

## AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

By Dr. David L. Cooper, Th.M., Ph.D., Litt.D.

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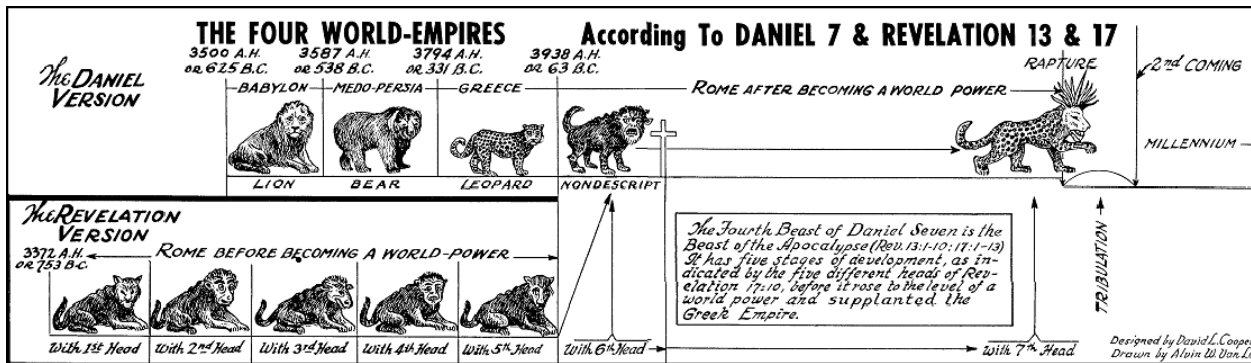
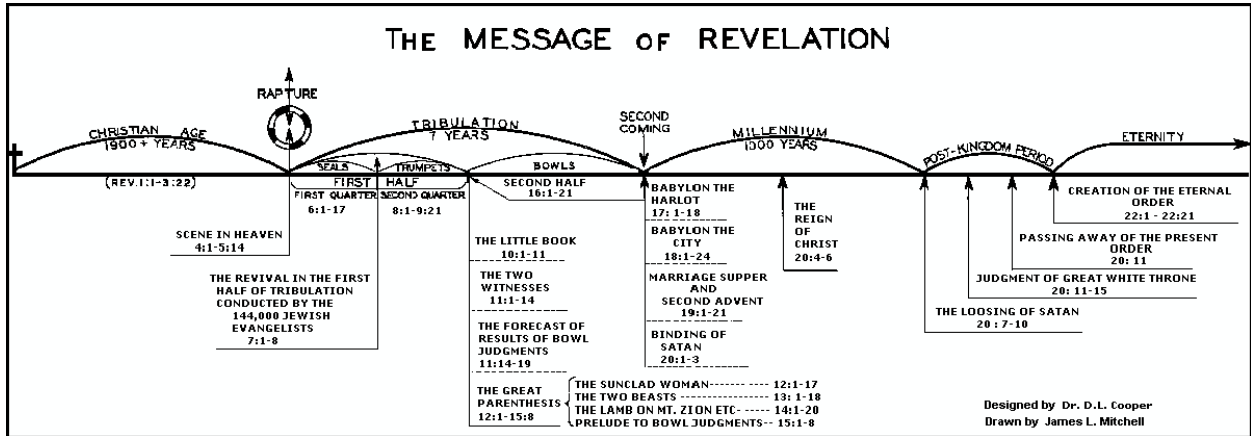
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(Installment One)  
**Preliminary Considerations**

To the average Christian the word prophecy instantly calls attention to something about the future. This, of course, is a limited meaning of the word.

The Significance of the Word "Prophecy"

The term "prophecy" literally means "to speak in behalf of another." In other words, to be a mouthpiece of the Deity. With this broad, definite meaning it is clear that anything that a man of God spoke was prophecy—whether it referred to past, present, or future events. This original, primary meaning of the word prophecy finds expression in the Hebrew Bible. Men who lived after the events which they related or the history which they wrote had to receive knowledge of that which they were writing by the aid and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus in a true sense the writers of the historical portions of the Old Testament were prophets. At times they spoke concerning things present before them. God frequently made a revelation concerning these, but it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that He thus made the disclosure. This type of message from God was likewise called prophecy because the speaker was delivering a message from God. Again, the message from God frequently pertained to things in the future. From these statements we see that any message which a man of God delivered, irrespective of whether he was talking about things past, present, or future, was, in essence, a prophetic message.

At the present time, however, we have limited the meaning of the word prophecy to those matters which deal with the future. If we examine the Word of God very carefully, we shall see that a large portion of the Word is devoted to future events. At various places in the Pentateuch there are predictions with reference to the future. In the historical portions of the Old Testament there are scattered here and there similar predictions. The Book of Psalms is largely prophetic, though there are a few of the Psalms that are devotional in their nature. Practically all of the messages of the writing prophets (and there are seventeen of them) are bringing messages concerning future things. In the Gospels we have quite a bit of prophecy. For instance, the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, the parables of the kingdom, and the Olivet Discourse, Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, are pure prophecy. Here and there in this same book there are various and sundry prophecies. The same thing is true with reference to Mark and Luke. In Acts we have several prophecies. In the Jewish section of Romans, chapters 9, 10, 11, we have quite a bit of prophecy. Here and there in the Epistles we find various predictions. The last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, is devoted entirely to predictive prophecy. If one wishes to avoid predictive prophecy, he will have to close his eyes to a very large portion of the revealed will of God, which thing no born again child of God will want to do.

The Book of Revelation the Culmination of Prophecy

Someone has written an exposition of the Book of Revelation in two parts and entitled his volumes The Crown Jewel of Prophecy. This is an appropriate title for the Book of Revelation, which is the last revelation of God to man. The first volume deals with the prophecies found here and there in the Old Testament, or at least with some of them. The second and final volume deals exclusively with the Book of Revelation. This writer had the proper conception. If one is to understand the Book of Revelation properly, he must know, or have a fairly thorough knowledge of, the prophecies found here and there in the Old

Testament, and likewise in the books of the New Testament. Being thoroughly acquainted with what Moses, the prophets, and the Apostles said, the Bible student is prepared to look at the Book of Revelation, "The Crown Jewel of Prophecy," where he will find a grand and glorious gathering together of all lines of prophetic thought, woven together into a single fabric of prophetic revelation.

### Special Blessing to the One Who Reads the Book of Revelation

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all thing's that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written, therein; for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:1-3).

There is a blessing for anyone who will read any portion of God's Word. In fact, God instructed His people Israel to read the Word and the priests were appointed to teach it to the people. The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth that the thing's that happened to Israel occurred to them by way of example, and that they are written for our admonition upon whom the end of the ages is come. Moreover, the Apostle Paul told Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16,17). This statement, of course, necessarily refers to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but what is true of them likewise is true concerning all the revelation of the New Testament. Every Christian should aspire to be useful and profitable in the Master's cause. It takes every book of the Bible to make one furnished completely unto every good work. For instance, if anyone wishes to understand God's dealings with men, and His overruling providence among the nations, he should read and study very carefully the Book of Job. Its message is as fresh today as it was the day on which it was written, and the truths contained therein are just as correct today as they were when they were penned.

While there is a great blessing to anyone who reads any portion of God's Word, the Lord holds out a special blessing to the one who will read the Book of Revelation. In fact, He said that blessed is the one who reads the book, the one who hears the book read, and the one who does the things contained therein. In the Apostolic Age very few people, comparatively speaking, were able to read and write. Most people had to depend upon others, the literate ones, to read for them. Although anyone was illiterate, he was not barred from the blessings promised the reader of the book, because he could get someone to read the book to him, could listen with an attentive ear, an open heart, and a receptive mind. Thus he would receive the blessing promised to them "that hear the words of the prophecy." Moreover, the things contained in the Book of Revelation are so very clear that anyone—even the illiterate and uneducated—could sufficiently understand its contents to enable him to do the things that are contained in the book. Since there are such wonderful blessings held out to those who read it, and who hear it, and who do the things contained in the book, we shall expect to receive a special blessing because of this series of studies.

### The Significance of the Word "Revelation"

The word in the original text translated "revelation" means, literally, *to remove the cover, to take off the veil*: That is, to expose to the view, or gaze, that which has been covered up or unseen. Those Scriptures that deal with the past and reveal to us what was done in days gone by really remove the covering from the past and bring to light that which has already transpired. The same thing is true with reference to the future. Certain portions of the Word which we call, in modern terminology, prophecy remove the covering from the future and enable people to see ahead of time that which is coming to pass.

Moses and the prophets spoke of the first coming of the Messiah. Had the Jews read with open minds and receptive hearts the messages of the prophets and had they known God in a personal manner, they would not have rejected Him. But not knowing Him, and being ignorant of the Scriptures, they literally fulfilled them in condemning Him. Just as people before the first coming of Christ could look into the Written Word and could see what God said would come to pass, and they were able to recognize the fulfillments of the prophecies as they were being fulfilled, so at the present time we can read the prophetic word dealing with the present and the future and can recognize in current events the fulfillment of many predictions today. In view of these facts it is no wonder that the Apostle Peter said that "... we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:19-21).

### Some Special Suggestions to Those Wishing the Truth Regarding the Prophetic Word

Before beginning the study of the Book of Revelation, it may be well to have our attention called to some special suggestions that will enable us to see the truth as it is.

#### *Try to Divest Oneself of All Preconceptions*

All preconceptions or prejudices are blinding to one. These hinder one from seeing the truth, regardless of whatever sphere in which it may lie. In other words, a person must have an insatiable desire to know truth and a determination not to allow his preconceptions and preferences to sway his judgment or to determine his thinking. Thus anyone by the Spirit of God should pray that he might be divested of all preconceptions and prejudices.

#### *Hunting for the Truth*

A man must make an honest effort in his quest for truth. In order to make such an effort he must remember the promise that God makes in such passages as Proverbs 2:1-5, in which we see the four conditions for understanding the Word of God: (1) To be willing to receive the Word of God; (2) to lay it up in the heart; (3) to pray for spiritual understanding; and (4) to search the Scriptures.

#### *Be Open to Conviction—but Not Gullible*

A person must not only divest himself of all preconceptions and prejudices, but he must be open aggressively (may I say) in his quest for truth. He must have such a desire for righteousness, truth, and justice that he is actually hunting for it. Some study the Bible from different motives. But the one and only motive that should actuate a student in his Bible study is to learn the truth. When anyone assumes an open mind to receive any and all truth, he must avoid being gullible. There are many people today who are open to receive any new truth which they have not had, but who are gullible, and who do not stop to investigate that which is presented to them. The only way to be is to be like the noble Bereans of whom we read in Acts 17:11,12: "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. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men not a few."

*Put Into Practice Whatever is Learned*

Whenever one learns any truth, he should put that into practice. If he does not, then that truth is soon lost. Whenever one learns a new truth and does not express it in words or actions, the truth just learned will not be his very long. It is therefore of the utmost importance that a person should act upon the truth that he learns.

*The Golden Rule of Interpretation*

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.

In approaching the study of the Book of Revelation it is very, very important that we observe the rule which has just been quoted. Much harm has been done by those who study the Book of Revelation, but who do not observe this general, fundamental rule. As it states, we are to take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages, indicate clearly otherwise. We are never to say that a passage is figurative unless the facts of the context indicate that fact. Only when there is positive evidence that a passage is not used in a literal sense, are we justified in departing from the ordinary, literal meaning. We should make allowances for figures of speech in the prophetic word the same as we do in the historical portions of the Scriptures. Also, whenever the facts of a context indicate that a passage is used in a symbolic sense, we are to interpret the symbol according to God's significance which He attaches to the same. May we therefore bear in mind, as we study the Book of Revelation, this most important rule.

The Author and the Time of the Writing of the Book of Revelation

There has been much controversy concerning the actual human author of the Book of Revelation. Among conservative scholars it is agreed that the Apostle John, the disciple that leaned on Jesus breast, is the author not only of the Gospel bearing his name, but also of the three Epistles bearing his name and of the Book of Revelation. But there are those of the advanced school of criticism who challenge the Johannine authorship of the Book of Revelation. One of the principle reasons for denying to John its authorship is that its vocabulary, style, and diction vary considerably from that of the Gospel and the three Epistles. When, however, a person recognizes that the subject matter of the Book of Revelation, is entirely different from that of the Gospel and the Epistles, and when he realizes that John received this marvelous revelation in an excited condition of mind, and when he realizes further that God took John as he was, and spoke through him, using his own capabilities and abilities—then he can see how John the Apostle could be the author of the book and yet use a different style and diction from that employed in the Gospel and the three Epistles.

Many believing scholars are of the opinion that John was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony which he bore to the Lord Jesus. This occurred during the reign of Domitian, the Roman emperor, in the year A.D. 96. He addressed this revelation to the seven churches—local congregations—in the little province of Asia, which was in the west central part of Asia Minor.

## (Installment Two)

**Outline of the Book of Revelation**

- I. The things which thou sawest—Vision of the Glorified Son of Man (1:9-20).
- II. The things which are—Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (chaps. 2 and 3).
  - A. Ephesus (2:1-7).
  - B. Smyrna (2:8-11).
  - C. Pergamum (2:12-17).
  - D. Thyatira (2:18-29).
  - E. Sardis (3:1-6).
  - F. Philadelphia (3:7-13).
  - G. Laodicea (3:14-22).
- III. The things which shall come to pass hereafter (chaps. 4-22).
  - A. The vision of heaven (chaps. 4 and 5).
  - B. The Tribulation (chaps. 6-19).
    1. The Seal judgments (6:1-17).
    2. The 144,000 Jewish Evangelists—and the world-wide revival (7:1-17).
    3. The Trumpet judgments (8:1—9:21; 11:14).
    4. Little Parenthesis (10:1—11:14).
      - a. The Little Book eaten by John (10:1-11).
      - b. The Temple and the Holy City (11:1-13).
    5. The Great Parenthesis (11:15—15:8).
      - a. Advance announcement of outcome of the second half of the Tribulation (11:15-19).
      - b. The Woman, Child, and Dragon (12:1-17).
      - c. The two wild beasts (13:1-18).
      - d. Special announcements (14:1—15:8).
        - (1) Regarding 144,000 Redeemed on Mount Zion (14:1-5).
        - (2) Regarding the Everlasting Gospel (14:6, 7).
        - (3) Regarding the fall of Babylon (the Harlot) (14:8).
        - (4) Warning against taking the mark of the beast (14:9-12).
        - (5) Revelation concerning the Martyrs of the second half of the Tribulation (14:13).
        - (6) The harvest of the earth (14:14-16).
        - (7) The vintage of the earth (14:17-20).
      - e. Vision of the Martyrs of the second half of the Tribulation (15:1-4).
      - f. The seven Angels with Bowl judgments prepare for action (15:5-8).
    6. The Bowl judgments (16:1-21).
    7. Information supplemental to account of second half of Tribulation (chaps. 17,18,19).
      - a. The fall of Babylon the Harlot in middle of Tribulation (17:1-18).
      - b. The fall of Babylon the city at end of Tribulation (18:1-24).
      - c. The Second Coming of Christ and attending events (19:1-21).
  - C. The Millennium and its aftermath (20:1-15).
    1. The Millennium (20:1-6).
    2. The short period following the Millennium (20:7-10).
    3. The judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11-15).
  - D. The Eternal Order (21:1-22:21).



The approach which one has to the Book of Revelation determines its message to him. The contents of the book is of such a nature that the viewpoint from which the book is surveyed determines the interpretation at every turn, as we shall presently see.

#### Four Theories of Approach

One of the familiar theories is known as the *preterist* interpretation of the Book of Revelation. This hypothesis assumes that John was talking about things that were then in existence—in his own day, A.D. 96. From this point of view all the data must be forced into a peculiar mold that sees and interprets the language as applying to that day and time, a very illogical approach.

The second is known as the *historical* theory, or hypothesis. The assumption of this point of view is that John was describing the major events that would occur during the Christian Dispensation. Hence history must be doctored and forced to fit into the scheme of secular history. In other words, this theory assumes that the Book of Revelation is church history prewritten in a kind of symbolic or figurative manner. Though many excellent historians have endeavored to trace the fulfillment of John's language, they have succeeded only to the satisfaction of themselves and those of that peculiar school of thought.

Another system is known as that of the *spiritualizing* school. These interpreters assume that everything in the book is figurative or metaphorical, and that John, though he used plain language in many instances, was talking about a spiritual conflict, the fight between the forces of good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of Christ over the devil and his forces.

The last of the four theories is the *futuristic* interpretation. Those holding to this view simply take the book at what it says, interpreting the literal language at its face value unless there are facts in the context which indicate a departure from the normal, or literal, meaning of the passage. Whenever there is such positive evidence, they take notice of the fact and interpret the given passage accordingly. Those belonging to this school of thought believe that the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation are historical, even though there are prophetic elements and promises scattered throughout this portion of the book. From Revelation, chapter 4, and onward—according to this school of thought—the Apostle is talking about things that are yet future, things that will occur in the Tribulation, the Millennium, and throughout eternity.

When the student takes everything into consideration, he cannot avoid the conclusion that the premillennial interpretation of the book is the only plausible and logical system to be followed.

There is nothing new, so far as predictions are concerned, in the first twenty chapters of the book. Practically everything that is found in this portion of the Word may be found in the Old Testament. The great fundamental truths that are set forth by Moses and the prophets are brought together and are put forward in various settings and combinations. But when everything is studied in a sane, logical manner, it is seen that there is simply the bringing together of the many lines of prophetic thought which are woven into a grand fabric of providential occurrences yet largely in the future. These statements being true, one must study and refer constantly to the Old Testament in order to determine the full force of the meaning of many passages.

#### INTRODUCTION (1:1-8)

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto His servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed

is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

"4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:1-8).

In Revelation 1:1-8 an introduction to the book is found. In the first statement we see the words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, ..." The word *revelation* in the original means *to remove the covering, to expose to view*. The book, therefore, claims to be the removing of the covering of the future so that the people of God may see what is yet to come. It is very difficult to see how many people can think that the book is a mysterious, unintelligible production, in view of the fact that the writer claims that this book is a revelation from God. Having confidence in every word of the inspired text, we shall believe that this book is indeed a divine disclosure, mediated through Jesus Christ, to the servants of God. We are told that God gave this revelation to Christ to pass on to His servants. Why is it said that God gave the revelation to Christ, since He was God and equal to the Father? The answer seems to lie in the fact that the second person of the Holy Trinity limited Himself, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, went to the cross to suffer and die for mankind, was buried, was raised with a glorified body, and became our great High Priest to intercede in our behalf and to be our representative before the great tribunal of the universe. All good and perfect gifts thus come from God, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to us.

The Lord gave this revelation to be delivered to His servants, or bondservants, as Christians are called. We have been set at liberty by Christ, and the Lord's freedman is the Lord's bondservant and vice versa.

The things which are revealed in the Book of Revelation, as stated in verse 1, "must shortly come to pass ..." We are to understand that the first things that are set forth in this prophetic program were to come to pass shortly, and they did begin to come to pass shortly after the revelation was made. The word may also be translated *speedily, quickly, or soon*. When the time arrives for any of the events foretold to come to pass, they do so with swiftness.

The word rendered "signified" has been misunderstood very greatly in certain quarters. According to a prevalent theory it means to "sign-i-fy," that is, to "write in signs." The Greek word has no such idea. It is therefore a mistake to interpret this word as indicating that the Book of Revelation is written in signs, or symbols. There are some symbols in the book which must be interpreted in the light of the fact that they are symbols. For instance in 12:1, and 12:3, and 15:1 we see that God called certain things symbols. We dare not interpret them literally. But we are never to interpret anything in the Bible as a symbol unless the facts clearly indicate such a meaning.

This message was sent to John who had been a faithful witness to the Word of God and to the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus, and who was suffering banishment on account of his boldness in Christ.

According to 1:3 there is a special blessing for those who read the Book of Revelation; for those who hear it read (being unable to read for themselves); and for those who keep, or observe, the things written in the book. God would not mock His servants by promising a special blessing, *even to the ignorant one who listens to the reading*, if it were so very mysterious that it could not be understood. The message of

the Book of Revelation has always been, and is especially today, a bright ray of heavenly light that is thrown across our dark pathway.

If the time was near in the first century when the message was given, it is certainly much nearer in the twentieth century—as all of the signs of the times indicate.

### A Prayer and a Dedication

According to verse 4 primarily and originally the Book of Revelation was sent to the seven churches of the little province of Asia, which was in the western part of Asia Minor.

For these churches (and all other churches throughout the age) a special prayer is made by John in their behalf: "Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the earth" (1:4,5). Grace and peace in the soul come from God alone. The word grace has various shades of ideas. For instance, grace was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal ..." (II Tim. 1:9). God's grace (spiritual power) is sufficient for us now (II Cor. 12:9; Heb 4:16). Then grace is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus (I Peter 1:13). The peace for which John intercedes in behalf of the churches is the peace of Christ in the heart which passes all understanding (Phil 4:7). Christ miraculously bestowed that peace upon the Apostles. Whenever anyone accepts Christ today, the Lord puts peace and assurance in the heart. One of the fruits of the Spirit is peace (Gal. 5:22,23). The grace and peace for which John is making supplication comes from the Holy Trinity: from God the Father, "who is and who was and who is to come," from the seven Spirits that are before his throne" (Isa. 11:2), "and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." All blessings which we enjoy come from the three personalities constituting the Holy Trinity. Our prayers are to be directed to God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, as we learn by comparing scripture with scripture.

Our Lord Jesus is "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead" and is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He always sought to do the will of God the Father and not His own. He faithfully declared the will of God, irrespective of circumstances and conditions. He was the "firstborn of the dead" in that He was the first and only one who died, and who has been raised back to life, never to see death again. Others before Him had been raised from the dead, but they were not raised to immortal life. He, being the first one to have this glorious experience, is said to be the first-born of the dead, or from the dead. Moreover, He is the ruler of the kings of earth. All authority in heaven and in earth has been given unto Him, and He is the Supreme Sovereign. Sometimes it seems as if the nations of earth are having their own way, and that Satan is holding high carnival. This is untrue. Our Lord is overruling, guiding, and directing the course of human events and history. He is steering all things toward the great, grand, and glorious consummation yet in the immediate future.

According to the latter part of verse 5 Christ loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood. The word rendered *loveth* is in the linear verb stem and indicates continued action. He loved us in the past; He loves us in the present; and He will continue to love us. But the verb rendered *loosed* is in the aorist tense and indicates one act that has already been accomplished. This passage assumes the doctrine of the finished work of Christ on the cross, by which all who accept Him are saved and cleansed by His blood. The one who is thus regenerated has been loosed from all sins, past, present, and future. This is an accomplished fact because of the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin.

We who are thus saved constitute a kingdom, acknowledging the sovereignty of our blessed Lord and Saviour. We are in the spiritual kingdom of God now—having been translated from the kingdom of darkness "into the kingdom of the Son of his love; 14 in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins ..." (Col. 1:13,14). Moreover, we are priests of God the Father. Every Christian is a priest—a go-

between, approaching God in behalf of, not only his own needs, but those of his fellow Christians and the world.

To Christ will be "... the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." And at this point the Apostle John chimes in and to these sentiments utters a fervent "Amen," which means "May it be thus!"

According to verse 7 Christ will come with the clouds: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; ..." This is stated by Jesus himself and is also made known by the angels who stood by the disciples as Jesus ascended (Acts 1:10,11).

When Jesus comes in fulfillment of this promise at the end of the Tribulation, "... every eye shall see him." Of course this means that every mortal living at that time will see Christ as He comes in power and great glory. Jesus expressed the same thought in Matthew 24:30. John also informs us that "they that pierced him" shall likewise see Him. This means that those who clamored for the death of Christ, as well as those who actually did the executing, will—from Hades where they have been ever since their death—see Christ coming in power and great glory. That is what the Lord Jesus said to Caiaphas, when the latter asked Him if He were the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel (Matt. 26:63,64).

John was eager for the Lord Jesus to return. This is seen by the fact that, when the revelation was made known that Christ is coming back, he ejaculated; "Even so, Amen."

The introduction to the Book of Revelation closes with a profound statement by God the Father concerning Himself: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (1-8). The Father, the Self-existing One, who sent this message to the churches, is the One who inhabits eternity: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit ..." (Isa. 57:15). He who is the Almighty Sovereign, seated upon the throne of the universe, has sent the message of the Book of Revelation through "Jesus Christ ... the faithful witness" to all of His servants in order that they might understand the future and might conform their lives to His eternal plans and purposes.

May we in faith, doubting nothing, accept His will for our lives and be governed accordingly!

(Installment Three)

**The Glorified Son Of Man**

Having studied in the preceding article the introduction to the Book of Revelation, found in 1:1-8, we are now prepared to advance in our investigation to verses 9-20.

John the Prisoner of the Lord

"9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and *girt* about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches" (Rev. 1:9-20).

The first thing to notice is that the Apostle John was in prison when he received this revelation. In writing to the seven churches of Asia, the Apostle spoke of himself as "your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience. ..." A person is impressed, as he reads the Scriptures, with the thought that the apostolic writers placed themselves on the same level as the laymen and never climbed upon an ecclesiastical pedestal to usurp authority over the laity—as has been done so very frequently since then. He was simply a brother along with the other brethren of the churches, because he had the like precious faith as they did in the one common Lord, Jesus Christ.

Another thing that they had in common was that they were partakers of the tribulation, and of the kingdom, and of the patience that are in Christ. The churches in Asia at this time had not suffered any great persecutions, so far as we know. The church at Smyrna was facing, as John told them, some persecution that was in the immediate future. The apostolic writers never shrank from persecution, but they considered such a part of their lives, a part of the program for their lives and testimony. Let us differentiate the statement by John that he was a partaker with them "in the tribulation" from that period of time which is usually called "the great tribulation." The Apostle Paul assured the churches which he established on his first missionary tour that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God [the Millennial Kingdom]" (Acts 14:22). Such tribulations are the ones concerning which John was speaking on this occasion. But the great Tribulation, mentioned in Revelation 7:14, is a period of seven years with which this present Christian Dispensation concludes, and during which God's severest judgments will fall upon the earth.

John was likewise a partaker of the kingdom, along with the brethren to whom he was writing. The kingdom of which he was speaking is the present, spiritual kingdom into which we have been brought by being translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. 1:18). This spiritual kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. One enters it by being born again, by being regenerated by the Spirit of God. But those who are in the present spiritual kingdom will enter "into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" when the Lord comes with His saints at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period. These two different phases of the kingdom must be clearly kept in mind if we are to understand correctly the Scriptures, especially the prophetic word. John was likewise a partaker of the patience which is in Christ. The word rendered "patience" is, in the footnote of the Revised Version (published 1901) translated *stedfastness*. Persecutions and trials develop in the faithful child of God the qualities of *stedfastness* and patience. These persecutions are necessary for the development of our Christian character.

John was on the Isle of Patmos because of his preaching the word of God and giving his testimony concerning the Lord Jesus. How long he was there, we do not know. Where he was when he was arrested and banished to the island, we do not know—we have no information regarding these points. It is quite probable, however, that he was arrested in Ephesus, where he engaged in a long ministry.

If a person preaches faithfully the Word of God and gives forth a clear, ringing testimony, as did the Apostles from personal experience, regarding the resurrection of Christ and His being the Son of God and Saviour of the world, he will have clashes with the world and, sooner or later, will undergo persecution. Yea, all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecutions!

#### The Vision of the Glorified Christ

John states that he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," when he received this communication from the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the meaning of "the Lord's day"? Two answers are given: First, that it refers to the first day of the week; second, that it indicates the day of Jehovah, or the day of the Lord. It seems probable that it here refers to the first day of the week. The fact which points in this direction is that the word translated "Lord's" is an adjective which is used only twice in the New Testament, and which, properly rendered, is "lordly." In I Corinthians, chapter 11, Paul speaks about the "lordly supper." But our translation renders the passage: "the Lord's supper" (I Cor. 11:20). Since John was, in this verse, giving the data concerning his whereabouts and the time, naturally this expression, "lordly day," would indicate what is called "the Lord's day," the first day of the week.

In what way could John mean by our term, "the day of Jehovah," or, "the day of the Lord"? It is altogether possible that, when the Spirit came upon him, he was carried forward in vision by the Spirit to the time of the Tribulation which in the Old Testament, is called "the day of Jehovah," or, "the day of the Lord." Thus John could have been thinking in such terms and could have meant that he was transported to the time of the great Tribulation. There is no doubt that he was carried forward by the Spirit according to II Peter 1:19-21, and that he was let down in the midst of the judgments of the day of the Lord. But it is not likely that this is his thought in verse 10. It is more probable, as already suggested, that he was talking about the first day of the week and his receiving the revelation on that day.

The Book of Revelation was sent, according to the instructions given John, to the seven churches in the little province of Asia which was in the western part of Asia Minor. Since it was directed to seven different churches, we might think of it as a circular letter, dispatched to these various congregations. They were of like faith and order and were not seven churches in the modern denominational sense of the term. It is quite likely that the original autograph penned by the Apostle John was sent to the church at Ephesus first, for that is the first one that is mentioned, in 1:11, and is the first of the seven to which a letter is directed; as indicated in 2:1. It is quite likely that, when this letter was received by the church at

Ephesus, a copy of it was made and then the original was sent to Smyrna, the next church. This church also possibly had a duplicate of the letter made and, retaining their copy, sent the original on to the next church. Finally, it is quite likely that copies were made of this book and were sent to other churches in various parts of the world. A little insight as to how the New Testament letters began to be circulated in larger circles than the local groups to which they were originally addressed is found in Colossians 4:16: "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." In just such a manner the letters addressed to various churches and the Gospels addressed to certain nationalities began to be spread out over the Greco-Roman world, by being copied by different scribes.

When John was in solitude on Patmos on the Lord's day, he heard a great voice behind him which reminded him of the sound of a trumpet, calling to him and saying: "What thou seest, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches ..." Thereupon John turned and looked around. When he did so, there was presented to his vision the likeness of seven candlesticks, or lampstands. Moving around among them was none other than the glorified Son of man, a description of whom is given in 1:13-16. According to verse 13 He was clothed with a garment down to His feet and was also girt about the chest with a golden girdle. His head and His hair were, as we see in verse 14, "white as white wool, *white* as snow." His hair's being white is probably indicative of His eternal existence. This thought is possibly borrowed from Daniel 7:9 which pictures the Lord God Almighty, the Father, as having "the hair of his head like pure wool," who is there called the "ancient of days," the One existing from all eternity. Since Christ on this occasion as set forth by John has hair white as wool, white as snow, doubtless the same idea or thought is advanced, namely, His eternal existence.

His eyes were as a flame of fire. This feature would naturally indicate indignation, wrath. Today we often speak of one's anger in terms of his facial expression, and say, "His eyes shot fire!" Quite obviously John recognized that the Son of God was indignant over something.

In verse 15 we are told that His feet were as burnished brass. With such feet He could go roughshod over any opposition, or any obstacles that might lie in His path. Again, in this connection we are told that His voice was "as the sound of many waters." This feature of the description likewise indicates a perturbed spirit and indignation of soul. According to verse 16 He had in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. The seven stars, as we see in verse 20, are symbolic of the seven churches. "... Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword." Doubtless since words flow from, or come out of, a person's mouth, and since the sharp two-edged sword proceeded out of the mouth of the Son of God, naturally we interpret this phenomenon as indicative of His word of wrath and indignation in pronouncing judgment upon those against whom He was indignant. In Ephesians 6:10-20 the Apostle Paul compared the Christian to the Roman soldier with his armament. Among the things which he said to them was his advice that they should take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Thus the Word of God seems to be symbolized by this sharp two-edged sword which proceeded out of the mouth of the glorified, indignant Son of God.

Also in verse 16 we are told that Christ's countenance was brilliant, "as the sun shineth in his strength." There was shining forth and irradiating from His person manifestations of His glorious, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent divine Being.

This description of the Son of God showed Him in His attitude in the year A.D. 96 when the Book of Revelation was written. The churches had not progressed as they should have done; but on the contrary, they were on a very low plane in comparison with that on which they should have been moving. Hence the displeasure of the Lord against them.

The glorified Christ was moving in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, which symbolized the churches, as is shown in 1:20. Though He was in heaven, yet He was in a very real sense on earth, walking in the midst of the churches.

### John's Reaction to the Vision

John tells us that when He saw the Son of man thus glorified, he fell at His feet as one dead. It is no wonder that this vision of Christ had such a paralyzing effect upon the Apostle. He had seen Jesus, during His lifetime, manifesting His lamb qualities. But on this occasion he saw Him manifesting His lion traits— He was indignant at the situation, and His divine ire and wrath were profoundly stirred. He was and is both the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world and the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that will go forth against all opposition when the time comes. We are to believe that John actually fell over, almost frightened to death.

John tells us that the Lord then took hold of his right hand and said: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have *the* keys of death and of Hades" (vss. 17,18). Thus with these comforting words John's fears were allayed, and he quickly returned to his normal condition.

The Lord spoke of Himself as "the first and the last," or, as He at different times spoke of Himself as being the "Alpha and Omega." As alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so Christ is from all eternity of the past and will continue throughout the ages to come.

He left glory, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and served His day and generation. He then went to the cross, where He was crucified. Thus He was put to death. His body was laid in the tomb, but His spirit went down to Hades. On the third day He came forth from the tomb, a triumphant Conqueror! His spirit re-entered His body. He arose from the dead. During the forty days following His resurrection, He appeared at various times to different ones of His disciples. (There were ten appearances altogether.) The disciples had the opportunity of seeing, touching, and feeling His body, and of hearing Him. Thus they *knew* that He had arisen from the dead. He will never return to death any more. He brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. At the time of the ascension the Lord Jesus sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and is there making intercession for all who come to God by Him, being able to save unto the uttermost all who desire to be saved, and who come to Him for this redemption.

As stated above, Jesus, after He had accomplished His work by going down to Hades, seized the keys of death and Hades and came forth, liberating all the saved from the realm of death. With the keys of death and Hades in His possession He showed that He is the Master of the spirit world. When He ascended on high, He led those whom He had released from Hades to glory. Since then He has ever had the keys of death and Hades. We praise God that the believer today goes immediately upon death into the presence of Christ and does not go down into Hades, as they did prior to His victory.

### The Threefold Division of the Book of Revelation

John in verse 19 was commanded to write three things: (1) The things which thou sawest; (2) the things which are; (3) the things which shall come to pass hereafter. The things which John saw constitute the vision which he beheld, of the Son of man walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (chap. 1). The things which are, are the seven churches to whom the seven letters were sent (chaps. 2 and 3). The things which shall be hereafter consist of chapters 4 through 22.

As has already been suggested, the stars are symbols of the angels—literally, *messengers*—of the churches, possibly the leading persons in each congregation to whom the people looked for guidance. The



candlesticks symbolize the churches. Candlesticks cannot give light of themselves. When, however, the oil is poured into the lampstand, it can give light. These seven lampstands symbolize the complete church, the number seven being the numeral indicating perfection, completeness.

(Installment Four &amp; Five)

### Letters to the Churches of the Province of Asia

In the preceding studies of this series we have simply looked at preliminary material and at the first section of the Book of Revelation, chapter 1. For two studies we shall look at the second section of the book, chapters 2 and 3. This portion of Revelation is, in the language of Revelation 1:19, "the things which are." These things are the letters written by the Spirit through John to the seven churches, local congregations, of the churches of Christ of the little province of Asia in Western Asia Minor.

These letters are very important in the revelation of God. Much time and thought should be given to them in a series of studies of this kind. But it is impossible for us to do that now, the reason being that these letters are as a rule, very plain and simple and do not require the profound and careful study that is demanded by the rest of the book. In this rapid exposition of the Book of Revelation, therefore, only the highlights will be dealt with. Nevertheless, it is the writer's earnest desire that each reader should meditate carefully and prayerfully upon these letters.

There was a general form or pattern after which each of these letters was written. A glance at each will yield the following facts: The Lord Jesus in starting each letter spoke of Himself in terms which were derived from the vision of Himself presented in chapter 1. He called attention to the fact that He possessed certain characteristics or qualifications that enabled Him to meet their immediate need. In the second place the Lord Jesus commended each of the churches for the things which they were doing, and for which they were standing—things that were commendable especially. In the third place He reproved them for any delinquencies or failures. In connection with these He always sounded a warning. At the conclusion of the letter He always held out a bright, thrilling promise of some glorious reward which the faithful would receive in the future.

Each of these letters was written "To the angel of the church in ..." As suggested formerly, the "angel" mentioned was probably some leading personage in the congregation. The word angel means "messenger." It is also quite possible that there were messengers from the various churches visiting John while he was in prison on Patmos. In this event it is quite likely that the term angel referred to these messengers, to whom John was to turn over a copy of the letter. For instance, to the messenger from Ephesus John was to give a special message addressed to him in verses 1-7 of the second chapter. While we cannot determine exactly the meaning of the word angel, or messenger, our understanding of it does not affect the interpretation of the message. With these few observations in mind, let us notice briefly the four messages that are found in Revelation, chapter 2.

#### To the Church in Ephesus

Borrowing His language from the description found in chapter 1, Jesus spoke of Himself to this church as the one who "Walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." We have seen that the candlesticks, or lampstands, symbolized a local congregation. The Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven something like sixty-six years prior to this time and had been seated at the right hand of the throne of God during that period, but was in spirit, actually, in the midst of the churches, walking around, as it were, and observing their lives and conduct. The church at Ephesus needed to recognize this fact and walk always as in the presence of God.

It had many wonderful works and examples of patience and endurance to its credit. This church was thoroughly orthodox—a very important matter.

But there was a serious complaint registered against it: "But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." The quintessence of religion is love—the love of I Corinthians, chapter 13, which

manifests itself in sixteen different ways in daily life and conduct. This priceless possession of love the church at Ephesus, seemingly, was losing.

The Lord threatened to remove its candlestick out of its place if it did not repent and come back to its original position of divine love, communion, and fellowship with God and Christ.

In verse 7 is the personal call to each one to listen to the message of the Holy Spirit. To this church Christ made the promise that to the overcomer He would give the privilege of eating of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God. The significance of this statement may be seen by the promise found in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. A thrilling hope and expectation is this hope to the overcomer.

#### To the Church of Smyrna

In introducing His message to this church, the Lord Jesus called its attention to the fact that He was the First and the Last, the One who inhabits eternity, who has always existed, and who will continue to live throughout all eternity. Though He was God, He entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and became the God-man. The purpose of His coming into the world was to purchase man's redemption, to provide atonement for man's sin, and to open up the new and living way of approach to God through His shed blood. Hence, at the appointed time He walked into the jaws of death and allowed the Roman authorities to seize Him and to nail Him to the cross, thus dying in our stead, and shedding His blood for our redemption. But being God in human form, He arose from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. He therefore said to this church that He had died, but that He came to life again, never to see corruption.

The reason for His calling this church's attention to these fundamental, basic facts was this: There was just ahead of it a storm of persecution that was even then brewing, and that soon would burst upon its head. Self-preservation is the first law of nature—so we are told. Naturally, men try to preserve their lives—instinctively. Under pressure people are prone to soft-pedal in times of danger, hoping that by so doing they may escape persecution and death. Such a danger is common to all. By implication the Lord asked those who would be facing their trial by persecution to follow Him as an example.

In verse 9 He recognized their situation. "I know," He said, "thy tribulation, and thy poverty." And He added that He knew those among them who were blaspheming and claiming to be Jews, "... and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." They were not Jews in the real sense of the term, because they lacked the spirit of Abraham. It was indeed a consoling thought to these endangered Christians to realize that the Lord was looking on and had taken their entire situation in hand, the implication being that He would meet their need and would assist them in times of danger. In verse 10 He gave a word of encouragement saying: "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." They were to be of good courage and faithful, even though the path of duty should lead into the jaws of death.

The letter closes with the promise: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Jesus, during His earthly ministry, urged His disciples not to fear those who could kill the body but after that could do nothing else, but to fear and reverence God, who, after having killed the body, can cast the soul, or spirit, into Gehenna, hell.

No complaint or reprimand to this church—Smyrna—is recorded. Had there been any occasion for censure, the Lord would have given it.

### To the Church of Pergamum

The Lord, in opening the letter to the church at Pergamum, called attention to the fact that He is the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. The mention of this fact constituted a threat against that church in the event that the evils which He was about to mention would be dealt with in a summary manner. That there is an implied threat in the language is proved by the epistle itself.

In verse 13 the Lord called attention to the fact that this Church was dwelling where Satan's throne was. Notwithstanding that fact it had stood firm and had not denied His name and the faith during some former persecution, in which one outstanding brother, Antipas by name, had been killed because of his loyalty to the Lord. There are places, we may have no doubt, in different ages where Satan has had his throne. He has a kingdom over which he is reigning. But there is some locality from which he carries on his operations through his servile spirits. It is very important that we realize that there is a Kingdom of darkness which has drawn up its forces against the children of God. In the very end of this age we may believe that Satan will have his throne in Babylon—old Babylon restored—which will then be the beauty of the kingdoms of the world.

The things which the Lord had against this church are set forth in verses 14 and 15: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner."

Satan is very crafty and cunning. If he cannot accomplish his designs against the people of God in one manner, he will in another. His major method is to transform himself into an angel of light—to disguise his presence and purpose.

According to verse 16 the Lord called upon this church to repent. At the same time He threw out a drastic warning, saying: "Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth." To repent is to change the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the mind, or heart. Such a resolution will result in a change of conduct and attitude. The Lord would fight against those guilty in the church who did not repent.

### To the Church in Thyatira

The message to the church of Thyatira is found in Revelation 2:18-29 and is a very searching one. The Lord spoke of himself to this group as "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass ..." The fact that His eyes were like flames of fire and His feet like burnished brass indicates that His divine ire and indignation were stirred to the very depths and that, unless there was a change in the situation, He would take drastic action immediately. People need to realize that, while God is a God of love, He is a God that has indignation every day—against sin in every form and phase. He is able, if necessary, to go roughshod over any situation and to deal with the guilty culprits. God sometimes uses the motive of fear, as well as those of love, kindness, and gentleness.

This church, Thyatira, had lying back in its history a good record: "I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first" (2:19). The Lord could not say such of most congregations. In fact, there are very few concerning which He could speak so very glowingly. This church had works to its credit. Moreover, it had love, the quintessence of Christianity. In addition to that, it was a church consisting of people who had real faith in God, who laid the emphasis upon the ministry of the Word, and who were patient and long-suffering. It was a church that was growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

Notwithstanding all of these favorable things, there was a very serious defect in this church, which was noted by the Lord. Against this evil the Lord spoke the following: "But I have *this* against thee, that

thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. 22 Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works" (2:20-23). There was actually a woman of the very lowest character who was being tolerated in the fellowship of the saints at Thyatira. She claimed to be a prophetess. It is altogether possible that she was a spiritist and was issuing her utterances and leading many astray. God gave her time to repent and doubtless overruled and worked everything for good in order to get her to repent. But she set her will like a flint against turning from her sins unto God. On the other hand, she persisted in her fornication. The call of God is to separation.

The Lord hurled this terrible threat against her: "I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works."

Upon the rest of the congregation the Lord laid no other burden than to stand aloof from this wicked woman and her influence. He spoke to as many as were not under her influence, who did not know the deep things of Satan, as was the common saying in the church there. There are many deep and sinister things that Satan palms off upon the children of God as being genuine. One is to prove all things—test all things by the Scriptures. To such the Lord said: "Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come" (vs. 25).

The Lord constantly speaks of His return. It seems that He has been away a long time, but He is coming back! Everything points in the direction that it will not be long now. But let us not set any date. Only remember that everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

The overcomer is promised that he will have authority over the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron. This is a promise that goes back to Psalm 2. The overcomers are promised the privilege of reigning with Christ during the Millennium and also of reigning in the eternal world.

Christ overcame and sat down with His Father in His throne; in a manner similar those who overcome will sit down with Christ in His throne and share His regal authority with Him, when He reigns over the earth from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

To the overcomer the Lord promises to give "the morning star." Christ is the Morning Star and is spoken of in this capacity in His relation to His coming for His saints before the Tribulation.

The letter to the church at Thyatira closes with the following exhortation: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (vs. 29). We should ever be alert in our attention to the Word of God and seek to know what is His will and to do it.

In the last study we examined briefly the first four letters in this series of seven. We now come to the consideration of the last three, found in Revelation, chapter 3.

### To the Church in Sardis

Characteristically, the Lord begins this letter in His usual manner of speaking of Himself in terms of the description of Himself as seen in chapter 1. Here He speaks of Himself as "he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." What is meant by "the seven Spirits of God"? As was seen in our study of 1:4, the expression, the seven Spirits of God, refers to the Holy Spirit. This is doubtless an echo of such a passage as Isaiah 11:2, in which the Holy Spirit is spoken of in a sevenfold manner, in terms of the seven different things that He would do in, and through the Messiah when He came at His first advent. When

Christ went back to the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit, who proceeded from the Father and the Son, to come to this earth and to carry on the work that had been started by the Lord during His earthly sojourn. The seven stars are the seven angels, or messengers, of the seven churches. As noted before, these messengers are some leading personages in each one of the churches, who by natural qualifications and surrender to God seem to be occupying the most prominent position in each local congregation.

Following His regular pattern, the Lord next called attention to the merits and praiseworthy things connected with this church. Thus He said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." This church, about which very little is said in a commendatory manner, had *works*. But if we are to judge from the way in which the Lord spoke of its works, we would probably conclude that they were not so very much.

The Lord called their attention to the fact that they had a name that they were alive, but in reality they were dead. The congregation had deteriorated to more of a social club, in all probability. By the preaching of the true gospel of Jesus Christ, the people are brought to a saving knowledge of Him and are regenerated. When the gospel ceases to be preached in its fullness and power, the people may come into a congregation and become numbered with them without the new birth, or regeneration. Thus, although the corporate body appears to be what it was at first, since there is no impartation of the new life in Christ to those constituting such a social unit, it is dead, spiritually speaking. This congregation doubtless was running along because of the momentum that it had when the true gospel was preached and spiritual life was present. We might illustrate it by a train that dashes across the prairie and approaches a town. Before reaching the station, the engineer cuts off the steam or power, but the train continues to go forward by its momentum. Thus it was probably so with this church at Sardis. It was just going along on the momentum gained by constant habit, without any new life. And yet there was a little life here and there, as is evident from the exhortation found in verse 2: "Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God." There were doubtless those—few in number—who really knew the Lord. But their spiritual light was not shining brightly.

Following this exhortation, the Lord gives a warning, urging the church to repent. If they do not do this, He threatens that He will come as a thief in the night and they will not know the hour of His coming.

Notwithstanding the low spiritual life of this church there were certain ones in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. Though one lives in a very poor environment, he does not have to succumb to the evil influence of the same. By the grace of God he can live above the sordid things of this world.

To those who were thus living separated lives, consecrated to God, the promise was made that they should walk with Him in white, they being worthy of doing so because

of the merits of the Lord Jesus alone. Those who overcome shall be arrayed in white as conquerors. Their names will never be blotted from the book of life. When they come before the Lord, He will acknowledge them before His Father and before the angels. Thus the letter closes with an exhortation to those that hear to give heed to "what the Spirit saith to the churches."

#### To the Church in Philadelphia

In addressing the church at Philadelphia, the Lord Jesus declared that He was the one "that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth." The Lord Jesus is holy in the highest sense of the term, because He is God. Holiness is both a positive and a negative term—positive in the sense that His very being was and is set toward holiness; in the negative sense, in that He was and is free from all taint of contamination, of defilement, and of pollution. He is the True One, true as opposed to false, the one who is the very embodiment of truth. He

has the key of David: that is, He is the descendant of David concerning whom the prophets spoke. For instance, David spoke of Him in his swan song in II Samuel 23:3-5. He is the one who has the key of David in that He unlocks the future for the Davidic house and the establishment of the kingdom of God in the highest sense of the term here upon earth. This He will do when He mounts the throne upon His return at the end of the Tribulation. Moreover, He is the one who opens, and none will be able to shut; He also shuts and no one is able to open. He is the one who is an absolute authority in all matters. This is in perfect accord with what He said to the disciples when He appeared to them, as recorded by Matthew 28:19,20. Then He declared that all power and authority in heaven and in earth had been given to Him. He can dispose of situations, unravel perplexities, solve difficulties. It is very, very important that we recognize Him as the one who has all this power, and who can solve all our problems. If we would go to Him with all our difficulties, and with our pleasures and plans as well, He would solve them for our good and for the glory of God. Having told the church what He was, and could do, and does do He acknowledged the works of the Philadelphian church. But He reminded it that He was the one who had opened before it a door which no one could shut. All the members were therefore supposed to enter in and to labor for Him. There seems to be, however, a censure in the words of the Lord Jesus to this group, for He said that they had "a little power," whereas all power that belongs to God is accessible to the one who by faith and consecration avails himself of it. Moreover, they had kept His word and had not denied His name. It seems that this church was very punctilious in the observance of the Word of the Lord and was proud of the name of Christ and had confessed it on all occasions.

There was a synagogue of Jews in Philadelphia. They were racially Jews, but did not have the spirit of the true Jew, just as Jesus said to His opponents as we see in John, chapter 8. Jesus told these Jews that they were not the children of Abraham, because they were attempting to do that which Abraham would never have done. In order to be a true Jew one must be racially one and must have the spirit of Abraham. Concerning these Jews who were a synagogue of Satan—that is, they were under Satan's domination and control—Jesus declared that He would overrule and cause them to come and bow down before the church in Philadelphia and acknowledge that He, the Lord Jesus, had loved that church.

There is a wonderful promise made to this church in verse 10: "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This church had been faithful in the observance of the Word of God. They had been faithful during times of stress and trial. The Lord therefore promised to such ones exemption from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world to try it. From this we know that there is a period of time when there will be world-wide, universal trials, troubles, and difficulties. This is known by prophetic students as the great Tribulation Period, the day of Jehovah, when He pours out His wrath upon the world. When this passage is studied in the light of related ones, it appears to be a promise that the Lord will take His people out of the world before that time of Tribulation bursts forth upon an unsuspecting world.

The promise of the second coming is affirmed in verse 11. When the time comes for Him to return to the earth, He will come, and come very quickly. Those who have His Word should hold fast to it and not allow anyone to cheat them out of their crown. If someone turns us away from doing the service of God from the heart, and causes us to squander our time, and to use the means which He places in our care for other purposes than the advancement of His cause, such a one will be causing us to lose our crown, or a certain amount of its brilliancy.

As usual, in this letter the Lord makes a definite promise to the faithful ones who overcome. "12 He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name." This promise must be studied carefully in the light of the two concluding chapters of the Book of Revelation.

A special appeal to the one who wants truth concludes the letter; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

#### To the Church in Laodicea

The last of the seven churches is the one in Laodicea, which was, as we see from the content of the letter, the poorest spiritually of all. To this group the Lord spoke of Himself as "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God ..." The word "amen" means to believe, or to make believe. It came to be a petition, "May it come to pass." Jesus was the faithful and true witness to the truth of God and to God himself. He came, not to do His own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Him. He sought, not His own pleasure, but the welfare of the human race and the glory of God. He asserts that He was "the beginning of the creation of God." This phrase is capable of two interpretations: First, it has been understood to mean that Jesus was a created being, that God alone existed in eternity and finally created the Son as He did the rest of His creatures; second, that the Son of God is the Creator of all things—the Source of all things. It is impossible to accept the first interpretation, namely, that Christ was a created being. There are many passages in the Scriptures that indicate that Jesus, the Word, was with God in the beginning, was God, and was in association with God (John 1:1; Phil. 2:1-11; Heb. chap. 1, and many other passages that teach that Christ is God, who existed with the Father before all eternity and will continue to be with Him throughout all eternity of the future). For these reasons we reject the interpretation that the phrase, "the beginning of the creation of God," means that Christ was a created being. In the Colossian Epistle there is an expression which is somewhat similar to this one, and which is that Christ was "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible ..." (Col. 1:15,16). Christ was "the firstborn of all creation," because, as we are told, in Him were all things created. Thus this passage tells us in what way He was "the beginning of the creation of God," or "the firstborn of all creation," namely, He was the Creator of all things.

That Christ was God in human form, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, is the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. Any system of teaching or group of people that rejects this fundamental doctrine is anti-Christian.

Again, Christ recognized the works that had been performed by the Laodicean church. They were in a pitiful condition, "neither cold nor hot." The Lord would have people either to be for Him, or to be out-and-out for the devil. Those who are neither hot nor cold are a positive detriment to the cause of Christ.

Because they were in this lukewarm state, the Lord declared that He would spew them out of His mouth. Judgment was bound to fall upon them if they continued in this condition.

There seems to have been quite a bit of wealth in this church. Unfortunately, most people cannot stand prosperity. They immediately focus their attention upon riches, that are here today and gone tomorrow. Because these people were depending upon their wealth and their riches, the Lord counseled them to buy of Him "gold refined by fire," that they might become really rich; and white garments, that they might clothe themselves in order that their nakedness might not be seen; and eyesalve, the real thing, that they might anoint their spiritual eyes and see realities as they are. When we consider all things, we come to the conclusion that nothing counts for anything, so far as eternity is concerned, except being in harmony with God's will and doing the same.

The Lord informed this church that He reproveth and chastens everyone whom He loves. The time has come, declared the Apostle Peter, that judgment must begin at the house of God. The wicked receive their punishment in the eternal world, but the children of God are chastened and corrected now, for their good.

The Lord represented Himself as standing outside the door of the Laodicean church and knocking in order that He might gain entrance. He did not expect the church as a group to open the door and welcome



Him. He therefore called upon each individual who would hear His voice and open the door, and to such ones He said that He would come in and would have fellowship with them. The gospel with all its privileges of association and fellowship with Christ is a personal matter. He is ready to have fellowship with anyone, no matter how humble he may be, if he will only accept the invitation.

In the letter to this church the Lord made a promise to those who would overcome. He informed them that He would allow the overcomer to sit down with Him in His throne, as He had sat down with His Father in His throne after He had done the will of God here in His first advent. Those who are Christ's, and who suffer with Him, will reign with Christ, when He returns.

This last of the seven epistles closes with the usual call for those who are willing to hear to do so and to listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are all eager to pour out the fullness of their blessings upon all who will receive.

## (Installment Six)

**The Vision in Heaven (Chapters 4 and 5)**

In this study we begin a new section of the Book of Revelation. As we do it, however, it is necessary for us to look at the general outline of the entire book, which, as we have already seen, falls into three natural divisions:

- I. The Things Which Thou Sawest—Introduction and Vision of the Glorified Son of Man, Chapter 1.
- II. The Things Which Are—Letters to the Churches of Asia, Chapters 2 and 3.
- III. The Things Which Shall Come To Pass Hereafter, Chapters 4-22.

With this lesson we begin the third division, which falls into the following subheads:

- A. The Vision of Heaven, Chapters 4 and 5.
- B. The Great Tribulation, Chapters 6-19.
- C. The Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment, Chapter 20.
- D. The Eternal Order, Chapters 21 and 22.

The first subdivision, The Vision of Heaven, of this last main general division, divides in turn into two principal sections:

1. The Vision of the Throne of God, Chapter 4.
2. The Lamb Slain From the Foundation of the World, chapter 5.

## John Invited to Heaven

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter" (4:1). In this verse John informs us that he was invited to ascend into heaven and to observe the situation there. Let us remember that there are *three* heavens: First, the atmospheric heavens, which are immediately around the earth; second, the sidereal heavens, the great expanse where the stars and the constellations are; and, finally, the immediate presence of God, called in the Hebrew Scriptures "the heavens of the heavens." This is what Paul referred to as Paradise, to which he was caught up (II Cor. 12:4). In the third heaven, or Paradise, is the temple of God, eternal in the heavens (Ps. 11:4; Hab. 2:20; Rev. 11:19).

John was invited, when "a door opened in heaven" to "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter." This language is to be taken at its face value. Unfortunately, a spiritual application has been made of it, and the language has been interpreted as a prediction of the rapture of the church before the Tribulation. While it is true that the church is caught up out of the world before the Tribulation, as is taught in various passages, this language has no bearing upon that subject whatsoever. The Lord wanted John to come up, in vision, into heaven and to see what was there. Paul was caught up to the third heaven and saw things that were not lawful for him to utter. John was caught up into heaven, and he saw things that he has told us about. When, therefore, the invitation was given to John, he was ready to ascend to heaven, which thing in vision at least he did. Praise God that he was invited there and was shown these things and has revealed them to us.

## The Throne of God

"Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; 3 and he that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon" (vss. 2,3). When John was caught up into heaven, he saw a throne and the Almighty seated upon it. He does not give a specific, definite word picture of the Almighty as he saw Him; but he spoke of Him in terms of the most precious stones known to man. There was a reason for John's not describing the Almighty. When Israel was at Sinai, God warned Moses to impress upon the minds of the people that they saw no form or shape of the Eternal Being. They therefore should not make any image of Him. God has consistently, throughout His entire revelation, withheld any definite idea of Himself so that man, who is prone to idolatry, might not make any likeness of Him.

There was, encircling the throne, a rainbow. Probably the appearance of the bow at this time was to signify that God is displeased with man in general and will bring the penalty of the broken covenant upon mankind. In order that we may see the significance of this, it becomes necessary for us to study Genesis 9:1-16. God entered into a covenant with all mankind when Noah came out of the ark. This everlasting covenant has four conditions, all of which man in civilized lands is now, as a rule, violating. As the days pass, and more scientific investigations are made, the more man breaks these four conditions. A holy and righteous God can do nothing but punish the race for their violations of the conditions of this covenant. A reference to the breaking of this everlasting covenant is found in a prophecy concerning the Tribulation (Isa. 24:5, 6).

If anyone wishes to see other pictures of the throne of the Almighty, he may view them in Job, chapters 1 and 2, and Psalm 89:5-8.

## The Twenty-four Elders

"And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold" (vs. 4). Round about the throne John saw twenty-four smaller, subordinate thrones, upon which were seated twenty-four elders, who were arrayed in white garments. On their heads were crowns of gold. Who are these elders? Some answer that they are twenty-four men, who are saved, who are crowned in heaven, and who represent the saved of the old covenant and of the new. Thus the presence of these are interpreted as evidence that the rapture has occurred before the Tribulation. As stated above, the rapture of the church undoubtedly occurs before the Tribulation begins. About this position there can be no question for the one who has thoroughly studied the prophetic word. But is the interpretation that these are representative of the raptured church correct? There is nothing in the context that indicates that these elders are used representatively. Never should one resort to a figurative, symbolic, or secondary meaning of any passage of scripture unless there is a warrant for the same in the context. One will seek in vain for such justification. There is nothing that suggests the idea of representation. The language simply states that there were twenty-four thrones and twenty-four elders, who were seated upon their thrones, and who had crowns of gold upon their heads. These are heavenly beings. The most rational interpretation of them is that they are celestial beings of an especially high order, who, under God, are assisting in the administration of the universe.

### The Lightnings, the Voices, and the Thunders

"5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders ..." (vs. 5). Are we to assume that these lightnings, voices, and thunders are to be understood literally? If we are to evaluate the Word properly, we must say that John knew what he was talking about, because he saw and heard these things. Assuming that the words mean exactly what they say, we immediately ask what is the significance of such a demonstration. The answer is not far to be found. Whenever there are winds and thunders and lightnings, we understand that they are destructive forces in nature that leave havoc and chaos in their wake. Evidently they indicate here that the wrath of God is gathering like a mighty thunderstorm which will burst upon the world soon. This interpretation is confirmed by the study of Revelation, chapters 6-19. These facts then confirm the interpretation.

It is very interesting to study in connection with Revelation 4:5 the following passages; Revelation 8:5; 11:19; and 16:17,18. A person is immediately impressed with the fact that, as the Tribulation advances, the storm of God's wrath increases in intensity, finally bursting in all its fury upon the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

### The Seven Lamps Before the Throne

"... And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; ..." (vs. 5). John saw, as we see in this verse, seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Here we are given the interpretation of the significance of the seven Lamps. They signify the "seven Spirits of God," but what is the significance of the term, "seven Spirits"? We have already seen in the discussion of Revelation 1:4 that the seven Spirits of God are mentioned in connection with God the Father and God the Son. Their being placed between the first and the second persons of the Holy Trinity and on the same level with them indicates that this expression signifies the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold plenitude. The seven lamps are probably an echo of the marvelous prediction found in Isaiah 11:2, which speaks of the Holy Spirit and His work in and through the Messiah in terms of the seven things which He did in and through the Son of God when He was here upon earth nineteen hundred years ago. Thus in this vision of heaven, chapters 4 and 5, we see God the Father on the throne, God the Holy Spirit symbolized by the seven lamps before the throne, and God the Son appearing as a Lamb standing in the midst of the throne.

### The Crystal Sea of Glass

"... 6 and before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal; ..." (vs. 6). I have made voyages across waters. At times, especially in the Mediterranean Sea, I have seen the water when it was perfectly motionless. The bright sun, shining upon it, made it look just like glass. John said that the space in front of the throne reminded him of such a glassy, crystal sea. Why it had this appearance, no one can say dogmatically. It is quite possible that it indicates the calmness that exists in God and about His throne. There is nothing that can disturb Him, or destroy the peace which He controls. It is true that Satan and his emissaries are the cause and occasion of much turmoil in the world. But nothing that he or they can do or say can affect the tranquility of the throne of God.

### The Four Living Creatures

"... And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third

creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (vss. 6-8).

Who are these four living creatures? Each has six wings. This feature instantly takes our minds to the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 6, where we see seraphim round about the throne, singing the same "triple holiness," as these six-winged creatures in Revelation are seen doing. From the two passages we see that they are a high order of celestial beings that engage in divine service of the Almighty. It seems that they are engaged in this worship constantly. Of course, it is a most delightful thing for them to do.

They may have other duties to perform, since they assume the forms that are indicated in this passage. One assumes the form of a lion; another, the likeness of a calf; the third, the appearance of a man; and the fourth is seen in the form of a flying eagle. It may be that the first one has some definite connection with the kingdom of wild beasts. The second, who is like a calf, may have some special relation with the domestic animals. The third one may have some special function to perform with reference to the human race, while the fourth and last one may have some special or definite relationship with the fowls of the air.

The song which they sing, in all probability, is a melodious strain of a holy trilogy to the Godhead though in verse 8 it is sung to God the Father who is designated in chapter 1 as the "One who was, who is, and who is to come." But the same words can be addressed to each of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

#### Worship in Heaven

"9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created" (vss. 9-11).

According to this passage when the living creatures offer praise to God, the elders cast their crowns before Him, and they sing the hymn of creation. This hymn acknowledges God as the Creator of the universe, which He brought into existence to reveal His glory to His creatures. God will, throughout all eternity, be revealing to His creatures more and more of His might, power, and glory.

(Installment 7)

**The Vision In Heaven**

## The Lamb of God

As we saw in last month's study, chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation give us a scene in heaven, which is preparatory to the bursting forth of God's judgments upon the world during the day of Jehovah. Naturally, since these judgments begin in the mind and plan of God, John was given this scene of heaven and the actors that play the leading role in this closing drama of the ages. In these studies we saw that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit figured largely in the action of chapter 4. In chapter 5 the Son is under the spotlight throughout.

## The Roll of the Book

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals" (5:1). In New Testament times usually the books were in the form of scrolls or rolls, made either of papyrus or vellum. About the beginning of the present era books with folios, such as we have today, began to come into existence and use.

John saw in the hands of the Almighty, as He was sitting upon the throne, a book that was "written within and on the back," and that was sealed with seven seals. This description leads us to believe that the form of the book which he saw was that of a scroll which had seals at various intervals, and which had to be broken as the book was unrolled. This book was written on both sides. It reminds one of that which Zechariah saw in vision as found in Zechariah 5:1-4.

## The Cry, "Who is worthy to open the book?"

"2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon" (vss. 2,3). All intelligible writings are to be read and understood. The strong angel in this verse proclaimed with a great voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" He doubtless was not asking for information, but to make the announcement that there was no one able or worthy to break the seals and to read the book. Among all the creatures of God—both celestial and terrestrial—there was found no one who was able to break the seals and to read the book. Obviously, it takes might, power, wisdom, to perform this feat. Let it be noted that none of the elders, or the living creatures, or any of the angels, could perform this task. If none of the angels of the celestial hosts was worthy or powerful enough even to look on the book, certainly none of Adam's race upon earth could look upon it and could break the seals.

## John's Reaction to the Situation

"4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: ..." (vs. 4). John was given understanding that there was great significance and importance attached to this book—that mighty and eternal issues were involved in this matter. He therefore wept much because none of God's creatures could do this. It is quite likely that John jumped to the hasty conclusion that there was no one who could, or would, open it and carry out the plans and purposes inscribed on the scroll.

### The Message Regarding the Lion of the Tribe of Judah

"... 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof" (vs. 5). One of the elders admonished John to stop his weeping and stated that there was one who was able to deal with the situation, and who was "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." The expression, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is an echo of the prophecy made by Jacob (Gen. 49:8-10). In this prophecy Judah was compared to a lion. This graphic description focuses its rays of light upon some descendant of Judah who undoubtedly proves to be Shiloh, the one to whom the right of reigning belongs. (Cf. Ezek. 21:27). This one is not only of the tribe of Judah, but is of the house of David, the founder of the throne in Judah. David was granted a vision of Him as is seen in II Samuel 23:3c-5:

"... One that ruleth over men righteously,  
That ruleth in the fear of God,  
4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,  
A morning without clouds,  
*When* the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,  
Through clear shining after rain.

5 Verily my house is not so with God;  
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,  
Ordered in all things, and sure:  
For it is all my salvation, and all *my* desire,  
Although he maketh it not to grow."

The seed thought of our Lord's being the Root of David is couched in the expression, "Although he maketh it not to grow." The verb in the Hebrew text rendered *to grow* is the word from which we get our noun translated *Branch*. Based upon this one prophecy are four most important predictions regarding Messiah. The first to be noted is Isaiah 4:2: "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Here the twofold nature of the Branch is brought forth most graphically: It is the Branch of Jehovah, having the divine nature; it likewise is the fruit of the ground, having human nature. Jeremiah likewise refers to Him in the following words: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). Here the Branch becomes King of Judah and shall be recognized as "Jehovah our righteousness." The third passage involving the Branch is Zechariah 3:8: "8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." Here the Branch is called a servant, because He serves humanity, although He is God in human form. The fourth and last passage on the subject of the Branch is Zechariah 6:12: "... 12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; ..." The human nature of the Branch is here emphasized—He is a man, though He is the God-man.

The elder, in calling John's attention to the fact that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Root of David, is referring to all these promises that are contained in the Branch passages. He will carry out all the predictions that are foretold of Him. At His first coming He fulfilled all the predictions that related to the first coming of the Messiah. When He returns, He will carry out the program just as outlined.

### The Lamb of God Slain for Sinners

"6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came, and he taketh *it* out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne" (vss. 6, 7). Though the Messiah is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He is also the Lamb, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world as the one who would deal with the sin question, and who would procure salvation for all who will accept. Thus that which was foretold of Him concerning His death, He carried out literally, as was foretold in Isaiah, chapter 53, and in many other predictions. Christ, who is the Lamb of God, and who suffered at His first coming, comes forth and takes the Book out of the hand of the Almighty who is seated on the throne in order that He might open it.

### Hymns of Praise to the Lamb

"8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sing a new song, saying,

Worthy art thou to take the book, and to  
open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain,  
and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men*  
of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,  
10 and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and  
priests; and they reign upon the earth" (vss. 8-10).

Only these heavenly beings engaged in this act of worship and praise. Not only does each one have his harp, but each has a golden bowl full of incense—the prayers of the saints. We are given the significance of the bowls of incense, namely, that they represent the prayers of God's people, which they have presented to Him, and which He, in the time of the Tribulation, answers. No prayer ever goes unanswered, but in His own time and way God fulfills every petition.

The reader is urged to note especially verses 9 and 10. The American Standard Version (published in 1901), following the Greek literally and absolutely, declares that "thou," the Lamb, didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation ..." Those who are worshiping do not include themselves in those who have been purchased by the Lamb. The reason for this is that they have never been lost and need no salvation. Those who are thus saved and purchased from among men constitute a kingdom and priesthood. They are at present in the spiritual aspect of the kingdom of God, but will enter the outward, visible manifestation of it at the second coming of our Lord. Moreover, we who are in the present phase of the kingdom are priests in that we can intercede in behalf of others, bringing them before the throne of grace constantly. When our Lord returns, we shall reign with Him upon the earth as the last statement of verse 10 declares.

"11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and  
wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (vss. 11,12).



Here we have a description of the second song of praise that is offered by the angelic hosts to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Note the fact that many angels joined their voices with the living creatures and the four and twenty elders. The number in this chorus are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Ten thousand times ten thousand makes one hundred million; in addition to these there are thousands of thousands.

The soul-stirring chorus which they sing is, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." This is a sevenfold statement of the things which our Lord will receive because of His having purchased from among men those who would accept the truth and receive His salvation.

"13 And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,

Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb,  
*be* the blessing, and the honor, and the glory,  
 and the dominion, for ever and ever.

14 And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped" (vss. 13,14). Here is the largest chorus, or choir, that ever is assembled, and yet it is not assembled, for we are told that every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea will engage in this mighty song of praise to the Lamb for His redemption. The statement is that every created thing in the heaven, on earth, under the earth, and on the sea will join in this mighty chorus. This is the thing of which Paul, in Philippians 2:9-11 speaks. When the time here foreseen in this passage arrives, all the angelic hosts, all the people who will be upon the earth, and all the lost in Hades, together with Satan and all of the demons, will bow the knee and confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. All the lost will see that God has been absolutely righteous and just in all His doings, and that He, in consigning them to the place of the condemned, is righteous, just, and true—that He could not do otherwise than He does.

They will, therefore, render praise to Him who sits upon the throne (God the Father) and unto the Lamb who purchased redemption for the human family. When this hymn is finished, the four living creatures will close with a hearty "Amen." Then the elders will fall down and worship. Thus will close this heavenly scene that is set forth in Revelation, chapters 4 and 5.

(Installment Eight)

**THE TRIBULATION CHAPTERS**

## The Seal Judgments (6:1-17)

In the last two studies we have examined the first subdivision of the third main section of the Book of Revelation. As we have seen, chapters 4 and 5 give us a vision of heaven when the stage is set for the beginning of the Tribulation Period.

The second subdivision of the third main section of the book begins with chapter 6 and runs through chapter 19. The chronological order of events as they will occur during the Tribulation is set forth by the seal, the trumpet, and the bowl judgments, that are described in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16.

As has been noted in former studies, something definite takes place when the first seal is broken. The same is true with reference to the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth seals; but when the seventh is broken, nothing specific takes place upon the earth. On the contrary, the seven angels who will blow the seven trumpets will prepare to sound their trumpets and call forth the various judgments that will fall upon the earth during the second quarter of the Tribulation. When the first trumpet is blown, something specific occurs. The same thing is true with reference to the five succeeding trumpets. But when the seventh is blown, nothing specific takes place upon the earth. On the contrary, the seven angels that will pour out the bowls of the wrath of God prepare to do so. Thus we see that the bowl judgments, the last series, come out of, or develop from, the seventh trumpet. In a similar manner the seven trumpet judgments come out of the seventh seal. When these facts are noted, the general drift of the Book of Revelation becomes apparent. This knowledge is necessary if one is to expound properly and accurately the message of Revelation.

The Lamb, having taken the roll of the book out of the Almighty's hand, breaks the seven seals. When He opens the first four seals, one of the living-creatures seen in heaven (chap. 5) calls forth with a loud voice ordering each of the judgments.

## The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come, 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown; and he came forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:1,2). The language in chapter 6 is clearly a dramatic presentation of literal facts that are presented under the form of striking imagery.

The entire program is put under the imagery of Christ's breaking, or opening, the seven seals. It is clear from reading the sixth chapter that there is not a real, actual, literal book that is sealed with the seven seals, but that this representation presents realities in a most vivid and graphic manner.

When Christ breaks the first seal, the first living creature, or seraph, gives an order in a loud voice saying, "Come." Immediately there comes forth a rider on a white horse, who has a bow in his hand. Then there is given to him a crown, a victor's crown. This is given to him by way of anticipation. He goes forth to conquer and accomplishes his purpose.

What is meant by this dramatic presentation? Is this a literal horse and a literal man riding the horse? We should take it this way if the facts of the context permit; but, when we read of the rider on the fourth horse in verses 7 and 8, we see that Death is the rider and Hades follows him. There is no such person as Death; nor is there any such individual as Hades. Death and Hades are personified and are represented as going forth as is described. These facts show that the fourth rider is not an actual, literal one, but that this

is a pictorial, symbolic representation of some reality. If this is true of the fourth horseman, it certainly is true of all of them, since clearly they belong to the same category.

With these facts before us as established beyond doubt, we come to the conclusion that the rider on the white horse can be nothing other than that of a movement that is headed by some great personage, and that is set in motion. The object of the movement is to seize world dominion. Those promoting it come forth for that purpose, and they reach their goal. It is thus stated. This position is confirmed by the further fact that the color of this first horse is white. Conquerors in ancient days rode on white horses. Moreover, the triumphant Christ, of whose second advent we read in Revelation 19:11-21, comes on a white horse, because He will be victorious over all His enemies at that time. He will have diadems on His head; but the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2 has a little victor's crown, a garland of ivy, or something of that nature—according to the customs of the day.

When we read this passage in the light that is shed on this subject by other Biblical writers, we conclude that the one heading this movement can be none other than the Antichrist, who will come out of obscurity into prominence and will lead a movement for world dominion.

"3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And another *horse* came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (vss. 3, 4). This second rider is mounted on a red horse, a blood-red horse. This one takes peace from the earth and introduces a reign of terror—such as the reign of terror in France. To this rider is given a great sword.

Suppose a cartoonist should put in some of our daily papers a picture of the world and of a man mounted on a blood-red horse, with a sword in his hand, galloping through the earth. And suppose there is also seen a dove flying directly away from the earth. Should you see such a cartoon as this in secular papers, how would you interpret it? Instantly every intelligent person would say that the cartoonist intended to convey to the reader's mind that there is a world war, with bloodshed and carnage in evidence on every hand throughout the world. Just such a cartoon do we see in the form of the rider on the red horse of this passage.

"5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not" (vss. 5, 6). The rider on the third horse is mounted upon a black steed. He carries in his hands a pair of balances selling grain. As he goes forth from one place to another John says that he heard the voice in the midst of the four living creatures, speaking of the grain's being sold at famine prices. That those will be dark days indeed is symbolized by the farther fact that the color of the horse is black. The oil and the wine at that time will not be hurt, because they will have medicinal properties—doubtless.

Since the rider on the black horse follows the rider on the red one, and since the latter is symbolic of war and bloodshed we conclude that the rider on the black horse symbolizes famine of the direst kind, the aftermath of World War I of the Tribulation Period.

"And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (vss. 7,8). When this fourth living creature shouts, "Come," there appears upon the arena a rider mounted on a pale horse. The name of this rider is Death, who goes forth reaping his terrible toll of people. Hades follows him. As was said in the beginning, there are no people by the name of Death and Hades. These are personifications of the power of Death and of the place to which the wicked dead go, awaiting the judgment of the great white throne, which comes after the Millennial Age, the period of our Lord's reign (Rev. 20:11-15).

When this stage of the Tribulation is reached, there will burst forth upon the world the second war of the Tribulation. This time the war will affect only a fourth part of the earth. In that section of the world men will be killed with the sword, with famine, with some pestilence or plague from the Lord, and by wild beasts of the earth. Just what part of the globe will be affected by this rider on the fourth horse is not revealed. The toll of life in this part of the earth will be terrific.

### The Return of the Days of the Martyrs

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled *their course*" (vss. 9-11). In our investigation of the seal judgments, we have come to the opening of the fifth seal. With the breaking of this seal the horrible days of persecution break forth upon all who turn to God in the first part of the Tribulation.

As we have seen in the discussion of chapters 4 and 5, the rapture of the saints constituting the Church of God occurs before the Tribulation begins. Every born-again believer is snatched away out of the earth by the Lord when He descends from heaven to the air to raise the dead and to catch up the living saints. But after the Church has been raptured, there are, in the first part of the Tribulation, a host of believers in Christ who suffer martyrdom because of the Word of God and of their testimony which they hold concerning Jesus Christ. Who are these saints?

There is but one answer to this question; They are the Tribulation saints, those who turn to the Lord after the Church is raptured and after the Judgments of the Tribulation begin. The events of this passage quoted in this paragraph anticipate the information which is given in chapter 7 concerning the great world-wide revival which we shall investigate in next month's study.

John sees the souls of the Tribulation martyrs underneath the altar in heaven right after they are martyred. Since Christ won the victory at the cross, the believer upon death goes immediately into the presence of Christ, whereas the lost go to Sheol, or Hades, and remain there awaiting the Judgment of the great white throne.

It seems from this passage that those who are saved, and who are in the presence of God, eagerly desire their resurrection bodies, but they are told to wait until the rest of their brethren, the Tribulation saints, shall have run their course and met their fate—at the stake.

From this passage we also see that the saved, though they are in heaven, are perfectly conscious of what is coming to pass upon the earth. These martyred saints know that those who actually executed them are still alive upon the earth, and have not been punished for their dastardly, blood-thirsty crimes. Other passages in the New Testament teach that the saints are conscious, and that they know about things transpiring upon the earth.

The Tribulation saints will receive their resurrection bodies at the end of the Tribulation.

### General Convulsions Throughout All Nature

"12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich and the strong, and

every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (vss. 12-17).

From this description it appears that there will be convulsions, mighty cosmic upheavals, at least throughout our solar system if not extending throughout the universe. At that time there will be a universal blackout—for a time. The light from the sun, moon, and stars will not reach this earth. This will be the second blackout that occurs in connection with the Tribulation. The first one occurs before the Tribulation begins, as we see in Joel 2:28-32. But when one of these blackouts occurs, it will clear up, and normal conditions of light and darkness will be restored. At the opening of the sixth seal will be the second blackout. There will be another one—though of a different nature—when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet (chap. 9). Another blackout will occur in the middle of the second half of the Tribulation (chap. 16). The final blackout will occur at the end of the Tribulation, immediately preceding our Lord's glorious return to this earth.

When these convulsions begin their deadly work throughout the universe, the kings of the earth and the princes and the captains and the rich and mighty men will realize, as they never have before, the character of the times in which they are living—that they are actually in the Tribulation, in the day of the Lord. Then, in terror and fright, they will cry to the rocks and the mountains to fall on them. They will seek for holes in the earth to hide themselves from the wrath of God and from the wrath of the Lamb. But their cries will avail nothing!

(Installment Nine)

## THE TRIBULATION (CHAPTERS 6-19)

**The 144,000 Evangelists and the World-Wide Revival (7:1-17)**

Let us always bear in mind that the chronological order of events as they will occur in the Tribulation is found in Revelation, chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. The chapters intervening between these give side lights on the situation as it will exist during the Tribulation.

In our last study we saw that the seal Judgments found in chapter 6 cover a period of probably around a year and nine months, the first quarter of the Tribulation. At the breaking of each of the six seals something definite takes place upon the earth. At the conclusion of the sixth seal there is, so to speak, a lull in the storm. Then there is given a vision of the 144,000 Jewish people who will conduct the world-wide revival in the Tribulation.

After the giving of this vision the seventh seal is broken, which develops into the seven trumpet judgments of chapters 8 and 9.

Though the prediction of the world-wide revival occurs in chapter 7, let us not think that it begins only after the first six seals have spent their force. As we saw in the last study, the martyrdom of the saints under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11) presupposes the breaking forth and the continuance of this world-wide revival. As to the exact time in the first part of the Tribulation when it begins, there is nothing to indicate. Someone, however, has beautifully expressed the thought in words similar to these: The 144,000 Jewish servants of God will grasp the banner dropped by the ascending church as it goes to meet the Lord in the air. These evangelists will carry forward the banner of Prince Immanuel to the ends of the earth and will bring about the world-wide revival.

When we study Revelation, chapter 7, we are led to the conclusion that the revival will reach its greatest intensity during the first half of the Tribulation, but it will likely go underground during the second half. That it will be stopped is set forth in Habakkuk 3:1, 2. In the midst of the years—the seven years of the Tribulation—the work of God, the great revival, will be brought to a sudden standstill. But it will be revived, not to blaze forth as a bright and shining light as in the first part of the Tribulation, however; but it will go underground and operate as the early church did during the days of the Roman persecutions. With these introductory remarks let us now proceed with the study of the chapter.

## The Ministry of Angels

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). On account of the abuse of the doctrine of angels and their ministrations by certain groups, many Protestants steer shy of anything that pertains to the ministry of angels. In the quotation just given, however, we see that they are the ones whom God dispatches to render various types of service to those who shall inherit salvation. One of the great services which they will render to the true worshiper is that they will camp round about those who fear God and deliver them (Ps. 34:7).

In Revelation 7:1 we see that there are four angels at the four corners of the earth holding back, or controlling, the four winds of the earth. In 10:1 we see a strong angel coming down from heaven. According to 12:7 Michael and his angels will go forth and war against Satan and his cohorts, driving them out of the presence of God. In 14:6 we see an angel proclaiming the everlasting gospel to all people, which, when properly interpreted, is an announcement made by the angels that the everlasting gospel will be preached throughout the Tribulation. In 16:5 we read of the angel of the waters. These references are

sufficient to show that the angels will play a very vital part during the Tribulation. But they are now at the present time rendering service to the Lord in various capacities (Ps. 103:20).

#### The Treasuries of the Wind

In our present chapter "we learn that four angels, mentioned in 7:1, are stationed at the four corners of the earth, and that they hold back the four winds of the earth so that they shall not at that time blow upon the earth, sea, or any tree. Men have learned much about meteorology; and there is still much to learn. Scientists can predict to a certain extent, and in a general way, the type of weather that will exist in a given area for a certain time, but they have much yet to learn. God gave Job a questionnaire, none of the questions of which Job could answer fully and satisfactorily. Among these the Lord asked him;

"By what way is the light parted,  
Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?" (Job 38:24).

This implies that there is some place from which the east wind comes forth and then is scattered over the earth. This type of language reminds one of such passages as Psalm 135:6,7:

6 Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done,  
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps;  
7 Who causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;  
Who maketh lightnings for the rain;  
Who bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries."

According to this passage there is some place which could be designated as the "treasury of the wind." Where is this place and who is in control of it? How are the winds brought out of it and how are they directed into various directions? On this point one should study carefully Jeremiah 10:13. When we begin to examine this question, we go up a blind alley. Our minds bog down, for we do not know the ultimate in this sphere of investigation.

The angelic hosts that remain faithful and true to God constitute a well-organized host. As John looked at the vision which was before him, he saw another angel, a fifth one, that ascended from the sunrising with a shield of the Living God. Then he cried with a great voice to the four angels of whom we have just learned, commanding them not to hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, nor anything—until the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God is accomplished.

We read accounts of tornadoes on land and hurricanes on the sea, and of the mighty power and damage wrought by them. From the passage under consideration it appears that the angels have control of at least some of these tornadoes and hurricanes. It is hard for us to see this truth, but we must accept it by faith, especially so when we see such a passage as the following:

"2 Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies. 3 Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear *the guilty*: Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. 4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel; and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him. 7 Jehovah is good, a strong-

hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him. 8 But with an over-running flood he will make a full end of her place, and will pursue his enemies into darkness" (Nahum 1:2-8).

When our Lord was asleep in the boat in which He was crossing the Sea of Galilee there arose a mighty tempest, which was about to destroy the boat in which the Saviour and the Apostles were sailing. The Apostles awakened Jesus. He then rebuked the wind and the waves. There was a mighty calm (Luke 8:22-25). Though the elements may seem, as men of the world express the thought, to go on a rampage, all the forces of nature are under the mighty hand of God who does many things that are hard for us mortals with our limited comprehension and understanding to grasp. He does all things well.

#### The 144,000 Jewish Servants of God

That these 144,000 servants are Jews is clearly stated in the context. There are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. There is not, therefore, a single Gentile in this group. The term *Israel* is used synonymously with Jews in this passage as it is in many others. Only the people who are known as Jews will be in this group.

These will be sealed by the angel in order to protect them from the dangers of the time. They will be immune from all dangers. The sealing of these reminds one of the sealing in the vision of the people of Jerusalem who were to be exempt from injury during a crisis that was coming upon the doomed city. Read carefully Ezekiel 9:3-8.

The 144,000 Jewish servants of Revelation, chapter 7, must be clearly differentiated from the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 14:1-5. This latter group consists of people of all races for we are told that "These were purchased from among men, to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4). Concerning them, in verse 3, it is said that "they that had been purchased out of the earth." This group consists of men, concerning whom it is said: "These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie; they are without blemish" (Rev. 14:4, 5). These words mean exactly what they say. This statement being true, we say that the 144,000 of Revelation, chapter 14, is an entirely different group from the 144,000 Jewish servants of God given in Revelation, chapter 7.

#### The World-Wide Revival

After John gave us the list of those who will be sealed in the Tribulation, he gave us a vision of the world-wide revival, the like of which has never been before and never will be after that time. It is described as follows: "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying:

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9,10).

Continuing this quotation, note the fact that this is a great multitude that no one can number, and they come out of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. Moreover, they are arrayed in white robes and have palms in their hands and they cry with a great voice: "Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." Without a doubt those who are seen in this vision are saved people, for John in vision saw them standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb, and they were arrayed in white robes, having palms in their hands. Their white robes indicate their having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, which made them white, clean, and pure as snow.



## The Tribulation Saints

After this vision there was flashed before John's mind this mighty host of saved people from all climes, all the angels in heaven, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, who prostrate themselves before God and praise Him in the following words: "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 7:12).

One of the elders, a member of this angelic host, inquired of John as to whether or not he knew who constitute this vast host of redeemed people whom he had just seen. John professed his ignorance. Then the elder informed him as to who they are, saying: "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). This language is clear and explicit. It should need no further elucidation. Nevertheless, there is much controversy regarding it; hence, we must look at the text more particularly.

John informs us that this vast throng of people washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and that they came out of the great tribulation. The idiom rendered "great tribulation," literally translated, is "the tribulation, the great." This idiom lays equal emphasis upon the adjective as well as upon the noun which modifies it. Thus John was talking of a specific time and period, which is properly designated "the great tribulation." This idiom lifts the period of which he is speaking from among ordinary times and raises it to a higher level, by emphasizing the thought that the suffering of that period will go far beyond all other times. Nothing like it has ever been and nothing will ever be like it after that. It will be the time of greatest sorrow to all.

This vast host turn to the Saviour, come to Him and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They do not come to Him during the Christian Dispensation as has been supposed; but they accept Him during the Tribulation. Hence, they come out of the Tribulation after having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb by having received Christ. In no sense can the church of the present day be said to come out of the Tribulation. It is true that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. It is also true that through many tribulations we enter into the kingdom of God, which is the millennial kingdom. Only those who accept the Lord during the Tribulation are said to come out of it and to stand before the throne and the Lamb.

## World Blessing Through Israel

God announced in Genesis 12:1-3 that it was His intention to bless all nations in and through Abraham and his seed. This promise was reaffirmed to Isaac and to Jacob. All the spiritual blessings that we enjoy today have come from God through Israel to us. In this seventh chapter of Revelation we see people of all nations in an enormous multitude coming to God and being blessed by Him. Evidently, then, this is at least a partial fulfillment of the promise that was made to Abraham. The full and complete fulfillment will materialize when the remnant of Israel are led by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists at the conclusion of the Tribulation to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then in answer to their pleading for Christ's return, He will do so and take the governments of the world in His hands, lift the curse, and establish His reign of righteousness. Then converted Israel will lead all men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When this is done, the promise made to Abraham will become a reality. Throughout the Millennium, the age of our Lord's reign upon earth, the people of Israel will be the priests and the ministers of our God. No Gentiles will then officiate in spiritual matters. The blessing of God, in the fullest sense of the term, will be flowing out to all the world—to all nations—through Israel, Abraham's literal descendants.

Israel at the present time does not have the truth of the gospel. We who know Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, and who know the plan of God, should, at this time, bend every effort to get truth out

to all Israel in this generation in order that they, Israel, may see the mistake of nineteen hundred years' standing and repudiate the national sin in genuine repentance, according to Isaiah 53:1-9 and Isaiah 63:7-64:12. When they thus repudiate the national sin and plead for Jesus Christ to return, He will do so.

When the church is raptured out of the world, before the Tribulation, its voice will cease. But we can leave behind a testimony in the form of properly written and edited books and literature, given to the Jews at the present time, so that now, not only will men be won from among Israel to the Lord Jesus Christ, but our message will also be in a permanent form in their hands—in the form of books and booklets. These they can and will read (devour, figuratively speaking) as soon as the Judgments of the Tribulation begin to come upon them. Then there will arise this army of 144,000 Jews who will conduct this revival.

My brother and sister in Christ, what are you doing to give the truth to Israel now? There is no greater investment that you can make than to proclaim the truth to God's Chosen People!

## (Installment Ten)

## THE TRIBULATION (CHAPTERS 6-19)

**The Trumpet Judgments (Chapter 8)**

As has been noted several times in this series of studies, the chronological order of events as they will occur during the Tribulation is set forth in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. Chapter 7, as we saw in the last study, is an intercalated vision coming in between the seal and the trumpet judgments. There appears to be, though one may not be dogmatic on this point, a short space of time intervening between the sixth or last seal judgment and the blowing of the first trumpet. That which lends color to this position is the first statement in 8:1. "And when he [Christ] opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." The things occurring on the earth have their origin in heaven. Since there will be "a silence in heaven" for half an hour (we do not know whether the word is to be taken literally and in the absolute sense of the term, or whether it is elastic) there will be some short period of time intervening between the close of the sixth seal and the breaking of the seventh.

When the seventh seal is broken, nothing particular takes place upon the earth. On the contrary, the seven angels who will blow the trumpets—calling forth judgments upon the earth—get ready to blow their trumpets. Thus we know that the seventh seal develops into the seven trumpet judgments. We might illustrate this principle by a skyrocket which is shot into the air. It forms a beautiful display at which we delight to look. Then it dies out with the exception of a little ball of fire which floats off some distance, and which, in turn, bursts into a second display. Finally this second display expends its force. Then there floats off a second ball of fire a little distance, which in turn bursts into a third display. The third one comes out of the second, and the second out of the first. Thus it is with the seventh seal. It bursts forth, or develops, into the seven trumpet judgments. Then, at the blowing of six of the trumpets, something definite takes place upon the earth; however, when the seventh trumpet is blown, nothing specific occurs upon the earth. On the contrary, the seven angels who will pour the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth get ready to pour them forth. Thus the seven bowl judgments come out of the seventh trumpet, and the seven trumpets come out of the seventh seal. With this in mind, we can say that the seal judgments cover the entire Tribulation Period. But, at the same time, the trumpet judgments do not cover the entire Tribulation (seven years) as is sometimes supposed. Those taking this position likewise say that the bowl judgments traverse the entire time of the Tribulation. For the sake of clarifying the thought, I would judge that the six seal judgments cover approximately the *First quarter* of the seven years of the Tribulation; the six trumpet judgments, that come out of the seventh seal, cover the *second quarter*; but the seventh trumpet, which develops into the seven bowls, will cover the *entire latter half* of the Tribulation.

According to Revelation 8:2 there are seven angels "that stand before God." One of these is Gabriel. We know this because of information that he gave to Zacharias in the following words; "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). This same Gabriel was dispatched to bring a message to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9:21). We have no information as to the identity of the other six that stand in the Almighty's presence.

These seven angels are given seven trumpets to blow, which call forth the seven trumpet judgments upon the earth. What is the significance of the trumpets? There evidently was a reason for God's presenting the message under this symbolism. Everyone will concede that the trumpets are not literal. But, though they are symbolic, they have a literal significance, as is quite manifest from the entire atmosphere of the passage. A glance at Numbers 10:1-10 may suggest the answer. Moses ordered the manufacture of two silver trumpets which were to be blown on different occasions and for various

purposes. One of the objects of the trumpets was to call together at the door of the tent of meeting an assembly of the leaders of Israel. At times the sounding of the trumpets was for the purpose of announcing the marching of the camp forward to another location. Sometimes they were blown over burnt offerings and sacrifices of peace offerings. At other times they were sounded as a call to war (Num. 10:9; cf., Ezek. 33:1-6). Of the various meanings of the trumpets here listed, it seems that there is but one that they can have in the Book of Revelation, namely, that of sounding an alarm of war—the war of heaven against earth. These trumpets are sounded as the declaration of the hurling of one judgment after another upon the earth, which will be accomplished largely by the angelic hosts in their use of material sources and resources. The entire context seems to demand this interpretation of the trumpets.

### Worship in Heaven

"3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:3-5). In this passage we see an angel officiating at the altar of incense in the heavenly sanctuary. That there is a temple in heaven is evident from different passages. For instance, in Psalm 11:4 we see this temple of God in heaven. The tabernacle built by Moses and the Temple built later by Solomon were little replicas of the spiritual reality in heaven. There is, of course, the most holy place and the holy place. In the most holy place is the throne of God and the mercy seat where atonement is made. In the holy place was the altar of incense, the candlestick, and the shewbread, all of which had symbolic significance with reference to Israel. (But we do not have time nor space to give an exposition of this phase of the subject at this time.)

We can see, however, from Revelation 8:3-5 that there is an actual service that is conducted in heaven. The one taking the leading part in it is called "an angel," and it is this angel who is officiating at the altar in the holy place. Who is this angel? Different answers are given. Some believe that he is one of the high, powerful, and authoritative angels. Others say, "No; this can be none other than our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ." Though we cannot be dogmatic on this point, it appears most reasonable to believe that this one is an angel, because he is, in the first place, called an angel. The Lord Jesus Christ, even in the Old Testament, was called "the angel of Jehovah," "the angel of God," and was distinguished from angels in general. This one is not distinguished from the angels; therefore it seems most probable that this is an angel and not the Son of God.

This angel offers the incense before God, and to it he adds the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. In the tabernacle and Temple service the high priest offered the incense in the worship. This had a symbolic significance. Though the incense was literal, yet it had a spiritual meaning. It seems that this fact signified the worship and the prayers of the saints. An intimation along this line seems to be found in Psalm 141:2:

"Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;  
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

When the statement is made that the prayers of all saints are added to the incense, we seem to have a definite intimation that the incense is connected with and symbolizes the presentation of the petitions of all the saints of all ages to God the Father, who is on the throne.

Every prayer of every born-again person is answered. Many of them still await their answer at this future time, of which we are studying. These, of course, are the prayers that pertain to God's punishment of the wicked, and the purging of the world of unrighteousness in order to establish a reign of righteousness upon the earth. Thus the prayers of the people of God throughout the centuries regarding God's promises just mentioned will be answered at that time. Jesus assured us that the one who seeks, finds; the one who asks, receives; and the one who knocks, to him shall the door be opened. That is in perfect accord with the statement that the prayers of all the saints are added to the offering of incense on this occasion.

### The Casting of Fire Upon the Earth

At the conclusion of this scene of worship, the angel (in the vision) takes fire from off the altar and casts it upon the earth. When this is done, there follow "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." (Cf. 4:5 and 11:19 with 8:5). As the Tribulation advances, these outward demonstrations increase in intensity and severity.

Though there is a symbolic act of casting fire upon the earth, it signified the actual causing of "thunders, and voices, and lightning, and an earthquake" upon the earth. The thunders will be literal; the voices will be literal; the lightning will be real; and the earthquake will be actual and very destructive. One of the best ways of studying the Book of Revelation, especially these Judgments, is to examine carefully the ten plagues which Moses brought upon the land of Egypt. (Read Exod., chaps. 1-11.) Moses and Aaron took their rod and waved it over the waters of Egypt, which was a symbolic act, but which actually turned the waters into blood. Again, Moses stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and as a result there came up frogs that covered the countryside. A symbolic act caused the coming of actual, literal frog's that were a plague and a menace to the entire land. Once again, note that Aaron stretched out his rod and smote the dust of the earth, and as a result lice appeared throughout the entire land of Egypt. Thus these various symbolic acts were performed, but they brought about real, actual judgments. In a manner analogous to this John saw these angels, actual celestial beings, blowing their trumpets, performing a symbolic act, which brought about literal results upon the earth.

### The First Four Trumpet Judgments

When the time arrived, the seven angels that were to blow their trumpets stood at attention and were ready to perform their duties "And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." When this angel sounded his trumpet, John saw, in vision, hail and fire mingled with blood, which were cast upon the earth. There is no reason that militates against our interpreting the hail literally, and likewise the fire. We know that God has treasured up snow and hail for the time of battle and war in His treasure house (Job 38:22-24). Moreover, we know that God rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen., chap. 19). In the Tribulation, when God is destroying the wicked from the face of the earth, He will rain fire and brimstone upon the earth (Ps. 11:6). Thus we have every reason to believe that the hail and the fire are literal. They will be mingled with blood, blood such as was the result of the miracle of turning the waters of Egypt into blood by Moses and Aaron.

This first trumpet judgment will affect one-third of the earth's surface, which will be scorched and burned. Likewise it will destroy the timber in the regions where the "hail and fire, mingled with blood" fall.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, *even* they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed." When this second angel sounded his trumpet, there was, as it were, a great mountain burning with fire, and it was cast into the sea. That which John saw reminded him of a great mountain which was burning with fire, and it fell into the sea and affected one-third of the waters. This possibly is a great meteorite which will plunge into the sea and with its deadly gases will affect the water of one-third of the sea and make it turn into blood. As a result of this, one-third of the creatures in the waters will be killed, and one-third of the ships will be destroyed. These are actual, literal facts.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." At the sounding of the third trumpet a great star, burning like a torch, will fall and bury itself in the crust of the earth. It will crash through the strata of the earth down into the subterranean canals of waters and will poison the same. Many men will die of these poisoned waters.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner." When the fourth angel sounds his trumpet, forces will be set in operation that affect the heavens and the heavenly bodies for one-third part of the day. Thus everything will be abnormal in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath at this time.

From what we have seen of the trumpet judgments they are an advance over the seal judgments, except the last one, which, as we have seen, was convulsions of all nature. As the Tribulation advances, the judgments will continue to increase in intensity and destruction.

(Installment Eleven)

THE TRIBULATION (CHAPTERS 6-19)

**The Trumpet Judgments (The Woes)**

"And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound" (8:13). It is quite evident that the eagle that John saw "flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe for them that dwell on the earth," was referring to the last three trumpet judgments, which are here called "woes." The reason for this fact is that the latter three judgments are far more intense and destructive than the first three—although these seem almost to reach the limit of the endurance of men in the areas where they take place.

The fifth angel that sounds with his trumpet calls forth the first woe, and the sixth with his blast causes the second woe to come forth with all its might. These are described in chapter 9. But, as we have noted before, the seventh trumpet—the third woe—does not call forth any definite specific thing that transpires upon the earth. Rather, it develops into the seven bowl judgments described in chapter 16.

In chapter 9, as we study these two woes, it becomes necessary for us to understand something about the origin and activities of the spirit world.

**The Origin of Evil Spirits**

The first glimpse that we have of the spirit world is to be found in Genesis, chapter 3. The serpent who beguiled Eve and caused her to eat of the forbidden fruit gives evidence of an intellect and power far superior to that of an animal or any human being. The results that followed that tragic incident have been so very far-reaching—affecting the entire earth and the greater portion of the human family for time and eternity—that we are confident that a gigantic intellect and mighty power were behind the scenes on that fatal occasion, engineering the situation and causing the Fall. The suspicions that are aroused by the narration of what actually occurred and the results thereof are lifted from the plane of hypothesis and theory by the information which is given to us in Ezekiel 28:11-19. Here we read of one to whom it was said: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God ... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. 14 Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee, so *that* thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. 16 By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground; I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee (vss. 12b-17).

When we understand the full import of this passage and compare the facts that are stated here with descriptions of the devil—found here and there in the Scripture—we come to the conclusion that this is an inspired pen picture of the anointed cherub, who was perfect in his being and in all his attributes, and who was the generalissimo of the Lord's armies. He was created perfect, but he conceived unrighteousness in his heart and instituted a revolt against the Lord God Almighty. In this rebellion he led astray one-third of the angels (Rev. 12:4). Those who followed his seductive ways in rebellion against the Lord were cast down from their high position in the service of God. They accepted the leadership of Satan,

this fallen spirit, and have been under him until the present day. At the present time he is the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1ff.). These evil, rebellious, fallen spirits inhabit the air and attack the human family, in many instances causing what is known as demon possession, which was prevalent in Palestine during the days of our Lord, which is quite common throughout the world today, and which will become more prevalent as we advance toward the end of the age.

In the days of Noah, however, there were other angels who had remained faithful and true to God up to that time, but who saw the daughters of men that they were fair. They lusted after these, assumed the form of men, came, and married these women, cohabiting with them. The result of these unholy unions was a race of supernatural beings. Those who left their former estate and came and thus assumed the form of men are called the Nephilim, the fallen ones. Their progeny are called the giants, men of renown, who were in the earth in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:1-4). Jude refers to these in verses 6 and 7 of his Epistle: "And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." Note that angels which kept not their principality but left their proper habitation are said to have acted as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did, who gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh. The Sodomites did this in like manner as the angels which kept not their principality but left their proper habitation, came, and cohabited with these women of Noah's day. Those spirits that were evil in the days of Noah were incarcerated in the pit of the abyss and have been there ever since, as is set forth in II Peter 2:1-10. There appears to be a mighty host of them.

#### The Fifth Trumpet (The First Woe)

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss" (9:1). Was this a literal star that John saw fallen from heaven to earth, or is the term used in a figurative sense? One instantly says it is used in the latter manner, for a literal star could not take a key and open the pit of the abyss, or perform the act indicated by this language. The word *star* is used in the figurative sense as we use it today when we speak of a motion-picture "star," or a "star" boarder. The star which John saw is an intelligent being who has great power, to whom the key of the pit of the abyss is given.

When this being opens the "pit of the abyss" there goes up a smoke, "as the smoke of a great furnace," and in the midst darkens the sun. This will cause a temporary blackout. The world will be in absolute, literal darkness when this occurs. As to how long it will continue, no one can say.

These beings, the locusts, coming out of the pit have power as the scorpions of the earth have power. They are not allowed, by divine decree, to injure any green or growing thing upon the earth. They are, however, permitted to strike all men who do not have the seal of God on their forehead (see chap. 7).

For five full months, 150 days, these demon locusts sting and torment men. The human family will be in such misery that many of them will attempt to take their lives, but it will be utterly impossible. They will have to "grit their teeth" and endure untold misery for five long months (9:5,6). The description of these locusts found in verses 9 and 10 show that they are not literal insects, but that they are spirit beings, who have nothing but vengeance and hatred in their souls against mankind.

Over them as their king they have "the angel [or messenger] of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name Apollyon [Destroyer]. True to the name of their leader, these evil spirits, when let loose upon earth, will wreak havoc from one end of it to the other.



At the expiration of the five months the first "woe," or judgment, will have run its course. Evidently, then, these demon spirits will be corralled back into the pit of the abyss where they will be incarcerated again.

### The Sixth Trumpet (The Second Woe)

In Revelation 9:12-21 we have a description of the sixth trumpet, the second woe. When this angel sounded his trumpet, John said that he "heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God." This voice said to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates." This is the first reference to these particular angels that is found in the Bible. The river Euphrates simply means the literal river that has been recognized by this name from times immemorial.

According to this passage there are four angels that have been bound and have been prepared "for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men" (9:15). Obviously, these are evil angels; otherwise, they would not be chained or bound at that one place and kept there through the centuries.

The language concerning the time that the Almighty had in view when He bound them is very significant. They have been placed there for "the hour and day and month and year." God has a plan and a purpose which runs through the ages. While He lets man exercise his own freedom of choice and determine what his present and future shall be, the Almighty overrules all things and makes everything fit into a plan that will bring ultimate glory to Himself and benefit and blessing to the greatest number involved.

These four angels are to be used of God in destroying one-third of the human family; that is, one-third of those that will be in existence at the time that these evil angels are loosed. One of the three purposes that the Lord has in sending the Tribulation upon the world is to destroy all the wicked out of it in order that He might establish a reign of righteousness. If the Lord would allow the wicked to continue to live as they are now, it would be impossible to have a reign of righteousness such as that which is set forth in the prophetic word.

These four angels will have a mighty host of evil, wicked angels under them. According to verse 16 "the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them." In this army there will be two hundred million evil spirits, for that is what they are. They will kill one-third of the people upon the earth.

These are said to be horsemen. Are they literal horsemen riding actual horses? This question is answered in verse 17: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceeded fire and smoke and brimstone." These cannot be literal, for horses and horsemen could not wear breastplates as of fire and hyacinth and brimstone. The heads of these horses are like the heads of lions. Out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. Obviously, therefore, these are not literal horses and horsemen. Those constituting this army have the appearance of an army of horsemen. Since, however, they have as their leaders these evil spirits, it is quite evident that they are another army of evil spirits that have superhuman power.

Where are they now? Are they in the pit of the abyss as are those of whom we studied, and who came out of the pit at the blowing of the fifth trumpet? It is impossible for us to say. There is no intimation in the text as to where they are now, or how they are gathered together by these four angels that are loosed.

The destruction of this army of two hundred million horsemen is beyond the wildest imagination of any of us today. They inflict injury and torment upon the people of the earth, even upon those whom they do not slay.

The two-thirds of mankind that are not killed by this plague do not repent of the works of their hands, "that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood ... and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Instead, they continue on as they have been going. Nothing but punishment and the final slaying of wicked men and the incarceration of these evil spirits in the pit of the abyss can solve the world problem. This will be done at the end of the Tribulation. Thus ends the prediction concerning this sixth woe.

(Installment Twelve)

**THE LITTLE PARENTHESIS (10:1-11:13)****Part 1: The Little Book Eaten by John (10:1-11)**

In our study of the Book of Revelation we have come to consider chapter 10. As usual it becomes necessary for us to get our bearings before we proceed with the discussion of this section. Let us ever bear in mind that the chronological order of the events of the Tribulation, the day of Jehovah, is set forth in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. The chapters intervening between these are interrelated visions that throw light upon the world situation in order that the reader may comprehend such conditions as exist at the time the judgments are falling upon the earth. As we have seen, the seal judgments are described in chapter 6. Roughly speaking, the trumpet judgments, which cover the second quarter of the Tribulation, are described in chapters 8 and 9. But we must modify this statement, for there is a parenthesis that is inserted in the narrative which consists of 10:1-11:13. The verse, 11:14, constitutes the last of the trumpet judgments. Thus this verse follows chronologically Revelation 9:21. In our study we have come to the consideration of this first minor, or "little" parenthesis, to which investigation we shall devote two studies.

**The Ministry of the Strong Angel**

As we have seen, angels play a very prominent part in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 10 we see a strong angel that comes down from heaven to the earth and stands with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the earth: "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth; and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices" (Rev. 10:1-3).

There is some discussion among expositors as to who this angel is. Some have come to the conclusion that he is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some elements that favor this position; but, when we consider this passage, by and large, this interpretation is quite doubtful. The Lord Jesus is introduced in the first chapter as the judge and the executor of vengeance against wrongdoers. He deals in mercy and yet in righteousness with His people. In the Tribulation He deals with the world in absolute righteousness and justice. We do well to accept the plain significance of the word *angel* and understand that this is a mighty and powerful one, who is dispatched of God for a definite, specific purpose. As he stood there in his majesty and glory, he held a little book in his hand, which was open. He cried with a great voice which was "as a lion roareth." As to what he said, we have no information.

When he thus spoke, "the seven thunders uttered their voices." Who these thunders were, no one can tell; because there is no information given. It is possible that these thunders were angels who spoke with thundering voices. In view of the fact that we do not have information as to their identity, we do well to pass by without comment.

When these thunders uttered their voices, John was about to write what he heard. This fact shows that the thunders spoke in language that was understandable by the Apostle. Hence he wanted to preserve what he heard. But a voice spoke to him saying, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not." Every time I look at this verse, I am reminded of the same of a book on Revelation that was written years ago, and that was entitled "The Voice of the Seven Thunders." It is difficult to see how any expositor could give such a title to a book in attempting to explain the Book of

Revelation. It may be that, when we get home to glory, the Lord will reveal to us what these seven thunders said.

"And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and he swore by him that liveth forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:5-7). According to these verses this strong angel lifted his hand to heaven as he stood upon the land and the sea and swore by the Almighty who lives for ever and ever—the Creator of the universe—"that there shall be delay no longer." The word *delay* in this utterance causes quite a bit of trouble. It has two different meanings: *time* and *delay*. Whenever a word has two or more meanings, that one should be accepted which accords with the facts of the context. To say that time shall be no longer is contrary to all the facts. We know that this statement is made in the middle of the Tribulation. Moreover, we know that the Tribulation continues for three and a half years after that date. Further more we know that when our Lord comes at the end of the Tribulation, He will reign upon this earth for a thousand years. Following the thousand years, there will be a little space when Satan shall be unloosed out of the pit of the abyss and will deceive the nations. Then will come the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). At that point the material heavens and the earth will pass away, and time, as we know it, will cease to be. There will be time, therefore, after the event mentioned in our passage; hence, the meaning of time as the translation of the word as in the original is a mistake. On the other hand, the word *delay* is also another meaning of this word. When we look at it in the light of all the facts, we see that it fits in perfectly with the context. The translators of the American Standard Version (published 1901) are therefore correct.

The reason the angel says that there will be delay no longer is that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants, the prophets." As we have already seen in chapter 6, the seals will at this time have been broken and will have spent their force. The six trumpeters will have sounded their notes of judgment and will have brought down the catastrophic manifestations of God's wrath upon the world. There will be one more trumpeter to sound and to call forth the completion of the wrath of God. But oh the devastation and the wreckage that will result from the blowing of that seventh trumpet is beyond human power to conceive. Events will move forward in rapid succession and culminate in the practical extinction of all civilization that is built up by man—by the time the end of the Tribulation is reached.

In verses 8-11 we have a description of a symbolic act, which John was commanded to perform. This strong angel handed the little book which he had in his hand to John, instructing him to eat it, which thing he did. In John's mouth it was as sweet as honey. In his belly it was as bitter as gall. The angel had told him that such would be the case. Things turned out exactly as foretold. Such symbolism is not strange to the one who knows his Old Testament. For instance, in Ezekiel 2:8-3:3 we have an account of Ezekiel's being commanded to take a roll of a book which was handed to him and to eat it. This scroll was written with lamentations and mournings and woes on both sides. Compare also Jeremiah 15:16-18. When the contents of the book was in John's mouth, it was sweet to him; but when it reached his stomach, it was bitter.

What was the significance of this symbolic act? The clue to this thought is found in Revelation 10:11: "And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." A person eats food; he first chews it and swallows it, digests it, and finally assimilates it. Some of it is built into the tissues of his body. Thus life is sustained. We speak of devouring books. We of course are thinking of our studying and receiving mental food and nourishment from books—as if it were actual food.

Sometimes that which is eaten physically proves to be very bitter and harmful to us. Sometimes we learn some new truths from a book, and we are delighted with it at first thought. But when we really digest and assimilate the thought, it becomes very sad to us—when we realize the import of its message. This seems to be the significance of John's eating the book which was handed to him. This book had written messages that pertained to the world and God's bringing His judgments upon the peoples. This being true, I would say that the little book contained the rest of the descriptions that are found in the Book of Revelation, chapters 11-19, the prophecy concerning the events of the second half of the Tribulation, which culminates with the second coming of our Lord.

### The City of Jerusalem During the Tribulation

Chapter 11 begins as follows: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." The mention of the Temple and the altar of God suggests immediately to Bible students that, in this part of the vision, John was given a glimpse of the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood. This supposition is confirmed by verse 8: "And their dead bodies *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." This city where the Temple of God is, is the very city in which our Lord was crucified, and which is called according to this verse, Sodom and Egypt. We therefore know that in chapter 11 we have the scenes laid in Jerusalem in the middle of the Tribulation Period.

Our Lord in the Olivet discourse foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and Jews' being dispersed among all nations during the time of Israel's being rejected by the Lord and being set aside. Jesus foretold the destruction of the Temple (Matthew, chapter 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). As Jesus and the disciples were seated on the Mount of Olives after He made that prediction, four of them came and asked Him: "Teacher, when therefore shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when these things are about to come to pass?" (Luke 21:7). In reply our Lord said, "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand ... Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24). Titus, the Roman general, drew up his armies around Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70. For some unknown reason, according to Eusebius, the father of church history, Titus withdrew his armies. Then the Christians that were in Jerusalem, following the instructions of our Lord, fled immediately to Trans-Jordan and went northward up to the city of Pella. After they left the city, Titus drew up his armies around the city again and prosecuted the siege until it fell. Those who survived that most horrible ordeal were led captive into the slave markets of the Greco-Roman world. Jerusalem was then trodden down by the Gentiles and continues in this condition until the present time. But we must note this exception, that practically half of it is now in the hands of the Jews, and the other half in the power of the Arabs. The fact that the Jews possess half of it—and they seem to be well established in the land—seems to indicate that they will sooner or later get full possession of all the city. Whenever they do, this part of the prediction will be fulfilled. Jerusalem will be returned to its rightful owners, the Jew's.

Everyone who has visited the State of Israel, which came into being in 1948, knows that the Jews are doing a marvelous piece of work in the upbuilding of Jerusalem and that part of the country which is now known as the State of Israel. John's prophecy in Revelation 11:1-13 presupposes the existence of the State of Israel and Jerusalem's being in the hands of its rightful owners.

There is another prophecy concerning the Jewish nation which will be fulfilled in the end time, and which is seldom noticed by prophetic students. It is Ezekiel chapter 20, all of which every Bible student ought to read and study very carefully.

In verses 33-39 appears the prophecy that in this connection is of vital importance to us. God declares that He, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, will be king over Israel. Then He will gather them—the Jewish people—from the peoples and the countries where they have been scattered throughout the Christian Dispensation and will gather them "into the wilderness of the peoples" where He will enter into judgment with them, face to face. What is meant by the expression, the wilderness of the peoples? There is no country by that name, but this is a play on words. When a person reads the entire chapter, he sees this brought out very clearly. God in the days of Moses brought Israel out of the land of Egypt into the wilderness of Sinai. During their forty-year sojourn in that desolate wilderness God entered into judgment with the people and punished them for their wickedness and their sin. Out of 600,000 warriors who left Egypt, only two of them entered into the Promised Land—Caleb and Joshua. Having spoken of those historical facts, God said to Ezekiel that He would gather Israel from among the nations where they have resided through the centuries and will gather them into the wilderness of the peoples and will there enter into judgment with them and cause certain ones to pass under the rod and enter into the land of their fathers. This prophecy has never actualized; but it certainly will, when the time arrives, be fulfilled literally as much as any other prophecy in the book. Where will God gather the Jews when He in wrath takes them out from among the peoples—among whom they have resided during the age of grace? The prophecy in Isaiah 27:12,13 shows where Israel will be in the very end of this age: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will beat off *his fruit* from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. 18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem."

Here God declares that He will beat off his fruit "from the flood of the river unto the brook of Egypt"—from the Euphrates to the River Nile in Egypt. When He beats off the fruit, He will gather the children of Israel, one by one, and place them in their own land. In this language God is comparing the Jewish people to an olive grove that will be planted in what is termed the "fertile crescent," consisting of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq, or Old Babylonia. Thus Isaiah, comparing Israel to an olive grove throughout this section of the world, said that God would beat off the fruit and gather it. Olives are gathered by beating the trees; then the berries are picked from the ground. With this imagery in mind, there is but one conclusion to which we can come, and that is that God will by His overruling providence spew Israel out from among the nations where they have resided and will gather them back into this fertile crescent where they will flourish in the very end time."

(Installation Thirteen)

### THE LITTLE PARENTHESIS (10:1-11:13)

#### Part II: The Jewish Temple of the Tribulation, the Holy City and the Two Witnesses (11:1-3)

Continuing our study of this minor parenthesis found in Revelation 10:1-11:14, we must now examine the prophetic utterances regarding the Jewish Temple which, in the last study, we learned will be rebuilt by the Jews in Jerusalem, and which will be standing during the Tribulation.

#### The Jewish Tribulation Temple

After Israel became settled in the Land of Promise and the kingdom had become well established under the leadership of King David, the Lord chose Jerusalem as the place where He would place His name (Ps. 78:65-72; Ps. 87:1-3; Ps. 132:13-15). From these passages we see that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem as the city where He would place His name, and where His people could come and worship Him. Thus Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem; Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it; Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest at the time of the restoration from Babylonian captivity rebuilt it; Herod the Great tore it down piecemeal and rebuilt and enlarged it; Titus, the Roman general, finally destroyed it in A.D. 70. An attempt in the days of Julian, the apostate, a Roman Caesar, was made to rebuild it but failed.

That this Temple will be rebuilt by the Jews and will be standing in the Tribulation (at least in a part of it) is certain from several passages of Scripture. Isaiah the prophet in vision saw the Jews rebuilding it and re-inaugurating their ritualism and sacrifices.

Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest? 2 For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word. 3 He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine's blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations: 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not" (Isa. 66:1-4)

In this passage the prophet saw them, the Jews, feverishly rebuilding this Temple. At its completion he saw the re-organization of the Temple service. But he declared that those who come and sacrifice will be just as acceptable to God as the man who would offer swine's flesh upon the altar as a sacrifice to God. The man who sacrifices an ox will be just the same as the man who slays another. None of them is acceptable in God's sight. Nevertheless, they will do this because they have chosen their own ways; God will choose their delusions.

The sacred writer, in Psalm 74:1-11, saw the Temple at Jerusalem being defaced and finally burned, together with all the vengeance of God throughout the land of Palestine. Some have interpreted this passage as referring to the destruction of the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar, but this is impossible; for there were no synagogues in the land at that time. Never did the synagogue arise until during the Babylonian captivity when Israel had no central sanctuary at which to worship. Then these private local meeting places were brought into existence. Since this passage contemplates the burning of the Temple and of the synagogues in the land the destruction of the Temple under Nebuchadnezzar could not be the event which was before the prophet's mind. Other interpreters have thought that the psalmist saw

Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greco-Syrian ruler in Antioch who committed all sorts of depredations against the Jews in their land, and who defiled the Temple at Jerusalem. Antiochus, with his atrocities against the Jewish people, could not be the fulfillment of this prediction because he did not destroy the Temple, but only defiled it. Others see the destruction of the Temple by Titus the Roman general, in A.D. 70, as the fulfillment of this prediction. But this interpretation does not tally with the facts. Titus tried to preserve the Temple and gave special orders to his men to do nothing to violate its sanctity. Contrary to his orders it was burned in the last desperate attempt of the Jews to resist Roman aggression. Thus we may be certain that the psalmist was not talking about the Roman overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, and the occupation of the land. The last and correct interpretation of this passage is that the psalmist saw the Jewish temple, rebuilt by them, standing in the time of the Tribulation when the forces of the Antichrist and his lieutenants will deface that sacred structure and will destroy it, together with all the synagogues in the land. Thus Psalm 74:1-11 presupposed the standing of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in the time of the end.

Our Lord spoke with a consciousness of the fact that the Jews will rebuild their Temple, and that it will be standing in the middle of the Tribulation. This is seen in Matthew 24:15ff. By reading the context of these verses, one can see that Jesus, in this passage, was talking about the Tribulation, the period of seven years of Judgment with which the age closes. In the middle of it the "abomination of desolation" will be set up. This will precipitate a crisis that will be a time of trouble the like of which has never been before and never will be afterwards. Thus our Lord assumed the existence of the Temple in the end time.

The Apostle Paul, in II Thessalonians, chapter 2, spoke of the Antichrist and what he will do when he, in the middle of the Tribulation, defies God. He will go to Jerusalem and will sit in the Temple of God, opposing all that is called God, and that is worshiped as God, and setting himself forth as God (II Thess. 2:1-13).

The teaching of these passages is that the Temple will be standing in the end time. This is in perfect accord with the teaching of Revelation, chapter 11, which we are now considering.

John was given a reed and was instructed to measure the Temple of God, the altar, and them that worship thereat. But the court which was without the Temple, he was to leave unmeasured, for it was given to the nations (Rev. 11:1,2). The question that arises in this connection is, Why measure that Temple? We may begin an investigation on this point by looking to Ezekiel, chapters 40-48. In 40:3 there is a man with a line, measuring the Temple and Jerusalem, which were being shown to Ezekiel in vision. When a person studies this entire passage, he sees that the measuring in this vision was to make known to the prophet the exact dimensions of that glorious structure, the most glorious one that ever graces this earth, and that will be called, "the house of prayer" for all the nations. Thus the measuring was to impart information concerning it, with its glory. In Zechariah, chapter 2, is recorded a vision of Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennium. Zechariah in his vision saw a man with a measuring line who was going to measure that city. From the context we see that the measuring was to make known to Zechariah the dimensions and the glory of Jerusalem as it will be in the Millennial Age. There are always plans and specifications, together with blueprints, made after which a building is constructed. But in Revelation, chapter 11, we see that John was given a measuring reed, "like unto a rod," by which he could ascertain the dimensions of the house and facts concerning those that worship thereat. As we study this chapter, we see that Jerusalem will be destroyed during the Tribulation. Moreover, as we have already seen, the Temple that will be standing in the Tribulation will be destroyed. We conclude therefore that the measuring is to make known the fact that the Temple and all its service and worshipers are not coming up to the standard to which they should attain, if they are to be acceptable to God. Thus we see that the measuring is to reveal the deficiency and the failure of the worshipers. This will be done to justify God's destroying the same. This usage is in perfect accord with that which is found in II Kings 21:10-15. God had used the line and the plummet on Samaria because of the wickedness of the house of Ahab, and destroyed it. In this passage



He threatens to use the same line and plummet of destruction on Jerusalem that He had already employed on Samaria. This passage gives absolute proof that the measuring here is to show the failures and the thing's lacking in connection with the Temple service, which failures make it necessary for God to destroy the Temple and to cause the wicked to cease.

### The Holy City

In Revelation 11:2, we read the prediction that the Holy City shall be trodden under foot for forty-two months. But in verse 3 we see two witnesses who prophesy for 1,260 days in sackcloth. The question arises as to what time or periods, are here in view. We are to understand that these figures literally refer to forty-two months, and to 1,260 days.

We must take everything at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless there are facts in the context to indicate a departure from the literal meaning. Since there is no such negative evidence, we will accept the statements at their face value. Again, in Revelation 13:5 we read of forty-two months, the period in which the Antichrist holds high carnival. In Revelation 12:6 we see a period of 1,260 days during which the woman, who, as we shall see, is none other than Israel, flees into the wilderness. In verse 14 of the same chapter, we see that she is in a place prepared for her "a time, and times, and half a time." The forty-two months mentioned in 11:2, the 1,260 days appearing in 12:6, the time, times and half a time of 12:14, and the forty-two months of 13:5 all refer to the latter half of the Tribulation. Thus the 1,260 days equal forty-two months, or three and a half years. By simple division we see that the months of those years will be thirty days. Evidently the calendar will be changed between now and then. We know that it will be changed, for Daniel 7:25 shows that the Antichrist will change the calendar in the middle of that last week of years of Daniel's prophecy.

But the 1,260 days of the witnessing of God's two servants of Revelation 11:1-13 is the first half of the Tribulation. The reason for this conclusion is to be found in the fact that, after these witnesses have finished their course, they are killed in the middle of the Tribulation. Their period of service therefore is the first half of the Tribulation.

### The Two Witnesses

John tells us of the two witnesses whose ministry, as we have just seen, falls in the first half of the Tribulation. Who are these witnesses? Are we to take the language literally—at what it says? Or are we to read into it some symbolic significance? There is no justification for our interpreting this passage other than literally. These witnesses have every earmark of personality; therefore we believe that there will be two witnesses who will engage in a special ministry during the first half of the Tribulation. But who are they? Some excellent Bible students believe that they will be Moses and Elijah; others, Enoch and Elijah. The reason for believing that they may be Moses and Elijah returned to life is that they do the very thing that only Moses and Elijah did. Moses turned water into blood, and Elijah shut up the heavens so that it did not rain during his special ministry of three and a half years.

Scriptural support that one of these may be Elijah is to be found in the last two verses of the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5,6). God in this passage promised that He would send Elijah the prophet to Israel before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes, the great Tribulation, to turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the children to the parents. The Jews rightly believe that God will send Elijah the prophet before Messiah appears. When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John (Matt. 17:1-13), the Apostles asked Him why the Pharisees believed that Elijah must first

come. "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things." When Jesus made that statement, they understood that He was talking of John the Baptist, calling him Elijah. John the Baptist was *an* Elijah. But he was not Elijah the prophet. The angel Gabriel expressed this idea to Zacharias, when he announced the birth of John, saying that John would go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. He would be *an* Elijah, but not Elijah the prophet. When John began his ministry, he was asked by a delegation from Jerusalem if he were Messiah. He immediately denied that he was the Messiah. Then he was asked if he were Elijah the prophet. To this question he also gave a most emphatic denial. Since Elijah is to return before the great and terrible day of the Lord, since John the Baptist was simply *an* Elijah and not *the* Elijah, and since these two witnesses engage in a ministry similar to that which Elijah performed, we may conclude that one of these witnesses mentioned by John is Elijah the prophet. Whether or not the other one is Moses or Enoch, no one can be positive. It is not necessary for us to understand that point in order to appreciate and evaluate the prophecy.

In Revelation 11:4 John tells us that these two witnesses are "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth." This language is an echo of Zechariah, chapter 4. In vision Zechariah saw a candlestick standing between two olive trees. There were pipes from the trees to a bowl suspended over the candlestick. From the bowl to each of the seven lamps there were seven pipes, through which the oil, that came from the trees into the bowl, flowed into the lamps. The symbolism was so very clear that it was not necessary to explain it. The candlestick represented Israel, who held aloft the torch of God's revelation to the world during the Old Testament Dispensation. The olive oil, when used symbolically, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. (But let us never say that it is used symbolically unless the facts of the context indicate that meaning.) The oil flowed constantly from the olive trees into the bowl and thence into the lamps. The interpreting angel said that the olive trees were "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14). In Zechariah's day the two anointed ones there referred to were none other than Zerubbabel, the prince of the house of David, and governor of the restored community, and Joshua the high priest. Thus they were filled with the Spirit of God and He, the Spirit of God, flowed out through them to the community of Israel and caused it to be the lampstand, or torch bearer, of the truth to the heathen world around. The same symbolism is referred to in Revelation, chapter 11. These two witnesses stand in relation to the rest of Israel that Zerubbabel and Joshua did in Zechariah's day.

While, according to Malachi's prophecy, Elijah comes and engages in a special ministry in Israel before the Tribulation begins, these two witnesses likewise engage in a special ministry during the first half of the Tribulation. The things that they do are expressed in the following words: "These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire" (11:6). This language is to be taken at its face value, for the Lord meant exactly what He said and said what He meant.

In verses 7-10 of this chapter we read of the beast, of whom we shall study in chapters 13 and 17, and who slays these two men. There will be great jubilation throughout the world over their death. They will send presents one to another in their rejoicing over the death of these two men. We are told that "from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *men* look upon their dead bodies three days and, a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb" (vs. 9). These men are killed in Jerusalem, yet people from all nations will look upon their dead bodies. In all probability this refers to television.

At the end of the three and a half days, these men will be restored to life and will then ascend into heaven. Their enemies will see them as they leave the earth on their way to heaven and a cloud will receive them out of their sight.

At that time there will be a terrific earthquake that will destroy seven thousand persons in Jerusalem. People will be shaken with dread and fear by the disastrous earthquake and will give glory to God. As to whether their turning to God is genuine, the text does not say.

(Installation Fourteen)

**Part I: Setting The Stage For The Latter Part Of The Tribulation**

A person must always understand the cardinal points of the compass, if he is to work properly and efficiently. When he loses his sense of direction, a man cannot know the direction to take in order to reach his objective. The same thing is true with reference to study or thought regarding any subject. In our study of the Book of Revelation we have come to the consideration of 11:15-19. This portion of scripture has generally been misunderstood. This fact has led to endless confusion and to the manufacture of various theories, which are most important, as they affect the entire interpretation of the Book of Revelation and other vital matters of prophetic investigation. These statements being true, we must stop and get our bearings as we go through the maze of the intricacies of this portion of the book. Let it be remembered by the student that chapters 6-19 (the second main subdivision in the third section of the book) deal with the Tribulation proper. The chronological order of events, as they will occur during the Tribulation, is set forth in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. A cursory reading of these chapters shows that there are three series of judgments set forth: The seals, appearing in chapter 6, and covering what we might roughly term the *first quarter* of the Tribulation; the trumpet judgments, found in chapters 8 and 9 covering what we might call the *second quarter* of the Tribulation; and the bowl judgments, found in chapter 16, and occurring during the *latter half* of the Tribulation. The relation between these three series of judgments is of the utmost importance and must be clearly seen in order to have a proper understanding of the entire book. When the first seal is broken, something definite takes place upon the earth. The same thing is true with reference to the breaking of the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth seals. But when the seventh one is broken, nothing definite takes place upon the earth; on the contrary, the seven angels who are going to blow the seven trumpets prepare to do so. These seven trumpets are recorded in chapters 8 and 9. The last three of the seven are called *woes*, because of the far-reaching and devastating effects that they will have upon the people of the earth. When the first trumpet is blown, something definite takes place upon the earth. The same thing is true with reference to the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. But when the seventh trumpet is blown, nothing definite takes place. On the contrary, when this occurs, the seven angels that will pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath prepare to enact their part in this closing drama of human history. When the seven angels who have the seven bowl judgments pour them out, something definite and specific occurs on the earth. When the seventh bowl is poured out, the wrath of God is completed. Thus the seven bowl judgments come out of the seventh trumpet; and the seven trumpets develop out of the seventh seal.

As stated above, chapters 8 and 9 give us the six trumpet Judgments. When we arrive at the tenth chapter, we come to what is known as the minor, or little, parenthesis of the book, which consists of chapters 10:1-11:13. We have already seen that, in chapter 10, appears the prophecy of John's eating the little book, the final part of the revelation to be given in the book. And in Revelation 11:1-13 is the information concerning the Temple at Jerusalem, which the Jews will build in the end of this age, and which will be standing during the Tribulation. Also we read of the two witnesses that will appear in Israel for the purpose of restoring the family relations of the Chosen People. All of this material, 10:1-11:13, is the little parenthesis at the very close of the account of the sixth trumpet. Chronologically speaking, 11:14 follows 9:21.

## The Relation of Revelation 11:15-19 to 15:5-16:21

The sixth trumpet brings us to the middle of the Tribulation Period, as we have already seen and noted by the facts to which attention has been directed. With 11:15 we begin the study of the second half of the

Tribulation. Here we read: "15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17 saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be Judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth. 19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:15-19).

A careful study of these verses shows that they constitute an announcement, a summary, of what will result by the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation. This paragraph is closely connected with 15:5-8, which verses constitute an introduction to chapter 16.

One can see that we have in 11:15-15:8 what is termed the major or great, parenthesis of the Book of Revelation. In this section we have three symbols presented: That of the woman (12:1); that of the red dragon (12:3); and that of the seven angels who have the seven bowls of the wrath of God. Thus this section gives us an explanation of these three symbols and related data. When we realize the parenthetic nature of 11:15-15:8, and when we read 11:15-19, and follow this section immediately by 15:5-8, we can see the connection of the chronological order of events. In other words, 15:5 takes up the thought that is dropped in 11:19. Hence, by following 11:15-19 with 15:5-8, we follow the chronological order of events as they will occur during the Tribulation.

As we shall see when we come to study 12:1-15:4, all of this section gives us the stage setting of the middle and the latter half of the Tribulation. It is absolutely essential that we understand these things in order to comprehend the development of the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation as set forth in chapter 16.

#### Announcement by the First Choir

##### *John's Prophecy Regarding the World Kingdom*

"15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,  
"The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15).

As stated above, when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, there are two choruses making special announcements regarding what will be the outcome of the judgments that develop out of the seventh trumpet. When this seventh trumpet is sounded, John sees the temple of God in heaven opened (11:19). When it is opened, there comes out of it a terrible storm indicative of God's wrath and indignation against the world. After this great storm, with thunders and lightnings, passes before John's gaze, the temple is closed. Then there is flashed before his startled vision, on the prophetic screen, the data that is found in 12:1-15:4, the material that gives the stage setting and the things that will be in existence during the second half of the Tribulation. When they pass before his vision, the temple of God in heaven is opened the second time. Then come forth out of this temple the seven angels who bear in their arms the seven bowls of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:5-8). These angels stand at attention, ready to obey any commands. The order goes forth to them: "Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (16:1).

After this necessary digression from our main theme, let us return to Revelation 11:15 and the announcement that is being made regarding the kingdom of the world and its becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The Authorized Version of the Scriptures has the word, kingdom, in the plural number; "The kingdoms of this world are become the *kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ." The Standard Edition (rev. 1901) follows the Greek text accurately and states, "The kingdom of the world is become . . ." At the time of which John is here speaking, there will be but one kingdom. All the kingdoms of the world will be united under one ruthless sovereign dictator, the Antichrist. It is of the utmost importance that we recognize this fact.

#### *Daniel's Prophecy Regarding the World Kingdom*

"23 Thus he [the interpreting angel] said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. 25 And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time" (Dan. 7:23-25).

The four beasts of Daniel, chapter 7, are symbolic of four kings that arise out of the earth (Dan. 7:17). These beasts symbolize not only the kings, the sovereigns of these kingdoms, but the kingdoms themselves. Figuratively speaking, when the spotlight is turned on in this prophecy of Daniel, chapter 7, we see the king; but when the floodlight is turned on, we view the realm over which he reigns. According to 7:23 the fourth beast will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces. The expression, "the whole earth," means exactly what it says—the entire world, all nations. Next, according to 7:24, that mighty empire will collapse, falling into ten separate divisions, over each of which a dictator will arise and usurp the authority. After this takes place, there will arise a little horn, the Antichrist, who will worm his way into favor with the ten dictators and gradually gain power until he becomes master of the situation. By the middle of the Tribulation he will be supreme—after having put down three of the dictators, he will become the absolute sovereign.

The seven kings that remain become simply "rubber stamps," or "yes men." This same situation we see in Revelation 13:7; "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." The reader should note the fact that "there was given to him [the Antichrist] authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." From these and other passages of scripture we know positively that the world will be headed up under one great sovereign in the end time. Hence, there will be the Kingdom of the world in the end time, of which John spoke, and which will, at the end of the Tribulation, become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

That the kingdom does not become the kingdom of Christ until the end of the Tribulation is evident from many passages of scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New. In view of this fact we know that John, in making this prophecy, is looking forward to the end of the Tribulation.

#### Second Announcement by the Twenty-four Elders

After the first choir had made its grand and glorious announcement that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, "the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17 saying,

"We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be Judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:16-18).

The second choir begins by thanking the Lord God, the Almighty, who inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15), because of several things which He does. They acknowledge His absolute authority. God's throne is exalted above all, and His authority is over the entire universe. (On this point, see Psalm 103:19-22.) All power belongs to God (Ps. 62:11). No one can question the rights, the prerogatives, and the sovereignty of the Almighty. Knowing these great basic and fundamental facts, the twenty-four elders, celestial beings, return thanks to God for the stability of the universe in which they live, and for the absolute sovereignty of their Lord.

#### *Gratitude for God's Assuming Absolute Control*

These elders praise God because He takes His great power and reigns. This statement, of course, harmonizes with the thought of verse 15, which says that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. But, as we have already seen, the kingdom of the world does not become the kingdom of Christ until the end of the Tribulation. Hence, the taking of His power as indicated in verse 18 is a reference to His taking over the kingdom at the end of the Tribulation. This fact must be clearly grasped if we are to understand the rest of this passage.

#### *The Nations Become Wrathful*

These celestial beings are grateful to God that the nations become wrathful, and God then is justified in taking over His authority over all human affairs. They are not gloating over the fact that the nations become wrathful, but their being wrathful gives God occasion to take the world situation in hand, and to establish a righteous and a just order from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

#### *God's Wrath Stirred*

According to verse 18, when the nations become wrathful, then that fact stirs up the wrath of God to its very depth. He therefore acts according to the principles of righteousness, justice, and holiness.

#### *The Time to Judge the Dead*

In verse 18 the statement is made that, at this time, when God takes over the kingdom of the world—which is at the end of the Tribulation—the time arrives for God to reward His "servants the prophets," and "the saints," and "them that fear thy name." When is the time that God rewards his servants the prophets, and the saints, and those who fear His name? There can be but one answer, in the light of the facts of this context and the drift of thought, namely, at the end of the Tribulation, when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Unfortunately, some good Bible teachers, not realizing or failing to note the drift of thought and the connection, have supposed that the dead are raised and the saints are rewarded in the middle of the Tribulation. They come to this conclusion because of the fact that, when we are studying chapter 11, we are investigating things in connection with the middle of the Tribulation. But when a person realizes that 11:15-19 constitutes an announcement that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord

and His Christ, and that these other things are in connection with that development, then he can see that the dead are raised and the Saints are rewarded at the end of the Tribulation.

That the dead, both the saints of the Old Testament and those of the New, will be judged and rewarded at the end of the Tribulation, is evident from a study of Psalm 50:1-5:

- 1 The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, hath spoken,  
And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth.
- 3 Our God cometh, and doth not keep silence:  
A fire devoureth before him, And it is very tempestuous round about him.
- 4 He calleth to the heavens above, And to the earth, that he may judge his people:
- 5 Gather my saints together unto me, Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

In verses 1 and 2 of this psalm we see Christ after He has come to the earth and has built up Zion, which becomes the beauty spot of the world. In 50:3 we see Christ coming, as He will, at the end of the Tribulation (cf. II Thess. 1:3-10). In Psalm 50:4 we see Christ giving a call to the heavens above and to the earth for His messengers—the angelic host—to gather His people together, "Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice," in order that they might be judged. This certainly is not the judgment of the great white throne, which occurs at the end of the Millennium, but it is the Judgment seat of Christ, before which all of God's saints will appear and where they will be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. In view of this fact, then, we know that the thing's mentioned in Revelation 11:18 will occur at the end of the Tribulation, when Christ comes to take over the kingdom of the world into His own strong, powerful hands.

#### *Christ to Destroy Them that Destroy the Earth*

When Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation, He will destroy those who are destroying the earth. This statement is to be taken literally, at its face value. Not until after the discovery of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and such other powerful weapons of war as we now have, did we see the full force of what is meant by the statement that Christ will "destroy them that destroy the earth." The scientists have learned how to avail themselves of the mighty power of the atom. The scientists know that, by the development of still more powerful means of destruction, a chain reaction could well set up that could destroy the earth. Man is discovering the secret of power and of the real nature of the material of which the earth is made. If the Lord should allow them to continue their research and discoveries, they would destroy the earth physically. But God will not allow them to do that. He will intervene and will destroy them and stop their diabolic work.

#### The Opening of the Temple of God in Heaven

"19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his "temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:19). That there is a temple of God in heaven is seen in such passages as Psalm 11:4. This is called, in theological language, "the very presence of God." This place is seen in Hebrews, chapter 9, and is spoken of as the true sanctuary of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

At this point in John's vision—at the middle of the Tribulation—the Apostle sees the temple of God in heaven opened. In it he sees the ark of the covenant, a spiritual reality. A little replica of it was built by



Moses and placed in the Tabernacle, a miniature model of the heavenly temple. Thus the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, were models of the reality that exists in the heavens from all eternity.

In the latter part of verse 19 there appears a terrific storm: "... and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." As we have already seen in Revelation 4:5, there proceeded out of the throne "lightnings and voices and thunders." In 8:5 there followed the actions of the angel, "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." The third place where this storm is seen is the verse which we have under consideration, namely, 11:19. The final verse where this terrific storm appears is 16:18: "... and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty." A glance at each of these passages reveals the fact that this storm is gathering force, momentum, and destructive power as one passes through the Tribulation, from beginning to end.

John saw and heard these manifestations at the time in this drama, as he has designated. This graphic manner of presenting the situation shows clearly that indignation and wrath are intended, because a storm naturally is a symbol of destructive force and power, which strike with an appalling accuracy and destructiveness. When we learn these facts and note other indications, we see that though the Tribulation starts out in a very destructive and terrific manner, the storm of God's wrath gathers momentum and power and leaves death and destruction in its wake.

No one who knows the forces that will be set in operation during the Tribulation and the sorrows and the distress that the judgments will entail would want to enter that period of God's judgments. There is but one thing for the intelligent, honest truth seeker to do today, and that is to flee to the Lord Jesus from the wrath that is to come. When the Lord Jesus Christ descends from heaven to the air before the Tribulation, He will raise the dead in Christ and catch up all the living saints, those who are born again, and who are ready for His coming. The rest will be left behind to enter into and to endure the terrific judgments of the Tribulation. Oh, my sinner friend, flee to the Lord Jesus Christ from the wrath to come!

(Installment Fifteen)  
**THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)**

**Part II: The Woman, Child, and the Dragon (12:1-17)**

"And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (Revelation 12:1-6)

Again we must get our bearings before proceeding with the exposition of the Book of Revelation. The title of this section is "The Great Parenthesis of the Book of Revelation." As we have noticed a number of times, the chronological order of events as they will occur during the Tribulation, is set forth in chapters 6, 8, and 9, and 16. As we have already seen, chapter 7 is an interlarded vision of the great revival that will sweep the world during the first half of the Tribulation. Revelation 10:1-11:13 constitutes the Minor Parenthesis of the book and is inserted in the narrative which describes the second woe, or sixth trumpet. As we saw in the last study, 11:15-19 is a short, yet vital, summary of the outcome of the judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation, which prepares one for the proper estimation of the judgments of the latter half of this period of indignation. We might compare these verses to the large headlines in a daily paper, which are placed at the head of an article, and which summarize all that appears in the write-up. What appears in 12:1-15:4 gives us the stage setting. This portion informs us of the political situation that will exist during the Tribulation, especially in the latter part of it. It likewise tells of the terrible plight of Israel, that will have to flee from his land to a place prepared by the Lord for him during the greatest persecution that the nation has ever endured. In chapter 14, however, there is given a vision of the millennial Jerusalem in contrast with it when the Antichrist is proclaimed the dictator of the world (Rev., chap. 13). There are several announcements concerning the events as they will develop during the latter half of the Tribulation. And, finally, in the latter part of chapter 14, is a prediction of the great struggle that takes place at the end of the Tribulation and a vivid description of the overthrow of the forces of evil. In 15:1-4 appears a vision of those who will come off victorious from the beast, the Antichrist, during the latter part of the Tribulation.

The Symbolic Woman

John is very specific. He tells us that he saw a "great sign," or symbol, in heaven. He then proceeds to describe this symbol, which was a woman arrayed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and with a crown of twelve stars upon her head.

Let us note carefully that this woman is called a *sign*, a symbol. This statement should cause us to keep our bearings as we study the Book of Revelation. Unfortunately, many commentators have explained that Revelation is a book of symbols. If this were true, there would be no necessity and no occasion of the Lord's speaking of this woman as a sign, or of His designating the red dragon also as a sign. Everything in the Book of Revelation should be taken at its literal face value unless the facts of the context and related

passages indicate that it is used in a figurative, or symbolic, sense. When the facts indicate a departure from the literal meaning, that fact should be noted, and the interpretation that accords with the passage should be adopted.

Who is this symbolic woman? Some tell us that she is not a symbol, although the statement is made that she is a sign. These commentators tell us that this is none other than the Virgin Mary. If it referred to her, there would be no occasion for John's calling her a symbol. The fact that she is called a sign shows that a literal woman is not intended. There are others who say that the woman is the Church. As evidence that this position is correct, they call our attention to the fact that the Church is spoken of as a bride. Yes, it is true that the Church is spoken of as a woman, the bride of Christ. But this woman cannot symbolize the Church, because she gives birth to the man child "who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron." The Church does not give birth to this future Ruler. But in this connection, it should be asked, Who is this man child that is to rule the nations with a rod of iron? The answer is, the Christ, the Son of God, who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and who is to break the nations to pieces and rule over them with a rod of iron justice (Ps. 2). In view of this fact, we cannot accept the position that the woman is the Church, because the Church did not give birth to the man child.

The correct interpretation, which is demanded by all the facts, is that this woman signifies Israel. It was the Hebrew race that produced the Christ, the man child. Isaiah sang, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa. 9:6). We therefore conclude that this man child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron is the Christ, the Messiah of Israel.

When a person reads this passage in the light of related facts, he comes to the conclusion that this symbolic woman gives birth to the symbolic man child, who is to reign over the nations. If this man child is the Christ, how can this symbolize Him as a person? The New Testament speaks of the mystical Christ, consisting of Christ the head and the Church the body. Christ sprang forth from the loins of Israel. The Church likewise came out of Israel. The Church at first was purely a Jewish institution. So it is quite in keeping with all the facts to think of this man child, here symbolized, as the mystical Christ—Christ the head and the Church the body.

### The Sunclad Woman

John states that the woman "was arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Since this is a symbolic picture, we conclude that the sun and the moon and the stars have the natural significance of those celestial bodies. They give light. We conclude, therefore, that the Lord intended for us to understand that Israel is the torchbearer of the truth at this future time. There radiates from her a glorious spiritual light, like that of the sun, which shines forth unto every nook and corner of the world at that time. The moon, the lesser light, is under her feet and gives forth the light of truth. The crown of twelve stars are also functioning in the same manner.

### The Birth of the Man Child

This woman was with child, and the labor pains were coming upon her in order that she might be delivered (vs. 2). In verse 5 she is delivered of a son, "a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne."

Christ, as has been stated, is the man child—without a doubt. But since the Church is to reign along with Christ, and since this man child is to rule over all nations with a rod of iron, many excellent commentators understand that this man child is the mystical Christ. Christ, the head, was born into the world nineteen hundred years ago. As soon as He was born, Herod, inspired by Satan, made an attempt to destroy Him. But by the overruling providence of God all of Herod's machinations for evil were

thwarted, and the Christ child was preserved and grew up to manhood and engaged in His public ministry. After He had completed His life's work, Christ allowed Himself to be crucified in order that He might offer Himself up as a sacrifice well pleasing to God to make atonement for the sins of the world. On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ the Holy Spirit came and inspired the Apostles to give the message of redemption through the shed Blood of Christ. On that day there were approximately three thousand souls who accepted the gospel message, were regenerated and saved, and were added together into the body of Christ. Thus on this day the mystical Christ was formed, Christ the head, the Church the body. The Church had just been brought into existence a little while when the persecution of Satan was launched against it, and for the first three centuries of its existence Satan launched one attack after another in order to destroy the body of Christ. But it is needless to say that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the kingdom. Satan's seeming triumph against the body of Christ proved to be in reality the means whereby the new faith was propagated and sent out to the ends of the earth.

But in the prediction in Revelation 12:1-6 we see that the man child "was caught up unto God, and unto his throne," away from the attempts of the dragon, the Devil, to destroy it. As stated above, Christ the head was caught up into heaven at the time of His ascension. The body, the Church of Christ, will be caught up at the time of the rapture, which occurs before the Tribulation. That this is true is seen from such a passage as 1 Thessalonians 1:9,10: "9 For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." We, the Church, are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ who will deliver us from the wrath to come, from the Tribulation judgments.

### The Symbol of the Dragon

In verse 8 John declares that he saw another sign, another symbol and then he describes it: "... and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems."

#### *The Significance of the Dragon*

Since the dragon is a symbol, it signifies something, or someone. Who? The answer is found in 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him."

#### *The Seven Heads and the Ten Horns*

What is the significance of the heads and the horns of the dragon? This is a difficult question to answer. We are told that like begets like. All life springs from antecedent life. In Revelation 13:1,2 we see that the beast of the Book of Revelation had seven heads and ten horns—a duplicate of the red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns. When we study the beast, we see that the heads signify various types of governments that control the beast during its entire career. This beast, as all commentators recognize, is a symbol of the Roman Empire, the fourth of the series in Daniel, chapter 7. The head is the governing part of the body. This beast had seven heads—one at a time. Five of these had already come and passed away. One was in existence when John wrote the Book of Revelation, and there is to come a seventh head. Since the head is the governing part of the body, evidently, then, that special type of government which Rome had was signified by the head. A glance at the history of Rome shows that there were different changes in the specific policy and form of government, but it was the same old beast throughout its history. The horns are symbols of kings or governmental power. Since these heads and horns on the beast

signify government, or types of government, it is quite likely that the seven heads on the old red dragon signify seven different types of administration of his kingdom that Satan has. The seven horns likewise may signify seven different individual spirits under Satan, whom he uses to carry out his diabolical plans and plots of the end time. (What I have just said is simply a conjecture and should not be proclaimed as the absolute interpretation of the significance of the heads and horns of the old red dragon. But the suggestions are at least worthy of consideration.)

### *The Fall of One-third of the Angels*

In verse 4 we are told that the dragon draws one-third part of the stars of heaven and casts them down to the earth. Let us bear in mind that the dragon is the symbol of Satan. The stars are not literal in this connection, because that does not make good common sense. Stars, then, must be used in a symbolic sense. When they are thus used, as we see in Daniel 8:10, they signify intelligent beings. In the case of the passage in the Book of Daniel the stars are the prominent Jews of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose activities reference is made in the prophecy. But these stars of heaven that are mentioned in Revelation 12:4 are intelligent beings in heaven. When we recognize that Satan led a rebellion in heaven in the past, as is indicated in several passages of the Scriptures, it is most highly probable that this passage refers to his leading one-third of the celestial beings in a revolt against God.

### *Satan at His Old Tricks*

In the passage which we have under consideration, we are given to understand that Satan is fighting against God, as he has always done, and is up to his old tricks. He made a stroke against God when he led the revolt which resulted in the downfall of one-third of the angels. When the Christ child was born, Satan made another stroke at God by trying to have the Baby Jesus killed. When the early Church came into existence, he began his persecutions against it. He has never ceased his animosity against God, nor his efforts to thwart or hinder the purposes and plans of the Almighty in the end time—in the end of this dispensation. There is little doubt that Satan will strike at the Church, attempting to give it a solar plexus blow. But the Church will be snatched out of the world by the mighty power of Christ at the rapture, before the Tribulation.

But, in the middle of the Tribulation, Satan will strike again at God, in that he will try to destroy the Jewish nation, which will flee from the wrath of Satan to a place prepared for her by the Lord, where Israel will be for one thousand, two hundred, and three-score days, that is, for the latter half of the Tribulation. Just where this place is, one cannot be dogmatic in asserting. There is, however, a suggestion that may be based upon a passage found in Daniel, chapter 11. In World War II of the Tribulation Period, that conflict will break out and will spread like wildfire all over the earth, affecting all countries with the exception of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. It is altogether possible that Israel in the land in the middle of the Tribulation will flee to these countries that now constitute Transjordan. Let us only think of this suggestion and not make it an article of faith!

Regardless of where this place is, the nation Israel will flee—or a portion of it will flee—to it and be nourished of God for 1260 days. That God will supply the needs and provide everything necessary for the faithful remnant during the Tribulation is set forth in Isaiah 33:15,16: "... his bread shall be given *him*, his waters shall be sure."

(Installment Sixteen)

## THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)

### Part III: The Woman and the Dragon (12:7-17)

As we have already seen, the woman and the dragon are symbols. The woman signified Israel, especially the faithful remnant of the end time. The dragon is a symbol of the devil, the great adversary of God and man.

In the middle of the Tribulation Satan makes a determined stand against God and against Israel. He has had access to the throne of God throughout the ages—since his rebellion, as set forth in Ezekiel 28:11-19. For various reasons at different times he goes into the presence of the Almighty. Even one of his fallen spirits appears in the presence of God, as we see in I Kings 22:19-23. How often, or how many, or under what conditions Satan and his servile spirits enter into the presence of God, the Scriptures do not tell us. In the passage now under consideration we see that both Satan and his emissaries are in heaven in the middle of the Tribulation.

#### War in Heaven

It is amazing to us that Satan and his hosts would be permitted to enter heaven. Moreover, it surprises us that there should be war in heaven. But when we study this passage in the light of others, we are not so very much surprised after all.

That there has been war in heaven before is quite evident from the statement of Bildad in Job 25:2:

"Dominion and fear are with him;  
He maketh peace in his high places."

This statement of Bildad's certainly does imply that there was war and rebellion in the highest places of the entire universe. God put this revolt down, according to this statement.

Isaiah the prophet seems to allude to this very thing in 51:9: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?" When we examine the context, of this verse, we see that the prophet was looking forward to the time of the Tribulation, and that he called upon the "arm of Jehovah," none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, to act decisively. In urging him by the Spirit of God to do this, he asked this unusual question: "Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?" This rhetorical question demands an answer in the affirmative. Yes, it was Christ the "arm of Jehovah," who pierced Rahab and cut him in pieces. This refers to the conflict at the original rebellion of Satan against God. Christ took the field of battle and fought against Satan, who is here called Rahab, and his hosts. In Psalm 74:12-14 there is probably another reference to the same conflict between Christ, the Son of God, and Satan and his hosts. In this psalm our author is discussing what will occur in the Tribulation, as is indicated by the context. Thus he addresses Christ and says:

"12 Yet God is my King of old,  
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.  
13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength:  
Thou brakest the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces;  
Thou gavest him to be food to the people inhabiting the wilderness."

An additional reference to this conflict is set forth by Jude in verses 6 and 7: "6 And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." These rebellious angels were cast down and have been kept in bonds under darkness, awaiting the judgment of the great day.

When we read Revelation 12:7-9, we see that Satan and his rebellious emissaries will be in heaven itself. Then Michael and his angels will go forth to war and will drive them out. As to whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ enters the fray, we cannot say; but His power and might evidently energize Michael and his angels, enabling them to drive out these wicked, servile spirits.

In verse 9 we have a clear description of Satan. Here he is represented under the symbolism of the "great red dragon" and is called "the old serpent." This latter name evidently is an echo of that which we read in Genesis, chapter 3. Either the devil assumed the form of a serpent on that occasion, or he used the serpent as a cat's-paw and thus brought about man's downfall. Moreover, this sinister enemy of God and man is called "the Devil and Satan." The latter term, Satan, is of Hebrew origin and means "adversary."

Satan is the deceiver of the whole world, a fact that is little known. The world lies in the Evil One and is deceived and blinded by this sinister being who is determined on man's downfall. Though the human heart is evil and desperately wicked, men would not resort to the many things which they do, if it were not for the blinding influence of Satan.

John saw the result of this conflict in heaven. Satan "was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (Rev. 12:9). Thus they are expelled from the presence of God, never to return there again.

#### A Voice From Heaven

When Satan and his hosts are hurled out of the courts of heaven, John heard a voice coming forth from the presence of God saying: "Now is come the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."

This quotation begins with the following statement: "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ ..." We know that the kingdom does not become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ until the end of the Tribulation, which comes three and a half years later. We must understand this language, therefore, to be an announcement concerning the beginning of the end. When we look at the entire sweep of the Book of Revelation, we see that the third series of judgments, namely, the bowl judgments, begins right away after this and continues thereafter through the latter half of the Tribulation and culminates in the turning over of the kingdom of the world to God and to His Christ. Hence, these words are most appropriate on this occasion.

In the latter part of verse 10 we have the statement: "... For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night." Satan is the greatest tattletale in the world. He is a blasphemer and is a liar, for he was that from the beginning of his downward career, when he rebelled against God. He misrepresents and falsely accuses the brethren all the time. He never speaks the truth,

unless it is for his advantage. He warps, twists, and modifies and changes things. He constantly accuses the people of God before the Almighty. Let all Christians recognize this fact, and let them be very careful about their thoughts and their actions, yes, their entire lives! For if they sidestep, Satan will accuse them before God and throw the fact into the face of the Almighty that His saints are thus acting.

The saints who are accused by Satan before God during the Tribulation are of course the Tribulation saints. We have already seen in our discussion of chapter 7 that the world-wide revival will sweep the earth through the first half of the Tribulation Period. This revival will be conducted by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists to whom we are now giving the truth of the Word of God. After the church is raptured, as we have already learned, and the Tribulation Judgments are beginning to fall upon the earth, there will arise 144,000 of these noble Jewish men who will go forth into every nook and corner of the world and lead hundreds of millions of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Satan will be indignant at them and will accuse them before God for everything that they might do or say, and for things which they never do or say.

But these overcome and are victorious "because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life unto death." There is power in the blood of the Lamb. There is power and strength in people's standing for their convictions and giving their testimony—true statements of fact concerning their relationship to God and to Christ and His living His life in them. No false testimony, no exaggerated statements will honor and glorify God. But when people are truthful, know the Lord Jesus Christ, give their testimony, and are willing to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the cause of Christ, then power from God flows into their souls, and they are energized by the Spirit of God and live for Him. There is therefore such a thing as victory in Christ. The Apostle Paul said: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). We are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us (Rom. 8:37) and who lives His life in us.

In Revelation 12:12 this voice that comes forth from heaven speaks to the intelligent beings in heaven saying: "12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, "knowing that he hath but a short time." The end, as we have already seen, is in sight. This one making the announcement calls to all those who are in heaven, the celestial host, and also the redeemed and saved ones who are in heaven, urging them to rejoice because the final drama is just about to be enacted and the deliverance of the world is at hand.

But during the last act of this drama—the last three and a half years of the Tribulation—Satan is upon earth. He no longer has access to the throne of God. He is indignant, because he has been defeated and driven out of heaven and knows that his time is short. Thus he makes good use of every split second of time that remains to him, because he knows that his defeat is certain and his overthrow is sure.

### The Dragon Persecutes the Woman

In verses 13-17 we have Satan's activity against Israel, represented by the woman, that is, the faithful remnant of Israel. Satan has, throughout the past, persecuted the Jewish people as he has no other nation upon the face of the globe, but what he has done in the past is insignificant in comparison to what he will do to it in the future—in the latter half of the Tribulation. According to Zechariah 13:8,9, two-thirds of the Jews will be butchered and slaughtered and go down into the oblivion of forgetfulness, without God and without hope in the world—one of the saddest, most pathetic pictures that is to be found in the entire revelation of God.

According to Revelation 12:14 "there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." The dragon is symbolic, as we have already learned, and likewise the woman is a symbol. Her being given the two wings of the great eagle also is symbolic in its significance.



The woman, Israel, flees from Palestine into a place that is prepared for her, where she remains for "a time, and times, and half a time," three and one-half years, the period spoken of in terms of days in 12:6. Where is this place to which the woman flees? Some have suggested Petra. That is a plausible explanation, but it will not satisfy all the conditions. When we recognize that World War II of the Tribulation, which occurs in the middle of the Tribulation, breaks out and spreads all over the entire world, involving every nation except three, namely, Amman, Moab, and Edom; and when we realize that the woman flees to a place for protection against the old serpent, we come to the conclusion that probably the place to which she flees is Transjordan, which consists of those three countries, Ammon, Moab, and Edom.

While the woman is in this place, she will be fed miraculously, for we are given that information in Isaiah 33:13-16. The remnant will be protected and will be given food and water: "... He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given *him*; his waters shall be sure."

When the woman flees from the serpent to her place, as we see in this symbolic picture, the serpent sends out a river that is designed to destroy her. Since this is a symbolic picture, therefore the river, also, is evidently symbolic. When a river is used in a figurative sense, as it is here, what is its significance? It is clear from such a passage as Isaiah 8:5-8 that a river, when thus used symbolically, signifies an army that invades a country. Thus, when we see these facts, we are certain that the stream which the serpent is represented as casting out of his mouth is nothing else but an army that the devil will cause to be sent against the woman (Israel) to exterminate her.

But in this symbolic picture we are told in verse 16 by John that "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth." This signifies the overthrow by a divine stroke of the forces that are sent against Israel at this crucial moment.

Seeing and realizing that he is thwarted in his evil purpose of exterminating Israel from the face of the globe, the dragon "waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17). The rest of the seed of the woman that are mentioned here evidently are Jews other than those that are in Palestine, against whom he sends his armies. But these against, whom he directs his final attack are the seed of the woman, Israel, "that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." Evidently, then, these are Hebrew believers, against whom Satan at that time will direct his severe blows. But they will be protected and will be cared for, as we see from various passages of Scripture. God knows how to take care of His own. He does it in His own way and in His own time.

(Installment Seventeen)

## THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)

### Part IV: The Beast and the World Kingdom of the End Time (13:1-10)

We must bear in mind that in Revelation 11:15 to 15:8 we are studying the "great parenthesis" of the book. In this section we have a description of conditions as they will exist in the middle of the Tribulation.

These are given in order that we may understand the events as they unfold during the latter half of the Tribulation.

We have already seen that Jerusalem will be very prominent in the end time. The Temple will be rebuilt. The Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews for seven years. Then he breaks it. At that time the faithful Israelites in the land of Palestine will flee to a place in the wilderness—probably in Transjordan, where they will be preserved and provided for during the latter half of the Tribulation. Satan will do all that he can against the Jewish people in order to exterminate them. He will use the Antichrist and vast armies of the nation in order to wipe out every vestige of Jewry from the face of the globe—but will be unsuccessful, because God providentially will intervene and will prevent the extermination of His Chosen People, whom He will yet use in the future.

As the panorama unfolds before our eyes, we next see the beast, who is mentioned in Revelation, chapter 13:11-18, and also in chapter 17:1-6.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYMBOLIC BEAST

In Revelation 13:1,2 we have the following language: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." When we look at this passage we see instantly that this is not a natural beast, because it is a composite one. It had seven heads and ten horns. Its body was like a leopard, and its feet were as the feet of a bear. Its mouth was as the mouth of a lion. There is no such monstrosity upon the face of the globe. When we realize that fact, we see that this beast is a symbol. Whenever such a use appears in the Scriptures, we ask ourselves, What is the significance of it? The answer to this question is to be found in such a passage as Daniel, chapter 7.

When we study this passage, briefly, here is what we learn: Daniel saw a sea, the waters of which were being lashed into a fury by the four winds of the earth. Under these conditions he saw coming forth from the troubled waters a lion-like beast that came out upon the land, and that was master of all he surveyed for a certain time. Then again, the waters were troubled by the winds. At this time a second beast emerged from the disturbed waters. This time the beast coming up out of the waters was like a bear, which came upon the land, took the place of the lion-like beast, became master of all it surveyed, and continued for a while. For a third time the waters were whipped into a raging fury. At this time there came forth a leopard-like beast, with four heads and the wings of an eagle. This third beast took the place of the second one and became master of all it surveyed, pushing its boundaries however, farther than those of its predecessors. For a fourth time the winds lashed the waters of the troubled sea. On this occasion a nondescript beast came forth out of the water upon the land and took the place of the third animal. This beast was entirely different from all the others and had ten horns upon its head.

Daniel was quite excited over what he saw. Then an angel came and interpreted the significance of these beasts. His words are: "17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, that shall arise out of

the earth" (Dan. 7:17). From this verse we learn that these symbols signified kings—four beasts, four kings. Then again, in verse 23 of this same chapter, we read; "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." From this verse we see that a beast symbolizes not only the king of a realm, but the kingdom over which he reigns. Thus there is a twofold interpretation to the symbolic significance of a beast. Figuratively speaking, we say, in the first instance, the spotlight is used and is thrown upon the sovereign of the realm. We see him, but not the realm over which he reigns. In the second verse, we see the spotlight is no longer used, but the floodlight is turned on and the light is diffused upon the entire realm over which the king reigns. This twofold signification is of the utmost importance, if we are to understand and comprehend the significance of the passage which we have for consideration.

Who were the kings and what were the kingdoms symbolized by the four beasts that emerged from the waters in Daniel's vision? Prophetic students correctly interpret them as signifying the four world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Daniel was, figuratively speaking, at a spiritual moving picture show. There passed before his vision on the "screen" the history of these four different empires from their rise until the consummation, when the Ancient of Days enters the courtroom of heaven, pronounces judgment of condemnation upon the last emperor of the final empire, and by a stroke of judgment he is cast into the lake of fire.

Daniel tells that he foresaw the rise and the course of this fourth empire, the one that had the ten horns. He declares that he "beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, *and* the wheels thereof burning fire" (Dan. 7:9). When, in this spiritual moving picture show, the fourth beast was thrown upon the screen, it remained there until the Ancient of Days, the Judge of the universe, pronounced its doom. This fact creates the conviction that the fourth empire, Rome, succeeded the third empire, Greece, and will remain upon the historic scene until it is overthrown by the Ancient of Days and by the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, when He returns at the end of the Tribulation.

That Rome succeeded Greece and has been in existence through the centuries and will continue to the very end of the age at the second coming of Christ is seen in my volume, *The World's Greatest Library Graphically Illustrated*.

#### The Beast of Revelation, Chapters 13 and 17

A careful study of Daniel, chapter 7, along with Revelation 13:1-10 reveals the fact that the beast which John saw is the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. Daniel tells us that this beast had ten horns. But John, in Revelation 13:1,2, informs us that the fourth beast had seven heads and ten horns. From the seventeenth chapter of Revelation we see that these seven heads are not contemporaneous, but that they come up in succession, throughout the entire life of the beast, or the career of the kingdom which it symbolizes. Five heads, however, had already come and gone by John's day and time. One was then in existence. He informs us in chapter 17 that there will yet come another one, a seventh, that that one will be smitten, but, but will be brought back to life again, and that it will have ten horns. The ten horns will be upon the seventh head, not scattered over the seven heads as some have supposed.

The significance of a horn, when used symbolically, is that it indicates a king or regal power. Thus the ten horns represent ten kings, who will reign along with the beast during the time of the Tribulation.

If we should study carefully Daniel 7:23-25, we would see that the world is to be headed up in the end time into one great, colossal, universal kingdom. Then, according to verse 24, that kingdom will collapse and fall into ten different segments. Over each fragment there will arise a dictator who will seize the power and reign in that section of the world. Then there will arise out of obscurity a man, unknown to the world, who will be able to help and advise each of these dictators how to solve his problems. He will thus

assist in such a marvelous manner that power will gravitate into his hands. Finally, he will gain ascendancy among these ten king's and will eventually make a covenant with the apostate Jews for seven years. Whenever he does that, the Tribulation begins. He and these ten kings will reign contemporaneously for the first half of the Tribulation—the first three and a half years, although this little horn, the Antichrist, will have the ascendancy among the ten. In the middle of the Tribulation World War II of the Tribulation will sweep away three of these ten king's. Then the head man, the little horn of Daniel, chapter 7, the Antichrist, will gain such preponderance of power that he will reign as an absolute monarch. The rest of the kings will simply be rubber stamps, yes-men.

In the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist will receive the death stroke, which means that he will be murdered. According to Revelation, chapter 17, his spirit will descend into the abyss; but he will be brought up out of the abyss and restored to life by satanic power. When he thus comes back to life, he seizes the imperial purple and reigns with a ruthlessness and a severity such as no one has ever exercised before in the history of the world.

### The Supremacy of the Antichrist

When the Antichrist is brought back to life, he will show great signs, satanic power's, and wonders. Then approximately the whole world will wonder after him, being dazzled by the glamour and the show of this man. Of course, that which will blind the eyes will be the unprecedented display of supernatural power, which the devil will grant to the Antichrist: "And I saw one of his heads as though it had been, smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast" (13:3).

### The Worship of Satan and the Beast

"And the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" (Rev. 13:3c,4). There will be no one man, or combination of men, able to match swords with the Antichrist, who will be backed up by all the power of the devil. But, praise God, there is one who will be able, as we shall see later in these studies, to make war against him! That one is the Son of God, when He comes in power and glory and wins the war of the great day of God the Almighty.

### The Blasphemies of the Beast

Daniel, in chapter 7, informs us that this fourth beast, the Antichrist, will utter blasphemies and speak great swelling words. John informs us that "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. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, *even* them that dwell in the heaven" (Rev. 13:5,6). It is absolutely beyond our comprehension to take in the blasphemies which the Antichrist, under the inspiration of the devil, will utter at this future time. He will continue pouring out his hatred and vengeance against God, Christ, and holy men of God, for the latter half of the Tribulation, forty-two months.

### The World Kingdom of the Antichrist

As we have seen on former occasions in these studies, the world will be headed up under one great, colossal government. This is seen in Revelation 11:15, in the announcement that is made from heaven,

which says: "The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." Thus the world kingdom, at the end of the Tribulation, according to this announcement, is turned over to the Lord and to His Christ. In Revelation 13:7 we see that "it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe, and people and tongue and nation." This statement is in perfect accord with the one in Revelation, chapter 11, and other passages in the Word that show that there will be but one universal kingdom in the end time, over which the Antichrist will reign, with his subordinate kings about whom we have just learned.

All people of the world will, through fear, ignorance, and intimidation, worship the Antichrist. Much is said in the prophetic word concerning his forcing people to worship him. He will sit in the Temple of God at Jerusalem and set himself forth before the people as God. He will also oppose everything that is called God, or that is worshipped as God. Moreover, he will demand absolute worship from the inhabitants of the world.

Though he demands universal worship, there will be certain ones who will not bow the knee to him, just as seven thousand men refused to bow the knee to Baal in the days of Elijah. They had convictions and would not compromise or sell their spiritual heritage for a mess of pottage of popular favor. So there will be those, sincere, godly people, in the Tribulation, who will rather give up their lives than to bow the knee and worship this man who will be energized by Satan.

#### Those Whose Names Are Written in the Lamb's Book of Life

God foreknows the end from the beginning. He knows those who will be true to Him, and those who will not; those who will stand for convictions, and who will court the favor of the ruling classes. It is just as the Lord said in Acts, chapter 18. He told Paul to be of good courage, for He had much people in that city, that is, in Corinth. They were not His people in reality, but they were of such character that they would accept the truth when it was presented to them. God wanted Paul to remain there and to preach the gospel to them. This would be their call and election to eternal life. So there will be those in the Tribulation who will want truth, and nothing but truth. They will accept the truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ, as soon as it is presented to them. Hence, their names have, by anticipation, been written in the Lamb's Book of Life. There will be no erasures from that divine, holy record.

My friends, have you had your name written in the Lamb's book of life, by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the atonement for your sins? If you have not, may you do so at this time.

(Installment Eighteen)

**THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)****Part V: The Second Beast of Revelation (13:11-18)**

As we learned in the last study of this series, the first beast of Revelation 13:1-10 can be none other than the political power of the end time. As we also saw, the fourth beast of Daniel's vision (chap. 7) is identical with the beast of Revelation 13:1-10. According to Daniel the world kingdom of the end time collapses, falling into ten different parts. Immediately a dictator in each one of these sections springs forth and seizes power and control. There will then come out of obscurity a man with such powers as were never before known to man. He becomes associated with the ten and unifies them into a world dictatorship. He rules in conjunction with them for three and a half years—the first half of the Tribulation. In the middle of the Tribulation he receives a death stroke with the sword. He dies, but by the power of Satan, he is brought back to life. At that very time, as we learn from other passages of scripture, there will burst forth World War II of the Tribulation, upon an unsuspecting world. The net outcome of this mighty and titanic struggle will be the fall of three of the ten dictators. This outstanding leader, who is known in the New Testament as the Antichrist, will seize absolute power. The seven remaining dictators will simply be "rubber stamps," so to speak. The Antichrist will hold high carnival from that time on to the end of the Tribulation.

As we shall learn when we reach Revelation, chapter 17, there will be a religious octopus that will be supported by the Antichrist. This ecclesiasticism is represented by a harlot, who rides upon the beast, the civil government of the end time, during the first half of the Tribulation. But when the middle of the Tribulation is reached, this religious system that is known as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" will be destroyed. Since man is incurably religious, as we know, he must have a new system of worship. This demand will be supplied by a new ecclesiastical system, which will be semi-political, and which will be under the absolute control of the false prophet of Revelation 19:20. Such seems to be the thing that is indicated by the second beast of Revelation 13:11-18.

**The Background of This Prophecy**

In Ezekiel 21:24-27 we read of one who is spoken of as "the deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end." There has been much guessing as to who this one is. In view of the fact that there is very little said about this one, it behooves everyone to be very cautious and present whatever light he has on this most difficult subject as simply a suggestion worthy of consideration. Dogmatism, therefore, on this point is to be ruled out entirely. Some expositors have thought that this deadly wounded wicked one is the personal Antichrist himself who, as we learn from Daniel 9:26, is to be of Roman extraction, but who is called in Ezekiel 21:24-27 "the prince of Israel of the end time." This interpretation may be correct. Or shall we consider this one as one of the ten kings—the dictator who seizes the authority in that section of the world which will embrace the State of Israel, and who will be an apostate Jew? This position is altogether possible, but lacks sufficient proof to establish it.

Another possible interpretation of this passage is that, when the ecclesiastical system which will exist under the Antichrist during the first half of the Tribulation is overthrown in the middle of that period of Judgment, there will arise another semi-political religious system to take the place of the first one, and to control the religious life of the empire of the Antichrist during the second half of the Tribulation. This

religious octopus will extol the Antichrist and worship him as God. The man in control of this ecclesiasticism will be the head of that section of the collapsed world empire that embraces the territory constituting the present State of Israel and will be one of the ten dictators. He attempts a seizure of regal and priestly authority and power. To him the Lord will say: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*" (Ezek. 21:27).

The words, "whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end" (Ezek. 21:25) seem to indicate the latter half of the Tribulation. Daniel, in discussing the latter half of the Tribulation, spoke of it as "the latter time of the indignation" (Dan. 8:17,19). If this interpretation be correct, then Ezekiel is talking about something that occurs in the middle of the Tribulation. That which is meant is possibly an attempt to seize the crown and the mitre, symbols of both civil and religious authority, by someone who is called "O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel."

It is altogether possible that this one of whom Ezekiel was speaking is some apostate Jew who makes an attempt to wear the royal crown of the State of Israel and also the priestly mitre. This one may be the one who will head the religious activities of the world empire during the latter half of the Tribulation after the Antichrist has proclaimed himself as God and demands the worship of all peoples—the false prophet.

In Revelation 16:13 and also in 19:20 we read of the false prophet. It is altogether possible that the false prophet may be this apostate Jew who attempts to fill two offices, that of ruler of Israel and the chief pontiff of the world religion. When we study Revelation 13:11-18 we see that this one, who is called "another beast" the second beast, does seem to have, not only regal powers, but also religious functions.

This interpretation of the Ezekiel passage is also a possible solution to the problem. Since, however, this theory cannot be proved with absolute certainty, it should be held simply as a theory and not as a scriptural teaching.

#### A DETAILED PEN PICTURE OF THE SECOND BEAST

Concerning this beast John said, "... he had two horns like unto a lamb." He is a beast, yet he has horns like a lamb. The fact that he resembles a lamb in this particular might lead us to adopt the following theory; Christ, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), is represented in Revelation as a Lamb that is slain from the foundation of the world. Since this second beast has the horns of a lamb, it may be that this figure points in the direction that this one is trying to imitate the Christ—to a certain extent—as much as possible.

#### He Speaks as a Dragon

Although he does try to emulate in some particulars the Christ, he "spake as a dragon." There can be but little doubt that the inspiration by which he speaks as a dragon is traceable to the fact that he is backed up by satanic power. Doubtless this one will blaspheme the name of God and will hurl anathemas at the people of God. This seems to be that which is suggested by the sentence, "he spake as a dragon."

#### He Exercises All the Authority of the First Beast

In verse 12 we are told, "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight." Since the first beast, the political head of the world empire, will be energized by the power of Satan, it is quite evident that the second beast will likewise be motivated and energized by satanic power to the same extent as the first one is. From the language of verse 12 it is clear that there will be perfect and full co-operation between the two beasts.

In exercising all the authority of the first beast, the second one will make the decree that all the people of the world shall worship and render divine service to the first beast, whose death stroke will have been healed. As we have already seen, the Antichrist is slain in the middle of the Tribulation, but is raised from the dead and restored to perfect health by the power of Satan. This will give him leverage upon the masses of the world, who will acclaim that he must be God; otherwise he could not have come back from the dead with such powers as he will at that time demonstrate. Thus the second beast will point to the fact that the first beast was killed, and that by his own power came back to life. Since he does this, the second beast will argue, it is evident that he is God and can therefore demand the worship of all men.

Though the second beast will attempt to enforce his decree that all men shall worship the first beast, there will be those who will oppose such blasphemy and sacrilege. Doubtless there will be many who will by various methods evade the issue and refuse to worship the first beast.

#### He Performs Satanic Signs and Wonders

In verse 13 we are told that the second beast will perform all sorts of signs and wonders: "And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men" (13:13). Our Lord, in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:24-28) likewise foretold that false Messiahs should come, and that they would perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the very elect. He doubtless was referring to this second beast and others in association with the Antichrist, who will perform these super-human wonders and signs to back up the lie that the Antichrist is God. The Apostle Paul, in II Thessalonians, chapter 2, likewise spoke of these lying signs and wonders that will be performed to establish in the minds of the ignorant the thought that the Antichrist is God.

#### He Gives Breath to the Image of the Antichrist

Of all the wonders and signs which will be wrought by both the Antichrist and by the false prophet, that of making an image of the first beast become a living person will be considered the greatest one. Concerning this mighty event, John tells us that the second beast will say "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given *unto him* to give breath to it, *even* to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:14,15). As to what material will be used in the making of this image we are not told. But we may be certain an image of the world dictator will be made.

From II Thessalonians 2:1-4 we learn that the Antichrist will go to Jerusalem and will stage the greatest demonstration of superhuman power that man has ever observed. He will go to the Temple, the literal Jewish Temple which will be built in the end time, and will proclaim that he is God, taking a determined stand against everything that is called God, or that is worshiped as God. Probably at that time the image will be used in the ceremony. There will likely be the unveiling of this image at the proper time in the ceremonies. Then the second beast, by the power of Satan, will speak to the image and he, the false prophet, will give life and breath to the image. Then it will be able to speak and cause that as many as will not worship the image of the beast should be killed. From this passage it appears that the second beast, the false prophet, will have the power of Satan to convert the image into a living, thinking, active man. We should not be surprised at this, when we remember that, after Moses threw his rod upon the ground and it became a serpent, the magicians of Egypt who opposed him threw their rods down and, by the power of Satan, turned them into living snakes. God at times permits Satan to perform miracles when He Himself works them, in order that there might be a margin for the exercise of faith on the part of those who long for truth and righteousness. In all probability, God allows the false prophet to turn this image



into a living person in order that those who are of faith may have an opportunity to exercise their faith and take a bold stand for the right and for God.

As to how long the image, after being converted into a living person will continue as a living person, the Scriptures do not tell us. This miracle of converting the image into a living person seems to be the highest expression of satanic power which God will allow Satan to exercise.

#### He Declares That All Must Take the Mark of the Beast

When the image is made alive, the second beast, working in conjunction with the image, converted into a man, will issue a decree that all peoples must take the name of the Antichrist or the number of his name upon their right hands or foreheads. If anyone refuses to do so, he will be denied the privilege of buying or selling. In fact, he will be denied all opportunities of making a living. Doubtless many of the true-hearted will retire into places of obscurity and will trust God to work out their problem and to supply their needs. Of course, God will not fail them (Isa. 33:13-16). But those who are not of faith, and who do not wish truth, will readily fall in line with the demands of the government and will take the name of the beast and the number of his name, which is "the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six" (13:18). The number, 666, is to be taken literally.

All who take the mark of the beast will suffer punishment and will be banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might forever and ever (read Revelation 14:9-12).

(Installment Nineteen)

**THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)****Part VI: The Vision of the 144,000 on Mount Zion (14:1-8)**

Let us remember that, in Revelation 11:15-15:8 we have the "great parenthesis" in the book, which is placed between the blowing of the sixth trumpet and that of the seventh. In these studies we have already seen that the middle of the Tribulation is reached with the blowing of the sixth trumpet. The seventh, however, brings in the events of the latter half of the Tribulation, which are set forth in symbolical form in chapter 16. Now, having our bearings, we are ready to study the vision of the 144,000 who appear on Mount Zion in association with the Lamb.

Is this company of 144,000 the same as the group set forth in Revelation, chapter 7? There are some who say that they are the same. The sole reason for such identification is that the number, 144,000, occurs in both passages. But other marks are such that they prohibit an identification of the two groups. Those in chapter 7 are all Jews—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel—and they are serving the Lord, especially in conducting the revival in the first half of the Tribulation.

But those constituting the 144,000 seen on Mount Zion in Revelation, chapter 14, are the ones who "had been purchased out of the earth." These were purchased from among men, to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. It is clear that these are taken from among all nations. These facts are sufficient to establish the position that an identification of the two groups cannot be made.

In Revelation, chapter 13, as we have already seen, the Antichrist goes to Jerusalem and puts on the greatest demonstration of superhuman-satanic-power that ever is staged in all the history of the world. This he does in the middle of the Tribulation and convinces—by the Satanic miracles that he performs—the wicked of the world at least that he is God. And they begin to worship him as God.

In contrast with the Antichrist and his cohorts, who go to Jerusalem and stage an unbelievable demonstration of super-human power, we see a vision of the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the 144,000 who are purchased from every nation on the face of the globe, and who have lived spotless, sinless lives.

**The Lamb of God and the 144,000 Sinless Ones**

"And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps*: 8 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie; they are without blemish" (Rev. 14:1-5).

The Lamb appearing here is the same one who is seen in chapter 5, verse 6, and who is likewise presented in the same passage as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David (5:5).

When the vision of the 144,000 upon Mount Zion was presented to John, suddenly there was heard a voice from heaven, which reminded him of the noise made by many waters and the noise of thunder. Then John explained that this voice which he heard was as the voice of harpers "harping with their harps."

And they sang, as it were, a new song before the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. When this scene is viewed in the light of other passages, it becomes evident that it is the heavenly choir, consisting of seraphim, cherubim, and all ranks and orders of angels that sing the praises of the Lamb and of those who have triumphed through the power and blood of Christ and have lived exemplary lives.

No one is able to understand this song except the 144,000 upon the earth.

These 144,000, taken from among men, have lived pure, clean, holy, spotless lives. They are said not to have been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These words mean exactly what they say. They have never told a lie. They are without blemish. It is needless to say that these have lived such pure, blameless lives only by and through the power of the Son of God. The Apostle Paul could declare, in the Thessalonian Epistle, that he and others associated with him were living blameless, spotless, sinless lives. Thus he declared, "10 Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (I Thess. 2:10). This does not mean that they had an experience which rendered it impossible for them to sin. No, far from that. But they were living so close to Christ, and Christ was living His life in them so that they could live without spot and blemish.

Wherever Christ goes after the fulfillment of this vision, these 144,000 will go and be in attendance upon Him.

#### The Message of the Angel Flying in Mid-heaven

"6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters" (14:6,7).

An examination of Habakkuk 3:2 shows that the work of God will thrive during the first half of the Tribulation, the period of God's wrath, when He is pouring it out upon the world. In the middle of those years of wrath, the work of God suddenly comes to a standstill. The prophet sees this situation and prays for God to revive His work in the middle of the Tribulation. When we compare the information gathered therefrom with Revelation, chapter 7, we see that the work of God referred to in the Habakkuk passage is the world's greatest revival that sweeps the globe and brings countless myriads to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Those conducting this revival are none other than the 144,000 Jewish people to whom we are now giving the truth of God. They do not accept the gospel now; but when the judgments of the Tribulation are in the world, then they will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). These 144,000 Jewish converts will then take up the banner of Prince Immanuel, which is laid down by the ascending Church at the time of the rapture, will go into every nook and corner of the world, will proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and will bring about the world revival. The Antichrist stops this mighty back-to-God movement in the middle of the Tribulation. This fact, the prophet Habakkuk sees. He prays that God will revive His work. Revelation 14:6 shows that this work of preaching the gospel is revived and is carried on during the latter half of the Tribulation.

#### The Overthrow of Babylon the Harlot

"8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). Let us remember that the standpoint of this great parenthesis in the Book of Revelation (which we are studying) is the *middle* of the Tribulation. At this time the announcement is made that "Babylon the great" is fallen.

What is meant by Babylon? There are *two* Babylons that are mentioned in the Book of Revelation: First, Babylon the harlot, appearing in chapter 17; and secondly, Babylon the city, which is described

minutely in chapter 18. This latter Babylon is none other than literal Babylon—rebuilt in the end time. That the city of Babylon will actually be rebuilt and will be the capital of the world empire of the end time is seen by a careful study of Isaiah, chapters 13 and 14. Also Jeremiah (chaps. 50 and 51) foretells Babylon as being in existence in the end of the age. If we are to allow these passages to give their messages without distortion, we must take them at what they say. When we do that, we cannot avoid the conclusion that Babylon the city will be rebuilt in the end time.

But there is another Babylon, upon whose forehead there is "a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" (Rev. 17:5). This Babylon is an ecclesiasticism, a politico-religious octopus that will send forth its tentacles throughout the whole world and will have control of all nations from a religious standpoint. Reference is made to this Babylon in Isaiah 57:3ff., Nahum 3:4, and, as stated above, in Revelation, chapter 17. When the true Church of God is removed by the rapture before the Tribulation, the professing church will be headed up into one great ecclesiastical octopus, which will control the religious life—or attempt to do so—of all peoples. It will be supported by the civil government—by the Antichrist and his regime—during the first half of the Tribulation.

By the time the middle of the Tribulation is reached, however, the Antichrist will have become so very egotistical and will have so yielded himself to the deceptive powers of Satan that he will come to the conclusion that *he* is God. Then, in the middle of the Tribulation (II Thess., chap. 2) he will go to Jerusalem and present himself as God and demand that men no longer worship God or Christ, but that they worship him, the Antichrist.

The announcement in Revelation 14:8, "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great," is speaking of Babylon the harlot.

But Babylon the city, rebuilt and standing in the end time, will fall at the end of the Tribulation, as we see from Revelation 16:19.

(Installment Twenty)

**THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)****Part VII: Eternal Punishment and Some Highlights of the Day of Jehovah (14:9-20)**

As we have already learned, we are still in the great parenthesis of Revelation 11:15—15:8. In this passage which we have for consideration in this study (14:9-20), we have brought before us the eternal punishment of the wicked, the blessedness of those who die in the Lord during the latter half of the Tribulation, and the war of the great day of God the Almighty.

## The Eternal Punishment of the Wicked

"9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:9-12).

The teaching of the Word of God concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked is a very unpopular subject. Upon rationalistic grounds and for other considerations is this doctrine discredited by modernists.

In speaking of the wicked of the end time, the psalmist declared:

9. "As for the head of those that compass me about,  
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
10. Let burning coals fall upon them:  
Let them be cast into the fire,  
Into deep pits, whence they shall not rise" (Ps. 140:9,10).

The prophet Daniel spoke of two resurrections. Hear him: "2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). The Hebrew text is constructed in such a way that we can see Daniel, as it were, pointing to a certain group of those that sleep in the earth and saying, "*These* shall awake unto everlasting life, but *these* [pointing to the second group] shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt." Such language can mean only one thing: that latter group will awake in resurrection and go into shame and everlasting contempt, into a place from which they will never return, but where they will have to abide through all eternity. This teaching is confirmed by our Lord in the following language: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, 29 and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28,29). We see these two resurrections in Revelation 20:1-15. The first one occurs *before* the thousand years' reign of our Lord. This is the resurrection to life and immortality. The second one occurs *after* the reign of Christ and is the one to shame and everlasting contempt.

According to Revelation 14:9-12 the angel said with a great voice, "If any man ... receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand," he would have to suffer throughout all eternity in the lake of fire, whose punishment never ceases. The Antichrist will decree that no man can buy or sell or have any kind of

business transaction, unless he takes the mark of the beast, or the number of his name. Doubtless many will sell their birthright to eternal life for a mess of pottage, but God gives fair warning in this passage that they had better not do that. He tells what the consequences will be. It is an awful thing to be lost eternally! It is a wonderful thing to be saved eternally by the grace of God.

#### Blessed Are Those Who Die in the Lord in the Latter Half of the Tribulation

"13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Rev. 14:13).

People are blessed who come to the Lord, and who are "in Him." This is true at all stages of Christianity. It will also be true in the Tribulation. It is very unfortunate that people will not wake up and accept Christ before the Tribulation begins. But we do praise God that, when His judgments are in the world, the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness—that is, the greater portion of them do accept the Lord.

Frequently, I am asked if there are people who will be saved in the Tribulation. Most assuredly! More people will come to the Lord in the Tribulation than have come for centuries. In fact, more than half the people of the Tribulation will accept the Lord during that time of wrath, "for when thy [Jehovah's] judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). "In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 17:7). Even in the latter half of the Tribulation myriads of people will come to the Lord. In Revelation 14:13, quoted at the beginning of this section, we see that there is a promise that those are blessed who die in the Lord from henceforth, that is, from the middle of the Tribulation on to the very end of it. Many of those who accept the Lord at that time will go home by way of the chopping block, but they are not to fear what man can do to them, but are to trust the Lord who has saved and accepted them.

They will leave a testimony which will cause others to take courage and to stand boldly for the Lord, whom they accept as Saviour. Truly, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church!"

#### The Harvest and Vintage of the World

"14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap; for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

"17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great *winepress*, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Rev. 14:14-20).

There have been much misunderstanding and conjecture about these two scenes. But there should not be so much misunderstanding in regard to them. Some tell us that the harvest scene is one thing and that the vintage is another. These interpreters usually place them at different times. The proper approach to the understanding of these two visions is, as I believe, to be found in Joel, chapter 3. A perusal of the

Book of Joel shows that he is talking largely about the Tribulation Period. A person should read Joel 3:9-15 which is talking about the preparation that is necessary for the war of the great day of God the Almighty, that is, the final great struggle of the world, when the Antichrist rises up against the Christ, who slays him. In verses 12 and 13 we have this language: "12 Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehosaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. 13 Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great."

The prophet saw the armies of the world gathered against Palestine, and against the Jewish nation at Jerusalem. In verse 13 he compares these vast hosts of armies to the ripened grain that is ready to be harvested. Then in the same breath, he compares them to grapes that are thrown into the winevat, and that are to be trodden out. Thus it is clear that these two figures of speech refer to the same great, final conflict at the end of the Tribulation—the war of the great day of God the Almighty. When a person sees this picture and then looks at Revelation 14:14-20, he sees instantly that this is but an expansion and an enlargement of Joel 3:13. If this is true, the harvest and the vintage scenes are one and the same thing, represented by two different figures, which depend upon the original passage of Joel.

This is in perfect accord with Isaiah 63:1-6, which speaks of the second coming of Christ and of His treading the winepress of the wrath of God alone at His second coming.

When we see that Revelation 14:14-20 is talking about the war of the great day of God the Almighty, we see that this is placed here by way of anticipation, but is referring simply to the events of the final overthrow of the Antichrist and all the forces of evil.

These verses speak of the events that occur at the very end of the Tribulation, which comes to a close at the time of the overthrow of Babylon the city, as described in Revelation 16:17-21. It is also talking about the same thing as that which is described in Revelation 19:11-21.

(Installment Twenty-One)

**THE GREAT PARENTHESIS (11:15-15:8)**

## Part VIII: The Third Sign in Heaven (15:1-8)

As we have already learned, the great parenthesis of the Book of Revelation consists of 11:15—15:8. In it are found three signs, or symbols. The first is *the sign of the woman* (12:1); the second, *the sign of the dragon* (12:3); and the third is *the symbol of the seven angles* (15:1), who have the seven vials or bowls of the wrath of God. These three signs are given in heaven; but, of course, they foreshadow, or signify, things upon the earth, as we have already seen.

We have also learned that the chronological order of events is set forth in Revelation, chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16. The truth is put in these chapters under the symbolism of seven seals (chap. 6); seven trumpets (chaps. 8 and 9); and seven bowls (chap. 16). The chapters intervening between these that I have just mentioned give what might, figuratively speaking, be called the stage setting. This phase of the drama is so very, very important that the Lord devoted chapters 12 through 15 to it in order to give us the facts that must be understood if we are to comprehend the message of chapter 16.

The farther we go in the Book of Revelation the more orderly it becomes to us. There is an unfolding of the events in a most systematic, clear, and lucid manner.

## The Sign of the Seven Angels With the Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, *which are* the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:1). Let us always bear in mind that the word "sign" here means a symbol, an emblem, something that stands for, or sets forth, some great truth or principle. God describes this sign in heaven as "great and marvelous." It is *great* because of the far-reaching significance of what is symbolized. It is *marvelous* in that it produces wonder and amazement in the hearts of those who learn the truth signified by this sign and see the far-reaching effects of it.

We are told that these seven angels have seven plagues, and that in them is finished the wrath of God. Since this is the completion of the wrath of God in the pouring out of these seven plagues, we are to assume that the wrath of God has been presented under some other symbolism. As we studied the seals and the trumpets in chapters 6, 8 and 9, we saw there evidence of the displeasure and the wrath of God as it is poured out upon the world. Thus we are of the profound conviction that the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls are all symbols of the pouring out of God's final wrath during what the Old Testament prophets called "the day of Jehovah"—the time when God arises and deals with mankind because of its sins. At that time, as we have already seen in preceding studies, God has three objectives in view in sending these judgments upon the world: First, to bring about the world-wide revival in which untold multitudes are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; second, to destroy all the wicked who will not receive the love of God, but who spurn it; and third, to break the power of the Jewish people so that they will confess their national sin of rejecting the Messiah and plead for Him to return. When God accomplishes these three purposes, He will stop the judgments of the great Tribulation. That the Book of Revelation is descriptive of the pouring out of God's wrath is quite evident to the one who observes the various characteristics of this book.

For instance, in 4:5 we read, "And out of the throne proceed lightning's and voices and thunders." This scene is introductory to that of the vision of heaven which prepares us for the breaking of the seal judgments in chapter 6. The introductory scene to the trumpet judgments is found in 8:5: "And the angel



taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." That which introduces the bowl judgments is found in 11:19 and reads as follows: "And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." A special introductory scene is given in Revelation 16:17,18: "And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty." Without question, these scenes of stormy conditions can prefigure nothing but wrath and destruction. In these passages we see a growth and a development in the gathering of this storm of God's wrath.

Thus in the pouring out of the plagues of the seven bowls there is completed God's sending of His judgments upon the world of wickedness.

Let us remember that we have already covered, in our study, one-half of the Tribulation, which is a period of seven years. Thus, as we shall see in chapter 16, the latter half of this period of judgment is covered. Moreover, we shall see that, at the conclusion of this latter half of the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus Christ will come in glory and power to take over the government of the world, and to reign from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

#### Vision of Those Who Are Victorious Over the Antichrist

As we have seen, there is an innumerable host of people who are led to the Lord by the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, to whom we are now giving the gospel. These countless multitudes wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are the Tribulation saints, who are led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, during the first half of the Tribulation. Concerning them, we have full and detailed information in Revelation, chapter 7. Many of them suffer martyrdom for their faith.

But those who appear in Revelation 15:2-4 are a different group entirely. They accept the Lord and come out of the latter half of the Tribulation, when the Antichrist is in the plenitude of his power and when he tries to force the people of the world to take the number of his name upon their forehead and upon their right hand. In view of these facts we see that the innumerable host of saved people, mentioned in Revelation, chapter 7, are the ones who come out of the *first half* of the Tribulation, whereas this group in chapter 15 comes out of the *second part* of the Tribulation.

This latter group is victorious over the beast. It is generally assumed by commentators that these are all martyrs, even though it is not stated in so many words—but they are victorious. Yet I am not absolutely certain that all of them are martyrs. They can be victorious over the beast and at the same time not be martyred. But it is quite likely that the bulk of these are made to suffer for their faith.

John sees them on a sea of glass which is before the throne of God. The mention of this sea of glass reminds one of that which is said in 4:6, concerning the sea as of glass before the throne. Here we see this sea of glass mingled with fire. What is the significance of the phenomenon expressed by "mingled with fire?" No satisfactory answer can be given, hence it is mere speculation to guess.

These who are seen in this vision sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Moses, of course, was the great lawgiver of Israel. Christ is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Though Moses was simply a man, while Christ was the God-man, there are certain similarities that exist between them. For instance, in Deuteronomy 18:15ff., God promises Israel that He will raise up a Prophet from among Moses' brethren like unto him. This promise is an evident reference to the Lord Jesus. At the transfiguration scene Moses and Elijah both appeared, talking with Christ.

Here we are told that this great multitude will "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" —two different songs.

The gist of these songs will be that God's works are marvelous, that He is righteous in all of His ways, and that He is the "King of the ages." Moreover, they have a vision that all people will fear the name of God and glorify Him—that is, all the people upon the earth, for God alone is holy. As the prophets of the Old Testament foretold that the time would come when all nations would be converted and would worship and serve God, so here these victorious saints express the same sentiments. The thing that will convince the people of the world will be God's demonstration that in His dealings with the peoples of the world He is absolutely righteous in all that He does.

### The Vision of the Temple in Heaven

In Psalm 11:4 we see the temple of God in heaven. In Revelation 11:19 we likewise see this same temple. In the Book of Hebrews we are told that there is a sanctuary or a temple of God in the heavens of the heavens. Of this heavenly temple, the Tabernacle and later the Temple built by Solomon, were little replicas, or patterns.

It should be noted that Revelation 15:2-4 constitutes a little parenthesis following verse 1. Verses 5-8 develop the theme that is announced in verse 1.

John sees the temple—"the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven"—open. He sees coming forth out of the temple "the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with *precious* stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles."

At this juncture one of the four living creatures (one of the seraphim of Rev., chaps. 4 and 5, and Isa., chap. 6) gives to the seven angels "seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever." God is forever and ever! He, as Isaiah the prophet affirms (Isa. 57:15), is "the high and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy."

When these bowls of wrath are given to the angels, John sees the heavenly temple "filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple" (Rev. 15:8). No living creature can enter the temple of God in heaven at that time. Not even an angelic being can enter it until the seven plagues of the seven angels are finished. Then they will enter and continue the service of God as usual.

Thus we see that chapter 15 constitutes the prologue, or introduction, to the seven bowl judgments of Revelation, chapter 16, which we shall study in the next article in this series.

(Installment Twenty-two)

### **The Pouring Out of the Bowls of God's Wrath (16:1-21)**

In our last study we saw that chapter 15 is the prologue, or introduction, to chapter 16. Thus there is a continuation of the special act that is enacted in chapter 15.

After the angels came forth from the temple a voice from within issued the command, "Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (Rev. 16:1).

#### The First Bowl of Wrath

In verse 2 we are told that the first angel pours his bowl upon the earth. Then he informs us of the literal effects upon the people of earth that this bowl of wrath has: "... and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image." This statement gives the literal facts regarding the results from this stroke of God's judgment upon those men who, during the latter half of the Tribulation, take the name or the mark of the beast upon their bodies and worship his image.

#### The Second Bowl of Wrath

When this second bowl is poured out, its contents strike the sea, as we see in verse 3. The results of this stroke of judgment are seen in the following words; "... and it [this second bowl of wrath] became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea." Again, there is no reason for our making any attempt to explain this language away. We are to take everything that God says literally unless there is some evidence in the immediate context or in a passage which is related to it that shows a departure from the literal meaning. We therefore have every reason to believe that this statement means exactly what it says. Why should it be thought incredible that this judgment means exactly what it says? When Moses waved his rod over the waters of Egypt "all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood" (Exod. 7:20). So when this stroke of judgment referred to in Revelation 16:3 falls upon the sea, "it became blood as of a dead man."

#### The Third Bowl of Wrath

In Revelation 16:4-7 we have the pouring out of the third bowl of God's wrath upon the rivers and the fountains of waters—the source of water supply for the nations. The result of this judgment is expressed in the following words: "... and it [the rivers and fountains] became blood." The same remark that I made about the preceding stroke of judgment applies to this one. It becomes evident that it says exactly what it means and means what it says.

At this point we are told that the angel of the waters proclaims: "Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy." It seems that the angels have special duties to perform in reference to various phenomena connected with the universe. Here we see "the angel of the waters," a celestial being that has charge of man's drinking water.

God is righteous and holy in everything that He does and says. He must punish sinners who are unrepentant of their wrongs. At this juncture a voice comes forth from the altar saying; "Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." Eventually all celestial beings, together with men

upon earth and the lost in Sheol, will declare that God is righteous in all that He does. His righteousness and justice will become apparent to all.

#### The Fourth Bowl of Wrath

We have, in Revelation 16:8,9, a description of what actually occurs upon earth when the fourth angel pours out his bowl of wrath: "8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory." This stroke of wrath strikes the sun, from which is concentrated heat to heat the earth and to scorch men with fire. This should not be thought incredible when we remember that we can take a lens, put it in the sunlight, focus the rays of the sun, and can actually burn wood or other combustible material. If man can do it how about God Almighty who is the Creator and Controller of all the material universe? In the light of all that we know, we must accept this statement at its face value and not try to read into it something that is not there.

When the heat becomes so very intense at this stage of the second half of the Tribulation, men here upon the earth will suffer so very greatly under it that they will blaspheme the name of God, who brings these judgments upon them. But they will be so very greatly hardened that they will not repent of their sins and give Him glory. Men who keep resisting God and sinning against Him frequently reach the point beyond which it is impossible for them to repent. Man, by impenitence and persistence in sin, destroys the delicate mechanism of his conscience. Hence, men do reach that point beyond which there is no remedy, as the writer of II Chronicles 36:11-16 declared.

#### The Fifth Bowl of God's Wrath

The fifth bowl of God's wrath is spoken of in the following words: "10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works" (Rev. 16:10,11). Again let me say that we are to take this language literally at what it says since there are no indications of a departure from the plain simple meaning of the words. This fifth plague will affect the throne of the beast and his kingdom. It will be directed against men.

We are told that the kingdom of the Antichrist will be darkened. There will be a complete, total blackout at this time. This should not be surprising when we remember that, when Moses was bringing his judgments upon Egypt, there was a total blackout, caused by the Lord. God, who did it once, can do it twice, or as often as He wishes. In doing this, God will bring judgments upon the nations that they deserve; but all of these strokes will be designed for their good—to bring them to repentance, if at all possible.

We have every reason to believe that this fifth judgment will be in the latter part of the latter half of the Tribulation. We note that men will still have the sores which occur from the pouring out of the first bowl of God's wrath. Medical science will be unable to cope with that dread affliction. Thus men will, from the beginning of the pouring out of these bowls on through at least to the fifth bowl, suffer from the effects of the first bowl of God's wrath.

Again we see that they do not repent of their evil works. Men will become hardened in sin so that they cannot turn from evil to God.

### The Sixth Bowl of Wrath

In Revelation 16:12-16 we have the pouring out of the sixth bowl and the effects upon the earth. This bowl is poured out "upon the great river, the river Euphrates," The "river Euphrates" means exactly what it says. There is no occasion for our interpreting this as a reference to the Ottoman Empire, as has been done so very frequently. There will be the drying up of the Euphrates in order that the kings that come from the Orient may come for the war of the great day of God the Almighty. This is seen in verse 12.

In verses 13 and 14 we see that there are three unclean spirits, like frog's, that are demons, and that go forth into all the world to stir up the kings of the earth to come to the place in Palestine "which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon," for the laying of the strategy for "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

We frequently hear of "the battle of Armageddon." Of course, we understand what is meant, but it would be far better to speak of Biblical things in scriptural terms. The Bible speaks of this final conflict as "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

Though men will be hardened by sin, yet there is given a call, as we see in verse 15, to those who have any desire to do the will of God, and a promise made to those who turn to Him, who keep watching, and who keep their garments clean.

Finally the kings of the world will gather together at Megiddo in Palestine for the laying of the strategy for "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

### The Pouring Out of the Seventh Bowl of the Wrath of God

In the final paragraph of chapter 16, verses 17-21, we have the account of the pouring out of the last bowl of the wrath of God which finishes His wrath against men. The strokes become more severe as we approach the end of the Tribulation.

At the conclusion of the Tribulation there occurs the greatest earthquake known to all history. At that time Babylon the Great (Babylon rebuilt on its ancient site), together with all the cities of the world, is thrown down and becomes nothing but rubble. God must deal with people who defy Him, according to the merits of their cases.

At that time, as we learn in verse 21, there will be great hail that will come down out of heaven. God has His armory full of weapons. On this point, let us remember what the Lord said in Job 38:22,23. He has filled His armory full of hail and snow "against the time of trouble, Against the day of battle and war."

In this connection, however, we should remember to study the great prophecy found in II Peter, chapter 3. This is a prediction that will be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation. Many of the planets and bodies belonging to our solar system will explode with great noise and intense heat. The heat waves will travel as far as the earth. Those parts of the earth that are struck by these terrific heat waves will be burned to a crisp, as we see in this marvelous prediction.

As we shall learn in Revelation, chapter 19, Christ will come at the end of the Tribulation, and will take over the government of the world and establish His reign of righteousness.

But we have reached, chronologically, the end of the Tribulation and the second coming of Christ, as will become evident when we study chapters 17-19.

(Installment Twenty-three)

**The End of Babylon the Harlot (17:1-18)**

As we have already seen in the last study, we reach the end of the Tribulation with the conclusion of chapter 16. We have repeatedly seen that chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16 give the chronological order of events of the Tribulation. Moreover, the chapters interlarded between those just named give the stage setting in order that we might see and understand the significance of the judgments that are mentioned in those chapters. Thus far in our study of the Book of Revelation we have an orderly development of the events of the Tribulation set forth. In other words, we have studied the outline of some of the principal events as they will occur during the Tribulation.

The Apostle John, as was true of many of the prophets, followed what is known as *the law of recurrence*. What is this law? In a word, it is the principle that was followed by the prophets when, after they had given a summary or a survey of a certain situation, they would go back and add details to the picture that they had already drawn in outline. As an illustration, let me call attention to the practice of the artist who, when he paints the portrait of someone, does what is usually called "blocking out" the portrait. At subsequent sittings, he adds details that were not put in at the first and develops more and more the features of the person whose picture is being painted. With this illustration in mind, we shall say that John has blocked out his portrait by the time he reaches Revelation, chapter 16. Following the law of recurrence, in chapter 17 the Apostle gives us the reign and overthrow of Babylon the harlot. In chapter 18 he gives the data concerning the power and influence and final overthrow of Babylon the city. Then, in chapter 19, he gives us more details about the second coming of Christ and the events connected therewith.

From all the data which we have, we know that Babylon the harlot, the great ecclesiastical system that will develop in the end time, is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation—immediately before the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath. On the other hand, Babylon the city—the literal, rebuilt Babylon of the end time is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation. Thus there are three and a half years that intervene between the overthrow of the ecclesiastical octopus and the destruction of the literal city of Babylon. The facts that are given us in chapters 17, 18, and 19 are absolutely essential for our filling out the picture concerning those momentous events that take place at that time.

**Prophetic Pictures of Babylon the Harlot**

There is nothing new in the Book of Revelation, in the first twenty chapters. Only chapters 21 and 22 give us new material—material not found in the Old Testament. We learn of Babylon the harlot in two places of the Old Testament, Isaiah 57:3ff., and Nahum 3:4.

In Isaiah, chapters 56 and 57, we have a vision of Israel of the end time. In 57:1,2 appears a prediction concerning the rapture of the saints out of the world before the Tribulation begins. After this, in verse 3, we have this language: "3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot." The reader should study carefully this verse and read through verse 8 in order to understand what the prophet is talking about. This prophecy follows immediately that which foretells the snatching away of merciful and good men out of the earth in order to take them "away from the evil to *come*"—that is, the judgments of the Tribulation.

There are certain ones who are called in verse 3 "sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot." A reading of this passage shows that the prophet was not talking about literal children and

their parents, but is talking about certain ones whom he designates as the sorceress and her consort, "the adulterer." This sorceress is called "the harlot." Who is this sorceress, this harlot, and who is the adulterer, since they are not a literal man and his paramour?

Let us turn to Nahum 3:4: "... because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." When the Book of Nahum is studied properly, it becomes quite evident that the prophet is talking about the destruction of Nineveh in the end time. Nineveh will rise out of the dust of the past and become a dominant factor in the end time—just as Babylon will likewise rise out of oblivion and become the capital of the world in the end time. There will at that time be the one who is called "the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." It becomes immediately apparent that this well-favored harlot who sells nations through her whoredoms and families through her witchcrafts is none other than the sorceress, the harlot, who is mentioned by Isaiah.

#### The Vision of Babylon the Harlot, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth

In Revelation 17:1ff. we read: "... Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was 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, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder" (Rev. 17:1-6).

When this passage is read along with those in Isaiah, chapter 57, and Nahum, chapter 3, it becomes apparent that the three prophets of God were speaking about the same thing: an ecclesiastical system that is supported by the civil government of the end time.

Man is incurably religious, we are told. When the true Church is taken out of the world by the rapture before the Tribulation, all the cults and philosophies and off-color brands of religions, together with all of the idolatrous systems in the world, will be brought together into one great religious system, or symbolic octopus. This great system is represented by the woman who is called MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. She will have control of all the religious affairs all over the world, under the Antichrist. That this is true is evident from the name of the woman: "THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." The term "Abominations," means *idols*. So she will be in control of all idols. Idolatry will, as we learn from many passages, sweep over the world at that time. This harlot, the symbol of the false church, as an impure bride (a pure bride is the symbol of the true Church of Christ) will be supported and carried forward by the political power. The woman rides the beast, the world empire of the Antichrist, during the first half of the Tribulation.

### Explanation Concerning the Beast

In our study of Revelation, chapter 13, we investigated the teaching concerning the world empire of the end time. John saw in vision a great and horrible beast, that had seven heads and ten horns. When this description is compared with the fourth beast described in Daniel, chapter 7, it is seen that they are identical. A beast, as we learned in Daniel 7:17, is a symbol of a world government. The beasts of Daniel's visions are kings. According to verse 23, however, a beast also symbolizes the realm over which the king reigns. The fourth beast, or kingdom, referred to in Daniel 7:23, devours the whole earth and becomes a world kingdom. According to verse 24 it collapses, falling into ten different sections. Over each one of these a dictator rises. After this occurs, there arises a little horn in the midst of the ten horns symbolizing the ten kings. This little horn becomes dominant over the ten and reigns along with them (Dan. 7:25). According to the prophetic outlook of Daniel, the world is to be headed up into one great, colossal government, which will collapse under its own terrific weight, falling into ten different kingdoms. Then there arises in each of these segments of the collapsed empire a dictator. After this, there will come a man out of obscurity who will gain the ascendancy among the ten and will reign with an iron hand. Such is the representation of Daniel, chapter 7.

The representation in Revelation, chapter 13, gives a bit of added information to that found in Daniel, chapter 7. This fourth beast, the Roman Empire, which succeeded the Grecian, has seven heads as well as ten horns. In Revelation 17:10 we see that five of those heads (types of government) had already come and gone. One was then in existence, and one, according to John, is yet to come. An examination of the history of the Roman Empire, from its founding in 753 B.C. and onward, shows that there were five distinctive types of administration that had come and had passed on. There was one, the imperial form of government, that was in existence in John's day. There is yet one other form, that will arise in the end time. When it comes, as we have already seen, the world kingdom will include every nation, tribe, tongue and language. Then it will collapse, falling into ten divisions as indicated by the ten horns on the beast. The ten horns are contemporaneous and are on the beast in its final form—during the Tribulation. In Revelation, chapter 13, we see that the beast, in its final form receives a death stroke, from which it recovers. But in chapter 17 we see the extent of this death stroke—that it is a real stroke which brings about his death. The Antichrist, in the middle of the Tribulation, will be slain, literally, and his spirit will descend to Sheol, or Hades. Then he will come back out of Hades, being raised by Satan. From that time on, during the latter half of the Tribulation, he will rule the world with an iron hand.

He is at the head of the empire when it has its seventh head—imperialism, dictatorship, Caesarism. But when he is slain and comes back to life, he will be of the seven, and yet he will be an eighth one. Satan will deliver over to the Antichrist his throne and power. Then the Antichrist will hold high carnival, so far as men are concerned—but not so far as God is concerned!

### The Complete Destruction of Babylon the Harlot

The overthrow of Babylon the harlot is shown in Revelation 17:15-18. In Revelation 17:1-6 this harlot is seen riding on the beast. Here the figure is changed, and she is represented as sitting upon many waters, which symbolize peoples—multitudes, nations, and tongues.

In 14:8 we have the announcement that "Babylon the great" is fallen. This is Babylon the harlot, the ecclesiastical system, which is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation. This is set forth in Revelation 17:15-18.

Babylon the harlot will be supported by the civil government and will have its headquarters at Babylon, the city, which will have been rebuilt. It will be so very closely connected with the civil power and with the capital of the world that its downfall is mentioned in terms of the city of Babylon, which city



is actually not literally destroyed until the end of the Tribulation, although the religious system is destroyed in the middle of it.

(Installment Twenty-four)

**The Destruction of the City of Babylon Rebuilt and Standing in the End Time (Chap. 18)**

Just a word or two in review, that we might have our proper bearings, should be given. Revelation, chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16, as we have repeatedly seen, give us the chronological order of events as they occur in the Tribulation. The end of the Tribulation is reached at the end of chapter 16. John, following the law of recurrence, filled in details into the survey of the history of the Tribulation, as we see in chapters 17, 18, and 19. *Babylon the harlot* is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation as set forth in Revelation, chapter 17. Now we come to the consideration of *Babylon the city*, described in Revelation, chapter 18.

## The Prophetic Background of Babylon the City

There are prophecies in the Old Testament which show that Babylon is to be destroyed in the Tribulation Period, the day of Jehovah. For instance, in Isaiah 13:1—14:27 we have a clear description of the fall of Babylon in the day of Jehovah, when God is punishing the sinners of the world. Since Babylon has been destroyed, it must be rebuilt in order for the prophecy to be fulfilled. For the one who is particularly interested in this subject, I would also direct his attention to a study of Isaiah, chapters 46—48, because this passage assumes also the existence of Babylon in the end time. Moreover, Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, likewise speak of the destruction of Babylon in the day of Jehovah. In order, therefore, for these prophecies to be fulfilled, Babylon, literal Babylon, must be rebuilt in the end time.

Someone may say that, if this be true, the coming of the Lord is in the very far distant future. Not necessarily so. We are living, not even in the atomic age, but in the hydrogen bomb age, and are moving rapidly into other eras. Babylon can rise out of the dust of the past in a very few months and be the city that is mentioned by the prophet. The Word of God is certain and absolutely sure.

## Announcement of the Fall of Babylon the City

In Revelation 18:1-3 we have the announcement; "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird." As we have already seen, the announcement in chapter 14:8 is concerning the fall of Babylon the harlot. These two announcements are entirely different. The one in chapter 14 is the announcement of the overthrow of Babylon the harlot, the ecclesiastical system, whereas this one in chapter 18 is the announcement regarding Babylon the city at the end of the Tribulation.

## Destruction of Babylon the City

"That the Babylon mentioned in chapter 18 is a literal city is quite evident to everyone who will, with an unbiased mind, read the entire chapter; for it has the earmarks of being literal throughout. To read something into it other than the literal meaning is to attempt to perform intellectual acrobatic stunts, of which no man is capable.

In Revelation 18:4-24 we have the prediction concerning the overthrow of Babylon the city which shall be the capital of the world, the royal city of the Antichrist, (The reader is especially urged to ponder over this entire chapter.)

### Call to God's People in Babylon

In verses 4 and 5 we have a call to the people of God that will be living in Babylon at the time when it is about to be destroyed. Thus the Lord says: "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Someone may ask this question: Since the destruction of Babylon the city occurs at the end of the Tribulation, how is it that there will be children of God in it at that time, seeing that the Church is raptured *before* the Tribulation? That question is very easy. After the Church is removed by the rapture before the Tribulation, the Tribulation judgments come upon the world. The seed which we are now sowing in all Israel will be watered by the rains of the judgments of the Tribulation, that will cause the seed to germinate and produce an army of 144,000 Jewish "Pauls"—servants of God—who will bring about the world-wide revival. An innumerable host of people will learn of the truth through the preaching of these 144,000 evangelists. These will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Note the fact that they come out of the Tribulation, the great one. God will have saints upon the earth during the Tribulation, that is, the Tribulation saints, moreover, some of those constituting the people urged to come forth out of Babylon before its final collapse may be the Jewish people who will turn to the Lord at the very end of the Tribulation, repudiate their national sin, and accept Christ. Thus there is a call for all of the people—then living upon the earth—who have any longing for God to come forth out of Babylon before its final collapse.

### Babylon to Receive Double for All Her Sins

As we learn from Isaiah 40:1,2, Israel will receive double punishment for all her sins. The reason for this fact is that he has had advantages and opportunities for advancement that no other nation, as a people, has enjoyed. But God is going to render double to Babylon for all of her sins, as we see in 18:6,7; "Render unto her even as she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works; in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning.

Babylon will have had unparalleled opportunities to receive the truth, but will have sinned against all the light God grants to her; therefore the punishment she is to receive is to be doubled unto her.

### Kings and Merchants of the World Weep Over the Destruction of the City of Babylon

This scene is set forth in Revelation 18:9-19. When Babylon is overthrown, the literal kings of the earth who will commit fornication wantonly with her, that is, with Babylon, "shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning" (vs. 9).

### *The First Woe (vss. 10-14)*

These merchants express their woe and horror over the complete destruction of the materials constituting their merchandise, as is described in verses 10-14, "... standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy Judgment come" (vs. 10).

Among the merchandise of her traffic there is a very sad note sounded in the latter part of verse 13; "... and cattle, and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men." Men and

women who traffic in the souls of others deal with spiritual realities that are to have their effect upon those thus treated throughout all eternity.

### *The Second Woe (vss. 15-18)*

The second woe is found in verses 15-18. Here they express themselves as being overtaken by judgment saying: "Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like the great city?"

One cannot avoid the conclusion that this is the destruction of a literal city. It will be the greatest city that ever is built, the finest, as we see in the song which constitutes Isaiah 25:1-5.

### *The Third Woe (vs. 19)*

The third woe is found in verse 19. These merchants and traffickers cast dust on their heads, they weep and mourn, and say; "Woe, woe, the great city wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate." Thus in this passage Babylon rebuilt is represented as the commercial center of the entire world.

Notwithstanding its greatness and power and magnificence, it is to be destroyed in one day, as we see in verse 8. According to the statement in verse 10 it is to be destroyed "in one hour." The same thought is expressed again in verse 17, "for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. Finally, in the third woe, the statement is repeated, "for in one hour is she made desolate."

### Saints in Heaven Rejoice Over the Overthrow of Babylon

"20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her" (18:20). Naturally, the saints in heaven will see things from God's standpoint and will rejoice over the execution of God's judgments against such sinners as those in charge of Babylon of the end time.

### The Suddenness and the Completeness of the Overthrow of Babylon

According to verse 21 a strong angel took up a stone "as it were a great millstone," cast it into the sea, and uttered this prophecy: "Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all." This is an echo of the prediction that the prophet made in Jeremiah 51:59-64.

In Revelation 18:21-24 we see the final, sudden, and complete overthrow of Babylon. It will become the dwelling place during the Millennium of everything that is unclean, as we see in Isaiah 13:19-22. It will be in the same category with Edom, as expressed by Isaiah 34:8ff. When the curse will have been lifted from the entire earth, it will still remain upon old Babylon and Edom. Men cannot sin away their day of grace and contemn the Almighty, and go unpunished. The Almighty is a God of righteousness and justice, who performs truth, and justice and righteousness in the earth in dealing with men.

When Babylon is thus overthrown in fulfillment of these marvelous predictions, Christ will take over the governments of the world, will lift the curse, and will establish His reign of righteousness from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. At that time the glory of God will encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea.

(Installment Twenty-five)

**The Marriage of the Lamb and the Second Coming of Christ (Chap. 19)**

Just a word or two by way of refreshing our memories and orienting ourselves in our study of the Book of Revelation.

We have already learned that the chronological order of events of the Tribulation is found in Revelation, chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. We reach the end of the Tribulation when we come to the close of chapter 16. The Apostle, being a prophet, followed the regular rule of the prophets of the Old Testament in following what is known as the "law of recurrence." After giving the skeleton outline of the events of the Tribulation on to the close, John filled in details by calling attention to the overthrow of Babylon the harlot, which occurs in the middle of the Tribulation, in chapter 17. In chapter 18 he told of the destruction of Babylon, which occurs at the very end of the Tribulation—three and a half years later than the destruction of the ecclesiastical system of the first half of the Tribulation. In chapter 19 we have the account of the marriage supper of the Lamb and the second coming of our Lord. This chapter naturally divides into two sections; (I) The Marriage of the Lamb (19:1-10); (II) The Second Coming of Christ (19:11-21).

The Marriage of the Lamb  
The Four Hallelujahs

In this section, which consists of the first ten verses of chapter 19, we have the word "Hallelujah" occurring four times. After the conclusion of the description of the fall of Babylon, John then heard a great voice as of a vast multitude in heaven saying; "Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God; 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (vss. 1,2).

The word, hallelujah, is of Hebrew origin and means, "O praise ye Jah"—that is, Jehovah. Evidently this great multitude in heaven consists of men redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Whenever we see the word, multitude, usually it refers to a vast number of men. I do not know of any occasion when it is ever used with reference to celestial beings—unless the facts of such usage is indicated by the context. (See Luke 2:13.) The assumption, therefore, is that these are redeemed men who will be praising God for His matchless salvation and for the righteousness of His judgments. In His bringing judgment upon and overthrowing Babylon the harlot, that corrupts the people of the world, they will rejoice with holy boldness.

A second time he hears the word, "Hallelujah." Following this second call to praise God, we see the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures—seraphim—falling down and worshiping God and saying, "Amen; Hallelujah." Thus these high celestial beings will be joining with the redeemed above in calling upon others to praise God for His great salvation.

When these celestial hosts join with men in praising God, there is a voice that comes from the throne saying: "Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great" (vs. 5).

A fourth time John hears "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (vss. 6-8).

"... The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth." In this fact we ought all to rejoice and to give praise to God. The host of redeemed ones, moreover, rejoice and praise God because the time is at hand "for the marriage of the Lamb." The Lamb's wife has made herself ready. The wife of the Lamb is none other than the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure," which sets forth pictorially and graphically the righteous lives and acts of the saints. Of course, we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, which is conferred upon those who accept Christ and trust Him. But, whereas we are saved by the grace of God through faith, we labor for the Master and will be rewarded according to our works. Thus the fine linen is symbolic of the righteous acts which we, as redeemed people, perform.

After these mighty acts of worship and praise to God the angel who was talking to John urged him saying, "Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (vs. 9). Who are these invited guests? There is some controversy as to who they are. Some think that they are the Old Testament saints; others, that they are the Tribulation saints. In view of the fact that we have so very little information regarding them, it is impossible to be dogmatic and assert that they consist of a certain group. Anyway, we know that there are certain ones who will be invited to attend the marriage of the Lamb when He, the Lamb, and His bride, the body of Christ, are united in the holy bonds of spiritual matrimony—for all eternity.

The words which the Lord has spoken are the true words of God. When this revelation was made known to John, he "fell down before his feet to worship him"—the angel. But this celestial being stopped him, saying that he himself was a fellow servant and that he, with the brethren, "held the testimony of Jesus." Then he exhorted John to "worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Everything in the Old Testament centers around, in some way, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Hebrew Messiah and Redeemer of humanity.

### The Second Coming of Christ

In Revelation 19:11-21 we have a prophecy of our Lord's return at the end of the Tribulation. One would do well, however, before going on with this study, to turn back to Psalm 50:1-6 and read there of the second coming of our Lord. After leaving heaven on His way to the earth, He stops, looks back toward the heavens which He has just left and then toward the earth, to which He is coming, and issues a command to those who are able to carry out His instructions, telling them to gather His saints together unto Him, even those who have made a covenant with Him by way of sacrifice, in order that He, Christ, may judge His people—that is, that He might make the awards of the rewards to His saints. After this Christ resumes His journey and comes all the way to the earth, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### Description of Christ of His Second Coming

In verses 11-16 we have a vivid and graphic description of our Lord as He will appear when He returns in glory. Here He is represented as a rider, a warrior, mounted on a white horse. Anciently, warriors rode on white horses and led their armies into battle. Thus our Lord at His second coming is represented as a warrior. His being thus represented is common to the Old Testament. For instance, in Deuteronomy 32:39-43, our Lord is presented as a warrior who takes His sword, whets it, seizes His bow and arrows, and goes into war against His enemies and those of His people. In Psalm 45:3-5 He is likewise represented as a warrior who goes against His enemies in battle and stands the triumphant Conqueror over all foes. In Isaiah 9:6 Christ is represented as the Miracle One who is able to counsel, and the Mighty God, that is, God the Hero. This passage looks at Him as He will be when He comes back, enters the field of battle, and

conquers the world. But the passage upon which the language of John in Revelation 19:11-16 is probably based is found in Isaiah 63:1-6. Here we see the description of our Lord as He will take the field of battle against the enemies of Israel and will bring deliverance to His sorely tried people.

Our Lord will have the name "Faithful and True." Moreover, His name is called "The Word of God." He will have on His head many diadems. There will accompany Him "the armies which are in heaven" who will be arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. These are none other than the saints of God, who come back with Christ when He returns to this earth.

And out of Christ's mouth will proceed "a sharp sword," not a literal one, but it is the weapon with which He will fight. He will speak the word of judgment and His commands will be carried out by the power of Omnipotence. He therefore is represented as having a sword which proceeds from His mouth. He will also smite the nations with this sword and will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. Moreover, He has written upon His garment and upon Himself the title, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Examine carefully Habakkuk, chapter 3, for a similar vivid and graphic description of Christ at His second coming. (Also examine Psalm 18:7-18.)

#### Invitation to the Birds of Heaven

When Christ takes the field of battle, there will go forth from the hand that was once pierced for our redemption rays, death rays, that will destroy all the wicked. In this connection one should read Jeremiah 25:30-38, for a further description of our Lord's destroying all the wicked when He comes back in fulfillment of this grand prophecy.

In Ezekiel 38:1-39:16 we have a prophecy concerning the invasion of Palestine by the forces of Russia and her satellites, which invasion will occur before the Tribulation. Then Gog's armies will meet the Almighty and will be completely annihilated. In contrast with this invasion which occurs, as stated, before the Tribulation, will be the invasion of Palestine by the forces of the Antichrist at the end of the Tribulation, as set forth in Ezekiel 39:17-29. A person should read verses 17 and 18 especially. He will see that the language there used furnishes the foundation for the choice of language that is used here by John in Revelation 19:17,18. When he studies Ezekiel 39:17-29, he comes to the inevitable conclusion that the invasion of Palestine mentioned in these verses is none other than that which is mentioned here in Revelation 19:17,18. This of course, is the war of the great day of God the Almighty.

#### The Final Battle of the War of the Great Day of God the Almighty

In Revelation 19:19-21 we have a prediction of the Antichrist's gathering the armies of the world and invading Palestine in order to wipe out the remnant of the Jewish people and to oppose Christ at His second coming. From the language of verse 19 it is clear that the Antichrist, inspired by Satan, will know that Christ is going to make His appearance in Palestine at the end of the Tribulation. In order to be prepared for Him, the devil will inspire the Antichrist to gather all the armies of the world there to engage in battle. The language is so very graphic I wish to quote it: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army" (vs. 19). The language is clear and unmistakable. The beast, that is, the Antichrist, and the false prophet who performs signs in his presence, will be taken, captured, and the two will be "cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone." On the surface there appears to be a contradiction between Revelation 19:20 and Paul's statement in II Thessalonians 2:8. There it is told that Christ slays the Antichrist by the brightness of His coming. Here we are told that the beast, the Antichrist, and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire. But the discrepancies are only apparent, not real. When Christ comes, He

slays the Antichrist by the brightness of His coming, but he is restored to life and is cast along with the false prophet into the lake of fire, where he will be forever and ever.

The rest of the wicked are slain "with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (19:21). Thus ends the last war, the war that is fought to stop all wars. From that time forth and forevermore there will never be another war that will plague this world.

O Lord, hasten that day!



(Installment Twenty-six)

**The Reign of Christ and the Judgment of the Great White Throne (Chap. 20)**

As I have often repeated, at the end of the Tribulation Christ comes all the way to the earth to establish His reign of righteousness. In chapter 19 we have seen that our Lord is to return, and that He will come back as a warrior and put down all opposition in order to establish His reign of righteousness.

Much confusion exists in the world today concerning the Millennium. There are those who take the position that Christ's coming to the earth precedes the Millennium. Those who thus believe are called premillenarians. On the other hand, there are those who hold to the theory that the world is getting better, and that by the preaching of the gospel the era of righteousness and peace and joy will be introduced. Then Christ will reign through the gospel for one thousand years. Those holding this position are known as postmillennialists. Very few people hold this hypothesis today. A third theory is that which is known as a-millennialism. Those who hold this position believe that there is to be no Millennium whatsoever, but that what is spoken of as the Millennium is to be understood spiritually, or figuratively.

Notwithstanding the fact that in the first six verses of Revelation, chapter 20, we are told that Christ will come, will bind Satan for a thousand years, and will reign on this earth for that length of time, those holding these nebulous theories still insist that there is not to be any literal reign of Christ upon this earth. Notwithstanding the fact that the language is crystal clear, these theorists, while they admit that the language actually and literally says that Christ will reign for a thousand years, yet insist that this passage is very highly figurative, and that we cannot, in view of that fact, accept it literally. Thus there are false theories that have been devised to explain that which is quite evident.

I wish to give my testimony here. Before I was a Christian, and while still a boy in my teens, I was seeking to learn how to be saved. I purchased a New Testament which I took with me while working for a railroad company. Every moment of my spare time I pulled out my Testament and read it. I read straight through the New Testament. Finally, I came to the twentieth chapter of Revelation. I took this passage at what it says and believed it. Accepting God's Word at its face value, I became a premillenarian. Shortly after that I entered a Bible college, where the Scriptures were frequently explained according to the following principle: "Yes, the Scriptures say this, but they mean something else." I thought this was very strange, but considered that my professors knew what they were talking about. I therefore was confused and did not know what to believe. Finally I heard a man preaching who said that the Bible means what it says and says what it means. Then I returned to my original understanding of the Millennium, and I have maintained that position ever since. God is honest; God is capable of expressing Himself; He said what He meant and meant what He said.

**The Binding of Satan for One Thousand Years**

In Revelation 20:1-3 we are told that, when Christ comes, Satan is bound and is put in the pit of the abyss, which is sealed, over him. There he will remain for a thousand years, during which Christ will reign upon the earth. This is in perfect alignment with the prophecy that is found in Isaiah, chapter 24. In the first 20 verses we have a vivid, graphic description of the Tribulation Period. At the end of that time, God incarcerates the hosts of the high ones on high (the evil spirits that inhabit the air). "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall be visited"—or, *punished* (Isa. 24:22). Here is the Old Testament prediction to the effect that God will incarcerate Satan and his hosts in the pit of the abyss for "many days," that is, a thousand years.

During the time that Christ reigns for a thousand years, the people living on earth will not be deceived by Satan. The people who at that time will live upon the earth will be those who survive the Tribulation,

who have been truth seekers, and who will be permitted to enter the Millennium. The gospel, however will be given to them by converted Israel. They will accept Christ and will re-populate the earth. These are the ones who will be put on the right hand of Christ when He judges the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46).

#### Christ's Reign Upon the Earth for One Thousand Years

"4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls 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; and they lived (lit., *came to life*), and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

#### The Saints

There are three groups of people who reign with Christ according to this verse. Who are the ones referred to in the clause, "and they sat upon them [thrones]"? The only possible antecedent of this pronoun is the "armies of heaven" found in Revelation 19:14. These are the saints of the present age, who are raptured before the Tribulation, and who come all the way to the earth when Jesus returns to reign upon the earth.

In the next place, the second group that reigns with Christ is mentioned in these words: "... And *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God." These are doubtless the martyrs who are slain during the first half of the Tribulation, and who are mentioned in Revelation 6:9-11.

The third group that is mentioned is spoken of in this statement: "... And such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand." These are also the Tribulation martyrs—those slain under the Antichrist during the latter half of the Tribulation. They are killed because of their faith, but they come to life and reign with Christ a thousand years. While all of these reign with Christ, there is a distinction between those constituting the body of Christ, that is called out during the present age, and the Tribulation saints.

#### The Wicked Dead Come to Life After One Thousand Years

"5 The rest of the dead [that is, those who are not raised before the thousand years begin] lived not until the thousand years should be finished" (20:5); namely at the judgment of the great white throne which occurs after the thousand years.

Thus there are two resurrections, the first and the second. The first resurrection embodies all who are raised before the thousand years begin. The second embraces all who are not raised until after the thousand years are finished.

#### The Saints of the First Resurrection to Be Priests

Those who come up in the first resurrection are blessed forever and ever. "... over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (20:6).

### Satan's Activities After the Thousand Year's Reign of Christ

In Revelation 20:7-10 we have a prediction that Satan, at the end of a little period of time which follows the Millennium, will be released, will come forth, and will deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth. These he stirs up to come against Jerusalem in order to intimidate Christ, to war against Him, but not with actual weapons of war. There is a war going on now, a war between the East and the West, a psychological war. It is as real as a shooting war. Thus there will be a war of words, a war of psychology, that will be backed up by demonstrations. There will go forth from the four corners of the earth a mighty host of unregenerated, unsaved people, who will try to intimidate Christ after His having reigned for a thousand years.

I am convinced that those who are in this host are unsaved people. People will be born all during the Millennium. All who are born during that period will be allowed to live at least one hundred years. If they accept Christ before their one hundredth birthday, they will continue to live on through the Millennium. But if they refuse Christ and postpone their salvation until they reach their one hundredth birthday, the curse of God will fall upon them and they will be blotted from the land of the living. (See Isa. 65:19-21). Thus I am convinced that this is a "youth" movement, consisting of unregenerated people who go up from the four corners of the globe to intimidate our Lord. They are spoken of as Gog and Magog, terms that are echoes of Gog and Magog who invade Palestine before the Tribulation, and who are overthrown when they meet God Almighty. God speaks of this hostile group which marches against Jerusalem and their destruction in terms of the destruction of Gog and Magog before the Tribulation.

After Satan does his worst in stirring up this movement against Christ, he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, "where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (20:10). The Antichrist and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years. At the end of the thousand years they are still there in conscious existence and in punishment, just the same as at the beginning of that time—and they will continue there throughout all eternity. It is an awful thing to pass out of this life, not having accepted the peace and the reconciliation which the Lord Jesus Christ purchased freely and offers as freely to one and all.

In Revelation 20:11-15 we have a prophecy concerning the judgment of the great white throne. In our considering this, let us differentiate between this judgment, which follows the Millennium, and the judgment of the nations, which precedes the Millennium.

#### The Great White Throne Judgment Not The Same as that of Matthew 25:31-45

When Christ, comes back, according to Matthew 25:31-45, He will gather those nations that survive the Tribulation and will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Those being put on the right hand, and who are represented as sheep, are allowed to enter the Millennial Age and to repopulate the earth. There is nothing said about a resurrection in this judgment, nor about anyone's accepting Christ—or anything of that nature. This fact is important for us to remember. The judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15 occurs *after* the Millennium. Those appearing here are all raised from the dead.

#### Passing Away of the Material Universe

At the judgment of the great white throne the entire material universe passes out of existence: "... the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." John saw them vanish. He looked in every direction, to the farthest limits of space, and said that the material universe did not flee into any place. It simply vanishes, disappears. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words

shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). This passing away of the heaven and the earth is the fulfillment of the prediction which our Lord made.

### The Dead Judged and Rewarded

At the judgment of the great white throne "books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*." Everybody whose name was not found in the book of life is judged and is caused to go off into everlasting punishment. Everybody's name was originally put in the book of life. "... it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Whenever a man goes out of this life, not having accepted Christ and not having his name written in the Lamb's book of life among the righteous, his name is erased from the book of life. Now everyone whose name has been erased from the book of life will be sent off into "the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone" forever and ever.

### Death and Hades Cast into the Lake of Fire

At that time "death and Hades," which represent the power of death and the place where the dead—the lost—are cast into the lake of fire.

As said above, it is an awful thing to be banished from the presence of God and from the glory of His might forever and ever. God does not wish "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Christ made ample provision for the salvation of every soul.

May God move upon the hearts of men and women everywhere and open their eyes to see the necessity of salvation and the importance of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ before it is eternally too late!

### The Book of Life

Punishment is everlasting, just as life eternal is everlasting. There is bliss, happiness, and joy for all who will accept the Lord Jesus. Have you done that, my sinner friend? The Lord bless you and enable you to do that, is my prayer.

## (Installment Twenty-seven)

## The Eternal Order (Chaps. 21:1-22:5)

We have seen in our studies that at the end of the Tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth in His glory and power. Then He lifts the curse from the earth, binds Satan, and incarcerates him in the pit of the abyss for a thousand years, during which time Christ will reign upon this earth literally. His saints who have suffered with Him will also reign with Him at that time.

At the conclusion of the Millennium the devil, as we have already seen, will be loosed for a little season. He will stir up a youth movement against Christ and will lead this group to go up against Jerusalem in an attempt to intimidate Christ. But fire from heaven will consume them and will wipe out the rebellion to a man.

Next, as we have already seen, the judgment of the great white throne will be set. Christ will sit as Judge upon that throne. All the wicked dead will be raised and be brought before this judgment bar. At that time the material heavens and earth, which were created originally in the beginning, will pass away. "Pass away" means exactly what the words say—they will pass away, cease to exist (Rev. 20:11).

Then will be created the eternal order of which we read in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

It will be well again to differentiate between the new heavens and the new earth spoken of in Isaiah 65:17 and referred to by the Apostle Peter (II Peter, chap. 3), and the eternal order which is described in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, and which follows the Millennium and the great white throne judgment. The new heavens and earth mentioned by Isaiah and Peter refer to the new heavens and the new earth which God will create at the beginning of the Millennium. The earth and the heavens of the present time will be injured in such a way and to such an extent in the Tribulation that God will have to engage in certain creative activity and repair work so that there may be a real Millennium upon this earth. But these new heavens and new earth that exist during the Millennium pass away at the judgment of the great white throne.

The new heavens and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem which comes down out of the eternal heavens and rests upon the eternal earth, constitute the eternal order and have no connection with the millennial order.

## The Eternal Heavens

In chapter 21, verse 1, John informs us that he "saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and that there is to be no sea on that new earth." This statement means exactly what it says, since there is no indication of a departure from the literal meaning.

After John was given a vision of the new heavens and the new earth, he then saw "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband."

When this eternal Jerusalem comes down and rests upon the eternal earth, then the tabernacle of God will be with men. He will dwell with them and they will be His people, and He will be their God. This will be an entirely new order and different from that which obtains at the present time. According to

Psalm 115:16

"16 The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah,  
But the earth hath he given to the children of men."

The atmospheric heavens surround immediately the earth. Out in space are the stellar heavens. Beyond them are the heavens of the heavens, which is called "the immediate presence of God." It is there that He dwells. But He gave the earth to the children of men. He does not dwell with them in the literal sense as is foretold that He will, eventually, in the future.

But when the eternal order is created, God's tabernacle will no longer be in the heavens of the heavens, but it will be in this eternal Jerusalem, which will come down out of the eternal heavens and rest on the eternal earth.

John emphasizes the fact that this eternal order will be made completely new—from start to finish. In other words, no material that has entered into the present physical order will be used in the construction of the eternal universe. As a matter-of-fact, as we have seen, all the materials that now constitute the present physical order pass out of existence at the end of the Millennium. Hence, the Lord creates all things anew.

According to verse 6 Christ declares: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," the beginning of all things, and the end, the one in whom all things find their consummation, and to whom are all things. He is the one who has the fountain of the water of life. He will let anyone who will, come and drink thereof so that he may never thirst again.

In verse 7 a promise is made to those who overcome that they shall inherit all those things. God will be their God, and they will be His children.

But in verse 8 the place of awful doom of certain characters is set forth. "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be in* the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

### The Eternal Jerusalem

In Revelation 21:9-22:5 we have a full and detailed statement of the eternal Jerusalem.

In verses 9 and 10 John informs us that he was invited by "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues" to come with him, saying, "I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." Then this angel took John to a high mountain, from which he could view the situation of the eternal order and showed him "the holy city Jerusalem," the eternal Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven from God," and resting upon the eternal earth. From this advantageous place John viewed these eternal matters and was thrilled to the very depths of his soul.

In verses 11-17 we are given a description of the eternal Jerusalem. It is a city "foursquare," that is, a perfect cube, the sides of which are 12,000 furlongs. When these Greek measurements are translated into English, we learn that this city will be 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high.

At this point of our investigation we should make a contrast between this eternal city of Jerusalem, of which we read in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, and the millennial Jerusalem. When we study Ezekiel's prophecy, chapters 40-48, we have a full and detailed description of the Jerusalem of the Millennial Age and of its Temple. The city of Jerusalem will be upon what the prophet called the oblation—the high mountain that will be created in Palestine at the beginning of the Millennium, and that will stand throughout the Kingdom Age. The city of Jerusalem proper, with its suburbs, will be a city ten miles broad by ten miles long. In other words, the millennial Jerusalem will cover one hundred square miles. But this is a very small affair in comparison with the eternal Jerusalem, the ground plan of which will cover 2,250,000 square miles. These facts show conclusively that the millennial Jerusalem is one thing, and the eternal Jerusalem is an entirely different matter.

Also in this connection let us make an observation, which is an inference that we draw from the facts that are presented here: namely, since God has a sense of proportion and does all things well, that is,

perfectly, we may assume that the eternal earth upon which the eternal Jerusalem will rest forever will be an enormous affair, in comparison with which this earth is but a mere speck.

Surrounding this eternal city of Jerusalem will be a wall which will have twelve foundations and twelve gates resting upon these twelve foundations. Over each gate will be engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. On the foundation underneath each gate will be the name of one of the Apostles of the Lamb. Thus very conspicuously will be the names of Jews in connection with the eternal Jerusalem where we shall be with God and with our loved ones forever and ever. Only through these gates will anyone be able to enter into this eternal city.

In verses 18-21 we read of the various gems out of which the foundations and the gates of the city will be made, and which will adorn this city. The glory that will radiate from this place is far beyond the wildest imagination of any mortal at the present time.

According to verses 22 and 23, God and Christ will be the light of the city. There will be no need of sun, moon, or stars, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb." They will be the light of the city, and they will also be the temple in the midst of the city.

Verse 24 is a very important and strikingly significant passage: "And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it." The Common Version adds a modifying clause which reads: "And the nations of them that are saved." This clause was added to the original text by a very late Latin manuscript. It is not in any of the old, reliable Greek manuscripts.

Who are referred to in this passage? All of the saved from the present material universe will be in the city of Jerusalem, but these people and their kings will live out on that earth. These will come and visit this eternal city. This conclusion we cannot avoid, if we accept the statements as they are given. But, who are they?

I would like to venture a guess. I am inclined to believe that this will be a new race of people who will be created, and who will live upon that eternal earth. Sin will never touch them. They will be in perfect harmony with the will of God throughout all eternity. It is altogether possible that the saints who suffer and labor for the Lord, and who reign with Christ in the Millennium will likewise reign over this new race of people. But remember, my dear friends, I am only throwing this out *as a possible suggestion*, and not as a definite dogma.

In 22:1,2 we have a most beautiful picture of the river of water of life, "bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This river will flow in the midst of the street. It is altogether possible that this street is the one mentioned in 21:21.

On either side of this stream is the tree of life, which bears "twelve *manner* of fruits, yielding its fruit every month," and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. But this seems to be an erroneous translation. There will be no sickness, no death in the eternal order. A better rendering appears to me to be "and the leaves of the tree were for the health of the nations." This tree of life will have the same purpose that it had in the Garden of Eden (Gen., chap. 2).

In 22:5 we read of this land of eternal day: "And there shall be night no more: and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

It has never entered the mind of mortal man what God has in store for those who know Him, and who love Him.

We shall be occupied throughout all eternity in reigning with Christ, as we are told in the last quotation.

We who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and who are trusting Him and the merits of His shed blood, shall enjoy these great and marvelous blessings forever and ever. It pays to be on God's side, to know Christ, and to labor for Him while we have yet time and opportunity. May the Spirit of God stir our hearts to loyalty and faithfulness in the discharge of every duty that comes upon us, is my prayer.

(Final Installment)

### The Closing Remarks of the Book of Revelation

In our study of the Book of Revelation we have come to the last section, which consists of 22:6-21. In these verses are practical, plain exhortations and information given.

"These words are faithful and true"

At the conclusion of the last vision the interpreting angel said to John that the words which he had spoken and showed him were faithful and true. This statement is correct regarding everything that God has said. The psalmist David declared:

"6 The words of Jehovah are pure words;  
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth,  
purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6).

The statement regarding the faithfulness and the truthfulness of the words of God is followed by a prophecy that the Lord will come quickly. Following this prediction is the exhortation: "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." The promise of blessing to those who keep the words of the Book of Revelation shows positively that it can be understood by those who really are seeking to know and to do the will of God. To hold out a special blessing for keeping the things in the Book of Revelation, if it were impossible for anyone to understand its message, would be mere mockery. God, of course, is not party to such deception. We therefore conclude that the Book of Revelation can be understood, and that the things therein can be kept.

### Worship God Alone

John declared that he is the one who saw and heard the things that are written in the Book of Revelation. When the Apostle heard and saw the things that are written, he fell down before the angel that showed him the revelation. When he did this, the angel said that he should refrain from worshiping him, because, said he, "I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book." He concluded his words with the exhortation that men should worship God—and, I may add, worship God alone.

### Prophecy Is Not Sealed Today

In verse 10 we have this language: "And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand."

When Daniel was given the revelations recorded in his book, he was urged: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). The expression, "shut up the words, and seal the book," indicates that the revelation given to Daniel was a closed book for the people of that day and time. It becomes an open book in the time of the end, as the verse declares. That we are in the end of the age, there can be no doubt. God has, figuratively speaking, removed the veil, and anyone who wishes to know the message of the Book of Daniel can do so, provided he will seek diligently for the truth and will ask God to open his eyes.

The Lord said that John *was not to seal* up the Book of Revelation. In other words, he was to put it in such a form that men can understand it, who desire to do so.



Prophecy can be understood, if people will have the proper idea and attitude towards it. If a person thinks that prophecy cannot be understood, and that it is enigmatical, he, of course, cannot comprehend it. The impression that prophecy cannot be understood is absolutely false. If one will study the prophecies that are quoted in the New Testament from the Old, will examine carefully the context in the Old Testament, and will take everything at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the context point to the conclusion that the words are not used literally, but are employed figuratively or symbolically, then he can understand the message. The same thing is true with reference to prophecy in the New Testament. A person can understand history as it is recorded in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. If a person can understand how to study the historical portions of the Old Testament, if he realizes that prophecy is but history prewritten, and if he approaches the study of prophecy from that point of view, he can very easily come to a correct understanding of the predictions in both the Old and New Testaments.

### Christ and His Message

In verses 11-15 we have a message that centers around Christ, who is set forth in verse 13 in the following words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." This statement reminds one of similar ones in the Book of Isaiah. The words, Alpha and Omega, are the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus speaks of Himself as being the Alpha and the Omega. By this language He is simply saying that He is the first and the last. There was none before Him, and He will continue on forever and ever. He is the beginning of all creation, in that He created all things, and by Him all things hold together (Col. 1:9-17).

Statements with reference to the Trinity must be understood in the light of the fundamental passage of the Old Testament, namely, Deuteronomy 6:4, which, when properly rendered, reads thus: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity." There is but one Divine Substance or Essence, but three Persons subsisting in that one Divine Essence. These great truths are fundamental and underlie all the teaching of the Word of God, both in the Old and the New Testaments. Christ was God, and was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Since He took the initiative, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father before the world began and came here as the God-man to redeem man, He is the central figure around whom all things revolve. "... The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

Christ, "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end," urges people to continue in the way that they have chosen, and are determined to go. Thus He said: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still" (22:11). The Almighty has never forced anyone's will. He uses moral suasion to influence people to choose and to do the correct thing, but He stops short of passing over the threshold of anyone's personality in an effort to force or coerce him to do the right. If a person deliberately chooses unrighteousness, or filthiness, or anything of that nature, the Lord will not force him away from the choices which he has made, but will allow him to go on in the same bent of his mind. On the other hand, if there is any righteous one—someone who loves truth, righteousness, and justice—he is urged to pursue that kind of life still, in accordance with the true fundamental principles of righteousness and justice.

According to verse 12, Jesus will come quickly. When He comes the second time, He will bring His reward with Him and render to everyone according to his work. When Christ came nineteen hundred years ago, He appeared upon earth as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He worked out God's scheme of redemption of mankind and made it possible that everyone who desires light might have the opportunity and the privilege of becoming sons of God. When He returns, He will come with His

reward and with His recompense and will render to every man according to his works. Men are saved by the grace of God through faith, but are to be rewarded according to their works. We are urged to stop laying up our treasures upon earth, but continually to lay up our treasures in heaven.

The Lord gave a message concerning those who are saved. Hear Him: "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (22:14). Those people who come voluntarily in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Regardless of how sinful a person may be, if he will only come to Christ and allow Him to do so, the Lord will wash him and make him whiter than snow.

Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb will have access to the tree of life and will be permitted to enter the holy, eternal city, where they will be with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit and loved ones throughout all eternity. Hence, the saved are indeed in a blessed and happy condition!

In contrast with those who enter the eternal Jerusalem, are those who are denied that privilege. They are spoken of as being "without" the city. This word is not to be understood as implying that *immediately outside* the eternal Jerusalem will be the wicked, that is "the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie." In contrast with the saved who will be "within" the city, the evil, reprobate ones will be "without." They will be in the place that is called "the lake of fire," which burns with fire and brimstone, forever and ever. Just where perdition will be, no one can tell. But it is in a certain locality in the universe, where all the wicked and unsaved will be. From that place they will never be able to depart. This is what is meant by Revelation 22:15; "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie."

#### The Angel Sent by Christ to Testify

In, verse 16 we read: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star."

The Lord sent His special angel to testify the things that are written in the Book of Revelation to the churches. Why to the churches? There is but one answer: That they might know what is contained in the revelation appearing in the book, and that they might conform their lives thereto. "Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

Christ speaks of Himself again as the "root and the offspring of David." By this expression He meant that He is descendant of David, humanly speaking. Christ is great David's "Greater Son"—the God-man.

However, He calls Himself "the bright, the morning star." The morning star appears just before daybreak. As it rises before the break of day, so will Christ appear as "the bright, the morning star." When we consider the comparison that is introduced by this language, we can understand this statement to refer to but one thing, namely, that it speaks of Christ's appearing before the dawn of the great and bright Millennial Day. In other words, Christ will appear as "the bright, the morning star" *at the time of the rapture, which will occur immediately before the Tribulation* breaks upon the world. The Lord Jesus Christ will himself "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: 17 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." The saints who are left upon the earth will be snatched away, being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, "... and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:13—5:11).

### Christ's Invitation to All Thirsty, Weary Souls

In Revelation 22:17 we have one of the three great invitations that appear in the Bible. The first one to which I wish to call attention is found in Psalm 2:10-12. This is extended to the atheists and unbelievers of the end time. They are admonished not to do what they contemplate, but to turn to God and worship Him and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

The second great invitation is that which was extended by the Lord Jesus Christ to all who labor and are heavy laden. It is such a wonderful passage that I am quoting it: "28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

The last of the three great invitations to which I have referred is found, as stated above, in Revelation 22:17, and is as follows: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life freely." The "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit. The "bride" is the Church. Both of them extend the invitation to the sinner to come and accept Christ. The one who hears and accepts the invitation should sound forth the message to others that they too may come to Christ and be saved. The one who is thirsty, let him come also. Whosoever will may come and partake of the "water of life" freely and be saved. Thus the Bible ends with this marvelous invitation to all who will to come.

### Warning Against Adding to or Taking From the Scripture

In one of his final orations Moses, immediately before his death, warned the people not to add to anything that God had said, nor to take from it: "2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2).

In Revelation 22:18,19 the Lord concludes the Book of Revelation, and at the same time the Bible, with the same warning that men must not take from the Scriptures nor add to them, or mutilate or change them in any way. The Scriptures are the infallibly inspired Word of God. They say what they mean, and they mean exactly what they say. People should be careful how they change, warp, distort, or modify what God has said! If one takes from the Book, "God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city." If he adds to it, God will "add unto him the plagues which are written in this book"—the Book of Revelation. The only safe course to pursue is to take the Word of God at it is written, and to follow the letter and the spirit of the instructions.

The Lord in verse 20 promises that He is coming: "Yea: I come quickly." The Apostle John then chimes in and says: "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." Every true heart who recognizes the truthfulness of the Christian religion and the blessedness of the eternal home, prays with John, "O Lord, come! Come, Lord Jesus!"

The Bible ends with the apostolic prayer: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen." (Rev. 22:21.)