17. 1, "Come hither, I will shew thee the judgement of the great harlot". The great blessing foreshown in the one case stands in marked contrast to the great punishment of the other, showing us something of the role of angelic creatures.

We see the holy city in an eternal context in 21. 2 and it may well be so throughout the remainder of our present study portion.

The fact that the New Jerusalem has so great a wall speaks of the eternal security we have throughout all ages. In these walls there are three portals (RVM). That is, in their entire length of 1, 500 miles, there are only three ways into the city on each of the four sides. The twelve tribes of Israel are represented here, perhaps in the same order as around the Tabernacle in the wilderness [Comment 6]. The foundations may be thought of as foundation stones. The apostles are seen as "foundation men" in Eph. 2. 20, that is in their teaching (see Acts 2. 42). Might it be suggested that each of the twelve apostles had his name engraved on a stone built into the wall, each a different costly stone, denoting the tremendous value of the "deposit" entrusted to them? In this future city which is called "the bride, the wife of the Lamb", we see the togetherness of believers of both Old and New Testament times [see Comment 2].

The city is seen to have huge proportions, cubical in shape. The inner sanctuary of the temple also was "four-square" (1 Kings 6. 20). It seems fitting that God's future dwelling place should follow the same pattern. Unlike the days of the Millennium there will be no temple. In times past God had to be isolated from His people because of sin, but now sin has been dealt with, and God can dwell

at one with His peoples. The Scriptures say that God is light. The Lord Jesus is referred to as the "Light of the world". He diffused the the light of understanding in contrast to the darkness of ignorance. The reference in Rev. 21. 23 is to literal light "greater than the sun at noonday", for the celestial city will have no need of light of lamp or of the sun; for the Lord God shall give them light. The light of God's presence has been called the *shechinah* glory, and God dwells in light unapproachable, which is true also of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6. 16). Out from the throne of God flows the river of the water of life which will be an eternal reminder that the Christ is the giver of the free water of life. It is noticeable that the tree of life is in the middle of the street and on either side of the river. This indicates that it is not a single specimen but rather a type of tree. Every month it yields fruit. Does this mean that eternity will be divided into months? The leaves are for the healing of the nations. This does not mean that there will be sickness or disease, but the word healing is translated from the word *therapeia* (hence "therapy") which carries the thought of service or care. God's provision to the whole new world will be from this centre.

A. Smith, S. R. W.

From Lagos. — Bearing on the subject of our study is the principle of God's choice of a place for His name, and in association therewith a people to whom He gives the near place of worship and service. In Gen. 2. 7-15 we believe that this principle is first underlined and set forth. For was not Adam created in the image of God and given privileges of worship and service in the garden of Eden? Granted that this was so, Eden's garden was therefore a place of divine choice and Adam and Eve God's people in principle [Comment 7]. Deut. 10. 14, 15 and. 12. 5-14 show a further outworking of that principle in the purpose of God concerning Israel. In Egypt before they were given the holy privilege of being a people for God, in mercy and love God was their Redeemer (see Ex. 12, Is. 63. 8, 9). God commanded them also to pass through His way which was in the sea. Thus Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (Ps. 77. 19; 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2). Moreover, Israel entered into a covenant relationship with the God of their salvation (Ex. 19. 1-8). Unto this people did God by the mouth of Moses speak concerning the place of His name in the land He promised

to them. It is clear from such scriptures as 2 Chron. 6. 5, 6 and Deut. 12. 5-14 that godly men and women were careful to **discern** and obey the will of God in this matter. Thus, "In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion" (Ps. 76. 1, 2). **Jerusalem** the beloved city was the place of God's name in the dispensation of the law. In the period of God's grace she is set aside. In the reign of the Messiah at the time of the Millennium, Jerusalem shall be made a praise in the earth (Is. 62). At last, the purpose of God with her shall terminate at the passing away of this present heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3. 10).

In the eternal state, and associated with the new heaven and new earth is the city of God's choice, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21. 2), the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11. 10). The great voice out of the throne confirms the establishment in perfection of the desire of God to dwell with men. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, **and God Himself** shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21. 5). Thus, **in the** new heaven and new earth, the new Jerusalem is **the place of God's** name and to the redeemed of earth both Jews and Gentiles shall God give the holy privileges of seeing His face and doing **Him** service. The "peoples" (Rev. 21. 3) shall comprise (1) **the bride** of the Lamb uniquely favoured to dwell in the new Jerusalem (21. 9, 10); (2) the redeemed of Israel dwelling about **the** city wall relative to the gate of each tribe (21. 12, 13); (3) **the** redeemed of the Gentile peoples dwelling according to their nationality outside the city. The redeemed of Jews and Gentiles [(2) **and** (3) above] would include those justified to enter into eternal life at the judgement of the living nations (Mat. 25. 31-46) and at the **Great** White Throne judgement (Rev. 20. 11-15) [Comment 8].

E. Bassey, S. A. Beyioku-Else

From Liverpool. —The New Jerusalem is a fitting city for the new heavens and the new earth. We noted that Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11. 10; see also vv. 13, 14). It is a four-square city, 1, 500 miles long, broad, and high. The throne of God and of the Lamb is in the midst of it. We

wonder if this throne is the same as in Rev. 20. 11 [Comment 9].

The bride is the city, the bride indicating her who is the meet companion for the master, and the city indicating the **place where** God will dwell with men. In Eph. 5. 25-33 the Church the Body seems to be the bride, although not spoken of as such there. This presents a difficulty in view of what we have already said, in that the *city* seems to embrace men of faith of all dispensations. Again, we thought, if the head with the members are seen as the Christ (the one new man of Eph. 2. 15) then the bride could be other peoples as distinct from believers of this present dispensation [Comment 10].

M. S. E., J. W., G. S. W.

From Melbourne. —Prominent on the gates of the city are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, while on its foundations are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. We do not attempt to **define** the twelve names of the latter, but would judge that it *is* reasonable to suggest that those given us in Mat. 10. 3, 4, with Matthias replacing Judas, will be those alluded to. We are hereby reminded that all the names on the gates and foundations are of **Abraham's** descendants; and wherever divine blessing has flowed from God to man, He has used them as the channel through which it has been poured. The multitudes of the redeemed who will populate the holy city will eternally be conscious of that fact, whether they be the redeemed of the twelve tribes of Israel, or of the Gentile nations who have believed the testimony of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (John 4. 22).

The tree of life from which our first parents were barred in their fallen state, will now be available for health and healing to all men on earth. It will grow beside the waters of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Eden's curse will be removed, and His Name shall be on the foreheads of His servants who do Him service. There is a marked contrast to the name and mark of Antichrist.

There was some discussion on the question of certain differences between the city of 21. 2, referred to as the *new* Jerusalem, and that referred to in verse 9 and onwards as the holy city Jerusalem. The question was raised, "Is the former city a description of an eternal scene, and the latter a millennial one"? [see Editorial].

A. E. E., T. W. F.

From R. A. P. (Stoke-on-Trent). —From Rev. 21. 9, 10 we learn that the Bride, the wife of the Lamb is epitomised in the holy city, new Jerusalem. The purposes of God in the wife of the Lamb are presented to us in chapters 21. 1-27; 22. 1-5, and are eternal. **They** stand in sharp contrast to the revealed purposes of **God in Christ** which are to be summed up in Him (Christ) in the dispensation of the fulness of the times, i. e. the Millennium (Eph. 1. 10). There are three distinct uses, we suggest, of the term "the Christ":

- 1) The Messiah, for whom the Jewish nation has sought and will yet seek (John 1. 41; Mat. 27. 22).
- 2) His Christ, against whom the Gentiles have assembled and will tumultuously assemble (mg.) and who **will yet reign** on earth (Ps. 2. 2; Acts 4. 26; 1 Cor. 15. 23-28; **Rev. 11. 15**).
- 3) The Christ, which titles the union of the **Head and members** of the Church, which is His Body (1 Cor. 12. 12, 27; Rom. 12. 5).

These three uses of the term are indicative of three major purposes to be fulfilled in the present earth. They can be represented by three concentric circles, the centre of which is Christ.

- 1) In the inner circle, to the Jew (first) as Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David and King of the Jews (Mat. 1. 1; 2. 2).
- 2) In the second circle, to the Gentile (the Greek) as Jesus, the Christ, the son of Abraham and King of kings and Lord of lords (Mat. 1. 1; Rev. 19. 75. 16).
- 3) In the outer circle, to both Jew and Gentile as Jesus, the Christ, the son of the Living God, and King of the kingdom of the Son of His love (Mat. 16. 16; Col. 1. 13).

These three purposes will have complete fulfilment in the present earth when His Christ reigns for 1, 000 years (Eph. 1. 10; Rev. 11. 15; 20. 4). After this the kingdom will be delivered up to God even the Father... that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 24, 28). All references to the title "Christ" in Revelation are either in association with the seven churches of this dispensation (Rev. 1. 7, 2, 5) or with the Millennium (11. 75; 20. 4-6). We suggest the future role of "the Christ" is not revealed in the Revelation. "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be" (1 John 3. 2) [Comment 11].

It is significant that the twelve foundations have on them the names of the *twelve apostles of the Lamb*. As there were at least sixteen apostles (BS 1953 pp. 11, 20) and we know fifteen of these

are ALL members of the church, the Body, we must conclude that apostles of the Lamb are those who were apostles before the day of Pentecost. All but one of the twelve were apostles approximately three to four years before Pentecost, which suggests we must look for a different identification of the wife of the Lamb from that of the church, the Body. The precious stones adorning the twelve foundations are identical with the stones in the breastplate (Ex. 28), except the seventh (chrysolite) and the tenth (chrysoptase). Those not matching the stones in the breastplate are third (carbuncle) and eighth (agate) and also of apparently different order [Comment 12],

The dimensions given suggest a cube of some 1, 500 miles per side. (NT 1932 p. 207). Although such a statement may suggest a three dimensional city we believe this will not be the case since the portals, the wall (singular) and the foundations are in one plane. "The city lieth four-square" (v. 16). A study of the world "four-square" in the scriptures will show it to mean "equal sides" in one plane, not equal faces. Some have suggested the dimensions are of different scale from those in the first earth. We do not support this since verse 17 clearly shows the cubit, by which John measured, to be "the measure of a man, that is, of an angel". We judge that angels and men have similar stature and dimensions since in the ultimate purpose of God they are to intermingle and work together for His glory. There is of course no reproduction in view in the eternal state (Mat. 22. 29-30) [see Comment 1, 1a].

R. A. Parker

From Atherton and Leigh. —Its Presentation. In Rev. 19 the wife of the Lamb is revealed to the apostle John as a vast company of people, namely "the church which is His Body", whereas in Rev. 21 she is seen as a holy city coming down from heaven to her eternal dwelling place on the new earth. The title "New Jerusalem" is used in contrast to the ancient Jerusalem, which city the Lord chose out of all the tribes to dwell there. How significant, therefore, is the revelation that the very throne of God and of the Lamb is to be found within this new city, associated with unveiled glory and splendour.

Its Dimensions. In 1 Kin. 6. 20 we are told that the place of the divine presence was 20 X 20 X 20 cubits, in the form of a cube. The whole of this city is to be a vast cube, the measurements of which appear to be approximately 1, 500 English miles [Comments 1, 1a]. The surrounding wall is 70 yards in height, a wall no longer for protection but merely as a dividing line. The walls and gates also

involve ideas of rule and government, the former having 12 foundations of enormous wealth, while the latter, 12 pearly gates, indicating abundant access, will be under angelic control.

Its Characteristics. It would be futile for the finite mind to attempt to assess the amount of wealth that is poured into this city, with its transparent gold, its precious stones, its light and its river clear as crystal. The garden of Eden with all its splendour pales into insignificance before the glory, purity, holiness and absolute perfection of this paradise, into which no sin can ever come, or blemish, to mar such excelling beauty.

Its Associates. It is quite clearly stated that the Bride, the people of Israel and Gentile nations, all redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, have their particular place in connection with the city. The Bride has long looked forward to this glorious future, and particularly as the days have darkened, and the word of God been more or less abandoned. The Patriarchs who died in faith also sought a heavenly country of their own, and this city has been prepared for them. Abraham in particular looked for this city which was to have the foundations, whose architect and maker was God. Will they not have a right to enter and enjoy its glories and splendour, more so even than the kings of the nations who are allowed to bring their glory into it (see v. 24) ?

E.

B.

From Hayes. —There are points of difficulty in this portion which have been the subject of controversy for centuries. These difficulties should not prevent us from appreciating, through all the imagery, the future glory of the Church, the Body of Christ and the final, full realisation of God's desire to dwell among men.

Let us consider some of the controversial points:

1) *Does this portion deal with the Millennium or the eternal state?* Of course, if we assume that chap. 21 is arranged in order of time, then this city is in the eternal state and on the new earth. The Revelation is not, however, arranged in a continuous sequence of time. The same periods appear to be dealt with more than once in the book.

Some commentators believe this to be a millennial scene because the organised nations with their kings are spoken of and there seems to be need of healing. Vine considers that the Greek word translated

"healing" includes "health giving". On the other hand, the Millennium is to be set up on the present earth, presumably in the **same** physical condition as it *is* now, and this would preclude **any literal** application of 21. 23 and 22. 5. We came to the conclusion **that the** eternal state is being described.

2) *What persons form the "nations" and the "kings of the earth"?*
We believe that these are persons who had not heard the **gospel** in their life-time but, having responded to the light they **had, their** names were found at the Great White Throne to have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life [Comment 13].

3) *Who will be in the New Jerusalem?*

The dwellers in the city comprise the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. Some believed that this is the Church, the Body of Christ, **and** that the faithful of Israel before Pentecost are not included in it. On the other hand, a suggestion was made that the Bride of the Lamb includes those of all dispensations who have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 21. '9. 14 is the only categorical statement as to who is the Bride of the Lamb. She is the holy city Jerusalem, which has twelve gates and names written thereon of the twelve tribes of Israel (indicating that the redeemed of Israel are included in the Bride) and twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (indicating that the redeemed of the present dispensation are included). Chap. 19. 7, 8 says the fine linen she wears is the righteous acts of the saints, which saints surely include those of the great tribulation, who are so often mentioned in the earlier chapters. This is the city for which Abraham and his descendants looked, so they are also included.

These suggestions are consistent with the many Old Testament references, historical and prophetic, to God as bridegroom or husband and Israel as bride or wife (Is. 49. 18; 54. 6; 62. 5; Jer. 3. 1; 31. 32; Ezek. 16. 32; Hosea 1 and 2).

These suggestions are also consistent with the fewer New Testament references to the present relationship between Christ and the Church the Body, which is as that between a husband and wife. In other gospel references to Christ as bridegroom the disciples are wedding guests (Mat. 9. 15; Mark 2. 19; Luke 5. 34).

It is significant that the Revelation references to the marriage consistently use the title, "the Lamb" not "Christ". Those who are

bidden to the marriage may well be the angels [Comment 14],

4) *Will the city be on earth?*

Some have thought that it will be suspended above the earth but the expression "coming down out of heaven" hardly indicates that it does not complete its journey to earth. It appears, therefore, that the saints of this dispensation will spend eternity on the new earth, though for the present they are heavenly people.

5) *What are the dimensions of the city?*

"Furlong" is a translation of "stadion", which is believed to be 202 yards whilst the British furlong is 220 yards. If the 12, 000 stadia is the distance round the city, then the perimeter is 1, 377 miles, each side 344 miles. The idea of the height being also 344 miles is difficult to imagine, particularly as the height of the walls is given as 144 cubits (about 260 feet).

The Greek text is apparently clear but is there some misunderstanding, or are the dimensions only symbolic? [see Comments 1, 1a].

COMMENTS

1) (Birkenhead). The main problem I see in the dimensions of the city is the vast difference between the height of the city itself and that of the wall, the latter a mere 76 yards. Perhaps the comparatively diminutive wall (by height) is to give clearly defined identity to the city rather than as any barrier. Atherton and Leigh friends express the same thought. All of this assumes that our interpretation of the measurements is sound. The suggestion that the 144 cubits refers to the wall's thickness is interesting, but not really suggested in the text. Perhaps the true visualisation of this magnificent city must elude us at present. The suggestion (R. A. P.) that the city is not three-dimensional at all seems to rest on an interpretation of "four-square", but the word "height" is as clearly used as "length" and "breadth".

J. D. T.

1a) May we not also consider the possibility that the description "four-square" applies only to the length and breadth, the height referring to the apex of the city? This interpretation envisages a pyramidal structure, which would make a wall of the stated height more meaningful.

Differences of view are expressed by contributors as to whether the measurement in 21. 16 means that length, breadth and height

were each 12, 000 furlongs or that this was the total disance round the city. The former view appeals to me as giving the correct sense of the verse, and I suggest that if the height of 12, 000 furlongs referred to the apex of a pyramidal city, this apex would possibly be the centre from which the glory of God would radiate to illumine the whole city.

G. P.

2) (Birkenhead). In keeping with editorial comment on this subject over the months, I believe that the Bride is the Church. If this is correct, the permanent privileged population of the city would appear to be the redeemed of the dispensation of grace. The mention of the twelve tribes of Israel in an intimate association with the city gates, seems to suggest a closeness of the Israelites to the city, more emphasised than that of "the nations" who will also have some access. Beyond this it is hard to go [see also Comment 14],

3) (Birkenhead). The exclusion of all associated with sin emphasises the elimination by then of all the evil present at the time the Revelation was given.

4) (Birmingham). While it would seem that there will be wide availability of the prescious fruit of this tree, we are dealing now entirely with individuals who *have* eternal life.

5) (Birmingham). I think the matter of the healing of the nations is well summed up in the paper from Derby.

6) (Derby). I am doubtful about seeing the message of eternal security in the city wall. See Comment 1.

7) (Lagos). The suggestion that in Adam and Eve we see "God's people in principle" is interesting, but it is probably impossible to say whether the concept of eternal distinctions among groups of restored humanity (as indicated in relation to the holy city) was in the divine mind from the beginning.

8) Lagos). We should also need to include those who share in the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20. 4-6), woun'dn't we?

9) (Liverpool). I hardly think we can identify the throne of God and of the Lamb (22. 1) with the Great White Throne. Whatever actual form the divine throne will take at different times, the purpose and function is of greatest importance.

10) (Liverpool). Eph. 2. 5 is speaking of the unifying of Jew and Gentile "in Christ", i. e. in the Church, His Body. While Head and members may be looked at collectively as "the Christ", for

there is a wonderful unity in the Church (1 Cor. 12. 12), yet at the same time Head and members are individual persons (see Rom. 12. 4, 5; Eph. 5. 29, 30). As indicated in **earlier months**, the Ephesians 5 passage seems to point very clearly to the Church as the Bride.

11) (R. A. P.). It is a matter of opinion whether the truth of Christ, as seen in association with the Church, has *complete* fulfilment in the Millennium. It is true that it is "the Lamb" who is referred to in Rev. 21. 7 but then so it is in Rev. 19. 9 (prior to the Millennium). Reference should be made to the related "debate" in *Bible Studies* in recent months.

12) (R. A. P.). This seems a rather circular argument! What more appropriate than that twelve distinguished members of the Body should have their names on the foundations of a city which is itself the Church, the Bride? Surely Matthias is "super-imposed" on Judas in Scripture, leaving the total of indicated apostles at 15, i. e. the twelve plus Paul, Barnabas and James?

13) (Hayes). If the only other groups envisaged in relation to the city are those of the Church and Israelites, would we not need to see others in "the nations" besides those here suggested? For, example, Gentile people saved in the Millennium?

14) (Hayes). This is an interesting setting out of the case for "the Bride" including more groups of persons than the members of the Church which is His Body. But it makes some pretty sweeping assumptions! Surely the Bride, in terms of persons, comprises the permanent population of the city. *Does* the inscription of the names of the twelve tribes on the gates necessarily indicate that they are "included in the Bride"? Because Abraham looked for this city, are his descendants necessarily included? True, Israel *is* referred to in the Old Testament as a "bride", but not in direct relationship to Christ, the Lamb. And would this thought not rather suggest either Israel *or* the Church—two different brides surely. Are Mat. 9. 15 and the corresponding Mark and Luke verses concerning the bridegroom, to be interpreted in terms of the Lamb and His Bride, or in a more general sense about rejoicing and fasting? After all, to regard the disciples as "guests" would *exclude* them from having part in the Bride. See Comment 11. So there are many difficulties here **and** I will not repeat the case, based on Eph. 5 for the identification of the Bride with the Church, which has figured in *Bible*

Studies in recent months.

J. D. T.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool:

1). Is the city of Rev. 22. 14 the same city?

I believe so.

2). Is the new Jerusalem an eternal city?

Again I believe so. See Editorial and views in papers.

3) If so, how is the healing of the nations associated with an eternal city?

See comment 5.

From Atherton and Leigh:

1). Seeing the nations were permitted to have the leaves of the tree of life, will those who do not come under the heading of "overcomers" be precluded from eating?

Presumably the reference here is to Rev. 21. 7. This depends on our interpretation of "overcomers" here. There are two main views. Either this is a special privilege for overcomers such as are mentioned in Rev. 3. 5, 12; or overcomers in the sense of 1 John 5. 4, 5 which would embrace all of the redeemed. It seems to me that the stark contrast with the classes mentioned in v. 8 suggests the latter interpretation of "overcomers". The mention of inheritance, as distinct from reward, is also probably supportive of this view.

2). Do the words of Rev. 22. 3, 4 imply that the "servants" may belong to any of the three groups that are associated with the city and whose face will be seen by them?

I do not think that we could be certain as to the inclusiveness of "servants" here. All things and persons, in eternity, will be His servants and we have already seen that the precise kind of association of the different groups concerned with the city is not spelled out. Perhaps there is here, however, just a hint of a special temple service, answering to the priestly service of a past temple?

J. D. T.

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from the Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario

Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 11. 11). '

VOLUME 42

DECEMBER 1974

EDITORIAL

The concluding verses of the Revelation contain re-affirmations of things already revealed, but with the emphasis on their finality, for the authority of the Lord Jesus and the eternal nature of His judgements are established. His personal influence and control down the ages are in the fact that He is Lord God of the spirits of the prophets. His words and works are eternal for He is the first and also the last, the beginning and also the end. He is the root and also the branch and yet He commands our attention and obedience by identifying Himself as "Jesus"—our Saviour and Lord. He is the great judge of all men and their rewarder—He puts "all things in subjection under His feet".

There are two of the seven "beatitudes" of the Revelation in this chapter; "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book" (v. 7), and "Blessed are they that wash their robes" (v. 14), and it is plain that obedience and holiness are the great qualifications He looks for in His servants in any age. It is noteworthy that in the new earth the operative word is "Come", for we shall still need Him and our new natures will experience new delights in our Beloved. Such blessedness is the prospect of that new state that John says "Come quickly".

Contributors should take satisfaction from the fact that their efforts of this past year have enriched our literature, and notably the many wide-ranging scriptural references will be of great assistance to other students.

A. B. R.

THE ORDER OF RESURRECTION

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at **the** last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, **and the life: he** that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11. 23-25). The welcoming of the Lord Jesus into the Bethany household ensured His entrance and we may confidently surmise that it was therefore one of the most instructed of its day. Martha's reply may then be taken as representative of what was understood of

resurrection until **the coming of the Lord Jesus**. She linked **the resurrection of her departed brother** with a definite **point in time**. And it is **the measure of her despair not only that this was the last event in time but also, it may be implied, that it must await a time when all, irrespective of their dealings with God, will be raised**. But the Lord Jesus spoke Lazarus up from the dead and out of the tomb in a token of what He was to accomplish for his race.

At the hour of **universal resurrection He will again speak up the dead and bring their bodies out of their graves, for He said "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"** (John 5. 28, 29). Whence, because of its subordination to Christ, its universal application, its occurrence at the end of time as we know it, and the entrance into life or death (the second death) of those who are raised, it is clear that this is the resurrection spoken of in association with the Great White Throne (Rev. 20. 11-15).

But the final paragraph of Rev. 20 is so connected with the preceding three that an unbroken sequence in time is described. In this an earlier, **first resurrection precedes the final resurrection by the period of one thousand years mentioned throughout the chapter**. No resurrection intervenes (Rev. 20. 5) and therefore the final resurrection is implicitly **the second resurrection**. All who are raised in **the first resurrection are believers for over them (unlike certain raised in the final resurrection) the second death has no power**. One group of believers is especially mentioned consisting of **"them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand"**. This group is easily identified as comprising those who died for Him during the immediately preceding period of great tribulation, when God punishes men who are alive on the earth and who terrorise each other, and which is terminated by the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth to reign (Mat. 24. 15-31; Rev. 13. 7-18).

But there are others in this first resurrection for, following the coming of the wrath of God is **"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" (Rev. 11. 18), and the time when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life" (Dan. 12. 2). The first resurrection, which is restricted to believers, includes such as Daniel, who shall stand in his lot at the end of the great tribulation (Dan. 12. 12, 13); Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mat. 8. 11; Luke 13. 28); David (Ezek. 37. 25) who shall enjoy the ensuing kingdom; and a whole host of lesser renown many of whom will have responded to the preaching e. g. of a prophet like Zechariah who, when the people of God were at a low ebb, revived them with the promise of experiencing just such a national greatness beyond anything they had known.

The first resurrection does not include believers of the present day of grace because "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thes. 4. 16, 17), and the whole point of the succeeding verses is that participants in this resurrection, who are all in Christ, will not pass through the day of wrath and great tribulation. This resurrection therefore precedes the first resurrection (in fact by the period of at least seven years). Time and season are not associated with this resurrection which takes place at the coming of the Lord to the air for the Church which is His Body; an event which has always been regarded by those in Christ as imminent (John 14. 3: Heb. 10. 37; Rev. 22. 20). Indeed so much so that some wrongly taught in Thessalonica that this resurrection had passed and that they were living in the day of wrath! (2 Thes. 2. 2).

In summary then, 1 Thes. 4. 75 and Rev. 20 establish a definite sequence of moments of resurrection and expand the statement: "each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. 15. 23-24).

At the end of this dispensation is the resurrection of its saints who are in Christ. At the end of the ensuing period, some seven or more years later, is the first resurrection in which believers of past ages (Rev. 11. 18) as well as the martyrs of the immediately preceding tribulation will be raised. Finally at the end of the thousand years the rest of the dead will be raised. Each moment of re-

surrection is associated with **the Lord Jesus Christ who will come to the air with archangel voice for His Church; to the earth when other saints will be raised and when He will reign: and who speaks the rest of the dead out of Hades and their graves at the last day. Each group of resurrected ones is then judged by Him. They that are Christ's receive rewards following each of the two earlier moments of resurrection, while the rest of the dead are judged at the Great White Throne at the last day, when those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life pass into the shame and everlasting contempt of which Daniel spoke concerning his people in that clause which is parenthetical both in content as well as time of fulfilment (Dan. 12. 2) — see *Bible Studies* 7943, 11, pp. 111, 112 and 1952, 20, p. 126.**

The resurrection of **the Lord Jesus Christ thus marks a distinct turning point in the history of mankind. Whereas before, the various great periods in which God had dealt with men may be viewed as ending with human failure and consequent judgements, afterwards they are marked by resurrection particularly of believers who have died in the immediately preceding period. (As a token of these sure things we may cite the apparently localised raising of saints in Jerusalem at the time of the Lord's resurrection (Mat. 27. 55) and in the future (Rev. 11. 5-72)). Sleep till the last day is not for them; instead, a foretaste of eternity, a fulness of salvation which daily becomes nearer than when they first believed. As it is written, "For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 17).**

Ian E. Penn

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Rev. 21. 9 to 22. 5

From Denmark Hill. —The most striking theme in the account of the heavenly city given in these verses must surely be the close Communion which exists between the inhabitants of the city and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Reference was made in this connection to 1 Cor. 13. 12—"Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face".

It was agreed that the curse referred to in 22. 3 was that inherited by all mankind as a result of the Fall (Gen. 3. 14-19). There is no curse because there will be no sin in the city, therefore God and man are able to dwell in close proximity as in the time of Adam's innocence. The presence of the tree of life in the city emphasizes the reversion to the relationship between God and man which existed before the Fall. It was noted that the tree, far from being the cause of man being expelled from the earthly paradise created for him by God (Gen. 3. 22), becomes in the heavenly city a source of blessing for the inhabitants.

The city is gorgeous and radiates the light of God and of the Lamb. Although the proportions measured out by the angel surpass the capacity of our understanding, reference was made to the proportions of the O. T. sanctuary given in 1 Kings 6. 20. This too was foursquare in its proportions, indicating its perfection and divine origin. The foundations of the city are associated with the names of the twelve apostles (21. 14).

The question of the precise timing of the appearance of the heavenly city in the generally accepted prophetic framework provoked much discussion. Because of the clear statements made in 21. 27 and 22. 25 that there will be those still afflicted with sin outside the city, it was argued that the holy city's appearance from heaven must precede the inauguration of the eternal state, for there can be no sin after the Great White Throne judgement and the final condemnation of Satan, death and Hades recorded in Rev. 20. It was therefore suggested that the holy city must appear from heaven during the Millennium, when sin will still abound on the earth, in association with the earthly Jerusalem which will be the spiritual

centre of the nations (Zech. 8. 20-23). In support of this view, the similarities between the millennial earthly Jerusalem of the O. T. and the New Jerusalem of Revelation were adduced (c. f. 21. 72 with Ezek. 48. 30-34; and 21. 23 with Is. 60. 19, 20). All agreed however that the New Jerusalem was to be seen primarily in the context of eternity [Comment 1].

The servants who inhabit the city (22. 3) were identified as those who had come out of the Tribulation from the reference in Rev. 7. 14, 15. It also appears, from a comparison of Rev. 22. 4 with Rev. 3. 12, that those who overcome in this dispensation will be accorded a special place of closeness to God and the Lamb [Comment 2].

D. B. Viles

EPILOGUE

Revelation 22. 6-21

From Atherton and Leigh, —We noted certain comparisons between the epilogue and the contents of Rev. 1.

- (1) Rev. 22. 6, 7 almost identical to Rev. 1. 3.
- (2) the blessedness of keeping the prophecies of the book.
- (3) the preeminent theme of the Lord's coming Rev. 22. 7, 12, 20 ("I come quickly") and Rev. 1. 7. We noted the reference to the Lord's coming to the air (Rev. 22) but felt His coming to the earth was referred to in 1. 7.
- (4) "Alpha and Omega" referring to the Lord 22. 13 but to the Father 1. 8 [Comment 3].

Rev. 22. 11 suggests that a time will come when there will be no opportunity for repentance for the sinner and at the same time no desire for the saint to sin [Comment 4]. It appears that the eternal destiny of individuals will have been settled, involving them coming to a stage where their characters will be fixed, permanent and unchangeable. The list in v. 15 presents those debarred from entering the holy city referred to in 21. 8, as those whose part will be in the lake of fire.

With regard to v. 16, "I, Jesus have sent Mine angel", we noted the pleasure which the Lord has in the use of the name Jesus, reflecting His humanity which He delights to be associated with.

The invitation to come (v. 17) is uttered firstly by the Spirit, then the Bride and lastly by those that have heard and is directed at two groups of people: (a) those who are athirst (b) those who will come [Comment 5]. This is a gracious and free invitation to come

to the water of life. Two views were expressed as to when this invitation is **to be made:** (a) **that the** invitation is a call **in the** gospel to **come to** Christ, issued initially by the Spirit and in which the **Bride takes part;** (b) **that the** invitation is made to those outside the holy city to come **and** enjoy the benefits that are to be found therein [Comment 6],

Prophetic; scriptures have implications perhaps extending further than we sometimes imagine. We have in vv. 18, 19 solemn words of warning, reflecting our duty not to tamper with, but to respect, and **have full regard to all** the prophecies here outlined. As the present **age** draws to its close the consequences of rejecting the Word of God makes the closing words of this book increasingly vital and precious. "He which testifieth" says, "I come quickly"; bringing a response from the Apostle's heart, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus", and a desire that meanwhile the "grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints". May it be so for us!

R.

A.

Jones

From Vancouver, B. C. —Excellent things from God for the saved are written in the book of Rev. 5. 7, which is full even to writing on **the** back of it. The judgements are in the seals. Even though parts of the Revelation are not understood, yet a blessing is promised for reading and keeping it (22. 7).

The Father and the Son are equally revealed as the Alpha and Omega in comparing Rev. 1. 8 with 21. 6 and 22. 13.

The prophets of v. 6 are mainly Old Testament prophets. The angel of v. 8 seems to be the same as that of v. 16. The words "the Lord, the God", remind one of the deity of Christ. "I Jesus", seems to convey the endearing love and friendship that He has for us and in love He graciously reveals the future to us. The Lord in love reminds us of His greatness as the Creator and source of life and yet He was born a descendant of David. He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Eternal One, the only-begotten Son, while we read of many sons of God yet "the only begotten" is the only Son who was not created, yet He was given for us.

The Lord as the bright, the morning Star, not only heralds the day of the Millennium and the Day of God, but also shines as the brightest Light in them. The morning star is an award to the Overcomer which also would be his through eternal ages, "They shall shine... as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12. 3).

Rev. 22. 18, 19 seems to suggest that the New Jerusalem, and the

Tree of Life are conditional to some. Even though saved "their part" may be denied to some because of disobedience [Comment 7]: also v. 14 suggests condition. There may be some who do not have robes, as for example, one saved, "as through fire" (1 Cor. 3. 15). The robes seem to be "the righteous acts" [Comment 8]. *H. McL.*

From Hayes. —To some extent v. 7 would seem to be out of sequence. It is obviously the Lord who is speaking here and this verse is therefore closely linked with verses 12-20. But on the other hand the promise of the Lord's quick return is really in 3 parts, (1) in relation to the keeping of the sayings or words (v. 7), i. e. to spur us on to keep faithful; (2) because there are rewards in view for, among other things, faithfulness (v.12); and (3) the things in the whole of the book of Revelation are authenticated by the Lord Himself and they are the last word until He comes (v. 20).

The thought of the Lord's return is continued in verses 10 and 11, "The time is near". So the words of this book are not to be sealed as they were in Daniel's day (Dan. 12. 4). When "the time" arrives, the great fixed gulf which has, since Adam's day, existed between righteousness and unrighteousness, holiness and filthiness, will then be permanently fixed in an eternal state. The coming of the Lord will mean that those who practise righteousness will continue to be righteous, just as those who practise sin will go on sinning, eternally [see Comment 11]. "Without are the dogs" (v. 15). How this should humble us and cause us to worship and serve the One through whom we have been washed and gained access to the tree of life. The AV of v.14 "Blessed are they who do His commandments" is not thought to be the correct rendering here.

From Derby. —The end of our last month's study brought John in vision to the eternal state, unto the ages of the ages. We read in Holy Scripture of "past ages, this present age, and the ages to come". The beloved apostle, conscious of the tremendous importance of these revelations thought the divinely appointed angelic messenger worthy of worship, but was admonished by the words "See thou do it not: I am a fellow servant with thee... and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God". We thought the words of v. 9 seemed to suggest a link between the heavenly aspect of the kingdom of God and the earthly as in Mat. 6. 10, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"; particularly the words "I am a fellow servant". "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give

you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 32) [Comment 9]. It was suggested that the first category in v. 11, the unrighteous, could include very many **people** seeking to justify themselves by seemingly good works. These **have** not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10. 3). The next class of persons comprises those described as filthy (the Greek does not signify in what way). There are many ways and degrees of moral filth in which men find a pleasure which they have no intention to give up, so God gives them up (Rom. 1. 24, 28). He that is righteous, let him do righteousness still means practical righteous living on the part of such as have first the righteousness of God by faith. Holiness in life is a condition we should all prayerfully strive after. It is significant that in v. 12 we are reminded again of the imminence of the Lord's coming, and the rewards are to each man according as his work is. So we are exhorted to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58). We are reminded in Mr. John Miller's writings that the Greek word for "come" in vv. 7, 12, 17, 20, is *erchomai*. a verb of movement, in contrast to *parousia* most often used where the word means presence, which signifies arrival. "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward (wages, see margin; i. e. what we have earned) is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is". V. 13 reaffirms what the Lord said to John at the first (ch. 1. 17), whilst vv. 14, 15 could be addressed to those in millennial days [Comment 10]. The root and offspring of David, who will one day appear as the Sun of righteousness to Israel, is the bright, the morning star for the Church. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, and the Bride consists of those whom the Spirit has been calling for the past nineteen centuries. The Scripture says "he that is athirst... he that will", for every individual must make a personal choice. The water of life is free. Vv. 18, 19, we thought, could not refer to the redeemed of the Church the Body, as above.

G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Melbourne. —In verse 11 we have the terrible statement regarding the unrighteous and the filthy among men. This, we suggest, emphasizes the fact that as men choose to live in this life, so will they remain in eternity, but in surroundings where their unrighteousness and filthiness will never again be contagious to others [Comment 11]. They that are righteous and they that are holy in time will be yet more so in the eternal scene as they enter into an eternity of service to the God whom they love, unhindered by human infirmity and in-

dwelling sin; for then they shall have put on immortality **and** incorruptibility like unto Him who is the first begotten **from the dead**.

I am the Alpha and the **Omega**, the beginning and **the end**, the first and the last, clearly identifies the speaker, **who** is **Jesus Christ**, with the glorious Person of the Jehovah of Is. **41. 4**. **Washing of the robes** that gives entrance to the tree of life, **and through the gates of the city**, implies the practical putting off of evil-doing, **and** the outworking of righteousness. Those who are thus said to be "blessed" would appear to be dwellers outside the city, **and not** inhabitants thereof. Then we have classified those **who must remain** without. Wherever and whatever the without implies, we **doubt not** that the lake of fire will eventually be their abode [Comment 12].

The One who bears the Name which is above every name, **Jesus** the Saviour, who has sent His angel to declare these things **unto the churches**, states that He is the root from whence David came, **and** also his offspring by human birth. He is also the bright, **the** morning star, whose appearing will herald the glorious day of millennial blessing, which will be the prelude to the eternal scene, when the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind [Comment 13],
W. C., J. W. F.

From R. A. P. (Stoke-on-Trent). —In the closing verses we **have** emphasized for us some conditional aspects of truth associated **with the** eternal state. Entrance into the eternal kingdom of **our Lord and** Saviour Jesus Christ is unconditional to all believing ones **whose** names are written in the book of life. The richness of the entrance of each one is, however, conditional upon "adding on **our part***", which we believe is a principle applicable to all dispensations (**2 Pet. 1. 11**). Overcomers are to have a special place in the eternal economy (see 2. 7, 11, 17, 28; 3. 5, 12, 21). The washing of their robes is enjoined upon every believer and for such **preparedness there** will be rewards (Is. 1. 16-20; Mat. 5. 43 to 6. 6; Rev. 7. 14, 15; 22. 14). Conversely, unbelievers called dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters and every one that loveth and maketh **a lie** will receive their reward without (v. 15) i. e. outside the new heavens **and** earth.

Throughout the scriptures, the satisfying of man's need by **God** is likened to slaking his thirst (Is. 41. 17; 55. 1; Ps. 42. 1, 2; 63. 1; John 4. 14; 6. 35; 7. 37). From John 7. 37 we see how this supreme satisfaction is associated with the eighth day of the feast of **taber-**

nacles. The eighth day has in view a new beginning and the passage we are considering presents the fulfilment of the eighth day. So that he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely (22. 77). When the Lord Jesus stood up and cried on the eighth day He was looking down the ages to the new earth when the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them (21. 3); to the time when He that sitteth on the throne shall say, "Behold, I make all things new" (21. 5). The fulfilment of the feast will take place in the Millennium but the eighth day points on to the eternal state. Then shall the thirsty ones drink of the water of life freely.

It has been suggested that the words of the Lord, "And My reward (*misthos*) is with Me", (22. 12) do not refer to the gifts He will award to believers for service when He comes again, but rather refer to the fact that the Church which is His Body will be with Him, i. e. His reward (*misthos*, wage). This is quite distinct from the Bride, the wife of the Lamb, and has in view His full *parousia*. A study of this text, beginning in Is. 40. 10; 62. 11 will show that His reward (*sakar*) is with Him and His recompense (*peullah*) before Him when He returns to Jerusalem and Zion [Comment 14].

R. A. Parker

From Liverpool. —The prophetic visions properly speaking terminate at verse 5; they have carried us into a future eternity, and have completed the revelation that God is pleased to make. The faithfulness and truth of the revelation are authenticated either by the Lord personally or by His angel. The word "shortly" has the thought of "speedily". He will avenge His people speedily (see Rom. 9. 28), making a short work upon the earth, when He does rise up to take vengeance. Three times the Lord announces His speedy return in this chapter (verses 7, 12, 20). The worship, due to God only, is emphasized in verses 8 and 9.

The time referred to in verse 10 is *kairos* a crisis, not *chronos* a period. That crisis will result in the eternal destiny of men being fixed as indicated in v. 11, when the Lord will render to each man according as his work is. Then there will be those who have washed their robes. The atoning blood of Christ alone enables sinful man to stand before the throne of God (7. 14) and the additional right to eat of the tree of life, and to enter the gates of the city. Alas there will be those who are without in the outer darkness and they are in

being in the eternal state. In the light of all that *is* coming to pass there *is* the collective call of the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come". There is also the individual call, "Come". There is then the call of personal need, "He that is athirst, let him come". And lastly the universal call, "He that will, let him take the water of life freely". It would appear from verse 19 that a saved person could be barred from having access to the tree of life and the holy city [Comment 15].

M. S. E., G. S. W.

From Birkenhead. —John, at the close of his writing, stresses again "that these things must shortly come to pass", a statement with which he opens his writings (1. 1), and indicates that "these things" were seen personally by him (1. 19). There is frequent stress that the writings are composed of words (note vv. 6, 9, 10, 18, 19) and further that the words of the Lord are "faithful and true" (21. 5). Evidently all things are in the control of the Almighty. He is "the God of the spirits of the prophets" and also sent His angel to reveal things yet future (v. 6). The Lord's coming to earth is near at hand (vv. 7, 10, 12, 20). This caused us to consider the possible basis for the view that the timing of this may be influenced by consecrated lives of those looking forward to the event. John testifies to having seen these things (v. 8) as he does in his gospel (John 21. 24). John is told to worship only God (v. 9), a fact that the Lord Himself brought to Satan's attention (Luke 4. 8).

In v. 11 the impression may be gained that there will still be sin and uncleanness when the Lord is on earth, but it may be that it will have reached a high level at the time when the Lord comes, and He will then deal with it. Reference is made here to the fact that He will give rewards (v. 12). One of the warnings given to those who tamper with Scripture occurs in our portion (vv. 18, 19). We can echo the concluding words of the book, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus", and earnestly desire that day.

R. D. Williams

From Nottingham. —John had seen the Lord in the days of His humiliation. He had seen Him by the sea of Galilee, he had seen Him on the cross. John had gazed into the empty tomb and believed; and now, on the isle called Patmos a glorious revelation of Jesus Christ had been granted unto him. He had seen the Lord revealed in all His glory, the triumphant One, the Alpha and the Omega, as He described Himself. There is little wonder that John wished to adopt a bodily attitude matching that of his spirit at this time.

At this point in the divine record we have a terse word of rebuke and instruction, "Worship God" (Rev. 22. 9). It has both a negative and a positive side. No angel or creature was to be worshipped. Such a service must be directed to God alone.

In this portion there is a further warning. This is against adding to or taking away from the words of the prophecy (Rev. 22. 18, 19). This reminds us of Deut. 4. 2, and there is a similar thought in Prov. 30. 5, 6. Tampering with the word of God must have serious consequences and we must treat the Scriptures with deep reverence.

The penalties for interfering with the words of the book of this prophecy are threefold (vv. 18, 19). In view of the eternal salvation of the believer of this dispensation the question arises to what people and times these scriptures refer. When the Church the Body is taken from this earth at the time of the Lord's return the Scriptures will be left here for men to read if they will. At that time sin and evil will sweep like a flood-tide over this scene and it seems likely that one of the characteristics of those days will be the efforts of men to tamper with the word of God in the prophecy. We suggest, therefore, that these are the people and this time when these scriptures apply.

It is noted that from vv. 1 to 11 the pronoun "he" is used, referring back, it seems, to "one of the seven angels..." (21. 9). Then in 22. 12 we have a change of pronoun to "I". Although there is no mention of the Lord's Name at that point, we take it that it is now the Lord speaking, not the angel, for the One who speaks says "I come quickly". To this we add "Amen: come, Lord Jesus".

R. Hickling

From Birmingham. — "These saying are faithful and true" was a summary of the things John had seen and heard, and also, God had sent His angel to show the things which must shortly be done. John was also told, "Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand". It is evident that the fulfilment of these prophecies was imminent and we would not count the Lord slack concerning His promises, but longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. To God a thousand years is as one day and one day as a thousand years. We are also told, "Behold, I come quickly". The opinion was expressed that it was not that He would come shortly, but that

when He did come it would be rapidly. When John saw these things he fell down and worshipped the angel, but this was not acceptable, and he was told by the angel not to do so, as he was himself but a fellow-servant.

The statement "Without are the dogs" (v. 15) does not mean that they are outside the city and in the new earth, for there shall not be any evil or sin in the new earth or the New Jerusalem. It was generally thought that the invitation by the Spirit and Bride to come, was to those outside the city to come into the city and take the water of life freely, but we wondered if it could have an application for to-day [Comment 16]. We could understand how the plagues would be added to those that add to the words of this prophecy, but how could God take away their part out of the book of life from those that take away from the words of the book of this prophecy? [Comment 15].

D. P. Brown

COMMENTS

(1) (*Denmark Hill*). Most agree that this city is eternal and not millennial, and see 21. 8 as the explanation for 21. 27 and 22. 15. There is no recovery from the lake of fire to a place in or near the city.

(2) (*Denmark Hill*). Surely the Church and believers from other dispensations will be included in "His servants"? The Church will be in the city.

(3) (*Atherton and Leigh*). Both to the Son I think, and 1. 8 only emphasizes the equality of Son and Father.

(4) (*Atherton and Leigh*). More than a suggestion—this is because His judgements are final and for eternity.

(5) (*Atherton and Leigh*), "will come "meaning" desires to come", i. e. by choice.

(6) (*Atherton and Leigh*), (b), for v. 17 connects with v. 14.

(7) (*Vancouver*). These warnings apply to-day and through the Millennium but not in the time of the new creation. All is settled by then.

(8) (*Vancouver*). "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord... for He hath clothed me with garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Is. 61. 10). All in the new state will be clothed, primarily because of what the Lord has done for them, but in addition obedience here will show there, and the cleansing is done here, not there. Incidentally those outside the city in

v. 14 are presumably not the bride.

(9) (*Derby*). There is certainly a "link" in service, but I doubt if we can say that the Kingdom of God of Luke 12. 32 has a heavenly aspect or angelic counterparts. Heb. 12. 22-24—"the general assembly and church of the firstborn".

(10) (*Derby*). Preaching in any dispensation consists of a blessing **and** a curse, but the blessing of v. 14 will apply in the eternal state, not the Millennium. All in the new earth will be righteous.

(11) (*Melbourne*). In the lake of fire condemned sinners will not practise sin—it will be darkness and weeping.

(12) (*Melbourne*). As from Rev. 20. 15 the Great White Throne judgement—before the city appears.

(13) (*Melbourne*). I think the Millennium is the end of the present creation, rather than a prelude to the new earth?

(14) (*RAP*). Interesting as this suggestion is I do not think it stands up to examination—as borne out in the second half of the paragraph! "My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is" is true of the Judgement Seat of Christ, and any other judgement. Certainly the Isaiah scriptures referred to bear this out—each passage and Rev. 22. 12 show He will dispense what He brings. I refrain from comment on sentence 2 of this paragraph!

(15) (*Liverpool*). This is not how I would read this. Anyone who is saved could fall into this state, but the Lord is anxious that this Revelation should be regarded as of equal importance with the other scriptures. Faith in, and expectation of, the eternal state is essentially saving faith.

(16) (*Birmingham*). I suppose it could in the sense that Is. 55. 1 does, but see RAP's paper paragraph 2. A. B. R.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Melbourne: The question has often been asked, and again arises: In the light of such a portion as verses 14, 15, can we legitimately interpret this as describing a condition of the eternal state—a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? There are those of our number, notwithstanding all that has been said and written to the contrary, who believe that there is much evidence in support of the view that the picture given in Rev. 21. 1-7, is descriptive of the eternal city New Jerusalem; while chap. 21. 9 to 22 15 is descriptive of a millennial scene.

The cleansing of v. 14 is preparation for the eternal state, and

access to the tree and the city is to those who are cleansed. Regarding v. 15, see 21. 8 which makes it clear that these have no place near the city—they are "without", i. e. outside in the lake of fire.

Comparing 21. 22-27 with Zech. 14. 16-21 is very convincing that Rev. 21 and 22 are not millennial. In Rev. no temple, no sin, and only they enter the city whose names are in the Lamb's book of life—very different in Zech. 14.

From Nottingham: Rev. 22. 11. (1) Is it correct to think of this verse as relating to the eternal state of man, that is, those **who are** described as filthy being the ones who are already in the lake of fire, and those who are described as righteous as those who are eternally saved? (2) In what sense can one who is filthy "be made filthy yet more" (R. V. M, v. 11). Is "yet more" an acceptable alternative translation for "still"?

(1) I think so. (2) I think the thought is concerned with time, rather than degree of sin. Strong says the word used comes **from** *etos* a primitive word for year. The lake of fire will be eternal, with no place or time for repentance.

From Hayes: Vv. 16 and 17. What is the significance of the mention of the Root and Offspring of David, the Bride, the Morning Star, and the Spirit and the Bride"? Apart from the Lord ("I Jesus") reminding us with great emphasis who He is, in the final phases of this great Revelation is He also drawing together in **our** minds His connection with Israel and the Church the Bride?

I agree that the reminder of who He is has great emphasis. He is Lord of all men and in all dispensations.

From Denmark Mill: Can the apparent contradiction between Rev. 3. 12 and 21. 22 regarding the temple, or lack of it be resolved?

I can only offer my opinion that, as there will be no separation as now between sacred and other activities, there is no need for a huge sanctified area to accommodate worshippers. The whole city can be so viewed and used, although some will be nearer to God than others, as in Rev. 3. 12. Plainly God's immediate presence will always be specially holy as in Rev. 4 so I judge there **will** always be a sanctuary, but in the clean eternal state no need for a temple. **A. B. R.**

Issued by the Churches of God

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office.

Assembly Hall, Georgian Close, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7RA

Also from the Churches of God Literature Department, Box No. 125, Brantford, Ontario
Printed by Craftsman Press Ltd.