

John's Revelation Unveiled

by

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John's Revelation Unveiled

Published by:



Ligstryders

✉ 74904 Lynnwoodrif 0040 South Africa

☎ Nat (012) 330-3150 Int (+27 12) 330-3150 📧 lig@mweb.co.za

<http://ligstryders.webjump.com>

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- "John's Revelation Unveiled" is the final section of a far larger work by Dr. F.N. Lee, entitled "Onward, Christian Soldiers! - Toward a Victorious Eschatology" (See Preface). It will be published at a later stage. Where references are made in "John's Revelation Unveiled" to the earlier parts of "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" these have been replaced with a "☩".
- Due to the size of the Bibliography, it was not included. Anyone interested should contact the publishers.

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Biographical Particulars

Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son in that faith.

At the onset of the Second World War, Lee's father was appointed by the Royal Navy as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Visiting Lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tennessee. He was then the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) —and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has twenty-one earned degrees —including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations* in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

Lee rises early; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited one hundred and ten countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has lectured and/or preached in all of those countries, as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

* Th.D. : The Covenantal Sabbath
Ph.D. : Communist Eschatology
D.Min. : Daily Family Worship
D.Ed. : Catechism Before Communion!
S.T.D. : Rebaptism Impossible!
D.R.E. : Baby Belief Before Baptism!
D.Jur. : Women Ministers & Australian Litigation
D.Litt.: Holinshed on the Ancient British Isles
D.C.L. : The Roots and Fruits of the Common Law
D.Hum. : Tiny Human Life —Abortion and IVF
D.Phil.: Miracles —What and When and Why?

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in Australia —where he is the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He retires in 2000.

His wife Nellie is in fulltime Christian Service as a godly Homemaker. Their elder daughter Johanna has completed her M.A.; and teaches English, German and Modern History in Brisbane at the Parkridge High School. Their younger daughter Annamarie (B.A. & Dip. Lib. Sc.), whom Dr. Lee baptized as a baby in 1970, was until 1998 Secretary/Librarian at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College, Brisbane, Australia —and has now completed her Dip. Ed. studies to become a Primary School Teacher.

Commendation by Professor Dr. Loraine Boettner

"Dear Dr. Lee,

Some time ago, I received your treatise [*Onward, Christian Soldiers!*]. I have read this with much interest and approval, and have nothing to offer but commendation. It is splendid for the purpose intended — Scripturally sound and interestingly written....

I like very much the optimistic view that Christianity is to triumph throughout the World. Yes indeed, righteousness is to conquer the Earth! That view is much needed today. And you bring out so clearly that this is the view presented in the Scriptures....

I want to commend you for a splendid devotional work. And I like this especially since it is written so clearly and strongly from the optimistic viewpoint which I think brings out the true meaning of that element in the Psalms. I had never realized how definitely and consistently optimistic the Psalms were. You have brought out many new thoughts that I have missed.... I hope that this work will be widely used.... I think that it will do much to help make known **the predicted latter-day glory of the Church**....

I think that you have given a good explanation of that very difficult passage, Rev. 20:7-10. That is a section of Scripture that has been puzzling to me, as on the surface it seems to indicate a future final apostasy of the Church; and yet that seemed so contrary to what I believed would actually take place — no apostasy but rather a smooth transfer or merger into the heavenly Kingdom....

Dr. Warfield did not believe that there would be a final apostasy. You have given a good explanation — that there is no actual apostasy, no real danger ever faces the saints, and that the Devil and his followers are merely exposed before the righteous shortly before their final expulsion into hell. Thank you for it.

Evidently the book will be a very thorough and comprehensive treatment of the subject.... I do welcome the fact that you are preparing such a book.

Sincerely,

Loraine Boettner, Rock Port, Missouri 66482, May 20th 1978."

Explanation of Commendation

My *Onward Christian Soldiers!* was all too slowly being written and mailed piece by piece to the great Prof. Dr. Loraine Boettner —famous author of the World-renowned works *Immortality, Roman Catholicism, Studies in Theology, The Millennium, and The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. To spur me on, he wrote to me about my *Onward Christian Soldiers!* seven times. That he did on October 26th, 1973; November 13th, 1973; January 9th, 1974; April 24th, 1974; September 9th, 1975; February 26th, 1977; and May 20th, 1978.

On February 26th, 1977, he wrote: "If excerpts from any of my letters will serve as even a partial Introduction to your book, I much prefer that you use them rather than for me to try to write anything else. With Best Wishes, Sincerely, Loraine Boettner."

I moved from the U.S.A. to Australia at the end of 1980, in order to teach Systematic Theology at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College in Brisbane. On September 7th 1984, Dr. Boettner wrote to me: "I remember with real appreciation your visit here at my home about nine years ago. And now I suppose you are still in Australia, about half-way around the World from here! I am writing primarily to say that in the recent [revised 1984] edition of *The Millennium*, I have added a chapter, 'The Millennium of Revelation Twenty.'

"This presents a new interpretation of chapter 19:11-21 which carries over into the 20th chapter —and, I believe, gives a truly logical basis for the postmillennial position. I have never been fully satisfied with the view there is to be a fearful apostasy just before the end of the Church Age, in which the saints would be all but annihilated just before Christ returns.... I believe that this [my **new**] interpretation solves that problem; that it firmly establishes the postmillennial system. I am sending you a copy of this book....

"I shall be glad to have your reaction to this...interpretation. I highly respect your position as a Reformed Theologian and a Postmillennialist, and I shall await with interest your evaluation. Loraine Boettner."

Since writing that last letter to me, Dr. Boettner has gone on to Heaven to be with Jesus. All my subsequent teaching tasks have till now prevented my completion and revision of the manuscript to my satisfaction. But now this has been achieved, out of gratitude to Dr. Boettner I can think of no better way of honouring him than to follow his suggestion of using excerpts from some of his various letters to me —in the above *Commendation*.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee, Brisbane, Australia, 1999, for 2000ff.

Preface

The following pages are excerpted from the latter part of the **thoroughly-revised** and **greatly-expanded** edition of my forthcoming work *Onward, Christian Soldiers!* Its subtitle: *Toward a Victorious Eschatology*.

That work goes through the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. This explains — in my present excerpt therefrom — the subsequent page numbers, footnote numbers, and format. For what follows are **but the last 31 studies** of passages from Holy Scripture for 366 "daily readings" and **Bible meditations** — one for each day of the entire year (including provision for a leap year).

Currently, I lack the time painstakingly to re-format all of this in what now follows. Yet I am very desirous to get this excerpt into the hands of my students and certain friends, before 2000 with its 'Y2K' scenario. So, as an *interim* measure, I am now simply presenting it here 'as is.'

I much respect many elements in **Preterism**. Yet I believe **the consistent eschatological teaching of the infallible Word of God — is Classic Historicalism**. Certainly that is the position of the mainline Christian Church reflected in: the Patristic Fathers; the Mediaeval Scholastics; **all** of the many Protestant Reformers; the 1561 *Belgic Confession* (arts. 28 & 29); the Preamble to the 1619 *Canons of Dordt*; the 1645 *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* (in the middle of its *Publick Prayer before the Sermon*); and the **unadulterated Westminster Confession of Faith** 23:4° & 25:6° — to all of which documents I myself am a **Strict Subscriptionist**. See my essay *The Non-Preteristic Historicalism of John Calvin and the Calvinistic Standards* (1993).

Truly, A.D. 2000 is very far from the end of World History! May we then redouble our efforts and labour for the Master from the dawn till setting sun — or rather, till the sunrise of Christ's **postmillennial Millennium!** See: the 1563 *Heidelberg Catechism* (cf. QQ. & AA. 80 & 123); the *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. & A. 191^{c-h}; and my own A.D. 2000 essay *Always Victorious! — The Earliest Church Not Pre- but Postmillennial*.

For, as Isaac Watts declares in his poem drawn from Psalm 72:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
doth its successive journeys run —
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Also Sir Arthur Sullivan exulted — in his own rousing marching song for the Church Militant here on Earth:

"At the sign of triumph, Satan's legions flee.
On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!"

Let Hell's foundations then indeed quiver! Onward, Christian Soldiers, to victory!

Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee, *Regente Jesu*, 2000 Anno Domini.

Christ has made us Kings unto God, to reign on the Earth

Revelation 1

December 1

"Jesus Christ...is the faithful Witness and the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the Earth. To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood and has made us kings and priests to God and His Father — to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen."¹

Probably very soon after writing his three *Epistles*, the Apostle John inscripturated also the last book of the Bible.¹ While himself **in exile** on the island of Patmos, he wrote the *Book of Revelation* to encourage persecuted Christians. For tribulation was even then being experienced in the Christian Congregations of Western Asia Minor, on what is now the Western Coast of modern Turkey. It was soon to spread throughout the Roman Empire.²

¹ Rev. 1:5f. The Johannine authorship is attested to in Rev. 1:1,4,9 & 22:8. This is asserted also by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the *Muratorian Canon*. Mt. 27:56f & Mk. 15:40 & Jh. 19:25f, taken together, perhaps suggest that this author may even have been the half-cousin of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

² The *Book of Revelation* was possibly and perhaps even probably inscripturated about 65 and before 70 A.D. Rev. 1:4,9,11; 2:10; 3:10; 13:3f; 14:8,10f; 17:1,9-11,16-18; 18:2,8f; 20:4,9 & 21:10f. See too Rev. 1:9 *etc.* above, with Dan. 12:1 and Mt. 24:1-8,16,21,28 & Acts 18:2.

It should be remembered that the early Church Historian Orosius records that Nero's A.D. 64f persecutions of Christians spread far beyond Rome. For other authorities in the Early Church even before Irenaeus (and most of the writers in the Early Church after him) assume an early (Neronic) date for the inscripturation of the Book of Revelation (*cf.* n. 4 below). A date of about 64-66 A.D. for the writing down of the *Book of Revelation* is suggested by various *Introductions* to Ancient Syrian translations, by Melito of Sardis (175 A.D.), by the *Muratorian Canon* (180), and by Tertullian (220).

In the Early Church, it was only Irenaeus who **perhaps** assumed a late date of 95 A.D. for the writing down of the *Book of Revelation*. He stated it had been written during **Domitian's** persecutions of Christians — conceivably those during the nineties. Yet even Irenaeus — as distinct from Eusebius's later (mis?)interpretation of Irenaeus — may well have been referring to an earlier Domitianic persecution of Christians during the late sixties. See at our n. 4 below. Compare too F.N. Lee's manuscript *Revelation & Jerusalem: Apocalypse Written Before 70 A.D.* (Jesus Saves, Brisbane, Australia, unpub., 1983) — as approvingly cited by K.L. Gentry Jr.'s doctoral dissertation *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* (Institute for Christian Economics, Tyler, Tx., 1989, pp. 35 & 58f & 103n.).

Advocates of the Early-Church-in-general's earlier (Neronic) date for the Book of Revelation, include: Epiphanius, Andreas of Caesarea, Arethas of Caesarea, Theophylact, Annius, Caponsacchius, Hentenius, Salmeron, Alcazar, Grotius, Hammond, Wettstein, Harenberg, Herder, Hartwig, Guerike, Moses Stuart, Adam Clarke, Zuellig, Luecke, Bleek, Duesterdieck, Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, Van Andel, A.S. Barnes, J.M. Ford, C. Vanderwaal, Leon Morris, J.A.T. Robinson, F.N. Lee, K.L. Gentry Jr., and D. Chilton. Significantly, the A.D. 400 Church Father Epiphanius gave a very early date to the *Book of Revelation* — based on Mt. 24:7 & Acts 11:28 & 18:2 *cf.* Rev. 6:2-8.

Christ has made us Kings unto God, to reign on the Earth

Caesar Nero ruled the Roman Empire from A.D. 54 to 68. It seems quite likely that at least some of the immediate tribulations of Christians referred to in the *Book of Revelation*, were those suffered as a result of the persecution which broke out after Nero falsely accused the Christians of instigating the burning of Rome in the July of 64 A.D.³

In that case, Revelation would have been written probably just a year or so later — during the year immediately before 66-67. That would have been just three-and-one-half years — or "time [and] two times and half-a-time" (?) — before the A.D. 70 Pagan-Roman destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.³ Thus very many Theologians — such as Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, Leon Morris, Vanderwaal, Francis Nigel Lee, Chilton and Gentry.

On the other hand, others think (with Eusebius and Enoch Pond) that the immediate tribulations referred to in the last book of the Bible were those suffered during Caesar Domitian's later persecution of Christians.⁴ In that case, Revelation would have been written around A.D. 95f.

³ In support of the view that the *Book of Revelation* was written before 70 A.D., compare Rev. 11:1f with Lk. 17:20-29f,37 & 21:6-24. Cf. too n. 2.

⁴ Cf. perhaps Rev. 2:10,13 & 3:10. The *Book of Revelation* was probably inscripturated about 65, and very likely indeed before 70 A.D. In the absence of the no-longer-extant original fragments of Papias, the earliest real claim of a late date for the Book of Revelation was made by the not-always-careful Early Church Historian Eusebius (325 A.D.). In this regard, he uncritically represents a statement in Irenaeus and ignores the other sources mentioned in n. 2 above.

In an extant reference (*Against Heresies* V:30:3), the 185 A.D. Irenaeus expressed himself somewhat obscurely so as to have become the first extant Early Church Father now often alleged to have proposed a late date (of 95 A.D.) for the *Book of Revelation*. Yet Irenaeus does not mention any such date, but only claims that "the apocalyptic vision...was seen...toward the end of Domitian's reign" —viz. "by him who beheld" it (namely John). Very significantly, Irenaeus does not claim he received this 'information' —as he often says in respect of other matters —from the 'ancients'!

A fortiori, especially in the light of Irenaeus's known errors in several other areas —such as his statements that the pillar of salt which had been Lot's wife, (still) menstruates; that Adam was a child at the time of his creation; and that Jesus appeared to be more than fifty years of age (*ib.* III:22:4 & IV:31:3 & IV:33:9 & IV:38:3 & IV:38:8) —his possibly attributing a late date to the *Book of Revelation* (in the teeth of clearly-earlier dates given by other Early Church Fathers as described in n. 2) —needs to be evaluated very critically.

The widely-held but poorly-grounded view that Irenaeus gave specifically a late date (only in the mid-nineties) for the inscripturation of the *Book of Revelation*, needs to be re-examined. Indeed, precisely the A.D. 325 Eusebius (*Church History* III:17-20) —himself noted to be an uncritical collator rather than a careful researcher —is really the one who assumed that Irenaeus 'must' have been attributing a late date to the inscripturation of the *Book of Revelation*.

A similar late date for the inscripturation of the *Book of Revelation* was attributed by later scholars who uncritically followed Eusebius's (mis)reading of Irenaeus. Such later scholars include: A Lapide, Vitringa, Hengstenberg, Swete, Zahn, Feine-Behm, and R.H. Charles, *etc.* Interestingly, these later scholars all acknowledge their dependence exclusively on Eusebius's (mis)representation of the above passage in Irenaeus and/or on similar post-Eusebian representations traceable back to Eusebius's own (mis)representation of Irenaeus.

Hengstenberg, however, does at least concede the possibility of an early date in his book *The Revelation* (Mack, Cherry Hill N.J., 1972 rep., I, p. 416 & n.). For to John in Rev. 11:13, "the temple at Jerusalem can be nothing else than a den of robbers.... At what period did the temple more deserve this name than shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the composition of the *Apocalypse* is transferred by those who understand by the temple in chapter eleven the temple at Jerusalem?" Hengstenberg then observes further: "The crisis [of Calvary] by that time [just before 70 A.D.] was quite past. The nobler elements had long ago been absorbed by the Christian Church. The Synagogue of Satan retained only the scum."

Either way, however, it is quite clear that the whole book was written by the Apostle John during the latter half of the first century A.D. It was written about things which even then would "shortly" start coming to pass — things that were then "at hand."

John does **not** say or mean (preteristically) that all those things would soon **finish** coming to pass. Nor does he say or mean (futuristically) that almost none of those things would even start to occur until after an alleged and still-future 'rapture.' He says and means (historicalistically) that first some and then all those things would "shortly" **start** coming to pass.

John was then on the small island of Patmos — during either a first or a second exile (*viz.* respectively in the sixties or in the nineties of the first century A.D.). It was then that he wrote about things which he **had** "seen" (*viz.* Jesus Christ and His Church or "Candlestick" Congregations) — and about things which "**are**" (*viz.* the things which were occurring right **then**, which he rightly called: "**now**").

Nevertheless, John wrote **also** about things which would **start** occurring **only after that**. Such were Christ's explanations to the aged John of the many mysteries or then-still-hidden events which only **others** would later see "come to pass" — *viz.* "the things which **shall** be **hereafter**"; the things that would start occurring only **later** (though as indeed then quite "shortly").

At that time, John was exiled on the isle of Patmos during the persecution of several Congregations of Christ's Church in Western Asia Minor.⁵ Possibly, that persecution had already or would also soon spread throughout the entire Pagan-Roman Empire.⁶ John wrote the *Book of Revelation* chiefly concerning "things which must **shortly** come to pass."⁷ And at least **some** of those "things" were already at least to **start** being fulfilled — by the time John died **before the end** of the **first century A.D.**

⁵ Rev. 1:4,9; 2:10,13,19; *etc.* [†] John's own persecution apparently commenced (especially after 63 A.D.) in Jerusalem (John 16:33 *cf.* Mt. 24:1-3,9-16). From there, it is believed that he (either before or during A.D. 66) escaped to Pella — and thence to Ephesus, and finally to Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation about widespread Pagan-Roman persecutions of Christians ever since Nero burned down Rome in A.D. 64. See n. 2, and compare all the relevant Historians — from Orosius to Vanderwaal. At first, in those early days, the Roman Pagans regarded the largely-Hebrew Church as nothing but a sect of Judaism. But now, between A.D. 66 to 70, Rome began to persecute also the Christians as a specific group it then learned was being hostilely opposed by the Jews (with which latter Rome had previously confused them). Indeed, Pagan Rome's persecution of Christians as such would become much more severe **after** she destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. For from then onward, Rome would clearly see the independence of Christianity from both Judaism and Rome — and also see Christianity's international expansion everywhere and its successful competition against the religious claims of both Judaism and the entire Pagan Roman Empire. See II Thess. 2[†].

⁶ *Cf.* n. 10 with Rev. 1:1 & 2:10 & 3:10 & 13:7f and ch. 17. See too n. 5.

⁷ Rev. 1:1,4,11f & 22:16 and with n. 8.

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First. The Apostle was **apparently writing his book to a Presbytery**. Just as John had apparently written to a regional Presbytery and to her many daughter Congregations in his *Second Epistle*⁸ — so too here in the *Book of Revelation*. For here, he was writing to the regional Presbytery of Western Asia Minor — and to her daughter Congregations (of Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamos and Thyatira and Sardis and Philadelphia and Laodicea).⁹

These Congregations had been or were just beginning to be persecuted⁶ (together with the Apostle John himself).⁵ The fact that John wrote to the **Presbytery** of Western Asia Minor has, we believe, many general implications as to which is the truly Biblical system of Church Government. And this also has many implications as to the ability of the Christian Church — when thus properly organized — to withstand persecution.

Second. The events revealed by Jesus Christ and recorded in writing by the Apostle John in the *Book of Revelation* during the latter part of the first century A.D., relate to "things which must **shortly** come to pass.... For the time is **at hand**."¹⁰

This surely indicates that the predictions about the future as recorded in the *Book of Revelation* — unlike the predictions recorded by Daniel in **his** own day¹¹ — would "**shortly** come to pass" (or soon **start** coming to pass). Such were the things which would occur "hereafter" — the things that would start to happen (also in Heaven but **especially** here on Earth) **soon after** they were written.¹⁰ For even then — **already** — "the time" was "**at hand**."¹²

⁸ II Jh. 1 & 13[†].

⁹ Rev. 1:1,4,11.

¹⁰ Rev. 1:1,3,19 & 22:6, and *cf.* n. 12.

¹¹ *Cf.* the great difference between Daniel's phrase "the words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9), and John's three phrases "things which must shortly come to pass" and "the time is at hand" and "do not seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand!" Rev. 1:1,3 & 22:10. See too: Dan. 8:26, Moffatt; 9:24; 10:4,13f, Moffatt; & 12:1f,4,6-9f *cf.* 2:28-45 (esp. vv. 34 & 44) and *cf.* too with 12:1; and 7:7-28 esp. v. 25 (*cf.* with 12:7).

¹² Rev. 1:1,3,19 & 22:6f,10,16 *cf.* Mt. 3:2 & 4:17 & Lk. 1:23,41 & 2:1,15 & 9:57 & Jas. 5:9. *Cf.* too n. 13. On the word "shortly" (*en tachei*) in Rev. 1:1 & 22:6, note that this expression is used elsewhere to signify: "within one year there-after" (thus Acts 25:4 & Phil. 2:19,23 & I Tim. 3:14 & Heb. 13:23); or "within a few years" (thus Gal. 1:6 & II Pet. 1:14); or "within fifty years" (Dt. 9:3 LXX, *cf.* Josh. ch. 14 & Ezek. 29:5 LXX *cf.* vv. 8,12f & II Th. 2:2 & Rev. 1:1,3,19[†]); or 'during the whole course of the period between the first and second advents of Jesus Christ' (Rev. 1:1,3,19 & 22:6f *cf.* 1:10 with II Pet. 3:8 & Ps. 2:12 LXX & Dan. 2:28f LXX and possibly also Rev. 1:1-14).

Similarly, "at hand" (*engus*) in Rev. 1:3, like *en tachei* ("shortly") in 1:1, generally means "chronologically near" (*cf.* Mt. 26:18 & Jh. 2:13 & 6:4 & 7:2 & 11:55) — although it can indeed be construed as referring to part or to the whole of the period between Christ's first and second advents (Mt. 24:33 *cf.* vv. 34-44 with Jas. 5:9's "*engiken*" and Rev. 1:3's "*engus*" *cf.* too Rev. 22:10,22). "Shortly" and "at hand" in Rev. 1:1 & 1:3 here mean: that "it is hard about to begin" (thus Matthew Poole); that it is ready "to start soon" (thus Albert Barnes); that it would soon start and then continue occurring "throughout Church History" (thus Hoeksema on Rev. chs. 1 & 22); that it would start not in "the far-distant future" but nevertheless endure "through the whole course of history" (Hengstenberg). Vanderwaal at Rev. 1:1's "shortly" cites the prophecy of Mal. 3:1 — which was fulfilled only some 400 years after that prediction was given. A futuristic understanding of these words "shortly" and "at hand" (*cf.* n. 13) is therefore precluded. For there is no natural way in which either *en tachei* ("shortly") or *engus* ("at hand") can possibly be applied to events the fulfilment of events the first of which would commence only subsequently to or after an assumed and as-yet-still-future "rapture" (as erroneously held by Pretribulationistic Dispensationalists and other Futurists in respect of Rev. chs. 4 to 22)!

Yet it must also be remarked that "the time" referred to in this text, is the entire time from John's own day right down to the day of the Final Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead and to consummate the New Heavens on the New Earth.¹³ For the *Book of Revelation* (21:1 to 22:20f) **ends** with the not-yet-fulfilled statement "Surely, I come quickly!" — to which the Church prayerfully responds: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Now although some of the events of Rev. 1:1f commenced occurring at the time John was writing (*cf.* Rev. chs. 2 to 3), it would still be many centuries before all the events predicted would finish occurring (*cf.* Dt. 32:35 & Mal. 3:1 & 4:1,6 & Ps. 90:1-4). Hengstenberg states in his book *The Revelation* (I p. 34): "The Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection [of the dead] were at a great distance from the present time.... In the middle, lay a period of a 'thousand years.'" However, during the time between the past commencement and the still-future termination of those events referred to in the *Book of Revelation* —they would also continue to occur.

Thus Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* I pp. 80f & n.) writes even about the verse Rev. 1:7 that "the Lord does not merely once come with the clouds [only] at the end of the World, but [He comes on the clouds to] throughout all periods of the World's history." So too Vitranga: "Christ is said in Scriptural style to come on the clouds of Heaven as often as He displays His glory and shows Himself as present to the Church. And there are various gradations of that advent of Christ, in which He is seen by His hardened enemies with the greatest anguish and lamentation." See too nn. 27 to 39.

¹³ I Th. chs. 4 to 5 & II Th. 1 to 2 *cf.* Rev. 1:7,19. *Cf.* esp. nn. 12 & 123. Indeed, the *Book of Revelation* is to be interpreted basically as history —as a series of major historical events some of which were occurring or beginning to occur or which were to occur shortly after the book was written down, and others of which would occur only during the then-subsequent history (whether now-past or whether now-still-future).

It is true that the *Book of Revelation* (and esp. chs. 6 to 19 thereof) has been interpreted in several different ways. For an excellent survey of the history of its interpretation, see W. Bossuet's commentary *The Revelation of John* (Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, Goettingen, 1896, pp. 51-141). For the methods of its interpretation, see G. Scroggie's book *The Great Unveiling: An Analytical Study of the Book of Revelation* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1979 rep.). However, here in this footnote we would simply state that the *Book of Revelation* has been subjected to the various different interpretations: of the Religionists; of the Preterists; of the Futurists; and of the Historicalists (sometimes wrongly called 'Historicists').

The Religionists believe that the *Book of Revelation* derives its contents from pagan myths. Thus: De Zwaan, Boll, Halver, Jung, Eliade, Lohse, and Visser. Clearly, this school roots largely in unbelief.

The Futurists believe that the *Book of Revelation* largely describes events which have not yet even started to happen —especially as regards Rev. chs. 4 to 22. Thus: Darby, Scofield, Fundamentalism, Seiss, Blackwood, Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas, Grace Theological Seminary in Indiana, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Dwight D. Pentecost, Walvoord, Malgo, G.G. Cohen, Salem Kirban, Hal Lindsay, Moses David & his so-called 'children of God' and David Koresh *etc.* It is indeed true that some predictions in Rev. chs. 4 to 22 have still not yet been fulfilled. However, it also seems obvious that other predictions in those chapters (such as at least Rev. chs. 12 to 13) are already largely past history.

The Preterists believe that the whole of the *Book of Revelation* largely describes the Apostolic Church, during the time in which that book was written. Thus: Alcazar, Gorgius, Grotius, Hammond, Herder, Zuellig, Eichhorn, Moses Stuart, Giet, Feuillet, Chilton, and Gentry. Undoubtedly, this school does demonstrably contain a considerable element of truth. But it also removes practically all of the many predictions from the last book of the Bible. Frankly, Classic Preterism is a Romish re-action which tries to identify Nero as the Antichrist against the Reformational Historicalism of Luther and Calvin which so identifies the Romish Papacy *etc.* See Calvin's Anti-Preteristic comments on: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:1-3; 2:15; 2:21-24; 3:15; Dan. 2:31f; 2:44f; 7:7-9; 7:13f; 7:22-27; 12:1-13; Mt. 23:39; 24:14f; 24:34; II Th. 2:2-8; *Inst.* IV:7:4f & IV:7:25 —and compare the Calvinistic *West. Conf.* 23:4 & 25:6 and *West. Larg. Cat.* 191 & 195. See too F.N. Lee's *The Non-Preteristic Historicalism of John Calvin and the Calvinistic Standards*, Queensland Presbyterian Theological College, Brisbane, 1993. See too n. 377.

The dominant school of interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* down through the ages, is that of the Historicalists. They stand midway between the Preterists and the Futurists. Historicalists believe that Rev. chs. 1 to 5 describe conditions in the Church at the time the *Book of Revelation* was being written and shortly

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thereafter (Rev. 2:5,10,16,22f). They also believe that Rev. chs. 6 to 22 largely predict the 'more important' events of Church History —from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, right down till today and tomorrow.

This Historicalism is the view of the Early Church Fathers (A.D. 90-140f). In particular, it is thus the view of: the *Didachee* alias the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (circa A.D. 95), the *Epistle to Barnabas* (ca. 100), Ignatius (107), the *Epistle of Mattheetes to Diognetus* (130), the Shepherd of Hermas (135), Papias (140), Justin Martyr (150), Theophilus (165), Irenaeus (180), Tertullian (195f), Clement of Alexandria (200), Hippolytus (230), Origen (230), Commodian (240), Cyprian (250), Novatian (255), Dionysius (260), Victorinus (290), Lactantius (300), Methodius (305), Eusebius (325), Athanasius (350), Cyril (355), Tichonius (370), Basil (375), Gregory of Nazianzen (390), Gregory of Nyssa (395), Ambrose of Milan (400), John Chrysostom (400), Jerome (410), Sulpitius Severus (420), and Augustine of Hippo-Regius (430).

Indeed, almost all Mediaeval Theologians too interpreted the *Book of Revelation* historicalistically. Such interpreters include: Leo the Great (460), Andreas of Caesarea (580), Gregory the Great (590), the Venerable Bede (730), Hrabanus, Walafrid Strabo, Arethas of Caesarea, Richard of St. Victor, Peter Waldo and the Waldensians, Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, Dante or Durante Alighieri, Nicholas de Lyra, Michael Cesena, John Rupescissa, Petrarch, John Milicx, John Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, John Purvey, Walter Brute, John Huss, Nicholas de Cusa, Girolamo Savonarola, Pannonius, and Hoffmann *etc.*

Also the Protestant Reformers were Historicalists. These include: Luther, Oecolampadius, Melancthon, Striegel, Joye, Osiander, Bibliander, Knox, Tyndale, Hooper, Bale, Latimer, Ridley, Von Amsdorff, Flaccius Illyricus, Bullinger, Funck, Virgil Solis, Conradus, Lambert, the *Geneva Bible*, Jewel, Nigrinus, Chytraeus, Cranmer, Foxe, Napier, and Junius. (Though Calvin never wrote a commentary on and rarely even quoted from the *Book of Revelation*, it is clear that also he interpreted other apocalyptic passages like Dan. chs. 1 to 12 and II Thess. 2 historicalistically —as too did the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Westminster Larger Catechism*.)

In the great seventeenth century, the Historicalist School included: James the First, Downham, Pacard, Broughton, Helvig, Brightman, Pareus, Cramer, Mede, Sibbes, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, John Cotton, Goodwin, Rutherford, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (8:8u & 23:4o & 25:6o), the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (QQ. 45f-r & 52b & 53g & 54pqr & 191c-n), the Congregationalists' *Savoy Declaration* (25:6), Durham, Gerhard, Roger Williams, Huit, Parker, John Owen, Tillinghast, Samuel Lee, Holyoke, Henry More, Cocceius, Witsius, Hutchinson, Calovius, Wm. Hooker, Increase Mather, Koelman, Sherwin, Samuel Mather, Alsted, Beverley, Matthew Poole, Phillipot, Harris, Jurieu, Cressener, Vtringa, Sewell, and Noyes.

In the eighteenth century, the following were clearly Historicalists: Willem a Brakel, Lowth, Fleming, Cotton Mather, Brussken, Whitby, Whiston, Matthew Henry, Lampe, Huernius, Horch, Steere, Daubuz, Burnet, Sir Isaac Newton, Bomble, Van der Honert, Dudley, Pyle, Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, Heunisch, Bengel, Willison, Thomas Newton, Mayhew, Burr, Cheever, John Wesley, Bellamy, Gill, John Brown of Haddington, John Gibson, Richard Clarke, Petri, Sam. Cooper, Langdon, Purves, Brown's *Self-Interpreting Bible*, Dwight, Hans Wood, Benj. Gale, Thomas Scott, David Austin, Osgood, Linn, James Winthrop, George Bell, Ogden, D. Simpson, Ed. King, Valpy, Galloway, M'Corkle, Belknap, Jh. Bacon, Lacunza, and J.H. Livingston.

Historicalists of the nineteenth century include: Farnham, Mitchel, Evanson, the *Christian Observer*, the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, B. Johnstone, Priestley, Adam Clarke, Charles Buck's *Theological Dictionary*, Geo. Hales, G.S. Faber, Nott, Asa MacFarland, J. King, Romeyne, the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, Elias Smith, Fuller, Jos. Lathrop, J. Morse, French, Ethan Allen, the *Douay Bible*, Beecher, W.F. Miller, Griffin, Robert Haldane, Prudden, Toovey, Wm. Cunninghame, A. Kinne, J. Frere, A. McLeod, J. Holmes, Boudinot, A. Armstrong, Schmucker, J.M. Mason, J. Emerson, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Thos. Hartwell Horne, J. Haywood, J. Bayford, A. Mason, H. Gauntlett, J. Fry, J. Wolff, the *Columbia Family Bible*, J.A. Brown, R. Reid, E. Cooper, J.R. Park, G. Croly, Thos. Keyworth, A. Keith, A. Campbell, W. Jones, the *Millennial Harbinger*, Samuel Lee, the *Cottage Bible*, the *Protestant Vindicator*, W.C. Brownlee, J. de Rozas, R. Scott, M. Habershon, I. Ashe, A.H. Burwell, E. Bickersteth, L. Gaussen, G. Junkin, Jenks's *Comprehensive Bible*, D. Wilson, A.L. Crandall, J.P.K. Henshaw, Hinton, El. Burdick, E.B. Elliott, D. Brown, Albert Barnes, Hengstenberg, Alford, Ebrard, J.P. Lange, Fairbairn, Dabney, Symington, Graeber, Sabel, Garnet, Huntingford, Auberlen, Christiani, Luthardt, Gray, Delacroix, U. Smith, and A. Makrakis.

In the twentieth century, the Historicalist School is represented (*inter alii*) by: Grattan Guinness, Mauro, Miskotte, B.H. Carroll, F.W.C. Nesor, W.L. Emmerson, Froom, Greijvenstein, J.H. Bavinck, Kik, Hoeksema, and F.N. Lee.

In order further to establish which of the above schools of interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* gives either the correct or the most acceptable perspective, one must first of all fully weigh the meaning of the phrases "the things which must shortly come to pass" and "the time is at hand" and "the things which shall be hereafter" in Rev. 1:1,3,19. Here, one should first carefully examine the argumentation given in n. 12. But second, one should next scrutinize the important text Rev. 1:19 (as done in our next paragraph) and the important passage Rev. 4:1-2 (as done in n. 123). For Rev. chs. 4 to 19 describe Church History—and not any post-raptural tribulation of others only after an alleged future rapture of the Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now one of the chief keys to the interpretation of the *Book of Revelation*, is Rev. 1:19. This text states: "Write the things which you have seen—both the things which are [now], and also the things which shall be hereafter." As the Westminster Assembly's contemporary the 1657 Church of Scotland Presbyterian Rev. James Durham points out at the end of his magnificent two-volume commentary on the *Book of Revelation*, this verse clearly rebuts Preterists like Gorgias and Hammond.

Rev. 1:19's "things which you have seen" means probably the first things John had seen which he was then to record, in writing, immediately—the seen things described in Rev.1:1-18. Rev. 1:19's "things which are [now]" refers probably to the condition of the seven Congregations in John's own day (then just about to be described in Rev. 1:20 to 3:22), and perhaps also to the heavenly 'playbacks' of then-current conditions also here on Earth (as recorded in Rev. 4:1 to 6:10f). However, Rev. 1:19's "things which shall be hereafter"—not 'things that shall be in the hereafter' alias only in the next life—probably means the things that would take place principally only after the first-century time when Christ gave John this book we call *Revelation*. These things would thus include all of the thereafter-mentioned major future events—regardless as to whether those subsequent events would start occurring immediately OR start occurring only some time after that; and irrespective of whether the subsequent events were to occur on Earth OR in Heaven OR in both of those two places. Cf. too nn. 44 & 123.

In the Greek of Rev. 1:19, the *ha eisen* signifies things then (in John's own time)—the things then happening in the first century A.D. both here on Earth and there in Heaven. The *ha mella genesthai meta tauta*—compare the *meta tauta* in Dan. 1:29 LXX—signifies the things that would happen both here on Earth and there in Heaven after the occurrence of what was then happening on Earth and in Heaven while John was writing down the *Book of Revelation* during the first century A.D. Consequently, Rev. 1:19's *grapson oun ha eides KAI ha eisin KAI ha mellei genesthai* seems to mean: "Write down [now] what you have seen—[namely] both the things which are [happening now both on Earth and in Heaven], and the things which will happen after this [both on Earth and in Heaven]." This means that the Preterists' hypothesis that practically the entirety of the predictions in the *Book of Revelation* were occurring at that time or would finish occurring within the lifetime of the John himself, is essentially incorrect.

On the erroneous Futurists' hypothesis with its inconsistent equating of Rev. chs. 2 to 3 with an incorrectly-assumed successive series of 'seven ages of the Church' (for details of which see just a few paragraphs later below), "the things which are" in Rev. 1:19 can hardly be understood as applying to the Congregations that "are" (or rather which then were) in Asia Minor at the very time John was writing down the *Book of Revelation* as described in the very next verses (Rev. 1:19f & 2:1 to 3:22). Instead, the Futurists understand Rev. chs. 2 to 3 to be referring to Rev. 1:19's "things which shall be hereafter"—namely after John's own day (yet before a falsely-assumed 'rapture' of the Church at Rev. 4:1). However, on the Historicalists' hypothesis, Rev. 1:19's "things which are" means exactly that. For the phrase refers to the affairs of the Congregations in the Presbytery of Asia Minor which John knew in his own day.

Again, the phrase "hereafter" (or *meta tauta*) at the end of Rev. 1:19 cannot be taken as applying exclusively or even largely to 'life in Heaven in THE hereafter.' For this word "hereafter" at the end of Rev. 1:19 here refers (without further immediate specification) to what would be (or 'happen' or *genesthai*) "hereafter." That is, the word "hereafter" at this point refers to what would start to happen after John had finished receiving the disclosures God then showed him which are now contained in the *Book of Revelation*. For here at the end of Rev. 1:19, the word "hereafter" refers both to what would happen during subsequent Church History here on Earth (cf. Rev. chs. 4 to 20) as well as to what would happen both in Heaven and on the New-Earth-yet-to-come either after death or alternatively after the Final Judgment. Rev. 1:7,19; 2:10; 5:6-10; 6:9-11; 10:6f; 14:13f; 21:2,9f,14,22; & 22:12,16,20. See too nn. 12 & 113 & 123.

All of John's visions were revealed to him in terms of categories clearly known to him—*e.g.*: the temple furniture (such as its Trumpets and Candlestick *etc.*). But some of the thus-recorded foretellings were predictions that were to be fulfilled either several years (cf. Rev. 2:10) or even only many centuries later (*e.g.* Rev. chs. 9 & 13 & 17 *etc.*). Too, the revelations given in Daniel were revealed to him in categories familiar to

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that Prophet (e.g. Dan. chs. 2 & 8). Yet some of those thus-revealed prophecies were predictions, to be fulfilled several years (e.g. Dan. chs. 2 & 5 & 6) or even only many centuries later (e.g. Dan. 7:7-28 & 9:25-27 & chs. 11 to 12).

Consequently, from our standpoint today, most of the predictions of both Daniel and Revelation have long ago been fulfilled. Some of them were fulfilled only a few years after they were revealed. E.g. Dan. 2:37-39a & chs. 4 to 5 & 7:3-5 & ch. 10 and Rev. 2:5,10,16,22f. Others of those predictions, however, were fulfilled only several centuries later. E.g. Dan. 2:39b-44a & 7:6-14a,19-25a & 9:34-27 & 11:1 to 12:2a and Rev. chs. 8 to 9 & 13:1 to 16:11. And yet others of these predictions still await their complete fulfilment at a time as-yet-future. E.g. Dan. 2:35b,44b; 7:14b,18,25b-27; 12:13 —and Rev. 1:7 & chs. 16:12 to 22:5.

We submit, then, that the *Book of Revelation* **in part** represents elements of the Preterist but **on the whole** especially of the Historicalist view. The Preterist element is obvious, when it is noted that the messages in Rev. chs. 1 to 3 were given to THEN-existing contemporaneous Congregations (see our study at its n. 5). For the seven Congregations of the Presbytery of Asia Minor all formed part of one contemporaneously-existing and contemporaneously-perceived Candlestick or Presbytery of the Apostolic Church (cf. Rev. 1:4,11-13,20). At the same time, however, the Historicalist element too is suggested even here in Rev. chs. 2 to 3 (and still more so in Rev. 6 to 9), especially when it is remembered that the seven Congregations of John's own day also typify all of the various conditions of different Congregations at all times in the Church Universal down throughout history. That is to say, Rev. chs. 2 to 3, though primarily describing each of the seven Congregations in the Presbytery of Asia Minor in John's own day, secondarily suggest the various possible conditions in other Congregations in any and every subsequent century throughout the history of the Church Universal right on down to the very end of the World.

That Rev. chs. 2 to 3 describe the conditions of the different Congregations in Asia Minor during John's own day —for the edification of Christians there and elsewhere then, as well as for that of the Church Universal throughout all ages —is the considered opinion of very many Theologians. Such include: Victorinus, Augustine, the Venerable Bede, Walafrid Strabo, Berengaud, Bruno, Richard of St. Victor, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, Luther, Bale, Bullinger, the *Geneva Bible*, Tillinghast, Cramer, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Beverley, Poole, Matthew Henry, Horch, Isaac Newton, T.C. de Bionens, Thomas Newton, Petri, Thos. Scott, Adam Clarke, Thos. Horne, the *Columbia Family Bible*, Jenks' *Comprehensive Commentary*, Gaussen, Richter, Albert Barnes, Hengstenberg, Lange, Lenski, Carroll, Hendriksen, Greijvenstein, the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*, Hoeksema, Rushdoony, Kik, Ladd, Mounce, Vanderwaal, and Chilton. Some of the above (Vanderwaal and Chilton in particular) adopt what they correctly call a covenantal interpretation (with blessings for compliance and with sanctions for disobedience) —which they rightly apply to the Church of all ages. See too n. 30.

In the above regard, both the Preterist and the Historicalist interpretations of Rev. chs. 2 to 3 are very compelling. Even those who are Futurists concerning Rev. chs. 4 to 22, do not interpret the seven Congregations of Rev. chs. 2 to 3 from a basically futuristic perspective. It is, of course, unfortunate that they do not primarily view the seven Congregations as describing historical situations contemporaneous with John —as indeed they should. For they wrongly regard Rev. chs. 2 to 3 as being primarily a prediction of an alleged succession of seven assumed 'ages of the Church' from the time of the Apostle John through to the time of a wrongly-assumed 'imminent rapture' of the Church.

Yet even Futurists do at least give some kind of an (inaccurate) historical(istic) and not a still-futuristic interpretation of those seven Congregations. And that historical account they give of Rev. chs. 2 to 3, undermines their 'non-historicalistic' and futuristic account they give of Rev. chs. 4 to 22 —and underscores the correctness of the Historicalists' interpretation of the entire book (Rev. chs. 1 to 22).

The Futurist G.G. Cohen, for example, in his book *Understanding Revelation* (Christian Beacon Press, 1969, ch. I pp. 46 & 48), holds to the following assumed chronology of the so-called 'seven ages of the Church':

- (1) Ephesus, or 'the Apostolic Church' (where the 'first love' was lost, 30-100 A.D.);
- (2) Smyrna or the 'persecuted Church' (100-313 A.D.);
- (3) Pergamos or the 'State Church' (a 'faithless Church' which tolerated false teaching, 313-590 A.D.);
- (4) Thyatira or 'the Papal Church' (a Church dominated by a powerful false-prophet, 590-1517 A.D.);
- (5) Sardis, or the 'Reformed Church' (a spiritually dying Church [*sic!*], 1517-1790 A.D.);
- (6) Philadelphia or a 'missionary Church' (faithfully witnessing, 1790-1900 A.D.); and
- (7) Laodicea or 'the Apostate Church' (lukewarm, from 1900 A.D. till its assumed 'rapture').

So the entire *Book of Revelation* has a **plasticity** as regards its application. Though basically **linear** in its view of time, **perhaps it also has a cyclical repeatability** as regards the time(s) of the fulfilment of such of its prophecies as pertain to at least some of its future events.¹⁴ Yet the events mentioned in this *Book of Revelation* (just like those predicted in the *Book of Daniel* to which it constantly refers) have, by now (in our own twenty-first century), for the most part long since been fulfilled (or started to be fulfilled) —at least in the primary sense.¹³

It is interesting that even Futurists like Cohen regard Rev. chs. 2 to 3 primarily as a schematic model of **the whole of Church History**, rather than interpreting it primarily as either a preteristic account of the first-century Congregations of the Presbytery of Asia Minor or alternatively as a futuristic account of the various stages in the development of the Church **after** her assumed as-yet-still-future 'rapture' (*sic*). Yet Cohen very unappreciatively describes even the early phase of the Constantinian Church as 'faithless' (in spite of Nicaea and Athanasius *etc!*), and unprotestantly identifies the "spiritually dying" Congregation of Sardis with the "Reformed Church" (of Luther and Calvin!) from the sixteenth down to the nineteenth centuries. Wow!

It is sadder still, however, that Cohen does not even concede that our **present**-day Church (in our so-called 'Laodicean Age') can or even **could** experience a 'worldwide lasting **revival!**' Cohen: *op. cit.*, pp. 61f. Indeed, that first-century Congregation of Laodicea was in no way regarded as existing at the **end** of Church History — according to Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:6,21c). But even if, as Cohen insists, there really **were to be** such a thing as 'the Laodicean Age' of the Church —it is difficult to see how we today could possibly be in **that** allegedly-unrevivable period and condition. For just look at all of our present period's revivals in Indonesia, Brazil, Korea, and Africa, *etc!*

We must conclude, then, that this theory of 'seven **ages** of the Church' —is incorrect. It is quite foreign to the text of the *Book of Revelation* itself. Indeed, it is also irreconcilable with the known facts of Church History. We reject, then, the Futurists' so-called 'seven ages of the Church' (according to Rev. chs. 2 to 3). And we even more especially reject the futuristic interpretation of Rev. chs. 4 to 19f (see n. 123). Instead, while appreciating some elements within Preterism, those who are **consistent** Calvinists and **strict** subscriptionists to and upholders of the *Westminster Standards* for that very reason cannot but uphold the therein-mandated **Historicalist** interpretation of Rev. chs. 1 to 22.

Hence **we reject Preterism**. The *Book of Revelation* needs to be interpreted **historicalistically** because, although Rev. chs. 1 to 3 (and possibly also Rev. chs. 4 to 7) are overwhelmingly **contemporaneous** with the time John wrote them —**most** of Rev. chs. 8:1 to 16:11 appears to **have been** fulfilled in **subsequent history**. Indeed, most of Rev. chs. 16:12 to 22:12f will apparently still be fulfilled in **yet-future history**. For whereas Rev. chs. 1 to 3 refer to conditions at the time of John—whatever the interpretation of the seven **seals** in Rev. chs. 4 to 7 may be, it is clear that the seven subsequent **trumpets** in Rev. chs. 8 to 11 are **only successively** sounded and heard.

It is also quite clear that the seven **yet-subsequent vials** or bowls in Rev. chs. 15 to 19 are **only thereafter** poured out—and, indeed, poured out **only one after the other**). So it is obvious that the seven trumpets and the seven vials are **chronologically fulfilled during the course** of either **Church History** or **World History** (*cf.* Rev. 8:12f; 9:5,12,14f,20; 10:6f; 11:14f,17f; 16:1,8f,11-14,17). And inasmuch as Armageddon and the fall of Babylon and the subsequent christianization of the nations and the Final Judgment and the renewal of the Heavens and the Earth (in Rev. chs. 16:12 to 22:5) have **not yet** taken place—it is obvious that those events too will be realized **only in still-future History**. See too nn. 12 and **esp. 16 & 30 & 123**.

¹⁴ Rev. chs. 1 & 13 & 17 & 22 *etc.*

Christ has made us Kings unto God, to reign on the Earth

For the *Book of Revelation* was, after all, primarily addressed to the first-century Congregations and servants of Christ well-known to John himself. At least some of the **then**-future events therein described, were by and large **intelligible** to those first-century Christians. In fact, the events predicted there were for the most part probably more intelligible to those first-century Christians then — than they are to us today.¹⁵ So, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments, the *Book of Revelation* "expounds the **Old[er]** Prophets, and shows what shall come to pass in the **New[er]** Testament."¹⁵

This does not in any way make the *Book of Revelation* useless to us today! For, as "servants" of Jesus Christ like John, we too are included among the **ultimate** and more remote addressees of that book.¹⁶ The therein-described and by-now **already**-fulfilled (or already **partly**-fulfilled) predictions, are always rich in relevant instruction — and sometimes capable of even further and ever-deepening fulfilments.

Yet the *Book of Revelation* (like the *Book of Daniel* in which its predictions are grounded) is **primarily** to be interpreted 'as now already fulfilled' **historicalistically**. Interpreted 'as now already fulfilled' — because some its predictions did indeed begin to be fulfilled shortly after it was written and in fact even during John's own lifetime. Yet interpreted **historicalistically in particular** — because yet other of its predictions would begin to be fulfilled only after the death of John, and indeed only during the course of **subsequent** Church History.

There are certainly a few predictions in the *Book of Revelation* which have not yet even started to be fulfilled.¹³ However, it is only in a very secondary sense that this last book of the Bible should ever be interpreted as 'not-yet-fulfilled' and especially **futuristically**.

Non-futuristic interpretation, whether partly-preteristic or whether instead wholly-historicalistic, is (we submit) clearly implied in the words of Christ to John in the very first chapter of the *Book of Revelation*: "Write the things which you have seen — both the things which **are** [now], and the things which **shall be hereafter** [or **after** this time of your writing it down]!"¹³

¹⁵ Rev. 1:3, cf. vv.4,9,11,19; chs. 2 to 3 & 11 to 13; 22:6,16, etc.

¹⁶ Rev. chs. 11 to 13 & 17, for instance, are very clearly grounded in Dan. chs. 2 & 7. The predictions in those chapters of Daniel were not preteristically fulfilled within Daniel's own lifetime. Nor were they futuristically to be fulfilled only in the as-yet-still-distant future. To the contrary. They were then clearly to be fulfilled **historicalistically** —and, for the **most** part, before or at the time of the **first** advent of Christ (although some were indeed to be fulfilled only in the course of Church History, between the first and second advents of Christ). Cf. Dan. 2:29's "hereafter" with that of Rev. 1:19. See too Dan. chs. 4 to 5 and 8 to 12 —which chapters also, as far as their **own** thrust is concerned, cannot at all easily be applied to events still future (after A.D. 2000).

Third. Christ's "Revelation" to the Apostle John came **from the Triune God**¹⁷ and **to His triunely-baptized people**.¹⁸ "Grace and peace be to you, from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who will keep on being; and from the seven Spirits before His throne; and from Jesus Christ Who...has made us kings and priests to God and His Father."¹⁹

Here we see that God always was, is now, and always shall be. Too, we receive God's grace precisely from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the one-and-only 'sevenfold' Spirit (Who has a 'perfect-seven' omnipotence).

May we too never forget that as baptized believers we too are in living contact with the Triune God Himself! For He will ever sustain us — as His baptismally-branded sheep.

Fourth. The *Book of Revelation* came to John specifically from the One Who is the central Person within the Trinity. It came from God the Son — from the triumphantly-risen Saviour. It came "from Jesus Christ Who is the faithful Witness and the First-begotten from the dead."¹⁹ For Christ it was Who told John: "I am He Who was dead, but Who keeps on living. And look, I am alive for evermore! Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of Death."²⁰

So too even today. Christ still has the power over Death, and even over Hell itself. What, then, have **we** who are Christians to fear? Indeed — absolutely nothing!

Fifth. Jesus Christ the Lord of the Book of Revelation is not merely the risen Saviour but — much more importantly — He is also the ascended and ever-reigning King. For the Son of man ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father in order to mount the **throne** of the Universe.

He did this as **man** — in His capacity as human viceroy of the cosmos.²¹ And He will keep on ruling in this way, until the very end of His mediatorial reign. Indeed, also after that, He shall continue His reign — in His other capacity as the divine Second Person of the Trinity.²²

Consequently, ever since His ascension and heavenly session, Christ has been "the Prince of the kings of the Earth."¹⁹ As such, He stands ready to execute repeated judgments over the nations — during the course of human history, **as well as** ultimately in the Final Judgment at the very end of history.

¹⁷ Mt. 28:19.

¹⁸ Rev. 2:1f; 7:3f; 9:4; 22:4; Col. 2:9-13; Rom. 4:11f.

¹⁹ Rev. 1:4b-6a. In v. 4b, the *KJV* translates *Ho erchomenos* as He "Which is to come." A better rendition of that Greek phrase (which is routinely used as the future participle of the verb "to be"), is: "He Who shall [always] keep on being."

²⁰ Rev. 1:18.

²¹ Ps. 110.

²² I Cor. 15:24-28, & esp. Calvin's *Commentary* thereon.

Christ has made us Kings unto God, to reign on the Earth

For in the vision which He gave to John about Himself, "His head and His hair were white as wool — as white as snow. And His eyes were like a flame of fire. And His feet were like fine brass — as if they were burning in a furnace. And His voice was like the sound of many waters. And He had seven stars in His right hand. And a sharp two-edged sword went forth from His mouth. And His countenance was like the sun which keeps on shining in its strength."²³

Thus, Christ **reigns!** He reigns **now!** Hence the Devil is **already** — in principle — a **defeated** foe.

Sixth. Consequently, our now-reigning Saviour — "the Prince of the kings of the Earth"¹⁹ — rules not only in Heaven but also on Earth, right here and now. And He keeps on executing that rule over this World in an ever-expansive manner — also through the agency of His Christian children.

For He "has made **us** kings and priests to God and His Father."¹⁹ Indeed, **we too** are **already** under-kings or viceroys in the **King**-dom of God here and now on this present Earth — under the leadership of our principal Prince — our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords and **King of kings**.²⁴ For He "**has** made us kings!"¹⁹

Moreover, as **heirs** of that Kingdom, we are in principle already free from the **evils** of the "kingdoms" of **this** World — as Christ Himself implied.²⁵ Accordingly, all temporary persecutions suffered by Christians at the hands of both Jew²⁶ and Gentile⁴⁷ can serve only to make them "more than conquerors" through Jesus Christ the Lord. For He is the **Prince** of His Kingdom; and every Member of His Church is a Christ-ian "king" under Him.²⁷

Seventh. The inspired John strengthened the suffering saints in their temporal and temporary persecutions. He did this, by assuring them of the **repeated invisible comings** culminating in the visible Final Coming of the Lord Jesus — in triumphal judgments against His enemies, and in covenantal defence of His suffering people.

Previously, Christ had come to His people at Calvary and at His resurrection.²⁸ Furthermore, even as He had at the beginning of the *Book of Revelation* only just then come in triumphal defence of John himself on the island of Patmos²⁹ — so too would He soon come also to strengthen the first-century A.D. Congregations in Western Asia Minor.³⁰

²³ Rev. 1:14-16 *cf.* n. 13.

²⁴ Rev. 19:13,16.

²⁵ Mt. 17:25-25 & 19:28, *cf.* Gen. 49:10 & Ex. 19:6 & Num. 24:8 & Dt. 33:26-29 & Dan. 7:27.

²⁶ Rev. 2:9 & 3:9.

²⁷ Rev. 6:2; 12:17; 17:14 *cf.* Rom. 8:33-39 (esp. v. 37).

²⁸ Rev. 1:7 *cf.* Jh. 19:37.

²⁹ Rev. 1:9-13 & 2:13.

³⁰ Rev. 2:25-27 & 3:3,11,20 *cf.* n. ⁴⁴. By the phrases "I come" and "I will come" in Rev. 1:7 & 2:5,16,25 & 3:3,11 (& 3:14,20 & 6:17) & 14:7 & 16:15 & 22:7,12,17b,20 — one should understand not Christ's final coming at the end of World History, but His several temporal comings (soon after John wrote these words) to give temporal rewards or punishments to the specific first-century Congregations enumerated. *Cf.* Num. 24:17 & Dt. 32:35 & 33:2 & Ps. 101:2 & Isa. 19:1 & Zech. 14:5 & Mal.3:1 & 4:1,6. *Cf.* too nn. ⁴⁵ 12-13.

He would particularly come and comfort them in the hour of those believers' deaths.³¹ Yet if they, the first-century A.D. Congregations, would not repent of their backslidings — that same Jesus would come even to **chasten** and to **correct** them.³² Indeed, He certainly came invisibly yet powerfully — to **destroy** the wicked Jerusalem in 70 A.D.³³

But Christ would come also to **strengthen** His **Post**-Apostolic Church.³⁴ He would come again and again in judgment, progressively to destroy the Pagan Roman Empire.³⁵ He would come to reign in the later post-Constantinian and semi-christianized Holy Roman Empire.³⁶

He would come in the power of His Word and His Spirit at the Protestant Reformation, progressively to destroy the Papacy.³⁷ Indeed, He would come in judgment also against the Papacy even at the French Revolution etc.³⁸

Christ comes in the judgments of wars and famines and earthquakes against the wicked rebels of our own generation.³⁸ He comes in Christian revivals, during our own and subsequent times.³⁹ And He will **ultimately** come again — visibly; with the clouds; in power and great glory; namely at a still-future and Final Judgment.⁴⁰

In **all** of these progressive comings of Christ, our Saviour would and shall progressively be glorified. For He ever goes forth conquering and to conquer all His enemies (either by converting them or by confounding them). "Look, He comes with clouds — and every eye shall see Him, even also they who pierced Him! And all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."⁴¹

O Christian, let us too then congregate in our Presbyteries! Let us too be edified, prophetically — **from** the past, **in** the present and **for** the future! Let us 'improve' our Triune Baptism (*Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q./A. 167)! Let us rise up again and again — free from our sins and despite our tribulations — in the power of our risen Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord!

³¹ Rev. 2:10; 14:13 etc., cf. Job 27:8 & Lk. 12:20 & 16:22.

³² Rev. 2:5,16 & 3:3,20.

³³ Cf. Mt. 23:33-39; 24:3,5,10,23,27,30; 26:64; Mk. 14:1,61f. Rev. 1:7 cf. Mt. 24:30 is strong evidence that at least Rev. chs. 1 to 11 were written largely concerning the city of Jerusalem at that time before A.D. 70, and principally refer to the fall of that city in A.D. 70. Cf. Rev. 6:12-17 and 11:1-14 (& esp. vv. 8f). Also see n. [‡] 12 & 30.

³⁴ Rev. 2:24-27 & 6:2f.

³⁵ Rev. 13:1-10.

³⁶ Rev. 12:6-12.

³⁷ Rev. 13:11 to 14:8f; 15:1-4; ch. 17; and cf. nn. 496 to 761.

³⁸ Rev. 11:13 cf. Dan. 2:41f; 7:7f; Rev. 11:2,13; 13:1f; 17:12f.

³⁹ Hab. 3:2-4; II Th. 2:8f to 3:1; Rev. 19:1-11f.

⁴⁰ Rev. 1:7 cf. Acts 1:6-11 & 3:20f etc.

⁴¹ Rev. 1:7 — "pierced" or "despised" (thus Hengstenberg in his book *The Revelation* I p. 81 n. 1). Observe that this text implies **only one final** coming of Christ at the very end of time, when He will come **visibly** and reveal Himself from Heaven to "**every eye**" here on Earth and therefore (at the time of their as-yet-still-future resurrection) **even to the wicked who pierced** (and despised) Him previously many centuries earlier. The text hardly permits two separate final comings of Christ (first for the believers and then a thousand years thereafter yet another coming in judgment against unbelievers alone). See too the remarks of Hengstenberg and Vitranga at the end of n. 12.

Christ has made us Kings unto God, to reign on the Earth

Let us expand our reign here and now on this present Earth as Christ's under-kings! Let us subject ourselves to our everywhere-reigning Prince, Jesus the King of all the Earth — in spite of all persecutions! And let us keep on doing this — until Jesus has christianized this World of ours and all it contains, by His progressive series of conquests!

As He again and again comes in repeated judgments — may every eye see Him! May the eyes also of the Jewish nation that pierced Him, ultimately recognize and worship Him!⁴² Indeed, may **all** the kindreds alias every **family** here on Earth progressively bewail Him in **repentance** — as the very **nations** themselves are slowly but surely turned into His Disciples, even while He progressively converts them (or otherwise confounds them)!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

⁴² Rev. 1:7 *cf.* Zech. 12:10f & Jh. 10:35-37.

Overcomers are given Power over Nations

Revelation 2

December 2

"That which you have already — hold fast, till I come! And He who overcomes and keeps My works unto the end — to him I will give power over the nations. And he shall rule [or shepherd] them with an iron rod. Like the vessels of a potter, they [those of the nations who do not repent] shall be broken into pieces — as I received from My Father. And I will give to him [who overcomes] the morning star."⁴³

Christ had just revealed Himself to the exiled John, on the tiny isle of Patmos. Next, the risen and reigning Saviour instructed John to write to the persecuted Congregations in the Presbytery of Western Asia Minor directly to the east of Patmos. The Apostle was to do so, both to encourage and to correct them — before Christ Himself would "come" and deal with them during that period of history.⁴³

In and through those messages to the Congregations of Western Asia Minor during the first century A.D., Jesus encourages and corrects His Church Universal down through all subsequent ages too.⁴⁴ For these messages refer also to the similar problems and needs of the Lord's Church in all times.

Yet the (seven) messages to the (seven) Congregations — unlike most of the rest of the *Book of Revelation* — are **not** to be construed as a future chronology of **successive** ages of the Christian Church.⁴⁴ For all seven messages were addressed to specific Congregations of Christ's Church during the **same apostolic age**. Nevertheless, all seven messages are **applicable also** to the Church of the twenty-first century today — though some of the messages are more relevant to certain modern Congregations than they are to others.

First. Christ told John to write to the "Angel" of His Congregation in Ephesus. That Angel or Preacher was to remind his flock that its Members were safely being preserved in the omnipotent hand of the divine Lord of the Church.⁴⁵

Said the Lord Jesus to the Apostle John: "Unto the Angel of the Church in Ephesus, write: 'These things says He Who keeps on holding the seven stars in His right hand; Who keeps on walking in the middle of the seven-pronged golden Candlestick.'" That "Angel" or "Star" — that Messenger in Ephesus — was thereby assured that also he himself was secure in the right hand of the Lord.

⁴³ Rev. 2:25-28. On "I come" *etc.*, see n. 30. For the possible meaning of "sword" for Rev. 2:27's word "rod" — *cf.* Rev. 1:16 & 2:12,16,2:23,27,29 & 19:15 *cf.* Isa. 11:4 & Eph. 6:17.

⁴⁴ *Cf.* Rev. 2:7,11,17,29 & 3:6,13,22. See too nn. 12 & 13.

⁴⁵ Rev. 2:1.

Overcomers are given Power over Nations

Perhaps that "Angel" of the Congregation in Ephesus was a guardian spirit — a bodyless angelic being appointed by God to take care of His flock in that place. More probably that "Angel" or Messenger represents instead — the Guardian Pastor or Preaching Elder appointed by Christ to be a shining "Star" to that Congregation. Or possibly that "Angel" represents both an angelic 'guardian spirit' as well as Christ's Preacher in Ephesus ultimately collaborating with one another (even if that was unbeknown to the Preacher).⁴⁶

At any rate — it is a great comfort for Christians and Preachers to know that the Congregations of Christ are under the protection of the reigning Lord Jesus, and safely in His loving hand. Indeed, nobody shall ever be able to wrest His children away from His tender loving care.⁴⁷

Second. Christ praised the Christian dedication of His Congregation in **Ephesus**. "I know your works, and your labours, and your patience — and how you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are 'Apostles' but are not — and have found them to be liars. And you have borne; and have had patience; and have laboured for My Name's sake; and have not fainted."⁴⁸

The Members of the Congregation had worked and laboured in terms of the Dominion Charter.⁴⁹ They had endured opposition, patiently.⁵⁰ They had rooted out false-apostles and all antinomian or law-breaking Nicolaitans.⁵¹ Indeed, they had started out by loving both the Lord pre-eminently as well as one another corporately.⁵² May we too follow their example!

Third. Christ rebuked and encouraged the Ephesian Christians to acknowledge the subsequent cooling off of their love. For He wanted them to overcome all hindrances in, and oppositions to, their Christian lives.

Said Jesus to His Church in Ephesus: "I have something against you — because you have left your first love.... Repent, and do the first works — or else I will come³⁰ to you quickly, and will remove your Candlestick.... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches: 'To him who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the middle of the paradise of God.'"⁵³

May this be also **our** present resolution! Indeed, may we too receive the same ultimate reward!

⁴⁶ Rev. 2:1 *cf.* 1:16,20; 10:10f; 22:6,9f,16,19; II Jh. 1; III Jh. 1; Gen. 1:1; Job 1:6f; 38:7; Ps. 103:20f; Dan. 10:13-20f; Mal. 3:1; Lk. 1:13-17,76-80; Eph. 1:1 & 4:1,11f with Heb. 1:7,14; 2:8-14; 12:22f; Mt. 18:10; Acts 12:15; I Tim. 5:17-19.

⁴⁷ Jh. 10:28f.

⁴⁸ Rev. 2:2f.

⁴⁹ Gen. 1:26-28 *cf.* Rev. 2:2a,3b & 14:13; Acts 20:17,35.

⁵⁰ Rev. 2:2a,3a; Acts 20:17-22.

⁵¹ Rev. 2:2b,6; 3:14f; Acts 20:17,29-31.

⁵² Rev. 2:4 *cf.* Acts 20:17,32,37f.

⁵³ Rev. 2:4f,7 *cf.* n. 30.

Fourth. Christ encouraged the impoverished Congregation of **Smyrna**. He told her Members that they were actually rich — and would soon receive crowns of life.⁵⁴ They were, indeed, then being persecuted — particularly by such Judaists as were then blaspheming them.⁵⁵ Yet only some of the Christians in Smyrna were then being imprisoned by 'devilish' Pagan Rome (especially after Nero cohabited with the Judaist Poppaea). But even then, the Christians' souls were still free — and their tribulation was but "ten days" **short**.⁵⁴

This tribulation of "ten **days**" might indeed last for ten **years**. Thus: Walter Brute; the *Dordt Dutch Bible*; Adam Clarke; and many others.⁵⁴ But it would soon be over. Because it clearly implies — as the *Geneva Bible* comments — that "there shall be comfort and **release**."⁵⁴

Yes, even those who had been faithful unto **death** during that persecution, immediately entered the next life **blissfully**. For those who have received the second birth — shall never be harmed by the Gehenna of the second death.⁵⁵

Fifth. Christ encouraged the Congregation of **Pergamos**. This Church included backslidden Members who had, like Balaam, compromised their testimony and fallen into Nicolaitan alias antinomian idolatry and fornication.⁵⁶ If they did not soon repent, Christ would come quickly — to punish those backsliders with severe temporal judgments.⁵⁷

But the rest of the Members of the Congregation in Pergamos had remained faithful — even while surrounded by a sea of Satanic iniquity, and even when unflinchingly persecuted during the days of past tribulation.⁵⁸ For **those** Members had overcome Satan. And "to him who overcomes," said Jesus, "I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone — and on the stone a 'new name' written which no man knows except he who receives it."⁵⁹

May we too never flinch under persecution! And may we too receive the heavenly manna, even today! For, as the *Geneva Bible* comments, the 'white stone' was "given to them that had gotten any **victory** or prize in sign of honour."⁵⁹ And "the new name also signifies **renown and honour**."⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Rev. 2:8-10 *cf.* "devilish Rome" in Rev. 12:3-9 & 13:1-4 & 16:13f & 17:3f. That Rev. 2:10's "ten days" of tribulation in fact lasted for ten years, is the opinion of Walter Brute, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Adam Clarke, Geo. Croly, Th. Keyworth, E. Bickersteth, L. Gaussen, and Th. Birks. †

⁵⁵ Rev. 2:9-11 *cf.* Rev. 3:9. According to C. Vanderwaal's *Sola Scriptura* (Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, Netherlands, 1970, III p. 222 n. 1), fully one-seventh of the inhabitants of the Imperial Roman Empire were Jews just before A.D. 70. *Cf.* Rev. 2:9 & 3:9 and chs. 7 & 11 with 20:10-15 & 21:1-8 & Mt. 5:22-30 & Mk. 9:42-48.

⁵⁶ Rev. 2:12,14f *cf.* Num. 22:5f & 23:29f & chs. 25 & 31:8,15f.

⁵⁷ Rev. 2:16.

⁵⁸ Rev. 2:13.

⁵⁹ Rev. 2:17.

Overcomers are given Power over Nations

Sixth. Christ gave similar encouragement to His Church's Congregation in **Thyatira**.⁶⁰ At first, He patiently gave the Congregation's immoral and wicked false-prophetess Jezebel a sufficient space of time to repent. But after the expiry of that time, He now announced that He would cast her and her **few** Satanic co-adulterers into "great tribulation." In fact, He would even kill her children — if she would not be converted.⁶¹

The **rest** of the Members in the Congregation at Thyatira, however — the "**many**"⁶² who apparently constituted the vast majority of the Congregation's Members, would not be punished like the "**few**"⁶³ (or "**them**")⁶⁴ who had lapsed into immorality and idolatry.⁶³ To the contrary. The rest of the Congregation — whose last works were even better than their first, and whose love and service and faith and patience were highly commended by the Saviour — would not be exposed to any further burdens or trials of patience.⁶⁵

For seventh. The good-living majority of the Congregation in Thyatira — like their Lydia of old⁶⁶ — would overcome all opposition and keep on doing Christian works "unto the end." And they would ultimately — that is, in later Church History — be "given power over the nations"⁶⁷ in Christ's progressively-christianizing World.

For "he [who overcomes] shall rule them [the nations] with an iron rod" — by shepherding and feeding them with his shepherd's staff.⁶⁷ "Like the vessels of a potter, they [those of the nations who do not repent] shall be broken into pieces — as I received from My Father. And I will give to him [who overcomes] the morning star."⁶⁸

True as it is that this promise will **fully** be realized only **after** the Final Judgment on the New Earth yet to come⁶⁹ — it is also apparent that it will **in large measure** first be realized **prior** to that time. For it will **first** be realized in this **present** World here and now — as Christianity extends its victorious advance across the globe, culminating in the christianization of all nations.⁷⁰

O Christian, let us too listen to what the Holy Spirit of God says to the Churches!⁴⁴ Let us too work to subdue the Earth and to win all of its inhabitants to the glory of Christ!

Let us enrich our impoverished spirits! Let us also discipline our few backsliders!

⁶⁰ Rev. 2:18.

⁶¹ Rev. 2:20-24 *cf.* Lk. 22:31f & n. 246.

⁶² Rev. 2:24.

⁶³ Rev. 2:20.

⁶⁴ Rev. 2:22.

⁶⁵ Rev. 2:19,24.

⁶⁶ Acts 16:14f.

⁶⁷ Rev. 2:26f. The Greek word translated "rule" by the *King James Version*, is "*poimanei*" — meaning "He will [feed them as their] shepherd." *Cf.* too the same word in Rev. 12:5, and note too Rev. 7:9,17!

⁶⁸ Rev. 2:27f.

⁶⁹ Rev. 21:26; 22:2,16 *cf.* 2:26-28.

⁷⁰ Rev. 21:24 *cf.* 2:25-28 & I Cor. 15:24-28.

Let us encourage, too, our industrious Christians! And let us advance on a broad front throughout the World —until all nations bow down under the rod of the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ, and until the kingdoms of this World have in practice too become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall keep on reigning and keep on expanding that reign for ever and ever!⁷¹

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

⁷¹ Rev. 11:15.

Christ converts Judaists and thus expands the Christian Church

Revelation 3:1-13

December 3

"I will come upon you like a thief.... Look, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews yet are not but do lie — look, I will make them to come and worship [God] in front of your feet, and acknowledge that I have loved you!"⁷²

In his mind's eye, John had already shifted his prophetic gaze up along the coast of Western Asia Minor from the South to the North. After so doing, he next addressed the Congregations of Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamos.

Then, after moving his mind's eye further "in the Spirit" due east to Thyatira, the Apostle (as Jesus' agent and spokesman) next extended his range more and more inland — in a south-easterly direction. For he next went on ("in the Spirit") to address the inland Congregations of Sardis and Philadelphia and Laodicea.

First. His prophetic gaze fell upon the Congregation in **Sardis**. That part of His Church had apparently "escaped"⁷³ the persecutions which some of the other Congregations had suffered.⁷⁴ Yet this was a mixed blessing.

For persecutions tend to deepen the faithfulness of Christ's Church.⁷⁵ And some in the apparently 'unpersecuted' Congregation of Sardis, had become "dead."⁷³ They, in particular, needed to be revived — and perhaps even through persecution.

Yet Christ did not hastily reject His Church. Rather did He enjoin her to be watchful, and to strengthen those that remained as a 'remnant' which was ready to die.

Said Christ, "I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard.... Keep on holding fast — and repent!"⁷⁶ For soon, Christ Himself would come and visit that Congregation — in temporal judgment.⁷⁶

May we too not reject our 'frozen' (though perhaps still 'chosen') brethren! But may we instead lovingly warn them — of their impending judgment!

⁷² Rev. 3:3,9 *cf.* n. 30.

⁷³ Rev. 3:1. Sardis may mean "escapees."

⁷⁴ Rev. 3:3,10,13,19.

⁷⁵ Jas. 1:2-21 & chs. 4 to 5.

⁷⁶ *Ta loipa*, "the remnant" or "the things that remain," vs. 2, means **all** those who are still alive. As such, it is not necessarily a minority of the Congregation. † On "I will come," vs. 3, *cf.* n. 30.

Christ converts Judaists and thus expands the Christian Church

As the *Geneva Bible* here comments: "Be awake!"⁷⁶ That means, to some: "Stay awake!" —and to others: "Wake up!"

Second. Not merely was the Congregation at Sardis 'strengthenable.'⁷⁶ It also had **a solid believing core** — on the basis of which, true **revival** could indeed be promoted.

Said Jesus to that Congregation: "You do have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. And they shall walk with Me, in white. For they are worthy. He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. And I will not blot out his name from the book of life. But I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."⁷⁷

He Who says these things, speaks efficacious words. For "He possesses the seven Spirits of God —and the seven stars."⁷⁸

Yes, Jesus Who says these things possesses the fullness of the sevenfold Holy Spirit. Indeed, He also possesses each of the seven star-like and luminous because Spirit-filled Angels or Messengers who lead His work in the Congregations of His Presbytery. Consequently, as pointed out by Martin Luther in his great hymn *A mighty fortress is our God*, even today — because we do indeed have 'the right Man on our side,' namely 'Christ Jesus' — 'He must win the battle!'⁷⁹

Third. It is, however, especially Christ's message to the Congregation in **Philadelphia** that is remarkable in the encouragement it offers. The Philadelphian Christians had, like those in Smyrna,⁸⁰ apparently been persecuted by the Pagan Romans at the instigation of influential local Judaists.⁸¹ The Philadelphian Christians were, moreover — even as John was then writing to them — on the verge of again being intimidated in a new wave of persecution that was then about to sweep through the whole World of the Roman Empire.⁸²

Judaists had persecuted the Christians from even before the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But periodic **Roman** persecutions of Christians — initially incited once again by Judaists —broke loose only in the time of Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54). Yet such persecutions first became really severe only during the time of Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-64f) and his Judaistic wife Poppaea.

⁷⁷ Rev. 3:4f.

⁷⁸ Rev. 3:1.

⁷⁹ Cf. Luther's hymn *Ein feste Burg ist uns're Gott* (verse 3).

⁸⁰ Rev. 2:8f.

⁸¹ Rev. 3:8a,9,10a.

⁸² Rev. 3:10.

Such Roman persecutions of Christians once again recurred, intermittently, from the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) right down to that of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.).⁸³ Yet John, at Christ's own dictation, assured the Philadelphian Christians that they would (by the grace of God) stand fast in their new hour of persecution — even as they had done before. "Because you have kept the Word of My patience," said Jesus, "I also will keep you during the hour of testing which shall come upon all the World — to test those who dwell upon the Earth."⁸⁴

Fourth. Even their worst persecutors would be converted — as a result of the Philadelphian Christians' stalwart testimony. For even since Calvary, part of the then-apostate and then-broken-off⁸⁵ Jewish nation had been trickling back into the true Christian Church (and still continues to so do).⁸⁶

Indeed, as a result of the mighty missionary outreach of the Church even among Judaists — the latter too were also then and are even now more and more being converted and enabled to see that not the Judaists but the Christians (both Hebrew Christians and Gentile Christians) are the true Zion. For Jesus Christ the Deliverer comes out also **to** the Judaists, **from** the Christian Church alias His True Zion, in her sustained missionary work-of-mercy. By means of this — Christ Himself turns and shall keep on turning **ungodliness** away from Jacob⁸⁷ (alias ethnic Israel).

So, then, even the Jews shall come into the Christian Church — and ultimately, like a flood! And in that way, "all Israel shall be saved."⁸⁸ Then shall those Newer Testament enemies of the Christians Gospel⁸⁹ themselves be converted to the true religion of Biblical Christianity.

The Older Testament itself is full of predictions of such an influx into the Newer Testament Christian Church. Here are but two.

"The sons also of those that afflict you, shall come to you — bending. And all those who despised you, shall bow themselves down — at the soles of your feet. And they shall call you 'The City of the Lord' — 'The **Zion** of the Holy One of Israel.'⁹⁰ That is why Augustine rightly called the Christian Church: 'The City of God.'

Once again: "Kings shall be your nursing-fathers, and their queens [shall become] your nursing-mothers. They [too, with you,] shall bow down...with their face toward the ground and lick up the dust at your feet."⁹¹

⁸³ Cf. Mt. 23:39-34; 24:1,9,15,21; 29:31,56,69f; Jh. 20:19; Acts 4:1-21,27-29; 5:17-29,40f; 7:57-60; 8:1-4; 9:1f,13f,23f,29; 13:50; 14:2-6,19; 17:5,13; 18:12-14; 20:3,22f; 21:11f,27f; 22:4,8,19; 23:2-21,27; 24:1,5; 25:7,24; 26:9-12,14,21; etc. See too J.H. Kurtz's *Church History*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1894, I p. 78f.

⁸⁴ Rev. 3:10. On the only relative significance of the phrase "the hour of temptation" in this verse, cf. n. 246.

⁸⁵ Rom. 11:1a,4f,11a,12a,15a,17a,20a.

⁸⁶ Rom. 11:17a,23a,25b,26a.

⁸⁷ Rom. 11:26b,31b.

⁸⁸ Rom. 11:25b-26a,31f.

⁸⁹ Rom. 11:28a.

⁹⁰ Isa. 60:14.

⁹¹ Isa. 49:23a.

Christ converts Judaists and thus expands the Christian Church

As Jesus Himself put it, in His *Book of Revelation*: "Look, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews yet are not but do lie — look, I will make them to come and worship [God] in front of your feet." Indeed, I will get them there to "acknowledge that I have loved you!"⁹²

This means, as the *Geneva Bible* comments, that the Triune God will humble the Judaists before the Christians. It suggests God here says to His Church anent the Judaists: "I will cause them, in your sight, to humble themselves — and to give due honour to God and to His Son Christ."⁹²

Meantime, fifth, the expansion of Christ's Kingdom here on Earth would continue — despite all resistance, be it from Barbarian or from Jew or from Greek or from Roman. For Christ lives, and always will live, in His Church Militant — and He has the key of David.⁹³ Indeed, He, the risen Saviour — wielding the keys even of Hell and Death⁹⁴ — Himself expands His Church and promotes her mission. For "**He opens** so that **no man [can] shut**; and He shuts, so that **no man [can] open**."⁹⁵ He sets His Church before "an open door — and no man can shut it."⁹⁶

Christ's Church herself indeed has little strength. But Christ's Own strength is revealed in His Church's weakness.⁹⁷ She shall not deny His Name⁹⁸ — for she knows that the Name of Jehovah-Jesus is strong indeed.⁹⁹ Thus His Church can do **all** things, through Christ Who strengthens her.¹⁰⁰

Sixth. The 'key of David' — comments the *Geneva Bible* — "signifies that Christ has all the power over the House of David, which is the Church." Consequently, "He may receive...whom He will." And the 'open door' set before the Church, adds the *Geneva Bible*, "is to **advance** the Kingdom of God."⁹⁹

Whenever she stands firm and immovable for Him — Christ comes quickly to revive and to expand His Church. Promises Jesus: "Look, I come quickly! Keep on holding fast to that which you have, so that nobody take your crown! Him who overcomes, I will make **a pillar in the Temple** of My God, and he shall not go away from it any more."¹⁰¹

Christians shall **overcome** the World. For they are not imminently removed **from** it; but established as pillars **of** His Church Militant, **in** it. Consequently, the Members of the Temple of God alias the Church Militant are **here and now** already crowned as kings (**in principle**).¹⁰² And all who overcome the forces of the spirit of antichrist are made into strong pillars of that Church Militant¹⁰⁵ — inflexible and immovable.

⁹² Rev. 3:9.

⁹³ Cf. Isa. 22:20-23.

⁹⁴ Rev. 1:18.

⁹⁵ Rev. 3:7b.

⁹⁶ Rev. 3:8a.

⁹⁷ II Cor. 12:9.

⁹⁸ Rev. 3:8a.

⁹⁹ Rev. 3:7f & 1:18.

¹⁰⁰ Phil. 4:13.

¹⁰¹ Rev. 3:11f cf. n. 30.

¹⁰² Rev. 1:6.

Last. Christ will ultimately come **visibly**, at His Final Judgment — to crown us **in practice too**.¹⁰³ Then will He incorporate us into the Heavenly City on the New Earth — for ever. Then His Name shall be most prominent — 'indelibly' written upon our baptized foreheads.¹⁰⁴

"Look," says Jesus, "I come quickly! Keep on holding fast to that which you have, so that nobody take your crown! Him who overcomes, I will make **a pillar in the Temple** of My God, and he shall not go away from it any more. And I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the City of My God which is 'New Jerusalem' (which comes down out of Heaven from My God). And I will write upon him My new Name."¹⁰⁵

As the *Geneva Bible* here comments, it is as if God the Spirit here says to God the Son as regards God the Father: "Let no man pluck them away whom You have **won** to God! For they are Your crown."¹⁰⁵

Indeed, as Hengstenberg comments: "To be **a conqueror** and to be a Christian, is the same thing."¹⁰⁵ So therefore, "he who has an ear — let him hear what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches!"¹⁰⁵

O Christian, let us too listen to what the Spirit keep on saying to the Churches!¹⁰⁵ Let us not fearfully seek to 'escape' persecution! But let us rather 'strengthen' one another!

Let us stand firm, through all tribulation — and attempt to convert even our persecutors! Let us march out, through uncloseable missionary doors — uncloseable, because Christ has opened them! And let us experience His comings in revivals and expansions of His Church — till His Kingdom is complete, when we ourselves will keep on standing within His Church or Temple: immovable for ever!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

¹⁰³ Rev. 2:5,10.

¹⁰⁴ Rev. 22:4 *cf.* 21:1f.

¹⁰⁵ Rev. 3:11-13. That v. 12 is describing even the 'Church Militant' and not just the Church Triumphant, appears from the use of the present participle *katabainousa* — meaning "which keeps on coming down" (from Heaven). See Vanderwaal's book *The Revelation* (p. 139), and Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* I p. 185.

Those that Overcome, will sit with Christ upon His Throne

Revelation 3:14-22

December 4

"I rebuke and chasten as many as I love! Therefore, be zealous — and repent! Look, I am standing at the door and knocking! If any man hears My voice and opens the door — I will come in unto him, and I will feast with him; and he with Me."¹⁰⁶

Christ delivered His messages (via the Apostle John) to the first six of His Congregations in the Presbytery of Western Asia Minor. Then our reigning King next addressed Himself to the last Congregation in that Presbytery. This was the lukewarm congregation of Laodicea — the sister Church of the Congregation in Colosse.¹⁰⁷

First. We need to see that Laodicea had previously heard all the counsel of God — from the Apostle Paul. For she had been told, just like her Sister Church in Colosse,¹⁰⁷ that Christ was the Creator and the Maintainer and the Reconciler of all things in Heaven and Earth.¹⁰⁸

She had also been informed that in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge had been stored up.¹⁰⁹ She had heard that 'Christ in you, the Hope of glory' — is the **riches** of the glory of the mystery (alias the manifestation of what had not been known) among the Gentiles who believe in Him.¹¹⁰

And now, Laodicea was again being reminded (by John) that Christ was the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of God's creation,"¹¹¹ the One Who was and is the Absolute Originator. For Laodicea was prompted to remember that Christ is the One Who began creation — the One Who is The Beginning alias The Beginner of creation. As the *Geneva Bible* comments, it is Christ "from Whom all creatures have their beginning."¹¹¹

Second. Sadly, the Church in Laodicea had cooled off toward Christ! So He, through John, reminded her how she had lost a very great deal of her true riches. And Christ, through John, exhorted her to recover them. For it is **spiritual** riches — and not the material riches they were then indeed continuing to acquire — that represent true wealth.

¹⁰⁶ Rev. 3:19f *cf.* n. 115.

¹⁰⁷ *Cf.* Col. 1:2 & 4:12-17 with Phm. 2 & 23f.

¹⁰⁸ Col. 1:13-20.

¹⁰⁹ Col. 2:1-3.

¹¹⁰ Col. 1:27.

¹¹¹ Rev. 3:14.

Those that Overcome, will sit with Christ upon His Throne

Said Jesus to Laodicea: "Because you say, 'I am rich and have increased with goods and don't need anything' —but do not acknowledge that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked —I counsel you to buy from Me gold tested in the fire, so that you may become rich; and white raiment, so that you may become clothed and so that the shame of your nakedness might not become apparent; and anoint yourself with eye salve, so that you may see!"¹¹²

May we today learn from the Laodiceans' mistakes! May we not forget our True Riches —the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Third. Christ promised to "rebuke and chasten" His Church — simply because He loved her. Said He: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot! So then, because you are luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot —I will spit you out of My mouth.... I rebuke and chasten as many as I love. Therefore, be zealous — and repent!"¹¹³

May we too understand that even today, lukewarm Churches can still be revived from their Laodicean indifference! And may we also ever regard Christ's chastenings as tokens of His love — designed to restore us from our wayward backslidings; designed to restore us once again to enjoy His tender care!

"For the Lord chastens those whom He loves — and He scourges every son whom He receives."¹¹⁴ As the *Geneva Bible* comments: "Nothing more displeases God, than indifference and coldness in religion.... Therefore He will spit out such as are not zealous and fervent."¹¹³

Fourth. The quantitative magnitude of Christ's love, is hardly less than the qualitative. For it is not just a few that He chastises, but a great number. Indeed, He says: "I rebuke and chasten as **many** as I love."¹¹⁴

Moreover, He adds: "If **any** man hears My voice, and opens the door — I will come in unto him, and will feast with him."¹¹⁵ The invitation comes to men indiscriminately. **All** who get open the door, **will** be received by Jesus.

Fifth. It should **not** be imagined, however, that those who **do** so open — do so of their 'own **free** will,' as it were. For the people here under discussion — are **not at all unregenerate** Heathen. Rather are they **somewhat-backslidden** (and therefore previously-regenerated) **Members of the Christian Church** in Laodicea. They are people whose wills had previously been "free-d" — **freed** by the Sovereign Lord Himself.

¹¹² Rev. 3:17f.

¹¹³ Rev. 3:15f,19.

¹¹⁴ Heb. 12:6.

¹¹⁵ Rev. 3:20, cf. Song 5:2-5. Christ is constantly knocking (*krouo*, present continuous tense) —as He keeps on standing "at the door" (cf. Jas. 5:3,8f). But that spiritually-present immance is **not** a physically-epiphaneous immance. Interestingly, not even the Pretribulationists argue thus in respect of Rev. 3:20.

Moreover, even here in their later restoration from lapses into sin, Christ is again sovereign. He says: "Look, **I** am standing at the door and [**I** am] knocking! If any man hears **My** voice and opens the door — **I** will come in unto him, and **I** will feast with him; and [only then] he with Me."¹¹⁵ Just as right after man's fall in the garden of Eden, so too here again it is not man that comes to God —but God Who comes to man.¹¹⁶

It is **Christ** Who stands at the door —not the sinner. It is **Christ** Who knocks —not the sinner. It is the voice of **Christ** and not that of the sinner which is heard.

It is not the sinner himself but it is **Jesus Christ** Who from the outside thrusts His hand through the small hole toward the edge of the middle of this old-fashioned door. Indeed, it is He Who then moves the hand of the sinner to lift up the latch on the inside of the door — and thus to participate in **Christ's** own opening of the door.¹¹⁶ And it is **Christ** Who then first feasts with the sinner —not vice-versa.

Sixth. Christ promises that those who overcome in His Name —will indeed reign with Him for evermore. He says: "To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne — even as I too overcame, and have sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches!"¹¹⁷

Now that 'co-rule' of the Christians enthroned together with Christ on His royal seat, starts in **this** life —here and now.¹¹⁸ And it continues, unloseably, right down also to the next life — yes, for everlasting!¹¹⁹ For, as the *Geneva Bible* observes, to sit with Christ on His throne is to be installed" in what He Himself calls "My royal seat —and to be partaker of My heavenly joys."¹¹⁷

O Christian, let us too listen to what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches — even today!¹¹⁷ May we too recognize Jesus as the Creator; as the Maintainer; as the Reconciler of all things in Heaven and Earth; and as the Beginner of the whole creation!

¹¹⁶ Gen. 3:8f.

¹¹⁷ Rev. 3:21f.

¹¹⁸ I Cor. 4:8 & Eph. 2:6 & Rev. 1:6.

¹¹⁹ Rev. 22:5.

Those that Overcome, will sit with Christ upon His Throne

May we enrich ourselves in Him in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up! May we ever turn closer to Him Who loves us —and Who proves that love by constantly chastening us! May we realize that He loves **many**, and will feast with **all** who hearken to His persuasive voice! And may we thus rule and reign with Him, in all that we do —both in this life and the next!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

All Things were created by the Lord for His Pleasure

Revelation 4

December 5

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power. For You have created all things. And it is through Your will [or for Your good pleasure] that they are, and were created."¹²⁰

John recorded Christ's messages to the seven Congregations in the Presbytery of Western Asia Minor **here on Earth**. But next, the Apostle was given a vision of **Heaven itself** — of **Heaven above**.

"After this" (or after those things), wrote John, "I looked. And see, a door **in Heaven** was opened! Then the first voice which I heard was as it were that of a trumpet which kept on talking to me. It said: 'Come up **here** — and I will show you the things which must occur **hereafter!**'"¹²¹ This latter phrase — "the things which must occur **hereafter**" — means those things which were still to happen **after** the occurrence of the previous things Christ had just shown to John.¹²¹ For many new temporal rewards and even chastisements were still to come, from Heaven — to men **here on Earth**, down through all the subsequent centuries, and **before** the Final Judgment.¹²³

The Lord had just shown His Apostle the condition of His Church in the Presbytery of Western Asia Minor **here on Earth** during the **Apostle's** own day. And now, the trumpet-voiced Son of man¹²² went on to show His same servant John a **heavenly vision** of the major events which **would next start occurring** — by and large consecutively — here on this present Earth, **after** His administration of temporal rewards or chastisements to the Congregations of His first-century Presbytery of Western Asia Minor.

Before describing that new series of rewards and chastisements which were as then yet to come right here on Earth — Jesus first showed John His **present throne in Heaven**. For it was in Heaven that the book with the seven seals of then-future Church History would be opened up — from which book its **contents** would then be brought to pass **on Earth**.

Here, the *Geneva Bible* makes a very valuable comment. It explains that first, "**before**" the Apostle would "make mention of the **great afflictions of the Church**, he sets forth the majesty of God." For by His "will, wisdom and providence all things are created and governed — to **teach us patience**."¹²³

¹²⁰ Rev. 4:11.

¹²¹ Rev. 4:1 & 1:17-19 & esp. n. 123.

¹²² Rev. 1:10,13-15 *cf.* 4:1.

¹²³ Rev. 4:1f; 5:1; 6:1-17 & 1:19 *etc.* Hengstenberg rightly declares in his *op. cit.* I p. 110, that the idea "that we have an entirely new beginning" from "the portion [Rev.] 4:1 to the end" of the *Book of Revelation*, "is against the reference of the last clause" in Rev. 1:19. See n. 13. *Cf.* too C. Vanderwaal's book *And It Shall Come To Pass In The Last Days*, Industrie, Oudkarspel, Netherlands, 1977, pp. 30-32. The Pretribulationist-

All Things were created by the Lord for His Pleasure

Now in this **vision** of Heaven, He Whom John saw sitting on the heavenly throne was and is the Triune God Himself. He was like a jasper and a rainbow and a sardius-stone to look upon.¹²⁴ For He Who sat upon the throne, is the luminous Thrice-Holy Lord God Almighty — alias the Father-Son-Spirit Who always was and Who is and Who shall keep on being.¹²⁵

Dispensationalist view that Rev. 4:1 to 19:15f refers to events which will take place only **after** a future "rapture" of the saints, must thus be rejected.[‡]

Moreover, the Pretribulationists themselves strongly disagree with each other as to the details of what they assume will happen. Hal Lindsay, for example, states that John actually left the Earth and went to Heaven in Rev. 4:1 (*There's A New World Coming*, Vision House, Santa Ana Ca., 1973, p. 75). Yet J. Walvoord, in his book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Moody, Chicago, 1966, p. 103), agrees with Scofield that John's body was not then 'raptured' into Heaven. Lindsay (*op. cit.* p. 78) thinks Rev. chs. 4 to 19 make up the 'Tribulation Chapters.' But C.I. Scofield (in *The Scofield Reference Bible*, Oxford Press, London, 1909, p. 1337) places the 'Tribulation' in Rev. chs. 11 to 18. Yet W.R. Newell (in his work *The Book of Revelation*, Moody, Chicago, 1935, p. 403), gets to the 'Tribulation' only in ch. 13.

Notice further that the phrase "after this" or "after these things" (at the beginning of Rev. 1:1a) refers only to the further disclosures to John after he had received and recorded the previous vision and explanation of Rev. 4:1a's "these things." So this phrase "these things" refers, at the most, only to the previous things concerning the seven-branched Candlestick and the messages to the first-century-A.D. seven Congregations mentioned in Rev. chs. 1 to 3. The new events referred to "after these things" therefore relate to events subsequent to the aforementioned "these things."

Now it is not at all suggested or implied that the events seen by John in Rev. 4:2 to 5:14 would **take place in history only after** the historical fulfilment of the disclosures shown him in Rev. chs. 1 to 3. As a matter of fact, all of the disclosures shown to John in Rev. 4:2 to 5:14 (*cf.* esp. Rev. 5:5-8f with Dan. 7:7-14) were fulfilled in history **immediately after Christ's ascension into Heaven and at His heavenly session** many decades **before** the predictions described in Rev. chs. 2 to 3 were being fulfilled while John was on Patmos.

However, at the end of Rev. 4:1c, the expression "the things which must occur hereafter" —meaning 'the things which must still occur after the afore-mentioned things' (*ha dei genesthai meta tauta*) —should be taken to refer to all the many **later** occurrences (*ha dei genesthai*) recorded "hereafter" (*viz.* after Rev. 4:1f). For it means then-future events either in Heaven or on Earth regarding those things which would only start to occur "thereafter." And "thereafter" here means: after John's reception of the disclosures recorded in Rev. chs. 1 to 3. Accordingly, "thereafter" here refers to those disclosures recorded in Rev. chs. 6 to 11 and 13 to 19 (*etc.*). *Cf.* too n. 13 & Rev. 1:19 & 4:1 & 7:1,9 & 15:5 & 18:1 & 19:1 with Acts 26:16 & n. 12 & 44.

Rev. 4:1c's "I will show you things which must occur hereafter" (*meta tauta*), therefore means the historical events which would occur after that time (of approximately 65f A.D.), and which events are recorded in Rev. 6:1 to 8:1f. Consequently, Rev. 4:1's "hereafter" applies to all of the events to be sealed in history subsequent to the time of John's own writing down of the *Book of Revelation*.

This is so, regardless as to whether those historical events would take place in Heaven (Rev. chs. 4 to 5 & 7:9 to 8:7a & 12:1-4a & 14:2-6a & 14:13-18a & 15:1-16a & 19:1-14 & 20:11 to 21:2a), or on Earth (Rev. chs. 6:1 to 7:8 & 8:7b-19 & 12:4b-14:1 & 14:6b-12 & 14:18b-20 & 16:1 to 18:24 & 19:15 to 20:10 & 22:2f). *Cf.* too nn. 13 & 113.

Furthermore, this can only mean that Rev. chs. 4 to 19 are not principally describing a so-called 'great tribulation' of worldlings —alleged to occur only after a wrongly-assumed 'rapture' of the Church out of the World. For, although these chapters do describe tribulation in the World, **the Church too shares** in that tribulation in the World. For the tribulated Church is in the World throughout the history of the World. See Mt. 13:21 & 24:9,14,21f and Jh. 16:33 & 9:1f & 14:22 & II Cor. 1:4 & 7:4 & Eph. 3:13 *cf.* Rev. 1:9 & 2:10 & 6:9 & 7:14 & 9:4f & 11:2-7 & 12:6,11,13f (*cf.* Dan. 7:21-25) & Rev. 14:4,8 & 14:12f & 15:28 & 16:6 & 17:14 & 18:20,24 & 19:3 & 20:4,9 & 21:4 & 22:2,11,15,19. *Cf.* n. 246.

¹²⁴ Rev. 4:3.

¹²⁵ Rev. 4:8 *cf.* Gen. 1:1-3,26 & 2:1-3.

From the midst of the throne, declared John, there proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices — from the sevenfold-exalted and sevenfold-blessed God the Father.¹²⁶ In the middle of the throne stood God the Son, alias the seven-horned Lamb or the sevenfold-anointed Lord Jesus Christ.¹²⁷ And in front of the throne was God the Spirit, Who shone forth like seven lamps of fire — as the sevenfold Spirit of God.

That Spirit Himself acts like the sevenfold eyes of Christ the Lamb. Those searching eyes are like flames of fire. Indeed, John had already written how they searched out the reins and the hearts of the Members of the seven Congregations in the seven-pronged Candlestick — the Western Asia Minor Presbytery in the Church of the living God.¹²⁸

Now this glorious and sevenfold or perfect Triune Being, said John, is completely independent of all the many created existences within the Universe which He Himself created. Thus, His heavenly creatures sing to Him without ceasing ('seven days a week' as it were): "Holy, holy holy; Lord God Almighty; Who was, and Who is, and Who shall keep on being!"¹²⁵

Second, out of the throne proceeds a triune creative activity — lightnings and thunderings and voices.¹²⁹ Here we catch a glimpse of the resplendent **external work** of the Triune Jehovah — His work in creation, in providence, in communication, in salvation, in judgment, and in consummation.¹³⁰ May we too then never forget the **glory** of the Lord with Whom we have to do!¹³¹

As the *Geneva Bible* comments: "From the throne of the Father and the Son proceeds the Holy Ghost Who, all having but one throne, declare the unity of the Godhead. The Holy Ghost is like lightning to us who believe, and like a fearful thunder to the disobedient."¹³²

Third. "Before the throne, there was a sea of glass like crystal. And in the midst of the throne and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first living creature was like a lion; and the second living creature like a calf; and the third living creature had a face like that of a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle....

"The four living creatures, each of them, had six wings around it. And they were full of eyes within. And they do not rest day and night. They keep on saying: 'Holy, holy, holy; Lord God Almighty; Who was, and Who is, and Who keeps on being!'"¹³²

¹²⁶ Rev. 4:5,11 & 5:13 *cf.* Isa. 11:1f.

¹²⁷ Rev. 5:6 *cf.* Isa. 11:1f.

¹²⁸ Rev. 4:5 & 5:6 *cf.* 1:12,20 & 2:23.

¹²⁹ Rev. 4:5.

¹³⁰ *Cf.* Rev. 1:10-20 & 8:5.

¹³¹ Heb. 4:12f.

¹³² Rev. 4:6-8 *cf.* Hengstenberg on v. 6 in his *op. cit.* I p. 214.

All Things were created by the Lord for His Pleasure

Now as to their basic description and activities, these four "living creatures" or *zooa* — each said to have **six** wings — on the one hand seem to correspond to the **sub**-sevenfold (and hence **sub**-divine) **six**-winged seraphs in a vision previously shown to Isaiah.¹³³ As such, the four living creatures in the *Book of Revelation* might well be Angels¹³⁴ sent out by Jehovah to serve Him for the sake of the entire Universe.

If Angels — these four living creatures in the *Book of Revelation* would perhaps minister also to the wild animals as well as to the tame animals of the land and of the air *etc.*¹³⁵ Yet they minister too especially for the sake of **man**¹³⁶ —who alone is the crown of the cosmos.¹³⁷

On the other hand, however, these four "living creatures" are clearly distinguished from the Angels — in the next chapter. That fact would rather seem to indicate that the four *zooa* are perhaps the sum total of all earthly living beings or creatures redeemed right here by the blood of the Lamb.¹³⁸

Be that as it may. Would that we too might serve the Lord with the same alacrity as do both the good Angels and the sub-human creatures! And would that we too might sing the "thrice-holy" *Trishagion*¹²⁵ with the same dedication as do the four *zooa*!

As Hengstenberg points out, "the object" of the description of the four *zooa* round the throne of Jehovah "was to impart consolation in the presence of a seemingly omnipotent World" alias mundane order. Indeed, the object is also to "pledge **the certainty of victory** being gained **over** it"¹³² by Christ —and His Church.

Fourth. The saved Church of Jesus Christ is, in fact, required to serve Jehovah and to sing to His praise with the same dedication as do both all unfallen angelic beings and all non-angelic sub-human creatures. For "round about the throne, were twenty-four seats. And upon the seats, I saw twenty-four Elders sitting, clothed in white raiment. And they had on their heads crowns of gold."¹³⁹

These Elders, just like the good Angels, surround the throne of Jehovah. But unlike those Angels, they are **crowned** and **seated** on **thrones**. This means that they **rule** and **reign** with Jehovah Himself —albeit only subserviently as viceroys-under-God.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Isa. 6:1-8.

¹³⁴ Rev. 4:8 & 5:11,14.

¹³⁵ Job 1:6f; 2:1f; 38:4-8; Ps. 103:19-22; 104:4-9; Num. 22:22f; Rev. 7:1-3.

¹³⁶ Heb. 1:1-14.

¹³⁷ Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-7; Ps. 8; Heb. 1:7-14; 2:5-14.

¹³⁸ Rev. 4:7-9; 5:8-12; Col. 1:15-20; I Pet. 1:9-12.

¹³⁹ Rev. 4:4.

¹⁴⁰ Rev. 5:10; 20:4; 22:5.

Now these twenty-four Elders in Heaven, like all other Elders here and now on Earth, **represent** the whole people of God.¹⁴¹ Thus they reflect twice the product of the divine number three¹²⁵ multiplied by the creation number four.¹³² They also suggest the six-fold number of the wings of the *zooa*, multiplied by the four-fold number of those living creatures themselves.¹³³

But the twenty-four Elders symbolize especially the sum total of the Older Testament Church built upon the foundation of the twelve Patriarchs of Israel¹⁴² and the Newer Testament Church built upon the foundation of the twelve Apostles¹⁴³ — with Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone of His entire Older-**and**-Newer-Testament Church-of-all-ages.¹⁴⁴

Fifth. The Elders, and all the Members of the Church-of-all-ages they represent — because they themselves are both creatures and sinners — do not have the intrinsic right to rule **in their own right**, themselves. They only have that God-given privilege graciously **donated** to them — by virtue of their creation and redemption through the mercies of the sovereign Lord. For it is Christ alone Who has clothed them in white raiment.¹⁴⁵ And it is He alone Who has invested them with their crowns of gold.¹⁴⁶

May we too never forget that we ourselves are but sinners saved by the grace of God!¹⁴⁷ For everything we possess, has been given to us merely through the mercies of the Triune God in Whom we live and move and have our very existence.¹⁴⁸

Sixth. The **heavenly** Elders never forget this. **They** know that their whole lives — both now in Heaven and for ever thereafter on the New Earth yet to come — are **to be dedicated** to the Triune God alone: **from** Whom they **have** received all things; **through** Whom they **are** right now enjoying all things; and **unto** Whom they **shall** bring all of the joyous praise of their lives. For each and every time (seven "days" a week without ceasing)¹²⁵ "when those **living creatures** give glory and honour and thanks to Him Who sat on the throne Who keeps on living for ever and ever — **the twenty-four Elders** fall down before Him Who sat on the throne."

There they "worship Him Who keeps on living for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power. For You have created all things. And it is through Your will [for Your pleasure] that they are and were created.'"¹⁴⁹

¹⁴¹ Ex. 3:16,18-22; Acts 11:29f; 14:21-23; 15:2,4,6,12,22f; 16:4; 20:17,20,28f; I Tim. 3:1-5,7; 5:1,17,19f; Tit. 1:5-11; I Pet. 5:1-4; III Jn. 1-12.

¹⁴² Rev. 21:12-14 *cf.* Gen. 37:6-11 & 49:1-28; Dt. 31:30 to 33:29 *cf.* Jas. 1:1 with Rev. 7:4-8 & 14:1-4 & 15:3 & 21:1,9-12.

¹⁴³ Rev. 21:12-14 *cf.* Mt. ch. 10 & 19:25-28 & Acts ch. 1 & 6:2-6; 15:6-14,22f; 16:4; I Cor. 1:1; 3:4-11; 4:6,9; 9:1-5; Gal. 1:1; 2:1,8f; Eph. 2:20; II Pet. 1:1,16-18; 3:15-18; Rev. 7:9-14; 14:6f; 15:3f; 17:4; 21:1,9-14.

¹⁴⁴ I Cor. 10:1-4; Ps. 18:2; 118:22f; Dan. 2:34f,44f; Mt. 16:16-18; Acts 4:8-12; I Cor. 3:6-11; Eph. 2:20; 4:4-15; Rev. 21:1f,9,14,22f; 22:3,13,16,18-21.

¹⁴⁵ Gen. 3:8,15,21 with Gal. 3:27-29 & Jh. 1:28-30 & Mt. 21:7-16 & Rev. 3:5 & 4:4 & 6:9-11 & 7:9-14 & 19:1-8.

¹⁴⁶ II Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 4:4,10; 1:5-7; 5:8-10; Rev. 20:4; 21:9,24; 22:4f.

¹⁴⁷ Eph. 2:8-10 & Lk. 17:10.

¹⁴⁸ I Cor. 4:7 & Ps. 50 esp. v. 10 *cf.* Acts 17:28.

¹⁴⁹ Rev. 4:9-11.

All Things were created by the Lord for His Pleasure

Thus the whole Church, represented by those twenty-four Elders, is to take pleasure in God's creation of all things — and also in their own createdness. Indeed, as the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "We are hereby taught to give **glory to God in all His works.**"¹³²

O Christian, may **we here on Earth** — just like the inhabitants of Heaven above — understand something of the indescribable splendour of God Himself! May we realize that He is totally sovereign over the entire Universe — in creation, providence, communication, redemption, judgment, and consummation!

May we serve our Triune God with the same alacrity as do the unfallen angels. But unlike those Angels, may we **rule** with Him here and now **on Earth**; even more so **in Heaven** hereafter; and **still more so** after the Final Judgment on the **New Earth** yet to come!

Above all, may we realize with the heavenly Elders that our Lord is indeed **worthy** to receive all the glory and honour and power of our lives — **even now!** For He has created all things for His Own pleasure. Indeed, our own greatest pleasure should be found in recognizing this — and in casting down our own crowns and kingship over all the Universe, before His regal throne.

May we do this, and continue to do this — until God, through the obedient agency of His earthly Church — has reduced all His enemies as a footstool under His feet!¹⁵⁰

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

¹⁵⁰ I Cor. 15:24-28; Heb. 1:13; 10:12f; Ps. 110.

The Elect of Every Nation are to reign with Christ on Earth

Revelation 5

December 6

"The four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell down before the Lamb. Every one of them had harps and golden bowls full of perfumes, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the book and to open its seals! For You were slain, and have redeemed us [or 'them' or 'the saints'] unto God by Your blood from every kindred [or family] and tongue and people and nation! And You have made them [or us] kings and priests to our God! And we [or they] shall reign on the Earth!'"¹⁵¹

Christ was showing John the expectant Church Triumphant, in Heaven above. Then the Lord Jesus next went on to show the Apostle the central role which He Himself had played and keeps on playing in the salvation of the entire elect Universe after His ascension and heavenly session. For He Himself **even now** promotes the further development of the **whole** cosmos not just **there** and now in Heaven, but also **here** and now on Earth.

First. John, in his heavenly vision, saw a **scroll** in the right hand of Jehovah. "Then I saw in the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne, a book written on the inside and on the outside —sealed with seven seals."¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Rev. 5:8-10. The manuscript versions of vv. 9f are very important, shedding much light on various possible meanings.

- (1) *Kai adousin*: "and they sang," v. 9. Here, it is not altogether clear exactly who sang. "Saints" in v. 8 is the immediate antecedent to "they sang." Yet it is more probable that the singing was done by the more remote antecedents mentioned in v. 8, namely "the twenty-four Elders." For it is only each of the Elders who had "harps" (to the accompaniment of which they too perhaps sang).
- (2) *Egorasas too; Theous*: "You have redeemed unto God," v. 9. It is not altogether clear exactly who God thus redeemed—whether He redeemed "us" (the twenty-four Elders), or whether He redeemed "saints" (v. 8). The preferred readings omit the word "us."
- (3) *Kai epoieesas autous*: "and He has made them," v. 10. This is the preferred reading (rather than "He has made us"). The "them" would then mean: those whom God has redeemed from every kindred and tongue and people and nation.
- (4) *Basileian*: "[as] a kingdom," v. 10. This is the preferred reading, rather than: "[as] kings."
- (5) *Kai hierais*: "and [as] priests," v. 10. This is the preferred reading, rather than: "and a priesthood."
- (6) *Kai basileusousin*: "and they shall reign," v. 10. This is the preferred reading, rather than: "and they reign" or "and we shall reign."

Putting all these preferred readings together, Rev. 5:8-10 would run as follows: "And when He [the Lamb] had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps and golden bowls full of perfumes which are the prayers of the saints. Then they [the twenty-four Elders] sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the book and to open its seals! For You were slain, and You have redeemed to God by Your blood from every kindred [or family] and tongue and people and nation—and You have made them [whom You have redeemed] to be a kingdom and to be priests for our God. And they [the redeemed] shall reign on Earth.'"

¹⁵² Rev. 5:1 *cf.* Ezek. 2:9f & Zech. 5:1-3.

The Elect of Every Nation are to reign with Christ on Earth

As will later appear, that very bookroll or scroll is not only Christ's blood-bought **title deed** to His two-sided redeemed creation (both the heavenly "inside" and the earthly "outside"). But it is also the record of the major religious events of all **future history** of that "inside" and that "outside" of the Universe. For as the scroll is later unrolled, it also deals with the unfolding of the future development of the plan of redemption.¹⁵³

As such, it is Christ's 'title deed' to all cosmic development.¹⁵⁴ For, as the *Geneva Bible* observes, this bookroll or scroll "signifies **all the counsels and judgments of God** which are known only to Christ."¹⁵⁵

Now the scroll was secured with seven seals. These seven seals not only authenticate the veracity but they especially symbolize the humanly-unknown contents of the scroll.

Nobody was able to pry open the seals of the scroll, or even to comprehend its sealed contents. Nobody — except the seven-horned Lamb with the sevenfold sharp-sighted eyes (and those privileged ones to whom He might be pleased to disclose such matters).

For the contents of the sealed bookroll can be understood only by Christ — **and** by those with whom **He** would share it. As the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments, the 'seven eyes' of the Lamb signify "the fullness of the Spirit Which Christ poured [out] upon **all**"¹⁵⁵ — upon all His elect.

Now John himself declared: "I saw a strong Angel proclaiming with a loud voice: 'Who is worthy to open the book and to loosen its seals?' And no man in Heaven, nor on Earth, neither under the Earth, was able to open the book neither to look into it. Then I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look into it."¹⁵⁶

Yet when the worthy Jesus opened the seals of the bookroll — "**thousands of thousands**" praised God. Why? Because they saw that Jesus had redeemed them "**from every kindred** [or family] and tongue and people and nation."¹⁵⁶

Second. One of the heavenly Elders, however, pointed out to John that the Lord Jesus Christ had triumphed victoriously, to open the scroll. Wrote the Apostle: "Then one of the Elders says to me: 'Do not weep! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book and to loosen its seven seals!'"¹⁵⁷

Now Christ's opening of the scroll depended upon His first being slaughtered for the sins of the World.¹⁵⁸ Yet Christ's slaughter was fore-ordained even before the foundation of the Universe.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Rev. 6:1 to 8:1f *cf.* 8:2-21 & 10:1f,8,10f & 11:1 *etc.*

¹⁵⁴ *Cf.* Rev. 1:2,19; 2:1f; 13:8; Ex. 32:31-33; Mal. 4:16f; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:27; 22:18f.

¹⁵⁵ Rev. 5:1,6.

¹⁵⁶ Rev. 5:2-4,9,11.

¹⁵⁷ Rev. 5:5 *cf.* Gen. 49:9 & Heb. 7:14. This is the first of a number of 'playbacks' recorded in the *Book of Revelation* (*cf.* too similarly Rev. chs. 12 to 13 *etc.*). This similar feature is found also in the *Book of Daniel* (chs. 2 & 7 & 8 to 9 & 10 to 12), and too in Christ's parables of the Kingdom of God (Mt. ch. 13 *etc.*).

¹⁵⁸ Rev. 5:9 & Jh. 1:29.

¹⁵⁹ Rev. 13:8 *cf.* I Pet. 1:18-20 & 5:13 & Rev. 11:15 & 17:14 & 22:5.

So the tense used in the phrase "He **has** prevailed"¹⁵⁹ — is '**past continuous**.' Thus it refers not only to Calvary, which was already **past** history at the time John was writing the *Book of Revelation*. It refers also to the continuous-**present** certainty that Christ will **keep on** prevailing.

For **all** of this was fore-ordained ever since the beginning of the World — and, in time, ever since the *Protevangelium* or 'First Gospel Promise' was given to fallen mankind in the garden of Eden.¹⁶⁰ Thus Jehovah's guarantee stretches from all eternity past and unto all eternity **future**.¹⁵⁹

Third. One of the Elders in the heavenly vision accordingly gave John a 'playback.' And this reminded the Apostle of that already-past and already-completed redemption which the Lamb had effected when He "prevailed"¹⁵⁷ (**past** tense) to open the book with the seven seals.

Wrote John: "Then I beheld. And look! In the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb as if He had been slain — having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits [alias the seven-fold Holy Spirit] of God, sent forth into all the Earth. And He [the Lamb] **came** and **took** the book out of the right hand of Him Who sat upon the throne.

"Now **when** He **had** taken the book, the four living creatures [or zool] and the twenty-four Elders **fell** down before the Lamb.... Then they **sang** a **new** song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals! For You **were** slain, and **have** redeemed us ['the saints'] unto God, by Your blood, from every kindred [or family] and tongue and people and nation!'"¹⁶¹

This is why John himself, when he started to inscripturate the Book of Revelation, dedicated it "to Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to God!"¹⁶² For it was precisely when Christ actually "took the book" or acquired title of the scroll, by shedding His precious blood — that the legal price for the redemption of His Church was officially paid.

So, even at that time of His death and resurrection and ascension and heavenly session, the entire Universe then and there acknowledged the Son of man Jesus Christ's acquisition of the title deed of the cosmos.¹⁶³ For this acknowledgment was then made by representations of both the Church Militant here on Earth¹⁶⁴ as well as of the Church Expectant in Heaven.¹⁶⁵

The Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Dr. Whittingham here makes an appropriate comment. It says: "Our Saviour Jesus has redeemed His Church by His bloodshedding, and gathered it from **all** nations."¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Gen. 3:15 & Gal. 4:4-6.

¹⁶¹ Rev. 5:6-9 *cf.* Isa. 35:10 & Jer. 31:11. As Hengstenberg rightly declared (*op. cit.* p. 343), in Rev. 5:9 "the kindreds and tongues and peoples point to the tables in Gen. 10 — comp. there ver. 5,20,31,32. This shows that the spiritual territory is co-extensive with the natural one," and it "marks the oecumenical character of the work of Christ."

¹⁶² Rev. 1:4b-6.

¹⁶³ Mt. 27:45-54; 28:1-4; Jh. 3:13-16; Eph. 4:8-10; I Pet. 1:10-12; 3:18-22.

¹⁶⁴ Jh. 19:25-30; Mt. 27:54-61; Mt. ch. 28; Mk. ch. 16; Lk. 23:54 to 24:46f; Jh. ch. 20f.

¹⁶⁵ Eccl. 12:7; Mt. 27:52f; I Pet. 1:10-12; 3:18-22; Heb. 11:26; 12:1f,22-24,26-28; Rev. 5:8 ("had"); 6:9; 11:8,11f,15-17; 12:10f; 14:12f.

The Elect of Every Nation are to reign with Christ on Earth

Fourth. John next describes the acknowledgment of those saving events specifically by the Church Triumphant (alias the Church in **Heaven**). He describes how in his vision he saw and heard the heavenly saints acknowledging the death of the Lamb on Calvary, and His subsequent resurrection from the dead and His arrival in Heaven on the clouds at His subsequent ascension and heavenly session — in fulfilment of Daniel's prediction.¹⁶⁶

John was now looking at the 'playback' of these saving events — in his own God-given vision¹⁵⁷ several decades after their occurrence. Thus John was then enabled to see how the Older Testament saints in Heaven had reacted, when our Saviour died and rose again and arrived in Heaven and sat down on the throne of the Universe as the Son of man.

John was enabled also to see how the Newer Testament saints in Heaven react to these matters — together with the Older Testament saints with them there. For the Older and the Newer Testament saints in glory both constitute the one and only Church-in-**Heaven** of our Lord Jesus Christ, represented by the "twenty-four Elders" (or the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles).¹⁶⁷

Indeed, John saw how Christ the Lamb "came and took the book out of the right hand of Him Who sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell down before the Lamb.... And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the book and to open its seals! For You were slain, and have redeemed us [or 'them'] unto God — by Your blood!'"¹⁶¹

Evidently, the echo of the death and resurrection of Christ here on Earth — then resounded throughout the cosmos and even into Heaven itself. And that echo was re-echoed back to Earth again — at Christ's arrival in Heaven after His ascension. For the heavenly-enthroned Christ then poured out His Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday — when the seven-fold Holy Ghost alias "the seven Spirits of God [were] sent forth into all the Earth"¹⁶¹ to inspire His earthly **Church** to start to go and gather Christ's elect from every nation.

Fifth. Calvary has given benefits — and is still able to benefit — both man and *zoa* (alias other 'living creatures'). It profits them both then (**at** Calvary) — **and** now (**after** Calvary). It benefitted them both in Heaven and on Earth. For after Christ's ascension and arrival in Heaven, "He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him Who sat upon the throne."

Then, "the four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell down before the Lamb.... And they sang a new song, saying: 'You...have redeemed **us**'" — namely the dead saints in Heaven. This can also equally appropriately be translated: 'You...have redeemed **them**'" — namely the living saints still on Earth.

¹⁶⁶ Dan. 9:26f & 7:9-14 *cf.* Rev. 4:4 & 1:7,16-18 *cf.* n. 165.

¹⁶⁷ Rom. 11:16 *cf.* Gen. ch. 17 & Gal. 3:16-29 & Col. 2:9-14 & Eph. 4:4-6.

For "You...have redeemed us [or 'them'] unto God by Your blood from every kindred [or family] and tongue and people and nation" — a worldwide redemption.¹⁶¹ "And You...have made **us**" in Heaven and "**them**" still on Earth to be "kings and priests to our God. Indeed, **we**" in Heaven as well as the believers who are still on Earth — "**shall** reign on the **Earth!**"¹⁶⁸

Here it must be noted that the Lamb of God **not only "redeemed"** both the Older Testament and the Newer Testament saints. He not only bought them — and thus also brought them back to God — from the realm of Satan. In addition, the Lamb **also** "made" or appointed the Older Testament and Newer Testament saints — as "**kings and priests** to our God."

Indeed, the Lamb appointed them to be kings and priests not only here and now **on the Earth** — before they die(d). Too, He appointed them to be kings and priests also here and **now in Heaven** — also after they die(d).

Indeed, He appointed them to be kings and priests even thereafter — in the future, and **on the New Earth** subsequent to the still-future resurrection of the dead. Thus the *Geneva Bible* suggests John then perceived the souls of dead saints in Heaven to be declaring: "**We shall reign** on the **Earth!**"¹⁶⁸

Sixth. The **earthly** exercise of that "kingly" office of both the Older Testament as well as the Newer Testament saints — started at their regeneration. That is to say, it commenced before their deaths — **while they were still right here on Earth.**

For they first **became** kings **prior** to their deaths and translations into Heaven.¹⁶⁹ They **remain(ed)** kings after their deaths when they went to Heaven — where they ruled and still rule and shall continue to rule (as disembodied souls).¹⁷⁰ And they **shall continue** to be kings — in even greater intensity, with Heaven and upon the New Earth. For one day they shall rule perfectly (in both soul and body) — in Heaven-on-Earth, after the Final Judgment.¹⁷¹

Seventh. Both those of the redeemed who were then still on Earth, as well as those of the redeemed who were then already in Heaven — would one day **once again reign right here on Earth.** Those then reigning in Heaven, would one day return and reign again — on the (renewed alias) the New Earth. And those then reigning on Earth, would soon die and then reign in Heaven — and one day return and reign again on the (new) Earth.

Meantime, however, those then on Earth — would soon reign here on Earth (**before** they died) **even more powerfully** than they had already reigned here on Earth. And their earthly descendants would reign even more powerfully here on Earth than had their faithful ancestors. For the reign of Christians here on Earth always needs to **expand** — and, by the grace of God, indeed does so.

¹⁶⁸ Rev. 5:7-10 *cf.* n. 151.

¹⁶⁹ Mt. 19:28; Eph. 2:5-10; 1:19-23; Col. 1:13-20; 3:1f; Rev. 20:4,6.

¹⁷⁰ Rev. 1:5-7; 4:4; 5:8-10; 14:12f; 20:4.

¹⁷¹ Rev. 5:10b; 22:5.

The Elect of Every Nation are to reign with Christ on Earth

As those reigning here with Christ themselves learn to be meek or to obey the Law of God — they more and more effect the whole cosmos for good. Indeed, "the meek...shall inherit the **Earth**."¹⁷² And the redeemed "shall **reign** upon the Earth."¹⁷² Likewise — may also we and our descendants reign on Earth — here and now!

Eighth. John saw how the new song of the expectant Church Triumphant in Heaven was reinforced by the voice of many unfallen and therefore unredeemed Angels. For there, the latter too sing together with the redeemed "living creatures" and the Elders. Yet, although the Angels cannot sing the **other** song of these redeemed — the redeemed certainly sing the song of the Angels.

Exclaimed the Apostle: "Then I beheld and heard the 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 [alias **hundreds of millions**], saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!'"¹⁷³

May that be our song, too! May also we sing it — even while we are yet here on this present Earth and before we die!

Finally. John wrote in conclusion: "**Every** creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth and under the Earth and such as are in the sea and all which are in them — I heard saying: 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him Who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb — for ever and ever!' Then the four living creatures said: 'Amen!' And the twenty-four Elders fell down and worshipped Him Who keeps on living for ever and ever."¹⁷⁴

Remarks Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: "It is absolutely certain that both irrational and inanimate objects are comprehended" here. For "every part of the Universe, from the highest pinnacle of Heaven to the very centre of the Earth, each in its own way, proclaims the glory of the Creator."¹⁷⁴

Accordingly, because "every creature" in the Universe each in its own way praises the Lord — every human being too should do so. And because all of the twenty-four Elders representing the people of God say 'Amen' — all of God's people right now, also here on Earth, should say 'Amen' too.¹⁷⁵

O Christian, the Lamb is still unrolling His scroll! May **we** too see that the whole stability and development of the Universe and of the World's future history depends upon His title to it, and His right to unfold it!¹⁷⁶

May we see how Christ's Calvary work and heavenly session is the basis of **our** ruling with Him here and now on this present Earth! And may we see that it guarantees too that also our faithful descendants shall rule with Him on this present Earth — even more than **we** do, here and now!

¹⁷² Rev. 5:10; 22:5 cf. Mt. 5:5.

¹⁷³ Rev. 5:11f.

¹⁷⁴ Rev. 5:13f & cf. Calvin's *Inst.* III:5:8.

¹⁷⁵ Rev. 5:14 & 19:4 cf. Dt. 27:15-27; Neh. 5:13; 8:6; Ps. 72:19; 106:48; & cf. n. 176.

¹⁷⁶ Rev. 4:1f,4,10; 5:3a,6,8-10 & cf. n. 175.

May we understand that Christ's title to and unrolling of World History secures also **our** ruling with Him even after our decease and our entry into Heaven —and further, of our ruling with Him still more, on the New Earth yet to come! May we even now therefore praise Him with all our strength! Indeed, while Christ's sevenfold Spirit still goes forth throughout all the Earth¹⁶¹ —may we call upon all people to yield to Him, and to serve Him!

Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus!
And, until then —onward, Christian soldiers!
On, to victory!

The Crowned Christ goes forth Conquering and to Conquer!

Revelation 6

December 7

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals [or the first of the seven seals of the scroll]. And I heard — as it were the noise of thunder — one of the four living creatures saying: 'Come and see!' Then I saw. And look, a white horse! And He Who sat on him, had a bow. And a crown was given to Him. And He went forth conquering, and to conquer!"¹⁷⁷

The Son of man¹⁷⁸ had shown John a vision of Heaven. In that vision, John saw how Christ Himself had prevailed and taken possession of the seven-sealed scroll and title-deed of World History. Christ did this after His resurrection, upon completion of His ascension at His heavenly session.¹⁷⁹

Next. John was shown how the now-enthroned Lamb **subsequently** opened the seven seals, one by one. This gives insight into the cumulative and progressive unrolling of the scroll of subsequent **World History**,⁴⁴ here on Earth. As it unfolds — such subsequent **World History** increasingly becomes expanding **Church History**.

This is the view of the *Geneva Bible* (of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham). That rightly comments: "The opening of the seal[s] is the declaration of God's will, and the **executing** of His **judgments** (that is, of His **righteous actions in the course of human History**).¹⁷⁷ Thus too: Augustine, Andreas of Caesarea, Bede, Haymo, Anselm, Richard of St. Victor, Joachim of Floris, Arnold of Villanova, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, Wimbledon, Purvey, Savonarola, Pareus, Petri, Galloway, Hengstenberg, Hoeksema, Greijvenstein, the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*, and many others.

First. John foresaw significant events in World History ever since our Christ's resurrection and ascension and heavenly session. What he saw, bears the character of a **progressive Christian conquest** of this great planet Earth.

Wrote John: "I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder — one of the four living creatures saying: 'Come and see!'"¹⁸⁰ Here, one of the four living creatures was apparently summoning **the white horse** — rather than summoning John. For the Apostle had already been summoned to Heaven in a vision, to see what Christ would show him there.¹⁸¹ Thus John wrote: "Then I saw. And look, a white horse!"¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Rev. 6:1f.

¹⁷⁸ Rev. 1:10-13; 4:1f.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. our study for Dec. 6.

¹⁸⁰ Rev. 6:1's "and see" is found only in *'Aleph* and a few other manuscripts.

¹⁸¹ Rev. 6:2.

The Crowned Christ goes forth Conquering and to Conquer!

What then is this white horse? 'The Gospel!' — answer Irenaeus, the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Henry, Hengstenberg, J.H. Lange, Lenski, Carroll, Greijvenstein, Hoeksema, and Rushdoony. The Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments: "The white horse signifies innocence, **victory**, and felicity — which should come **by the preaching of the Gospel**."¹⁸¹

Second. Who, however, is the rider of that horse? Here, John next wrote: "He Who sat on him, had a bow. And a crown was given to Him. And He went forth conquering, and to conquer!"¹⁷⁷ This Rider is a **warlike King** and **Conqueror**, shooting forth 'His terrible swift **Word**' like **arrows** from His **bow**.

Says the Calvinist *Dordt Dutch Bible*: "The white horse with its conquering Rider, would portray **Christ**. Just as He had already begun through His Apostles, He would also **subsequently** subjugate pagan idolatry and other idle religions **through other faithful Preachers**.... Here the pure preaching of the Gospel is to be understood — which Christ the King of kings, riding on the horse, spreads throughout the whole World by His powerful Spirit."

It is rather obvious that the Horseman on the white horse is our Lord Jesus Christ — after His heavenly session, as He now sallies forth to conquer the World. This conquest began with His Spiritual descent into His Church here on Earth on Pentecost Sunday, and continues with His progressive subjugation of the World through His Spirit-filled Church ever since.

After all, this white horse and especially the Horseman Who rides it are **clearly identified** by John in a subsequent chapter of this same Book of Revelation.¹⁸² For there we read that the white horse is ridden by its Divine Horseman called "Faithful and True" and "the Word of God" and "King of kings and Lord of lords."

This is obviously none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ¹⁸³ — alias the perfect Son of man. For the **crown** worn by the Horseman on the white horse, is the crown lost by the first Adam when he sinned in the garden of Eden. It was regained, and even further enhanced, by the Second Adam — when He triumphed, from the garden of Gethsemane and the tree of life on Calvary, in His postmortal resurrection and His heavenly session.¹⁸⁴

Third. It is **since** His heavenly session as the reigning Son of man — that the now-crowned Jesus goes forth conquering. And He does this in the power of His Spirit — Whom He from Heaven sent forth upon His Church shortly after His heavenly session. For now, in the power of His sevenfold Spirit in all the Earth, Christ constantly activates His Spirit-filled earthly Church to go forth in His Name — to conquer the World for Him.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Rev. 19:11-16.

¹⁸³ Rev. 1:5,9; 3:14f; 19:11-16; 22:16; Jh. 1:1-14; I Tim. 6:14-16.

¹⁸⁴ Ps. 8:5-8; Heb. 2:5-9; Rev. 5:5-13; 6:2; 14:14; 19:12.

¹⁸⁵ Dan. 7:13f; Acts 1:9; 2:17-21,32-35; Jh. 14:16-26; 15:26f; 16:7-14; Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:45-49; Acts 1:5-8; 2:17-21,32-35; I Cor. 15:24-28.

As Christ's Spirit-filled Church conquers — so does Christ Himself conquer. This is **how** He discharges His victorious arrows from His mighty bow.¹⁸¹ This is **how** He wields His sharp two-edged sword.¹⁸² For it is He Who thus empowers His Bible-wielding earthly Church to swing that sword¹⁸⁶ and to shoot off those arrows.¹⁸⁷

It is the whole Bible, the Word of God, which is His sword.¹⁸⁶ It is Bible-texts which are His darted arrows.¹⁸⁸ That sword and those arrows are to be employed by Christ's Church Militant against His and her enemies. For thus Christ Himself goes forth into all the World — **conquering**, and to conquer! It is **He** Who causes His Church to go forth with **confidence** in His own power — conquering, and **to conquer!**

The great commentator Hengstenberg remarks on this verse: "The crown is given to the Rider, materially, so that He may bear it in His warlike and victorious march.... We must not interpret it as 'conquering, so that He conquered' [without even using the appointed agency of His Church]; but only as '**conquering**, so that He might conquer'" — namely conquer through the further warlike efforts precisely of His Spirit-filled **Church**.

This means: "**Victory** — and nothing but victory! The expression 'so that He might conquer' is a substitute for the annexed infinite absolute in Hebrew — which 'describes **vividly unceasing progress**' (Ewald).... It might also have stood as: 'conquering and conquering' — or as: 'so that He conquered and conquered'" or 'so that He thus **keeps on conquering**. Compare the Hebrew infinitive absolute: 'certainly or **thoroughly conquering**.'

This means nothing less than that **the Gospel** is to attain victory over the World. Explains Hengstenberg: "The object of the victory can only be the World, as hostile to Christ.... Behind the punishment — there is salvation, also for the World.... The *Book [of Revelation]* is primarily a book of consolation for the **Church**. This, in all its feebleness and tribulation, shall be **revived** — by having the image of its heavenly King placed before its eyes, as He goes forth with invincible might to win a sure and glorious victory."¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁶ Eph. 6:11,17; Heb. 4:12f; Rev. 1:13-16; 19:13-15. Cf. too n. 187.

¹⁸⁷ Ps. 7:11-13; 18:13f; 45:5; 64:7; 127:4; 144:1-6; Rev. 7:1-4; 9:4; Ps. 91:1-16 cf. n. 186.

¹⁸⁸ Rev. 6:3-8; Lev. 26:6; I Chr. 22:8; Ps. 19:11; Isa. 32:18; Ezek. 13:18; Hab. 3:9. "In the passage before us," writes Hengstenberg, commenting on Rev. 8:8, "there is no reason why we should take *Haidees* in the Old Testament meaning [of *She'ool*]. The subject of discourse [in Rev. 8:8] is the judgments to be executed upon the ungodly World as opposed to the Kingdom of Christ. For such, to die and to go into Hell is all one. Of the elect, no account is made here.... The fourth part of the Earth is the fourth part of the human race.... [But] only the fourth part is destroyed.... [Some commentators wrongly represent] the plagues mentioned here [in Rev. 6:4-8] as affecting Christians not less than others, and even specially intended to put their faith to the proof. The analogy of the Egyptian plagues should have kept commentators from such irrelevant remarks, which would substitute the judgments on the Church for those on the World."

The Crowned Christ goes forth Conquering and to Conquer!

Fourth. Christ, however, conquers the World **not only** by opening the first seal and releasing the **healing** power of His Bible-wielding **Church**. For whenever His Voice and His Message by His Church go unheeded — **He also** opens the second and the third and the fourth seals of His book of history. Even in **those** ways, He effects the subjugation of the Earth. That He accomplishes, also through the **wounding** power of His non-ecclesiastical agents (such as the red and black and pale horsemen who bring bloodshed, shortages and death).

Yet in all of the ravages inflicted by these hurtful non-ecclesiastical agencies, God is eminently merciful. For in general, He spares not only His faithful children still here on Earth.¹⁸⁷ He also gives some restraint even to some of the unconverted. For He does not permit the red and black and pale horsemen always to waste the oil and the wine, nor even collectively to destroy more than one-quarter of the Earth and all its living creatures.

Writes John of the Lamb: "And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say 'Come and see!' So I looked. And there went forth another horse, which was red. And power was given to him who sat on it, to take peace from the Earth — and so that they should kill one another. And a big sword was given to him.

"Now when He [the Lamb] had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say 'Come and see!' So I looked. And behold, a black horse! And he who sat on it, had a pair of balances in his hand. Then I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say: 'One measure of wheat [or]...three measures of barley for a penny [alias a day's wages] — and see that you don't waste the oil and the wine!'" Barely enough to survive. Thus the fear of food-shortages and famine.

"And when He [the Lamb] had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say: 'Come and see!' Then I looked. And behold, a pale [or yellow-green] horse! And the name of the one who sat on him, was Death — and the Grave followed with him. And power was given to them over the fourth part of the Earth — to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the wild beasts of the Earth."¹⁸⁸

Now these things only chasten and correct but never break God's **elect** — who here **seem to be fully three-quarters of the human race**. Yet these wars and shortages or famines and sicknesses and Death and the Grave [or Hell] and the place of the dead and the lake of fire do decimate and destroy **unbelievers** as "**the fourth part of the Earth**" — from the A.D. 70 siege and destruction of Jerusalem, right down throughout history until the Final Judgment.¹⁸⁸

As the *Geneva Bible* comments, the red horse signifies "the cruel wars that ensue[d] when the Gospel was [or is] refused."¹⁸⁸ Likewise the black horse of famine, and the yellow-green horse of death.

Fifth. Christ's general care of His earthly Church during the wars and shortages or famines and deaths, however, is not to be construed as if He never allows His children to suffer. After all, the entire human race must die — including Christians. And a good few of God's Christians are even martyred for the cause of their holy faith.

And so, wrote John, "when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them who were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held."¹⁸⁹ This represents, in the words of the *Geneva Bible*, "the continual persecution of the Church."¹⁸⁹

Here again, as before,¹⁹⁰ John was transported in a vision — **back** from Earth to Heaven — back from considering the wars and shortages and deaths here on Earth, to considering 'dead' Christians now in Heaven. There he saw the disembodied "souls"¹⁹¹ of the martyred saints under the altar in Heaven,¹⁹² 'safe in the arms of Jesus.'

Calvin declares in his *Psychopannychia*, that "the souls of the martyrs under the altar" are "the souls of the dead."¹⁹³ Also the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* notes: "They are in His safe custody in the Heavens."

There in Heaven, says John, "they cried out with a loud voice." There, "they keep on saying: 'How long, O holy and true Lord, do You not judge and avenge our blood upon them who dwell on the Earth?'"¹⁹³

Sixth. God repeatedly judges the wicked here and now in the various punishments He pours out throughout history. For He **avenges** the blood of His saints — shed by the wicked (for Christ's sake).¹⁹⁴ The Lord sends these punishments **during** history — even though His **Final** Judgment against the wicked is reserved till His Second Coming in power and great glory.

Meantime — white robes of justification were given to the disembodied souls of the Martyr Church in Heaven. In fact, such had been given to them already while they were still here on Earth — even before they got to Heaven. "And it was said to them, that they should rest for just a little while yet — **until** also their fellow-servants and their brethren who **should be killed** as they were, should be **fulfilled**."¹⁹⁵

Here, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments: "The Church of Christ would be oppressed by the **Antichrist** and his servants, who would shortly after that arise **in the Church**.... What **succeeds that**, is the rise in the **East**...of the **Mohammadans**." But the more subtle deceit, would be "especially...the **Romish Antichrist** in the **West**...[with]in the **Church of Christ**."

These killings continue from one place to another, down through the centuries. But when the last of God's elect has been called — long after the very last Christian martyr has been slaughtered — history shall be fulfilled at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in Final Judgment.

¹⁸⁹ Rev. 6:9.

¹⁹⁰ Rev. 1:9f; 4:1f; 6:1f,3,8f.

¹⁹¹ Rev. 6:9; 20:4-6; II Cor. 5:18.

¹⁹² Rev. 6:9; 8:1-3 *cf.* Heb. 8:5 & 9:1f,11,21-4.

¹⁹³ Rev. 6:10.

¹⁹⁴ Rev. chs. 15 to 16.

¹⁹⁵ Rev. 6:11 *cf.* 4:5 & 5:6b. Rev. 6:11 has *chronon* (and not *kairon*), which should be translated "delay" (as in Rev. 10:6f, *NIV*). And Rev. 6:11's *pleeroothoosin* should be translated "so that they" — that is, the Members of the Church **Militant** here on Earth — "should be fulfilled." The common understanding of this word, comments Hengstenberg, is "till they have been completed" or "till their number has been made up." Vitringa renders it "till the whole measure of the sufferings appointed to them might be full."

The Crowned Christ goes forth Conquering and to Conquer!

Seventh. So, after opening the sixth seal, History will develop toward its end — as Christ comes (invisibly although) mightily and in **repeated judgments**.¹⁹⁶ For such 'comings of the Lord' and 'earthquakes' occur against the 'stars of the sky' and the 'mountains and rocks' — alias influential men.¹⁹⁶

Wrote John: "Then I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal. And look! There was a great earthquake. And the sun became black as a hairy sackcloth, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of the sky fell to the Earth, even like a fig-tree casts her untimely figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. And the sky departed like a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

"Then the kings of the Earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every slave and every freeman — hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks: 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him Who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come. And who shall be able to keep on standing?'"¹⁹⁶

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* here comments,¹⁹⁶ 'the great earthquake' signifies "the change of the true doctrine which is the greatest cause of motions and troubles that come to the World." Similarly, 'the sun that was as black as sackcloth' represents "the brightness of the Gospel" eclipsed by "the traditions of men." Too, 'the moon...like blood' signifies "the Church miserably defaced with idolatry and afflicted by tyrants."

Again, continues the *Geneva Bible*, 'the stars of the sky' represent Teachers or "Doctors and Preachers that depart from the truth." And the 'mountains' and the 'rocks' here signify "realms, kingdoms and persons that did **seem** to be as stable...as the mountains" — until God shakes them up in judgment after judgment. "Such men of whatever estate they be, shall be desperate afterward and not able to sustain the weight of God's wrath but shall continually fear His judgment."¹⁹⁶

Such major judgments would occur at the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Luke 23:28-30) — to which, in the first instance, John may very well (at least initially) have been referring in this passage (Revelation 6:12f). Thus Grotius, Hammond, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, and Moses Stuart.

However, such major judgments would occur **also** even **between** the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the pagan Roman Empire in A.D. 313f. Thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments: "Here are shown **things which would occur after**...the four empires prophesied by Daniel....

¹⁹⁶ Rev. 6:12-17 and cf. nn. 30 & 46 and Lev. ch. 26 & Dt. 28 & Isa. 13:6,9,13 cf. Mt. ch. 24 & Neh. 1:6 & Zeph. 1:14,18 & 2:2f & Lk. 23:28-30. Most Preterists like Vanderwaal feel that Rev. 6:10-17 is primarily a (+/- 66 A.D.) foretelling of the then-soon-to-occur fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (cf. Isa. 2:19 & Hos. 10:8 & Lk. 23:30 & Acts 2:16-20). Many Historicalists like Albert Barnes range the fulfilment of the six seals from Domitian in A.D. 96 through Commodus and Caracalla and Decius and Callianus and Diocletian and the barbarian threats of the Goths and the Huns in A.D. 365. Even Futurists like Cohen (*op. cit.* pp. 107-115) do not apply Rev. 6:12-17 to the end of World History. Indeed, we ourselves feel it bears multiple and repeated fulfilments — starting with the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem, and terminating with the end of World History. That is Consistent Historicalism. Cf. our main text at nn. 44 & 46 & 197.

"From the scenes shown at the opening of these seals, some understand the alterations and difficulties which overtook the Roman Empire from that time until the times of Emperor Constantine." Thus Walafrid Strabo, Berengaud, Wimbledon, Purvey, Savonarola, Bruno, Bale, Hooper, Cranmer, Ribera, Alcazar, James the First, Brightman, Poole, Isaac Newton, Samuel Lee, Thomas Scott, and Albert Barnes.

Such major judgments would occur also at the time of the Roman Empire's first Christian Emperor **Constantine**. Thus Brightman, Mede, More, Jurieu, Cressener, Whiston, Daubuz, Lowman, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, and Bishop Elliott.

But there would be other times too at which such major judgments would occur. For example: at the later pagan attacks against the christianized Roman Empire, and especially at the fall of Rome in 476 (thus Fuller, Frere, Albert Barnes, & Hengstenberg); at the takeover of the Holy Roman Empire by the Papacy (thus the *Dordt Dutch Bible* & Campegius Vitringa); at the French Revolution (thus Faber, Cunninghame, Willis, Lord, Leslie, & William Anderson) — and also at other events toward the end of history (thus Lange, Greijvenstein, and Prof. Herman Hoeksema).

To the above list of judgments, we ourselves would propose a few more. Such would include: the unleashing against a backslidden Western Church of the Islamic scourge, in the form of Mohammad's armies in 590-732; the chastisement of the idolatrous Eastern Churches by the Turks in 1050-1450; the sixteenth-century Protestant wounding of the Papacy; the seventeenth-century judgment on lukewarm churchianity by the *Illuminati* (and by the French Revolution as its chief by-product); the twentieth-century scourges of Communism, Humanism, Socialism, and apostate religious Ecumenism and the New Age Movement; the future downfall of the false World Systems of Romanism and Islam before the advancing armies of the living God; and the final visible coming of Christ on the clouds of Heaven in power and great glory to judge the living and the dead.

All of the above applies to God's coming in judgment especially against Jerusalem in A.D. 70 — and also to His many subsequent comings in judgment, from time to time, throughout History (as indicated above). But in the ultimate sense, it applies especially to Christ's future visible coming in Final Judgment; of which all of the previous comings in judgment are but reminders.

Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III:9:6) give a fine description of that Day of Judgment. Says Calvin: "On that Day...the Lord will receive His faithful servants, wipe away all tears from their eyes, clothe them in a robe of glory and joy, feed them with the uneffable sweetness of His pleasures, [and] exalt them to share with Him in His greatness."¹⁹⁶

O Christian, may we too see and believe that our reigning Saviour rules this World! May we know that He, through the testimony of His Church, ever sallies forth from Heaven — conquering, and to conquer our Earth!

May we see and warn people about His presence, even in the punishments of war and of shortages and of death! May we urge men to yield to Christ!

The Crowned Christ goes forth Conquering and to Conquer!

May we know that this World of ours shall continue —until the last of God's elect has been called, and His last martyr has been slain! Indeed, with every God-sent temporal judgment in our World —may we look forward, in God's good time, to the visible advent of our Saviour in power and great glory at the Final Judgment!¹⁹⁷



So on, then, Christian soldiers!

Let us too go forth conquering, and to conquer —in the Name of Jesus!

Onward then, following after our conquering Saviour —unto victory!

¹⁹⁷ Mt. 25:31-46; Lk. 21:24-27; Acts 17:31; Rev. 14:14-20; 20:10-15 *cf.* n. 196.

All the Elect of the Tribes of Israel sealed and spared

Revelation 7:1-8

December 8

"I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of the Earth.... Then I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God. And He cried out with a loud voice to the four Angels to whom it was given to hurt the Earth and the Sea, saying: 'Do not hurt the Earth, neither the Sea, nor the trees — till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads!' Then I heard the number of them which were sealed. And there were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand from all the tribes of the children of Israel."¹⁹⁸

John had just seen the opening of the sixth seal.¹⁹⁹ Then he was again transported in his vision from Heaven back to the Earth.²⁰⁰ And there he saw an Angel sealing the elect of God.¹⁹⁸

There is evidence elsewhere in the *Book of Revelation*²⁰¹ and in other Books of the Bible,²⁰² that the sealing of the elect actually commenced early in the times of the Older Testament²⁰³ — and shall continue right down to the final Coming of Jesus Christ at the very end of World History.²⁰⁴ Yet the sealing described by John here in Revelation chapter seven, rather seems to be describing events which take place since Christ's resurrection — **between** the time of the opening of the sixth and the time of the opening of the seventh or last seal of the Lamb's book of Church History. Both views are cogent.

¹⁹⁸ Rev. 7:1-4.

¹⁹⁹ Rev. 6:12.

²⁰⁰ Rev. 7:1.

²⁰¹ Rev. 14:1-5 & cf. esp. n. 123.

²⁰² Rev. 7:4 & 21:12-17 cf. Rom. 11:12,15,23f,26-32 & Gal. 6:16; Rev. 21:9,12-14 & 3:12 & 11:8 & 14:1; 15:3-5; Gen. 49:8; Eph. 1:4-6 & 3:15 cf. Gen. 29:32 & 49:19; Heb. 2:10; Dt. 33:34; Ps. 1:1; Gen. 30:8 & Dt. 33:18f; I Cor. 6:17; Gen. 30:18; Dt. 33:18f & I Cor. 6:19f; Dt. 30:20 & II Cor. 6:16; Gen. 30:24 & 49:22 & Jh. 15:5 & Acts 2:47; Gen. 35:16-18; Acts 2:33.

R. Woodrow (in his book *His Truth Is Marching On: Advanced Studies on Prophecy in the Light of the Bible*, Woodrow, Riverside Ca., 1977, pp. 54-88), limits the 144 000 to the "first fruits" of Israel converted to Christianity during the apostolic age alone, compare Rev. 7:4 to 14:4 & Jas. 1:1,18 & Ex. 23:19 & Lev. 2:14 & Neh. 10:35 & I Cor. 15:20 & 16:15 cf. Acts 21:20 & Heb. 12:18-24. We ourselves, however, think that the ideal number (12 x 12 x 10 x 10 x 10 = 144 000) of the "children of Israel" in Rev. 7:4f implies that the group consists of a similarly ideal entity of the "children of Israel" alias (Hebrew and Gentile) Christians, and that the word "firstfruits" refers to their full dedication to God rather than to their being merely a first-installment of the harvest (with more to follow). Cf. ⁵ Lev. 23:10 & Jer. 2:3 & Rom. 8:23.

²⁰³ Rom. 4:11 cf. Gen. ch. 17 & II Tim. 2:19f & I Tim. 3:15f & I Cor. 1:13 & 6:11; 10:1-4; 12:13; II Cor. 1:19-22; Eph. 1:13; 4:4-6,30; Jh. 3:3-5,16,22,25,33; 4:1-2 & 6:27 cf. Lk. 3:3,7,16,21-23; 4:1,14,18 cf. Dan. 6:17.

²⁰⁴ Col. 2:8-14 & Mt. 28:18-20.

All the Elect of the Tribes of Israel sealed and spared

Wrote John: "And after these things" — that is, after the opening of six of the seven seals of the Lamb's book **in Heaven** — "I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of **the Earth**, holding the four winds of **the Earth**, so that the wind should not blow on **the Earth**, nor on the Sea, nor on any tree. Then I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God. And He cried out with a loud voice to the four Angels to whom it was given to hurt **the Earth** and the Sea, saying: 'Do not hurt **the Earth**, neither the Sea, nor the trees — **till** we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads!'"²⁰⁵

First. It should be noted that the four Angels restraining the four winds from hurting the Earth and the Sea and the trees, was to be **subservient** to the more important task of sealing God's elect on their foreheads.²⁰⁵

Here, the four Angels (or Messengers) — as also regarding the "Angels" of the Congregations in chapters two and three — probably means Christ's Messengers or **Preachers**. Too, "the four winds" controlled by those four Angels — here seems to refer to the blessings and curses of God which His Preachers are to proclaim to their listeners. Such divine messages preached, are blessings if the listeners obey them; and curses if they disobey them.

For the four winds of the Earth, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, represent the totality of the witness of the Holy Spirit. For "the Spirit [*Pneuma*] is compared to wind [*pneuma*].... Though there be one Spirit..., yet four [spirits or winds] are here named in respect of the diversity of the four quarters of the Earth where the Gospel is spread" by Spirit-filled "**Preachers** of the same **through[out] the whole World**."²⁰⁶

Furthermore, "those that are sealed by the Spirit of God...make open profession of the same." They constitute "**an infinite number which shall be saved** both of the Jews and Gentiles through Christ."²⁰⁶

Second. It should be observed that the sealing of God's servants was undertaken at the command of **another** "Angel...having the seal of the living God."²⁰⁵ This **other** "Angel" or Messenger is very probably the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For **this** "Angel, ascending from the East" — rising as the Sun of righteousness like the sun in the East, and later soon ascending from the Earth into Heaven — is indeed the One with "the seal of the living God."

Such is indeed the one-and-only **uncreated** "[Arch-]Angel" or "Messenger of the Covenant" **God the Son**.²⁰⁶ In the first and last resorts, He is the One Who **leads** and **seals** — even though He 'subcontracts' **created** 'Messengers' or **Preachers** to **administer** His seal to the sum-total of His earthly followers.

²⁰⁵ Rev. 7:1-3; 9:4,14f; Isa. 11:12; Ezek. 7:2; Dan. 7:2; Zech. 2:6; 6:5; Jh. 7:35.

²⁰⁶ Rev. 7:1f *cf.* Num. 2:3-9; Zech. 14:4; Mal. 3:1f; 4:1-6; Mt. 28:19f; Mk. 16:1-9,15f; Acts 11:1-12; Rev. 12:7f.

Third. This "sealing" is probably a reference to the important work of **baptizing** God's Newer Testament Covenant People with water from the sacramental "Sea"²⁰⁷ — even as Jesus had declared that he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved.²⁰⁸ Moreover, also later, we read that even when many of the inhabitants of the Earth were tormented — such torment was to be meted out to "**only those men who do not have the seal** of God on their foreheads."²⁰⁸

States H.B. Swete in his work *The Apocalypse of St. John* — in the post-apostolic writings which followed it, 'the seal of the Lord' is either Baptism or the Chrism (alias Confirmation). Thus the *Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Alexandria.

The A.D. 100f *Shepherd of Hermas* (III:IX:16 & III:IX:22) says regarding "the seal of the Son of God" that "before a man bears the **Name** of the Son of God, he is dead. But when he **receives the seal**, he lays aside his deadness [cf. Romans 4:11 & 4:23-5 & 6:1-5].... The seal, then, is the **water**.... This seal was **preached**.... They who believed...are **like infant children**.... Infants are honourable before God, and are **the first persons** with Him."

Clement of Alexandria in section 42 of his A.D. 190f work *Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?* declares: "The **Presbyter**, having taken the youth..., finally **baptized** him. After this, he [mistakenly] relaxed his stricter care and guardianship — under the idea that the **seal** of the Lord he **had set upon** him, was a complete protection to him."

Also Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. states on Rev. 7:4's "number of those who had been sealed" that "this idea of understanding the Sacraments as a **seal** is taken from Scripture itself. In Romans 4:11 we read the following of the patriarch Abraham: 'He received the sign of **Circumcision** as a **seal** of the righteousness of faith'.... In the Sacrament of **Holy Baptism** — we are dealing with a sign that **seals** [Romans 4:23-25; 6:1-5; Colossians 2:11-13]....

"In Second Corinthians 1:21-22, we read that 'it is God Who has **anointed** us and confirmed us with you in Christ. He has also **sealed** us and given the **earnest** [or **down-payment**] of the Spirit in our hearts'....

"Ephesians 1:13 is similar: 'Christ...has **sealed** you with the Holy Spirit of promise.... What we read in Ephesians 4:30, has similar implications: 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you have been **sealed** unto the **day of redemption**'....

"These statements refer to, and are connected with, **Holy Baptism**.... When one thinks about this deeply, one then also realizes how it can be said in **Revelation 7:2** that even God the King has such a **seal**." A. Kuyper Sr.: *From the Decrees of Dordt*, Wormser, Amsterdam, 1892, pp. II:440-4, 509f.

²⁰⁷ Rev. 7:2-9 & 9:4 & 14:1 & 22:4 cf. Ezek. 9:4 & I Cor. 10:1f & Pss. 77:15-20 & 78:13 cf. Rom. 4:11 & Col. 2:8-14. As E.W. Hengstenberg comments, "amid all the judgments which befall[ed] the World for its sins — God protects His Own People. The sealing refers to the entire duration of the Christian Church, even to its final completion; to the entire duration of the World, even to its final destruction."

²⁰⁸ Mk. 16:16 cf. Mt. 28:19.

All the Elect of the Tribes of Israel sealed and spared

Kuyper elsewhere argues: "The effect of **Baptism is the seal of the living God** as the sign of incorporation into the Covenant of Grace.... **Baptism seals** incorporation...into the Church of Christ as it is visibly expressed here on Earth.... Baptism is and always remains the **sealing** of incorporation into the Covenant of Grace, and therewith into the Church Universal....

"The chief aspect of **Baptism**, is that it is **the seal of the living God** unto incorporation in the Covenant of Grace.... God indeed has just such a seal. **Revelation 7:2**.... This seal is **stamped upon the elect**...who receive knowledge of the truth and are baptized." Thus A. Kuyper Sr.: *On the Sacraments* (in *Dictations on Dogmatics*, IV, Kok, Kampen, 2nd ed., pp. 127f & 134f).

What a wonderful comfort to God's baptized people, then — for them to know that no terror or pestilence or evil or plague shall as much as come near their dwellings! For God shall give His angels charge over them — to keep them in all their ways.²⁰⁹

Fourth. We have just been told about the **sealing** of the 'Israelites' — the elect from "**Israel**" — right here **on Earth**.²¹⁰ Thereafter, we are told next about the ingathering of the fullness of the '**Gentiles**' in **Heaven**.²¹¹

Here, we are **not** told that **no** 'Gentiles' were **sealed** here on **Earth** before all the 'Israelites' had finished being sealed here on Earth. Still less are we here told that no 'Israelites' will be sealed here on Earth after all the 'Gentiles' have been sealed here on Earth. In fact, here it certainly seems that **the 'Israelites' sealed on Earth are the very same group of people as are the 'Gentiles' gathered in Heaven**.

For in the times of the Older Testament, the **first** believing Israelites **were** Gentiles!²¹² In the times of the Newer Testament, the first believing Gentiles were 'Israelites'! Indeed, in the times of both the Older Testament and the Newer Testament, God saves both 'Israelites' and 'Gentiles' by bringing them into 'Zion' (alias the true Christian Church).²¹³

Fifth. As regards the sealed 'Israelites' — their "number" is here described as "a hundred and forty-four thousand from all the tribes of the children of Israel."²¹⁴ Both this "number" and also these "tribes" themselves are to be construed **ideally** — rather than 'literally' (*sic*).

For even the twelve tribes of Israel are not specifically enumerated strictly — right after this. There, the full tribe of Dan is omitted;²¹⁵ the half-tribe of Manasseh is described as a full tribe; and the half-tribe of Ephraim is replaced by a 'new' tribe — namely the 'full' tribe of Joseph (in addition to the half-tribe of Manasseh).²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ Cf. Ps. 91 esp. vv. 5-12.

²¹⁰ Rev. 7:4 & esp. vv. 1f.

²¹¹ Rev. 7:9f.

²¹² Gen. 10:21-31 & 11:10-31; 12:1; Josh. 24:2f; Ezek. 16:3f cf. Rom. 2:28f & Rom. 9:6,24,27 & ch. 11.

²¹³ Acts 1:6f & Gal. 4:4-6.

²¹⁴ Rev. 7:4.

²¹⁵ Rev. 7:6-8 cf. Gen. 48:5-20; 49:2-27, esp. vv. 16f; Dt. 33:5-24. In the light of Jer. 8:16, which some of the older Rabbis believed implies that the "antichrist" would come from the tribe of Dan (cf. too Gen. 49:17),

So too, the precise apportionment of "twelve thousand" sealed persons to each of the twelve **'newly'**-constituted tribes of 'Israel' — is hardly to be construed too arithmetically. For these numbers are in strange contrast to the great disparities regarding the respective quantities and godliness of each **ethnic** tribe of Israel as recorded in the Older Testament.²¹⁶

Sixth. It is of interest to note that even the **order** in which the several tribes of 'Israel' are presented in the *Book of Revelation*, is different from the **various** orders given of them in the Older Testament.²¹⁷ Here in the administration of the Newer Testament, the tribe of Judah is now foremost in line.²¹⁸

The reason for Judah's elevation to the first in rank, is not far to seek. "Our Lord [Jesus Christ] sprang forth from Judah."²¹⁹

Indeed, since Calvary, Jesus Christ — "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David — has prevailed to open the book [of Future History] and to loosen its seven seals."²²⁰ Accordingly, Judah is now magnified, and even the order and importance and numbers of the Christianly-sealed "children of Israel" have themselves been ameliorated.

Clearly, then, neither the specific "tribes" of 'Israel' nor the respective "number[s]" of their elect nor the various "order" in which they are elsewhere mentioned — are here in view. The meaning here, is simply that the sum-total of God's elect or 'Israel' shall yet be brought into the Church of God under the Newer Testament.

For this 'Israel' (or 'Prince of the Triune God') — **consists of converted 'Israelites' as well as of converted 'Gentiles.'** It embraces "Judah" or 'Praise [the Lord]!'; "Reuben" or 'Behold a Son!'; "Gad" or 'Great Troup!'; "Asher" or 'Blessed!'; "Nephthalim" or 'Overcomers!'; "Manasseh" or 'Forget [the Past]!'; "Simeon" or '[God] has heard!'; "Levi" or 'Joined [to God]!'; "Issachar" or 'The Price has been Paid!'; "Zabulon" or 'Dwelling [with the Lord]!'; "Joseph" or '[The Lord keeps on] Adding!'; and "Benjamin" or 'The Son of My Right Hand!'

Seventh, it is obvious that great multitudes of 'Israelites' — alias Christians from all nations — will yet be saved. Indeed, this will occur long before the Final Coming of the Lord Jesus on the clouds of Heaven.

Hengstenberg rightly comments on Rev. 4:4-8 (at v. 4) that the "very omission of the tribe of Dan is a proof that the Seer [John] spake of the tribes of the children of Israel not in a Jewish but in an Israelitish-Christian sense. In the sacred books of the Old Testament, the wicked appear, in spite of their fleshly descent from Jacob, as cut off from their people. But, on the other hand, native heathens [or rather Gentiles], under certain restrictions, were on account of their faith naturalized in Israel; and the Prophets announced that one day these restrictions were to be abolished, and the naturalization of believing heathen [or rather Gentiles], going hand in hand with the exclusion of the false seed [of ethnic 'Israel'], shall proceed with great rapidity. So, for example, Isaiah in ch. 56:6-7, and Ezekiel in ch. 47:22-23." And even [the very famous Hebrew-Christian Scholar] "Ewald admits that it is not Jewish Christians specially who are spoken of (in Rev. 7:4-8), but the whole Christian Church."

²¹⁶ Gen. 46:9-24; Num. chs. 1 to 2 & 34:14f; Josh. chs. 14 to 22.

²¹⁷ Gen. chs. 29f & 35 & 49; Num. chs. 2; Dt. ch. 33.

²¹⁸ Rev. 7:5, *per contra* Gen. ch. 49 & Dt. ch. 33.

²¹⁹ Heb. 7:14.

²²⁰ Rev. 5:5.

All the Elect of the Tribes of Israel sealed and spared

Thus twelve, being the number of the Triune Creator (Three)²²¹ multiplied by the number of His creation (four),²²² is here again multiplied by ten (the number of perfection)²²³ — and yet again by ten **squared**. This yields the number of 'double perfect fullness' or "twelve thousand" servants per "Tribe" of all the "children of Israel."

Then again, this number of twelve thousand for each "tribe" — is further multiplied by the ('Creator' times 'creation') number of twelve. This yields a sum-total for all the "tribes" of the "children of Israel" collectively. It amounts to "a hundred and forty-four thousand." This is the number of 'absolute perfection.' It will be reached when the last elect 'Israelite' shall be saved, and the last Christian martyr shall be killed. Thus will this number of 'absolute perfection' "be fulfilled."²²⁴

Interestingly, most Bible Commentators here suggest that the number(s) and the name(s) and the order(s) of the "tribes" of 'Israel' are not strictly precise — but **ideal** and **symbolic**. Thus Victorinus says this means Hebrew Christians. Primasius, Beatus, Bede, and Swete say it means all the elect.

The Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* says it means "an infinite number of both Jews and Gentiles who shall be saved through Christ." And the *Dordt Dutch Bible* says it means either the elect of the Older Testament's Hebrews, or the Hebrew and Gentile elect of the Newer Testament's Church Militant.

Matthew Poole and Albert Barnes and Herman Hoeksema say it means the Gentile Church — Barnes further suggesting that the "Tribes" may well mean Christian "Denominations." Matthew Henry says it means the faithful remnant of ethnic Israel before 70 A.D. And Adam Clarke says it means all the Jews and all the Christians who are now in Heaven — by grace and through faith.

The Hebrew-Christian Prof. Dr. Ewald says it means the whole Christian Church. Hengstenberg says it is to be taken in the "Israelitish-Christian sense, because Dan is omitted." Lenski and Hendriksen say it means the Church Militant. Finally — Greijvenstein, Ladd, the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*, Mounce and Rushdoony all say it means the whole Church.

O Christian, even today — when many Gentiles are still blind to the Gospel, and when blindness has in part come also upon the Jews — thank God, that blindness is only in part! The true "Israel" is still being engrafted into the Covenant of Grace. Indeed, together with the fullness of the Gentiles — even the fullness of the Jews shall yet be restored to mercy.²²⁵

²²¹ Mt. 28:19 *cf.* Rom. 11:36 & Rev. 4:8.

²²² Gen. 2:10; Rev. 6:27 *cf.* 7:1 & 20:8.

²²³ Ex. chs. 7 to 11 & Rev. 2:10.

²²⁴ Rev. 6:11c.

²²⁵ Rev. 11:25-32 *cf.* vv. 12,15,23f & 1:28 to 3:4 & Lk. 3:3,7,16,21-23 & 4:1,14,18 & Dan. 6:17.

Let us then work for the salvation of "Israel" alias the Christian Church Universal — even as we work for the salvation of the World!

So on, then, Christian soldiers!

On with missions to the Jews — **and** to the Gentiles!

On with the sealing of "Israel" alias the Christian Church — in Holy
Baptism!

Onward, to victory!

A Great Multitude of Nations before the Throne of Jesus

Revelation 7:9-17

December 9

"After this, I beheld. And look! A great multitude which no man could number, from all nations and kindreds [or families] and people and tongues, stood in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were clothed with white robes, having palm-branches in their hands."²²⁶

John had just seen the sealing of the fullness of "Israel" — **here on Earth**. Then he was again transported in his vision — **back to Heaven**.

For next, he wrote: "I beheld. And look! A great multitude which no man could number, from all nations and kindreds [or families] and people and tongues, stood **in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb**. They were clothed with white robes, having **palm-branches** in their hands."²²⁶

First. John here saw the **Church Triumphant** — the **Church in Heaven**. Thus the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Poole, Matthew Henry, Lange, Hengstenberg, Barnes, Hoeksema, Swete, Hendriksen, Greijvenstein, Ladd, Lenski, the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*, and Mounce.

Here, the Church has **triumphed** for ever. For all of her Members are seen to be holding palm-branches or *phoinikes* before the **throne** of the Lamb — "in token of **victory** and **felicity**" (thus the *Geneva Bible*).

Second. Here again, as also seen previously,¹²³ it is not declared that these 'Gentiles' went to Heaven only **after** the 'Israelites' were sealed here on Earth. It is declared merely that John only **saw** the 'Gentiles' in Heaven after he **saw** the 'Israelites' being sealed on Earth.

"**After** this, I beheld" — Revelation 7:9, *cf.* 7:1-4f. Indeed, as just previously implied,²¹² **the 'Israelites' sealed on Earth ultimately prove to be the same group of people as the 'Gentiles' gathered in Heaven**.

For at the very time John was writing these words, and as already clearly predicted by Paul,²²⁷ the stream of Jewish converts flowing into the Christian Church had been diminishing — while the stream of Gentile converts was beginning to flow stronger and stronger. Indeed, down through the subsequent centuries of Church History — both groups would continue to flow into the true Israel of God alias the Christian Church which is ultimately to consist of "the nations of them that are saved" (Revelation 21:24f).

²²⁶ Rev. 7:9 *cf.* n. [†] 202.

²²⁷ Rom. 11:12-32.

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Third. It should be noted that John here saw in Heaven "a great multitude which no man could number."²²⁶ Vast though the number of the '**Israelites**' was which John previously saw being sealed on **Earth** — that number was still **numerable** (at least symbolically). But the sum-total of the '**Gentiles**' which John now saw in Heaven — was **beyond** both his own and any other man's powers of computation.

This means that the Church of Jesus **starts** out here on **Earth** on only a small scale. However, the **completed** Church in **Heaven** will no longer be but a "little flock"²²⁸ or merely a "chosen few"²²⁹ — after the **completion** of its earthly **sealing**.

So far, down through Church History here on Earth, the numbers of these Church Members have constantly **increased**. They will **continue** to do so. But when they die and all get to Heaven — their ranks shall ultimately swell to that of a "**great** multitude which no **man** could **number**."²²⁶

Indeed, there they will be even as innumerable as the countless billions of stars in the sky.²³⁰ For they cannot be counted, once gathered together in Heaven at the end of World History — and immediately prior to their transfer back to the Re-New-ed Earth.²³¹

Fourth. This huge host of the redeemed in Heaven at the end of World History — constitutes "a great multitude which no man could number, from **all nations**."²²⁶ For John saw not merely a handful of believers saved from out of the Jews; nor even a handful of believers saved from out of every nation on Earth. To the contrary. He saw a great and humanly-innumerable **multitude of all nations**. Thus Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke.

A multitude of nations — **as nations!** This does not, of course, imply that all individuals among all nations shall be saved. For at least some individuals are reprobate, and will certainly be lost.²³² In **this** sense, Christians are redeemed from **out of** every kindred and people and tongue and people and nation.²³³ On the other hand, however, God's Word also teaches that [ultimately] even **the nations** shall be saved — their "fullness"²³⁴ and not their 'emptiness'; the majority and not just a minority of their citizens.

God promised Abraham that not just an elect **minority** of believers from every nation would be saved. For God told him: "In your seed" — and Christ is that Seed²³⁵ — "**all** the **nations** of the Earth shall be blessed!"²³⁶ Indeed, John's "great multitude...from **all nations**"²²⁶ is later described by that Apostle himself as "**the nations** [who] shall walk in the **light**" and who "shall bring the glory and honour of **the nations**" into the New Jerusalem.²³⁷

²²⁸ Lk. 12:32.

²²⁹ Mt. 22:14 & Lk. 13:23f.

²³⁰ Gen. 15:5 *cf.* 22:18.

²³¹ Rev. 6:9,11f; 7:1-4,9,14,15-17 *cf.* 21:1-6,22f; 22:1-5.

²³² II Cor. 13:5f & II Th. 3:2.

²³³ Rev. 5:9 & 7:9.

²³⁴ Rom. 11:12,25f,32.

²³⁵ Gal. 3:6-8,16,27-29 & 4:4-6 *cf.* Gen. 3:15.

²³⁶ Gen. 22:18 *cf.* Gal. 3:8.

²³⁷ Rev. 21:24-26.

This includes the "fullness" and the "honour" also of Israel and Egypt and China. Currently, the modern nation of Israel is enslaved to apostate Judaism;²³⁸ Egypt to antichristian Islam;²³⁹ and China to atheistic Communism. But ultimately, all nations will have become christianized.²⁴⁰ For, as a result of the success of Christian Missionary Work, they shall yet become **baptized nations** — observing **all things whatsoever** Christ has ever commanded.

Fifth. This great multitude of Gentiles which John saw in Heaven, will be gathered not only from all nations. It will be assembled also from all "**kindreds**" — from **all families**.²²⁶ This means, quite frankly, that every "kindred" or each family as such here on Earth — as opposed, of course, to each **Member** of every family — will ultimately be saved.²⁴¹

This is what God promised to Abraham the father of all believers.²⁴² For He told him: "In you, **all families of the Earth** shall be blessed!"²⁴³

We too are children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. May also we therefore exercise faith — and believe that God really means **exactly what He says!**

Sixth. The innumerable company of the saved in Heaven shall consist of **every people** and **every tongue**.²²⁶ Pentecost Sunday, when the Holy Ghost came down from the throne of God and the Lamb on high, was a preview of Heaven. Already at Pentecost, the mighty works of God were spoken about in every language under Heaven.²⁴⁴

Yet now, in Heaven itself, John saw how those same mighty works of God will ultimately be praised **in every language**.²²⁶ For the "new song" to the glory of the Lamb shall be sung in Heaven by the elect of every "tongue and people and nation."²⁴⁵

It shall be sung in English, by Americans and by the British, *etc.*; in Hindi, by Indians; in Chinese, by Chinamen; in Russian, by Russians; in Spanish, by Spaniards and South Americans. It shall be sung in German, by Germans and Austrians and Swiss and Liechtensteiners and Luxemburgians — and in French, by Frenchmen, Belgians, Guianians, Haitians, Quebecois and West Africans. It shall be sung in Afrikaans by South Africans and Namibians, and in Portuguese — by Angolans, Brazilians, Galicians, Mozambicans, and Timorese.

²³⁸ Rom. 11:12,15,22f,26,31f.

²³⁹ Ps. 68:31; Isa. 19:21-25.

²⁴⁰ Pss. 2 & 22 & 72.

²⁴¹ Eph. 3:9,15.

²⁴² Rom. 4:1,12,16; Gal. 3:6-8,29.

²⁴³ Gen. 12:3 *cf.* 22:18.

²⁴⁴ Acts 2:2,5-11,14,21,33f,39.

²⁴⁵ Rev. 5:9; 7:9,12f; 14:1-3; 15:2-4.

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Even in less-widely-spoken languages — such as Afghan, Auca, Bushman, Gaelic, Hawaiian, Icelandic, Irish, Manx, Maori, Navaho, Welsh, Xhosa and Zulu — the Name of Jehovah shall be praised. For the Universe itself will then reverberate to the honour of the Lord — as God then conducts the whole vocal orchestra of humanity itself. Mankind as the crown and glory of the cosmos will then encircle the heavenly throne of God and extol His Name, by singing the song of redemption and victory in every language and tongue of all nations and kindreds and people.²⁴⁶

Seventh. This mass of saved humanity in Heaven will then be seen to **have been saved even out of great tribulation**. This is pre-eminently that of A.D. 66-70, although it also seems to include all subsequent tribulations suffered here on Earth before one's death.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Rev. 7:14 *cf.* 2:10,22 & 3:10; Jer. 30:7; Mt. 24:21; Acts 14:22 & II Cor. chs. 8 & 13 with our studies at nn. 61 & 123.

Although the Greek of Rev. 7:14 does have the definite article "the" in the phrase "the great tribulation" — that definite article there is simply a regular genitive of movement (*tees*), in the phrase "these are they who came out of great tribulation." The significance of this definite article in its movemental genitive case, must not be exaggerated as if it were implying the idea of an unusually massive tribulation. For Scripture here knows nothing of '**the** Great Tribulation' (*sic*) on Earth in the future (in contrast to any lesser tribulations in the past). Here, there is no predicted tribulation immediately before or during or after a yet-future time at which the Church would be 'raptured.' Here, there is no final 'Great Tribulation' during which things would be grimmer than ever since the fall of man.

Interestingly, even the Futurist Gary Cohen (*op. cit.* p. 128) insists that "the great tribulation" of Rev. 7:14 is the same tribulation as that "great tribulation" (mentioned without a "the") in Mt. 24:21a. That latter, affirmed Jesus, was to be a tribulation "such as was not since the beginning of the World to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Mt. 24:21b). There, the phrase "to this time" is referring to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37 to 24:3,15f,28). The next phrase there — "nor ever shall be" (Mt. 24:21b) — is referring to all future tribulations after that great tribulation of the A.D. 66-70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem. This proves conclusively that the greatest of all tribulations was already fulfilled in A.D. 66-70, and that all other "great tribulations" thereafter — which there would indeed be (Mt. 24:21b) — would be lesser tribulations than the "great tribulation" of A.D. 66-70.

Consequently, "the great tribulation" — in the sense of the greatest tribulation in the history of the World — terminated at 70 A.D. It cannot possibly refer to any other tribulation either before or after that. Still less can it refer to a supposed 'greatest of all tribulations' after an as-yet-still-future alleged 'rapture' of the Church.

Moreover, it would be wrong to construe any such "great tribulation" in quantitative terms. For whenever it would occur — it would happen after the different tribulation of the Great Flood in the days of Noah, during which the entire population of the Earth perished except for eight persons inside the ark (II Pet. chs. 2 & 3). Yet incidentally, even those eight persons were not 'raptured' upward or 'up and away' from that tribulation. Instead, strictly speaking, they went right through that tribulation!

The very idea of one as-yet-future 'great tribulation' being the greatest of all tribulations, would have required a much stronger and a differently-worded Greek construction than that mentioned in Rev. 7:14. For in that case, instead of the simple phrase actually used there, namely *ek tees thlipseos tees megalees* alias "out of the great tribulation" — the Greek would have needed to have said something like *ek tees (pantoon toon thlipseoon) thlipseos tees megistees kai tees eschatees*, alias 'out of the greatest and most ultimate of all the tribulations.'

However, such an idea is in conflict also with the very next verse (Rev. 7:15). For that clearly seems to imply that the life in Heaven of those who "come out" of the earthly tribulation concerned, will continue quite some time after that 'tribulation' and before they actually inherit the New **Earth**. For it says that they do "serve Him" (*latreuou sin* = present and not future tense) — "day and night, in His temple. And He Who sits on the throne shall dwell" (*skeenoosei* = future and not present tense) — "among them" (Rev. 7:14f *cf.* 21:3).

Furthermore, Rev. 7:14 does not teach that the humanly-innumerable multitude shall come out of an as-then (in approximately A.D. 65f) purely future 'great tribulation' at all. To the contrary, it rather teaches that this innumerable multitude is constantly coming (*erchomenoi* = present participle with continuous or durative significance) into Heaven, out of the 'great tribulation' which they had experienced while here on Earth before

Chilton and Gentry apply this great tribulation to the fall of Jerusalem from A.D. 66 onward. The *Dordt Dutch Bible* applies it to the tribulation of Protestants under the Antichrist (alias the Papacy). Matthew Poole applies it to "great sufferings and persecution." And Adam Clarke identifies it both with "the Diocletian persecution" of A.D. 293f, as well as with "persecutions of every kind."

Hoeksema refers the "great tribulation" to the whole of Church History; especially to Domitian's rule, and also to the end-time. Hendriksen sees it as "**all** the persecutions and trials of God's people." Ladd and Mounce have it cover all Church History, and especially an end-time tribulation. Lenski says: "Never is tribulation — pressure — entirely absent from the Church." The *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes* applies it to the whole of Church History. And Greijvenstein says it "covers all periods of persecution to be endured by believers **on Earth**, throughout the whole time of World History."

In Heaven, all shall serve God, day and night — in His holy temple²⁴⁷ alias His heavenly sanctuary.²⁴⁸ Of this, to be entered into only through the blood of Jesus — God Himself gave Moses a pattern for the construction of the earthly tabernacle and all of its equipment²⁴⁹ in the wilderness.²⁵⁰

The above points to a heavenly life of perpetual religion, twenty-four 'hours' per 'day' and seven 'days' per 'week' — without ceasing.²⁵¹ O, that we too would realize right here on Earth (and even now) that life **is** religion — and that true religion is life **itself** (and not just a **part** of life)!²⁵²

Last. It should be noted, however, tht the saints **will not stay** in that '**merely-heavenly**' condition for ever. No. After the Final Judgment, the time will come when Heaven itself and all of its inhabitants will come down onto **the (then re)new(ed) Earth**.

their deaths and consequent migrations to Heaven. Indeed, even then (as John was writing those very lines) — they one by one kept on leaving the Earth in death, and so kept on coming into Heaven.

Consequently they would go on coming into Heaven after the tribulation of A.D. 66 to 70, and also after all other subsequent tribulations of their earthly lives. Some of those earthly lives would, of course, involve greater tribulations than others. But none of those subsequent tribulations would ever compare to the great tribulation of A.D. 66 to 70.

As already stated, the futuristic interpretation of Rev. 7:14 is in any case clearly precluded by Mt. 24:21. The idea of a future tribulation much worse than any in the past, is therefore totally foreign to the Holy Scriptures. Mt. 23:37-39 *cf.* 24:1-3,21b. See too: Rev. 2:22 & 3:10 & n. 84; 6:3-17 & esp. vv. 9-11; 12:11; 13:7; 17:14; Ps. 90:9-11; Mt. 10:17-39; 23:29-34; 24:9,21; Mk. 10:30f; 13:9-13; Lk. 12:39-53; Jh. 15:18-25; 16:2,20f,33; II Cor. 2:4; 6:4-10; 11:23 to 12:10; Eph. 6:12-16; II Tim. 3:11f; 4:5-17; Heb. 10:32; 11:24-38; 12:2-10; Jas. 5:10f; and I Pet. 2:20f & 5:9.

²⁴⁷ Rev. 7:15 *cf.* Hab. 2:20 & Heb. 12:22f.

²⁴⁸ Ex. 25:4f *cf.* Heb. 8:5 & 9:1-8,19-24.

²⁴⁹ Rev. 1:12f; 4:1,5f; 6:9; 8:3-5; 10:19; 14:18; 15:2,5,8; 16:17.

²⁵⁰ Ex. ch. 25, esp. v. 40; *cf.* too chs. 26 to 30.

²⁵¹ Rev. 7:15 *cf.* 4:8-11 & 14:11-13.

²⁵² Jas. 1:25-27 *cf.* 2:8-12.

A Great Multitude of Nations before the Throne of Jesus

For even God's Temple of Heaven — shall yet be brought **down to Earth**.²⁵³ And when God's saints get their bodies back, they will serve Him for ever in those bodies **here on Earth** (after its renewal).

Meantime, right now, "they **are** before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple" in **Heaven**. But on the New Earth yet to come, "He Who sits on the throne **shall** dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun [cast] light or any heat upon them. For the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them — and shall lead them to fountains of living water. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."²⁵⁴

Then, the Lamb will consummate **everything**. Indeed, "when He had opened the **seventh** seal, there was **silence** in **Heaven**." For the **Cosmic Sabbath** then arrives — the saints' Everlasting Rest here on Earth; in **Heaven-on-Earth**.

That "silence" denotes the arrival of Eternal Rest (thus Victorinus, Bede and Anselm). It introduces the Jubilee (thus Pierre Jean d'Olivi). It refers to the Advent, the Second Coming of Christ (thus Cunninghame and Baylee).

O Christian, may we too work for the redemption of that great multitude which no man can number! For we too must endure some tribulation, and perhaps even great tribulation, while taking the Everlasting Gospel to all of the nations — and thus doing the will of God here on Earth, even as it is now being done in Heaven.²⁵⁵

Yet one day, the kingdoms of this World shall have become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. And then, He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever²⁵⁶ — **everywhere here on Earth**, as well as elsewhere throughout His Universe. For then it shall be 'ever-morning' and 'never-evening' — on God's Everlasting Cosmic Sabbath.

So on, then, Christian soldiers!
Onward — as the *Geneva Bible* comments — "in token of victory and
felicity!"²²⁶
Onward, **to victory!**

²⁵³ Rev. 21:12f,22.

²⁵⁴ Rev. 7:15 to 8:1 *cf.* 21:1-6 & 22:1-5.

²⁵⁵ Mt. 6:10 *cf.* Ps. 103:18-22 & 104:4.

²⁵⁶ Rev. 11:15.

Even amid God's Judgments — Two-Thirds of all Creation spared!

Revelation 8

December 10

"Then the first Angel sounded [a trumpet], and there followed hail and fire mixed with blood.... Then the second Angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea. Then the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed."²⁵⁷

Christ had just given to John a **sweeping overview** of the major future ecclesiastical events (both here on Earth below²⁵⁸ as well as in Heaven above).²⁵⁹ Christ gave that overview, after His opening of the sixth seal²⁹⁶ (of the Lamb's book of Church History) — announcing the 70 A.D. fall of Jerusalem and many other subsequent events down till the end of time.

However, "when He had opened the seventh seal — there was silence in Heaven for about the space of half an hour."²⁶⁰ This is apparently the silence of the Cosmic Sabbath at the end of Church History, after the attainment of the christianization of the whole World and the baptismal sealing of all its many nations.

After hearing that impressive silence, John received **another** vision of what would happen here on Earth **between** the time of his own day and the arrival of the Cosmic Sabbath at the end of World History. In that new vision, John saw seven Angels with seven trumpets — heralding both earthly blessing to the Church, and temporal judgments against the unrepentant World. In that same vision, he also saw Another Angel —superintending and assisting the saints to pray, and conveying their prayers even to the very throne of God.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Rev. 8:8f.

²⁵⁸ See Rev. 7:1-8.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Rev. 7:9-17.

²⁶⁰ Rev. 8:1.

²⁶¹ Rev. 8:2 cf. 8:6 to 9:21; 10:7; 11:12-19, esp. v. 15; cf. nn. 272 to 445. See too I Cor. 14:8, *per contra* Lev. 25:9f & Ezek. 33:3-11 & Hab. 2:14,20 & Zech. 14:16 & Acts 3:19-21 & Rev. 5:1 & 8:1 & 22:7f. Vanderwaal (*Sola Scriptura* III:227) and Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* I:325-448 & esp. pp. 332f) both point out that the trumpets **plague** 'Egypt' but not 'Israel.' For "the trumpets here are exciting for all [and affect all] —joyfully exciting for the Church [not raptured from but right here in the World; yet] frightfully exciting for the World." See too: Lev. 25:9f,13,24f; Num. 10:2-10;29:1; Josh. 6:4-20 & esp. v. 5; II Sam. 6:15; I Chr. 15:24; II Chr. 5:12f; 29:26f; 30:21; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:35; Ps. 47:15; 81:3; ch. 150; Isa. 58:1; 61:1f; Jer. 4:19; 42:14; Ezek. 7:14; Hos. 8:1; Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16; Lk. 4:17-21; Rev. 7:3 & 9:4.

Even amid God's Judgments —Two-Thirds of all Creation spared!

Now the events recorded in this new series (of the seven Angels with the seven trumpets), do **not** occur only after the events recorded in the previous series of the seven seals as a whole. For the series of events heralded by each of the seven trumpets *seriatim* — do not succeed but rather **run parallel** to the series of events unfolded at the breaking of each of the seven seals one by one. Yet the blessings and judgments trumpeted by the seven Angels do (by and large) indeed **succeed** one **another**.

First. The seven trumpets apparently announce some of the major events stretching from John's own day right down to the time of the finishing of the mystery of God alias the end of His Revelation. As such, those events involve God's partly-passed but also-partly-still-future plans for man.

For John "saw the seven Angels which stood in front of God.... To them, seven trumpets were given.... The seven Angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound [the trumpets]. The first Angel sounded.... Then the second Angel sounded.... Then the third Angel sounded.... Then the fourth Angel sounded.... Then the fifth Angel sounded.... Then the sixth Angel sounded.... Then, in the days of the sounding of the seventh Angel, when he **shall** begin to sound, the mystery of God **would be finished**."²⁶²

Let us now attempt to establish **when** the events predicted by the sounding of each of the trumpets *seriatim* would **begin** to be fulfilled in the History of the Church and of the World. It is **not** stated that these trumpets are **end-time** instruments, to be blown only **immediately** prior to the **final** coming of the Lord Jesus Christ back to Earth. No. Rather do these trumpets — just like the seals — appear to cover the whole course (or at least a considerable part) of Church History **after** Christ's heavenly session. Indeed, they seem to have occurred — or (in some cases) are yet to occur — **between** His 'invisible' A.D. 70 coming with the Pagan-Roman armies to judge apostate Jerusalem, and His visible Final Coming to judge the whole World.

Second. The events heralded by the trumpets are not all yet-future — as the **Futurists** wrongly allege. Neither were they all to finish occurring during John's own lifetime — as **Hyperpreterists** allege. But many were to start and finish occurring only after John's lifetime, although at least the seventh trumpet has not yet even started to sound — as the **Historicalists** rightly argue.

Also as regards **this** passage, most of the great commentators have been Historicalists. Thus: Bede, Strabo, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Brightman, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Mede, Gerhard, Sherwin, Jurieu, Fleming, Cotton Mather, Matthew Henry; Sir Isaac Newton, Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Gill, Samuel Langdon, John Brown of Haddington, G.S. Faber, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Alexander Keith, Louis Gaussen, Bishop E.B. Elliott, Albert Barnes, and J.P. Lange, *etc*.

²⁶² Rev. 8:2,6-8,10,12 & 9:1,13 & 11:15. Note that Martin Luther, and the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* and the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, all interpret Rev. chs. 8 to 11 from the same historicalistic perspective we ourselves have adopted. Similarly, so too does the famous independent Greek-Orthodox Scholar Apostolos Makrakis, in his *Interpretation of the Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Orthodox Christian Education Society, Chicago, 1972.

The events announced by the trumpet-blasts appear to occur **successively** — rather than concurrently (or simultaneously).²⁶³ There is even a **progression** in the intensity of the various events which occur — following the sounding of each trumpet. Yet there is no evidence that the events following the sounding of a particular trumpet always cease before the next events begin to operate after the sounding of the following trumpet. For the events proclaimed by the seven **trumpets** — though largely progressive and successive — were to be **enduring** events (just like the seven days of **creation** itself).

Third. Before the seven trumpets (of these Angels) are described in detail,²⁶¹ John was first shown how "another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer. Then much incense was given to Him, so that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar in front of the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, went up in front of God — out of the hand of the Angel."²⁶⁴

Clearly, this is an uncreated Angel — namely our great Messenger, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For no One else could offer the prayers of all the saints upon the altar to God as their great Mediator.²⁶⁵ He 'intercedes' with His Father on behalf of all of the prayers prayed for Jesus' sake by **all** of the saints — that is, by all of those who have been sanctified — without exception.²⁶⁶

In fact, He conveys to His Father all of the prayers prayed throughout Church History: even while His judgments are being poured out upon the Earth. Indeed, He also controls the seven created Angels who trumpet out Christ's warnings to the unrepentant World through the messages of the Preacher-Angels of Christ's Own Church here on Earth.²⁶⁷

Thus Christ holds both His bodyless spirit-angels as well as His embodied Preacher-Angels in His Own almighty hand.²⁶⁸ Indeed, He sends them forth into all the World to bring down His blessings upon the penitent — and His judgments upon those prayerless earthlings who refuse to become His saints. For "the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it upon the Earth. Then there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."²⁶⁹

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments, our "only remedy in our afflictions" — is to appear before the face of God by means of Jesus Christ. He is the Angel, the Sacrifice, and the Priest Who presents our prayers...before the altar and divine majesty of God."²⁷⁰

²⁶³ Rev. 9:5f,12,15,20; 10:6f; 11:15,18.

²⁶⁴ Rev. 8:3f.

²⁶⁵ I Tim. 2:1-5 & Jh. 14:6.

²⁶⁶ Jh. 14:13; 16:23; Heb. 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 7:24f.

²⁶⁷ Cf. our study for Dec. 2.

²⁶⁸ Ps. 103:19-21; Rev. 1:16,20; 2:1f; 8:1-6.

²⁶⁹ Rev. 8:5 cf. 4:5 & 5:6.

²⁷⁰ Rev. 8:2,6.

Even amid God's Judgments —Two-Thirds of all Creation spared!

Indeed, also the great Lutheran Commentator Bengel here observes: "Frankincense and prayer draw a great deal after it. It is acceptable. It will be heard. God then causes His righteous judgments to go forth as a terror to the World — for the discomfiture of His enemies, and for the **advancement** of His Kingdom."²⁷⁰

Fourth. We now return to the sounding of the trumpets, accompanied by the prayers of the saints which constantly kept and keep on being conveyed to the Father — by and for the sake of His uncreated 'Other' Angel Jesus Christ. Wrote John: "Then I saw the seven Angels who stood in front of God. Then seven trumpets were given to them.... And the seven Angels who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound" — to blow those trumpets!²⁷⁰

What do the events announced by the successive blowing on these trumpets involve? Respectively and consecutively, they apparently refer to: the A.D. 70 fall of Jerusalem; the vicious attacks of heretics who plagued the early Post-Apostolic Church, and the later invasions of the Christian heartland by Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Heruli; and the ferocious attacks on Christianity first by Mohammad's Arabian Moslems and later by the Saracen Turks.

Those events would impact upon and be followed by also further events. Such include: the undermining of the Church herself by the awful idolatry of Eastern-Orthodoxy's Ritualism, as well as by the machinations of the Western Romish Papacy — and also the ongoing re-form-ation of Christ's Kingdom by the rising tide of Biblical Protestantism, right down to the universal victory of Christianity toward the end of World History. Let us then take a closer look at these events, which follow(ed) after the blowing on each of the trumpets.

Fifth. John heard the first created-Angel sound his trumpet. "The first Angel sounded. Then there followed hail and fire mixed with blood, and they were cast upon the Earth. And the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."²⁷¹

This strongly reminds us of a combination of the ten plagues of Egypt.²⁷² It seems to represent the combined destruction (here termed "blood"?) wrought by nature (here termed "hail"?) and persecution (here termed "fire"?) upon the vegetation (here termed "grass" and "trees").

Only one-third of all this was destroyed.²⁷¹ Now the *Book of Revelation* elsewhere suggests that "Egypt" is the place of the apostate covenant people "where also our Lord was crucified"²⁷² — and inasmuch as elsewhere in Scripture "trees" frequently represent human leaders, and "grass" frequently represents their 'grass-roots' followers.²⁷³ So we here have a picture of what is probably the judgmental and bloody destruction of the leaders as well as the followers of the Christ-rejecting **Judean Judaists** by fire and by "hail" **in A.D. 70** — as well as a picture of judgment on apostate Church Members both then and thereafter.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Rev. 8:7.

²⁷² Ex. 7:20-25; 9:23-28 *cf.* Ps. 18:13; Isa. 28:2,17; Job 28:22f; Dan. 12:1.

²⁷³ Judg. 9:8-15; Ps. 1:1,3; Jer. 7:20; 17:7f; Ezek. 31:3; Dan. 4:20-22; Ps. 103:15f; Isa. 40:6-8; I Pet. 1:24.

²⁷⁴ Dan. 9:26b,27b; Mt. 10:15; 11:23f; 23:33 to 24:3,15,28; Lk. 17:29-32,37; 20:20-24; 23:28-31; I Th. 2:14-16 & II Th. 1:6-8; Heb. 8:13; 12:26-29; II Pet. 3:7-13; Rev. 8:5-8; 11:5f *cf.* Gen. 19:13-25; Isa. 1:4,7,9f,20; Jer. 17:27 —*cf.* F. Josephus's *Wars of the Jews* VII:1:1 & VII:8:5. Edward Gibbon and Albert Barnes, however,

Sixth. John next heard the second trumpet being blown. "Then 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. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and which had life died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed."²⁷⁵

Now the first judgment had fallen upon the "land" (probably meaning the terrain of first-century Judaea)²⁷⁶ and its apostate contents (including its plants and its men). But the following or second judgment was to fall upon the sea and its inhabitants — on its fish and on "those who go down to the sea in ships."²⁷⁷ Yet here again, only one-third of the inhabitants (of the sea) was destroyed.²⁷⁴

The *Geneva Bible* comments here that the burning "mountain" cast into the sea, means that various or "divers sects of heretics were spread abroad in the World."²⁷⁵ Throughout Scripture, the word "mountain" is frequently used as an image of Israel.²⁷⁸

Again, the word "sea" is frequently used throughout Scripture as an image of the power-wielders in the Gentile World.²⁷⁹ Previously, after the sounding of the first trumpet — the burning up of the trees and the grass, probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem (alias 'Egypt') by fire. And now, after the sounding of the second trumpet — the object which was "**as it were** a great mountain burning with fire" was perhaps the **scorched remnant** of apostate Judaea, scattered especially **after** A.D. 70 (and also in subsequent centuries) throughout the "sea" of the **Gentile** World.²⁷⁹

For the burning mountain of Judaism (thus Mauro)²⁸⁰ fills "the third part of the sea" of the Gentile World with blood and death and destruction. Then, it also filled the international communications media with anti-Christian propaganda (albeit only partially so).²⁷⁵ Too, the second trumpet probably also heralds "the invasion of the Roman Empire [including its apostate 'Christian' citizens] by foreign nations and by the barbarians" (thus Bengel).²⁷⁵

identify the first trumpet as announcing Alaric's Gothic invasion of the Western Roman Empire in 395-410 A.D. Vitranga argues that the first trumpet might "not unfold to us some divine judgment upon the Roman Empire of one period, but a certain species of divine judgment to be expected at various periods after the times of John." See too Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* on Rev. 8:7 at his n. 2 *in loco*. Bengel, however, refers the prophecy to the Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian at the beginning of the second century A.D.

²⁷⁵ Rev. 8:8f. Gibbon and Barnes, however, identify the second trumpet as announcing the attacks of Genseric's Vandals on Africa and Italy in A.D. 433-453.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Lk. 17:20-27 & 18:8⁹.

²⁷⁷ Rev. 8:9 *cf.* Ps. 107:23f & Dt. 33:18f & Gen. 49:13.

²⁷⁸ Ps. 48; Isa. 2 & 59:20; Dan. 9:20; Mt. 11:20f; chs. 23 & 24; 24:3,32 *cf.* 21:21 & Jer. 51:25; Mk. 11:11-23.

²⁷⁹ Dan. 7:2f *cf.* Rev. 8:8f & 13:1 & 17:1,15.

²⁸⁰ Jh. 8:41,48; Mt. 28:11-15; Rev. 2:9 & 3:9 *cf.* Lev. ch. 26 & Dt. ch. 28 & Isa. 41:14-16 & Jer. 51:19-25 & P. Mauro's *Of Things Which Soon Must Come To Pass* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1933, pp. XIV-XVII, 212-226, 287-290). Re the Church being the burning mountain, and the sea the World of nations — *cf.* Isa. 2:2 & Dan. 2:34f,44 & Rev. 21:1f,10. See too n. 279.

Even amid God's Judgments —Two-Thirds of all Creation spared!

Seventh. John then heard the third trumpet being blown. Wrote he: "The third Angel sounded. Then a great star fell out of the sky, burning like a lamp. And it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called 'Wormwood.' And the third part of the waters became wormwood. And many men died from the waters, because they had been made bitter."²⁸¹

This time, destruction fell upon one-third of the fresh waters which thirsty men need to drink. The great star which fell from the sky burning like a lamp, is probably Lucifer himself or one or more or all of his agents (such as apostate clergy etc.).

Lucifer was the greatest star or created Angel. Yet, instead of **upholding** (*luci-ferre*) the Son of God as **The Lamp** of the Universe²⁸² — Lucifer himself futilely tried to illuminate men like The Lamp and Light of the World!

In himself trying to be The Lamp and Light of the World — Lucifer fell. Indeed, he continued to fall even further, in various stages, ever since the creation of man.²⁸³ And his fall was steep — especially since Christ's resurrection and ascension and the resultant (at least nominal) christianization of the Roman Empire previously dominated by Satan himself.²⁸⁴

So the great star falling from the sky, and burning like a lamp, is probably Lucifer himself or one or more of his agents. The "rivers" and "fountains of waters" into which he fell, are probably the well-springs of Christianity.²⁸⁵

Accordingly, this event of the star falling — **after** the sounding of the **third** trumpet — probably indicates Satan's pollution of the Christian message by poisoning the well-waters of the life-giving Gospel. As such, it would then refer to the terrible spread of Satanic heresies even on the fringes of the Christian Church herself — throughout the Roman Empire.

²⁸¹ Rev. 8:10f.

²⁸² Rev. 8:10's great star was probably Lucifer. Cf. too Gen. 2:1; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Isa. 14:12-15 (*per contra* Jh. 1:1-5 & 8:12); Ezek. 28:12-19; Dan. 8:10; Lk. 10:18; Mt. 24:29f; Jude 6,13; Rev. 1:16,20; 2:1f; 6:13; 8:10-12; 9:1; 12:4,7-10. Yet others regard Rev. 8:10's great star as either Islam or the Papacy or both (cf. Rev. 8:12 & 9:1f & 11:7 & 13:11f). Wrongly so, we think — for Islam and the Papacy were hardly (a) great star(s) fallen from Heaven, but rather later results here on Earth of Lucifer's fall from Heaven.

²⁸³ Isa. 14:12-15 cf. Ezek. 28:12-19; Gen. 3:1f cf. Job 1:6f & I Pet. 5:8 & Lk. 12:31 & Mt. ch. 27 & Gen. 3:15 & Rev. 12:1-5 & Rom. 16:20 & Rev. 12:7-10 & 20:1-6.

²⁸⁴ Dan. 7:1-26; Rev. chs. 13 & 17.

²⁸⁵ Jer. 2:13b & I Jh. 4:1-6. The *Geneva Bible* equates the poisoned waters with "false and corrupt doctrine." See Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 293f: "The symbols of the verses now before us point to the activities of Satan, working in the early days of our era, mainly through unbelieving Jews, in poisoning the streams of truth and the wells of salvation by means of certain great heresies, [such] as the Socinian and Arian, which denied the Deity of our Lord and the saving efficacy of His death." Barnes, however, identifies this third trumpet as announcing the attacks on the Roman Empire made by Attila and his Huns in 447 A.D.

This took place in particular during the first five centuries in Pseudo-Christian movements like judaizing Ebionism, paganizing Gnosticism, dematerializing Docetism, compromising Syncretism, dispensationalizing Marcionism, pseudo-glossolalic Montanism, mysticistic Mithraism, dualistic Manichaeism, philosophistic Alexandrianism, and modalistic Sabellianism. It further occurred also in 'Jehovah-Witness'-like Arianism, assumptionistic Nestorianism, consubstantiationizing Eutychianism, ultra-arminianizing Pelagianism, and in Proto-Romanistic Semi-Pelagianism etc.

As the *Geneva Bible* comments, the 'bitter waters' here "signify false and corrupt doctrine."²⁸¹ For all of those heresies, like poisoned wells, certainly killed many men — spiritually.

Yet they polluted only a minority (or "a third")²⁷¹ of the spiritual waters. This left the other two-thirds of the waters unpolluted — for the enjoyment of the true Christian Church.²⁸⁶

Eighth. John at this point next heard the fourth trumpet being blown. "Then 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 — so that the third part of them was darkened. And the day did not shine, for a third part of it — and the night likewise."²⁸⁷

Here, the heavenly bodies (sun and moon and stars) were smitten — though only the third of them. This probably refers to the **eclipse of influential leaders** in the civilized World at that time. For such astronomical symbols are frequently used to refer to ecclesiastical and political leaders.²⁸⁸

As such, the prediction probably refers especially to the corruption of the but-recently-christianized Roman Empire — with the "darkening"²⁸⁷ of its political and ecclesiastical leadership. Here one thinks of Julian the Apostate — and particularly of the attacks of the Goths, the Huns and the Vandals; the fall of Rome to such Pagans; the later demise of Justinian; and the advent of the 'Dark Ages' at the beginnings of the rise of the **Papacy**.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Ps. 36:9; Jer. 2:13a; Jh. 3:3-8; 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 7:16f; 22:1,6,17 —*per contra* 8:10f.

²⁸⁷ Rev. 8:12.

²⁸⁸ Gen. 37:9f; Num. 26:17-19; Isa. 13:1,9f; Ezek. 30:2-4,18; Joel 2:2,10,30f; Mal. 4:1-2; Mt. 23:37 to 24:29; Heb. 12:25-29; Rev. 6:12-15; 12:1,4,7,10 —*cf.* too Am. 8:9 & Mic. 3:6 & II Cor. 4:4 & n. 46.

²⁸⁹ *Cf.* the attacks of the Goths, Vandals and Huns and others — which darkened Christian Southern Europe for centuries ([‡] *cf.* too n. 44). The Western Roman Empire was "darkened" by the invasions of: Alaric and his Goths in 395-410; Genseric and his Vandals in 428-468; Attila and his Huns in 433-453; and Odoacer and his Heruli in 476-490. It was also "darkened" internally by the later rise of the Papacy. Barnes emphasizes the importance of the attack of Odoacer and his Heruli as leading to the fall of Rome in 476-490. Ever since about 250, the Bishop of Rome had constantly been gaining the pre-eminence over his fellow-bishops elsewhere. But it was only just before 600 that solely the Bishop of Rome (at that time Gregory the Great) was officially called Pope or "Universal Father" — a title which the reluctant Gregory, unlike any of his altogether-different successors, nobly and promptly denounced as a title of the Antichrist.

Even amid God's Judgments —Two-Thirds of all Creation spared!

Again, however, this "darkening"²⁸⁹ was only in part.²⁸⁷ For true Christianity, like Moses' burning bush, could not and cannot be consumed.²⁹⁰ Once illuminated by Christ the Light at the time of His incarnation — the increasing irradiation of the World by the now-ignited bonfire of Christianity could not and cannot be extinguished.

Ninth. Even though Satan has tried to douse both Christ the Light and also His Church's illuminating of men and women, such as during the 'Dark Ages' — Christianity still continued to irradiate its surroundings. And though it then sometimes burned low indeed — it would ultimately blaze up again as never before.

Indeed, the Protestant Reformation rekindled the fire of the Christian Church. And the ongoing establishment and expansion of Congregations in our own day, and tomorrow — shall yet ignite the whole World like a bright torch, to the glory of God.

O Christian, may we too — like Christ's seven Angels — and even **as** Christ's seven Preacher-Angels in His Congregations — not only **pray** to **Him!** May we also **testify** and give light to the World!

May we offer salvation in Christ to all who will repent — and proclaim God's judgments to all who resist Him! And may we confidentially expect only one-third of those confronted, to reject His salvation — and two-thirds to receive it!

Even as history unfolds from judgment to judgment,⁴⁴ inexorably leading to the last and Great Assize — it is always tempered with a **double portion** of God's mercy.²⁹¹ For His saving purposes shall ultimately be fulfilled.

Finally, at the sound of the seventh trumpet — the kingdom of this whole World shall become that of our Lord and of His Christ. And He shall then and thereafter keep on reigning, for ever and ever.²⁹²

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

²⁹⁰ Ex. 3:1-3.

²⁹¹ Hab. 3:2 *cf.* Rev. 8:7-12.

²⁹² Rev. 11:15.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

Revelation 9

December 11

"I saw a star fall from the sky.... And he opened the bottomless pit. And there arose a smoke out of the pit.... And out of the smoke locusts came upon the Earth.... And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the Earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads.... Then the four Angels were unleashed — who were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year, to slay the third part of men."²⁹³

The first trumpet heralded the weakening of Judaism by the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The second, third and fourth announced grave challenges to Christianity — by heresies and invasions. The Church lapsed into idolatry. So, as long-term correctives, next came the simultaneous start of the two most terrible scourges of the True Church — **Islam**, and the **Papacy**.

In his magnificent book *A History of the Work of Redemption*,²⁹³ Princeton's President Rev. Prof. Dr. Jonathan Edwards explains: "The two great works of the devil which he...wrought against the Kingdom of Christ are...his **Anti-Christian** [Papal or Romish] and **Mahometan** [Moslem or Islamic] kingdoms — which have been, and still are, two kingdoms of great extent and strength. Both together swallow...up the Ancient Roman Empire; the kingdom of Antichrist swallowing up the Western Empire, and Satan's Mahometan kingdom the Eastern Empire.... In the *Book of Revelation* [chapters 16 to 20]...it is in the **destruction** of these that the glorious victory of Christ at the introduction of '**the glorious times of the Church**' will mainly consist....

"**1260 'days' or years**...are so often in Scripture mentioned as the time of the continuance of **Antichrist's reign**.... The rise of Antichrist was gradual.... **The Bishop of Rome**...claimed the power of Universal Bishop over the whole Christian Church through[out] the World.... He...was confirmed in it by the civil power of the Emperor, **in the year 606 [A.D.]**....

"**Mahomet** was born in the year of Christ 570 in Arabia. When he was about forty years of age [and thus **around 610 A.D.**], he began to give forth that he was 'the great prophet' of God, and began to teach his new invented religion.... He published his *Al Coran*, which he pretended he received from the Angel Gabriel.... His party gradually grew, until they overran a great part of the World.

²⁹³ Rev. 9:4,15 —cf. Edwards's *op. cit.*, Period III, Part II:III:2dly.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

"First the **Saracens**...of the country of Arabia where **Mahomet** lived, about the year 700 began dreadfully to waste the Roman Empire.... These are supposed to be meant by the '**locusts**' that we read of in the ninth chapter of Revelation. And then, after this, the **Turks**, who...were followers of **Mahomet**, conquered all the Eastern Empire. They began...to invade Europe 1300, and took Constantinople and so became masters of all the Eastern Empire in the year 1453.... These are supposed to be prophesied of by the '**horsemen**' in the **ninth chapter of Revelation**."

Now after John had heard the fourth trumpet sound, he beheld and heard an angel-like eagle flying through the midst of the sky. It said with a loud cry: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the Earth — by reason of the other sounds of the trumpet of the three Angels which are yet to trumpeteer!"²⁹⁴

Severe as the first four judgments were — the remaining three judgments would be much more severe. Thus, they are each described in considerably greater detail than are the first four judgments. For the latter three judgments would fill the World — with a threefold woe!²⁹⁵ And these woes — comments the *Geneva Bible* — represent "horrible threatenings against the infidels and rebellious persons."²⁹⁵

First. The initial woe would start after the blowing of the fifth trumpet. That seems to herald the 'Dark Ages' — commencing around 600 A.D.²⁹⁶

"The fifth Angel sounded," wrote John. "I saw a star fall from the sky upon the Earth. And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."²⁹⁷

According to all expositors, the **prototypical** or **original** 'fallen star' was and is Satan. According to some, however, the **particular** 'fallen star' mentioned **here**, was **Mohammad** (570-632 A.D.).²⁹⁸ After his religious fall, he led his vast armies of unitarianized Arabs — and also set an example to the later Islamic Turks in subsequent centuries — not only against idolatry, but also against all forms of Trinitarian Christianity.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Rev. 8:13, '*Aleph & A & 046*.'

²⁹⁵ Rev. 8:13 *cf.* 9:1-13; 9:13 to 11:14; 11:15-19; 12:12b.

²⁹⁶ See study for Dec. 10 at nn. 284-289.

²⁹⁷ Rev. 9:1.

²⁹⁸ See Philip Schaff's article *Mohammed*, in *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, Funk & Wagnall, New York, 1891, III:1541. Wrote the renowned apocalyptic commentator G.S. Faber: "The religion or spiritual kingdom of Mohammed arose precisely in the year 606.... At its first rise it was to be little, comprehending two or at the most only three persons — namely Mohammed and his two apostate associates. The Rabbinical tales, with which the *Koran* is so largely embellished, Mohammed is supposed to have learned from a Persian Jew. And for those parts of his multifarious work which touch upon Christianity, he is thought to have been indebted to the Nestorian monk Sergius or Baheira...."

"The false religion of Mohammed...was a medley of corrupted Christianity furnished by an apostate monk; of Talmudical Judaism contributed by a renegade Jew; and of Arabian superstition purified of its idolatry by Mohammed himself.... An apostate Christian pastor...Sergius...opened the bottomless pit and let out the false religion of Mohammed. Revelation 9:1.... It is represented by St. John [as] an apostasy from the pure faith of revelation...."

"I conceive then that the 'fallen star' of the first woe-trumpet is no other than the apostate Nestorian monk Sergius or Baheira who assisted Mohammed in the forging of his imposture and who infused into it all the Antitrinitarian venom of his own sect. The Mussulmans assert that he [Baheira] first noticed the prophet...when

he observed a luminous cloud around his head.... In one of his [Mohammed's] journeys into Syria...and receiving great satisfaction from him [Baheira] in many of those points which he desired to be informed in, he [Mohammed] did thereon contract a particular friendship with him. And therefore not long after, the monk — for some great crime being excommunicated and expelled [from] his monastery — fled to Mecca to him; and, being there entertained in his house, became his assistant in the framing of that imposture which he afterwards vented." *Op. cit.* I pp. 172f, 188f, & 286f.

Also Archdeacon Woodhouse recognized in his own *Dissertation on the Divine Origin of the Apocalypse*: "Mohammed did not pretend to deliver any new religion, but to revive the old one. He allowed both the Old and New Testaments, and that both Moses and Jesus were Prophets sent from God; that Jesus son of Mary, is the word and a spirit sent from God, a redeemer of all that believe in him. Mohammed represents himself as the Paraclete or Comforter sent by Jesus Christ. So, in his ascent to Heaven, as invented in the *Koran*, while the Patriarchs and Prophets confess their inferiority to Mohammed by in-treating his prayers —in the Seventh Heaven he sees Jesus whose superiority the false-prophet acknowledges by commending himself to his prayers.

"Faith in the Divine Books is a necessary article of the Mohammedan Creed —and among these is the Gospel given to Issa or Jesus, which they assert to [have] be[en] corrupted by the Christians. If any Jew is willing to become a Mohammedan, he must first believe in Christ. And this question is asked him, 'Do you believe that Christ was born of a virgin by the blast (or inspiration) of God, and that he was the last of the Jewish Prophets?'

"Mohammed arose to establish a new religion, which came pretty near the Jewish and was not entirely different from that of several sects of Christians. This got him a great many followers. The imposter Mohammed confessed that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, that he was the Word of God sent from Heaven, the Spirit of God declared by the miracles of the *Gospel*, the Prophet of God whose office it was to deliver the Gospel and teach the way of truth, who is to come to judgment and to destroy Antichrist and convert the Jews. Thus also he taught that the Gospel of Christ, and the Law of Moses, and all of the Prophets, are to be believed. And thus he was better inclined to the Christians than to the Jews....

"Mohammedism began as a Christian heresy, acknowledging Christ for a Prophet, a greater than Moses, born of a Virgin, the Word of God. Sale asserts the Mohammedan religion to be not only a Christian heresy, but an improvement upon the very corrupt idolatrous system of the Jews and Christians of those times.... Joseph Mede affirms that the Mohammedans are nearer to Christianity than many of the ancient heresies —the Cerinthians, Gnostics, Manichees.... Whatever good is to be found in the Mohammedan religion (and some good doctrines and precepts there undeniably are in it), is in no small measure owing to Christianity. For Mohammedism is a borrowed system, made up for the most part of Judaism and Christianity. And, if it be considered in the most favourable view, might possibly be accounted a sort of Christian heresy."

Islam is a "religion...rising upon the basis of true religion, corrupted even like the papal to serve the purposes of a worldly and diabolical tyranny. In the Mohammedan religion are these articles, all evidently derived from the Christian, and constituting in it a great superiority above anything that Paganism or mere philosophy have been able to produce: the belief in the existence of one all-wise, all-good, all-powerful God; of the immortality of the soul; of future rewards and punishments to be distributed by Jesus; of the acceptance of prayer, of self-humiliation, of almsgiving; of the obligation to morality in almost all its branches.

"Take from Mohammedism one article in which it differs from all religions generally admitted to be Christian —the belief of Mohammed's divine mission —and little will then be found in it which may not be discovered in the [faith] profession of many acknowledged Christians.... On the whole, when we consider the origin of Mohammedism and its near affinity to corrupted Christianity; when we reflect also on the amazing extent of this superstitious domination, which occupies nearly as large a portion of the globe as that possessed by Christians, comprising vast regions..., we shall readily admit that, if not a Christian heresy, it is at least a Christian apostasy." Cited in Faber's *op. cit.* II:269f.

The above account is largely correct, though perhaps somewhat too appreciative of Islam. Yet we (F.N. Lee) would prefer to say that whatever is good in Islam, is not original to it; and that whatever is original to Islam, is not good.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Mt. 24:4,11,24-25 & I Jh. 4:1-6 & Rev. 9:1,11; 16:13; 19:20f; 20:10; Dt. 13:1-5; 18:9-22; Isa. 19f; 21:13-17. Some regard this 'fallen star' as the Papacy, on the strength of their conflation of Rev. 9:1-2,11 & 8:10-12 & 11:7 & 13:11f.

But most Theologians (with both the American Presbyterian Albert Barnes and the Greek-Orthodox Scholar Apostolos Makrakis) identify this fallen star of Rev. 9:1f as Mohammad (570-632 A.D.), and the armies which followed him as those of Mohammad's Arabs. See too Rev. 16:12-14 & 19:20f.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

Second. Around 620 A.D., Mohammad apostasized from his own weak grasp or rather inadequate understanding of some of the heavenly revelations contained in the Holy Bible. Then, under the misdirection of that **great** "fallen star" called Satan — and conceivably also at the promptings of demons³⁰⁰ — Mohammad perhaps even spiritistically or mediumistically²⁹⁸ "opened up" the bottomless pit, and made smoke to rise up out of it.

For "he opened the bottomless pit. And there arose a smoke out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."³⁰¹

This smoke, comments the 1560 Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham, represents "abundance of heresies and errors, which cover Christ and His Gospel with darkness."³⁰¹ This is a very good description of the views of Mohammad. For his theology was indeed an "abundance of heresies and errors." His views — while claiming to be 'Biblical' — actually "cover Christ and His Gospel with darkness."

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* of 1637 remarks: "Some understand this star to be Mohammad and his followers. They around 620 scraped together his ungodly doctrine — which was brought forth from the bottomless pit — from [perversions of] Judaism, Paganism and Christianity."

The well-known Scottish Presbyterian James Durham in his 1657 *Complete Commentary upon the Book of Revelation* observes: "This Mahomet lived a little before...the year 650." That was "a little after [Pope] Boniface the Third has assumed the title of Universal Bishop.

"He [Mahomet or Mohammad] was...a subtle fellow and no Christian, about the year 630. With the help of one Sergius a Nestorian monk, and Joannes Antiochenus an Arian, and some Jews — he had begun to coin his blasphemous *Al-Coran*. Therein he endeavoureth a mixture of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity (but of the grossest kind *viz.* Arianism and Nestorianism)....

"He called himself 'the great Prophet' and blasphemously applied some Scriptures to that purpose. He allegeth: that his writings...were given him from Heaven and are without error and therefore joineth the Old Testament, the Gospe,l and the *Alcoran* together; that the refuters of the *Alcoran* are to be persecuted with the sword.... He asserteth one only true God, and denieth the Trinity of Persons.... He is against all idols and images, and allegeth himself to be specially commissioned against **idol-worship**. **And it may be that God...purposed him indeed to scourge that sin,**" and thus "to make him the more instrumental in pursuing that sin — partly more to convince and shame Christians addicted to it." So Islam rightly condemns the Church's **idol-atry!**

³⁰⁰ See our study for December 10 at nn. 281-289.

³⁰¹ Rev. 9:2f.

Yet in his own commentary on the *Book of Revelation*, Philip Mauro notes the evil character of Islam. He comments that, like Christianity, "Mohammadanism has a superman, and a book. It is a Satanic imitation of Christianity. It has spread over a great part of the christianized World.... Its founder was, without doubt, devil-inspired. Mohammed, the fallen star, opened the pit and let loose the darkening power of Satan; and he flooded the eastern part of the christianized Earth, and considerable portions of the western also, with doctrines which can justly be termed hellish in their nature and effects."³⁰²

Third. In the wake of the false-prophecies of Mohammad **himself**, came the fearful spread of the apostate religion of Mohammadan-**ism** — alias **Islam**. Prophesied John: "Out of the smoke, **locusts** came upon the Earth. And to them was given power — like the **scorpions** of the Earth have **power**.... The shapes of the **locusts** were like horses prepared to battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold.... They had tails like **scorpions**, and there were **stings** in their tails."³⁰¹ Indeed, that **power**, comments the *Geneva Bible*, represents "false and **deceitful** doctrine which is pleasant to the flesh."

Clearly, these 'locust-scorpion' objects are no mere insects! For ordinary locusts have no king and wear no crown,³⁰³ whereas these extraordinary "locusts" had a leader. For "they have a **king** over them, who is the [fallen] Angel of the bottomless pit — whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, but in the Greek tongue has his name *Apollyon*" (alias 'Destroyer').³⁰⁴

Again, this "king"³⁰⁴ strongly suggests not only Mohammad — the alleged messenger or *rasool* of Allah (alias the unipersonal Deity of Islam). But to many Christian Theologians, it also suggests that the real influence behind Mohammad and Islam is **Satan himself**.³⁰⁵ Satan tried to be like God; and he pretends to be that Deity called Allah. Yet he remains only the Destroyer.

Strikingly, Allah is sometimes described by Moslems themselves as "the One Who brings damage" or "the One Who leads astray" or "the Bringer-down" or "the Tyrant."³⁰⁶ As such, this Moslem concept of Allah is **really** that of a great **idol** opposing the true Triune God³⁰⁷ (as Calvin too so aptly remarked).

Explained Calvin:³⁰⁸ "The **Turks** in the present day...proclaim...with full throat that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is their God — yet by their rejection [of the Deity and Saviourhood] of Christ," they "substitute an **idol** in His place." That is to say, Allah is an **idol** substituted by **Moslems** in the place of **the one and only true and Triune God**.

³⁰² Mauro: *op. cit.*, pp. 314f.

³⁰³ Prov. 30:27.

³⁰⁴ Rev. 9:11, *Abaddon* = 'Destroyer' (Heb. '*abad* = destroy). Cf. Greek *apollumi* = destroy (hence the word *Apollyon* = 'Destroyer'). See too text at n. 313. The *Geneva Bible* comments here that *Abaddon* is the "destroyer"; and that "Antichrist the son of perdition destroys men's souls with false doctrine, and the whole World with fire and sword." See again n. 298.

³⁰⁵ Rev. 8:10 *cf.* nn. 281-289. See too n. 306.

³⁰⁶ See Cragg: *The Call of the Minaret*, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1956, p. 43.

³⁰⁷ I Jh. 2:22f; Jh. 14:6; Mt. 28:19.

³⁰⁸ Calvin's *Inst.* II:6:4. Cf. too at nn. 326-333.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

Now very many Theologians indeed have considered the apostate religious movement started by the "**fallen star**" (at Revelation 8:1-14f) to be the beginning of the ongoing movement known as **Islam**. Some further see the same movement described at Revelation 16:12f as that of "**the false-prophet**."²⁹⁹

This is the considered opinion of Pseudo-Methodius (675 A.D.), Beatus (790), Jepheth ibn Ali Halevi (950), and Joachim of Floris (1191). It is the considered opinion also of: Luther (1522); Melanchthon (1543); Bullinger (1577); Foxe (1584); Napier (1593); Downham (1603); Brightman (1614); Pareus (1618); Davenport (1633); Mede (1637), John Cotton (1639), Parker (1646), Goodwin (1654), Durham (1657), Increase Mather (1669), Vitringa (1705), Matthew Henry (1712), Jonathan Edwards (1739), John Gill (1758), G.S. Faber (1806), Bickersteth (1836), Louis Gaussen (1837), Bishop Elliott (1845), Albert Barnes (1851), Apostolos Makrakis (1881), and Philip Mauro (1908).

Locusts often come up from the Arabian deserts. Mohammad unleashed his Arab "locusts" to scourge the Mediterranean World and to darken a large area of nominally-Christian civilization. For Mohammad's "locusts" — similar to those in Joel's vision³⁰⁹ — "were like horses prepared to battle."³¹⁰

Those horse-like "locusts" went forth unto conquest; in regal attire; with savage appearance; and armed to the teeth. "On their heads were as it were crowns of gold, but their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. And they had breastplates like iron breastplates. And the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses running unto battle."³¹¹

For, as from A.D. 622, Mohammad's Arabian armies of Moslem horsemen swept not only northward and eastward — but also westward across Christian North Africa and then on into Western Europe. Thus they terrorized the **previously-'christianized'** Armenia, Cyprus, Crete, Syria, Persia, Kazakstan, Babylonia, Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Numidia, Mauretania, Sicily, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Corsica, and France — until the great Charles Martel the 'Hammer' finally stopped them in A.D. 732 at the Battle of Tours in Northern France.³¹²

Sir William Muir points out in his book *The Caliphate*: "Like swarms from a beehive or like locusts darkening the air, the one Arabian tribe after the other emerged and rolled to the North, and then spread out in great hordes to the East and the West." Thus the Arab Moslems then **almost totally wiped out the Christian Church** — all the way from Northern India to Northwest Africa.

³⁰⁹ Joel 1:4,6f; 2:4-11,20,22f.

³¹⁰ Rev. 9:7a.

³¹¹ Rev. 9:7b-9. Muir's book *The Caliphate* (p. 44) and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* are cited in W.L. Emmerson's book *Die Bybel Spreek* (Sentinel, Kenilworth, South Africa, n.d.) — a translation of his work *The Bible Speaks* — and were translated from the Afrikaans text back into English by F.N. Lee. See too nn. 312 & 328.

³¹² Cf. Alexander Keith, as quoted in Emmerson's *op. cit.* p. 484: "There is practically no part of the entire *Book [of Revelation]* which is interpreted so uniformly as the exposition of the fifth and sixth seals.... It is applied to the Saracens and the Turks." See too (in *idem*) the citation from Prof. Davis's *Short History of the Near East* (p. 32): "The cloud of the Saracenic invasion from the Arabian deserts rolled northward." Also cf. nn. 311 & 328.

Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says of Mohammad's successors: "They reigned by right of conquest over the nations of the East to whom the name of liberty was unknown and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence and severity that were performed at their own expense. Under the last of the Ommidades, the Arabian Empire extended two hundred days' journey from East to West — from the confines of Tartary and India, to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean."³¹¹

Barnes comments: "With surprising unanimity, commentators have agreed in regarding this as referring to the empire of the Saracens, or to the rise and progress of the religion and the empire set up by Mohammed.... Mohammedan tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Mohammed.... Nothing would better represent...the Saracenic hordes that came out of Arabia — and that spread over the East, over Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Spain, and that threatened to spread over Europe."

Fourth. The nature of the mission of these "locusts" should clearly be understood. They did not — as **insect** locusts do — go forth to destroy crops or vegetation. Instead — "it was commanded them that they should **not** hurt the grass of the Earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those **men** who do **not** have the **seal of God** upon their **foreheads**."³¹³

Nor did they go forth specifically to **kill** men,³¹⁴ but rather **hurt**-fully or forcibly to convert them to a false religion — and thus to torment their souls.³¹⁵ Thus: "to them it was given that they should not kill them — but that they [their victims] should be tormented, five months. "Now their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.... And they had tails like scorpions." Just like locusts, scorpions too are creatures of the Arabian desert. "And there were stings in their tails. And their power was to hurt men, five months."³¹⁶

This "five months," when construed strictly, is the average duration of a plague of locusts in the insect world. However, construed prophetically (according to the day-year principle of interpretation),³¹⁷ it would imply five (thirty-day)[♠] months of day-years — alias about one hundred and fifty years or about a century and a half of sustained tormenting of their victims.

That very period, interestingly, corresponds exactly to that of Islam's pressures against Christian civilization from the rise of Mohammad (beginning at his first battle when only twenty years old in 590 A.D.)³¹⁸ — to the final arrest of those pressures by Charles the Hammer (in 732 A.D.).³¹¹ Thus, in general, the comments of: Brightman, Mede, Thomas Parker, Jurieu, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, Gill, Backus, John Brown of Haddington, Winthrop, Faber, Thomas Scott, Fuller, Adam Clarke, Gaussen, Bickersteth, and Albert Barnes.

³¹³ Rev. 9:4a.

³¹⁴ Rev. 9:4a-5a,6.

³¹⁵ Rev. 9:5b,6,10 *cf.* Mt. 16:26.

³¹⁶ Rev. 9:5,10.

³¹⁷ *Cf.* Dan. 9:2,24f; Gen. 1:14; 5:23; 29:18-30; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:5f. See too Dan. 7:25 & 12:7,11 & n. 380.

³¹⁸ See M.M. Ali: *Mohammad the Prophet*, Ahmadiyya Anjuman-I-Isha'at-I-Islam, Lahore, 1933, p. 45.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

Fifth. "In those days [of the 'five months' or one hundred and fifty 'day-years'] men shall seek death, but shall not find it. They shall desire to die, but death shall flee away from them."³¹⁹

Even the Moslems themselves desired to die (and thus hoped to be transported into their falsely-imagined ideal place of a lascivious paradise).³²⁰ But, like zombies or the 'living dead'³²¹ — before they died, they were first obliged to wage their *jihad* or 'holy war' — for their own destructive king, Abaddon-Appolyon-Allah.

Onward surged the Moslems. They were all fired up by the battle-cry of their caliphs: 'Before you is paradise; behind you are death and hell!'³²² The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* of 1637 insists that Mohammad's "ungodly doctrine...was propagated throughout a large part of the World by his Arabs and Saracens, who looked like armed locusts."

Sixth, however, even throughout the rise and expansion of Islam during the first century and a half of its existence — it had no power in itself, but only God-given power.³²³ For Islam could inflict its spiritual torments only on unbaptized **Non-Christians** (such as Pagans, Jews, and Apostates). It could hurt "**only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads**" and true faith in their hearts.

For as Jesus Christ Himself had promised: "He who keeps on believing and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not keep on believing, shall be condemned."³²⁴ Accordingly, those who truly believed in Jesus and who bore His seal of Baptism on their foreheads — were spared all "hurt" at the hands of the Moslems. For even such true Christians as were then martyred, **did not seek death** — yet found it (and thereby entered into **everlasting life**).

On the other hand, those Non-Christians whom the Moslems could and did hurt — **desired death**, but could not find it. For as Non-Christians, those latter spiritual zombies were among the 'living dead' — just like all baptized unbelievers and unbaptized unbelievers even today. "And in those days, men shall seek death — but shall not find it. And they shall desire to die — but death shall flee away from them."³²⁵

Seventh. The scourge of Mohammad's Islam, though then arrested in its advance into Christian Western Europe in A.D. 732 — and though subsequently expelled from Spain and the islands of the Mediterranean — still continued to spread to other areas elsewhere. "One woe is past. But behold — two more woes come after that!"³²⁶

³¹⁹ Rev. 9:6.

³²⁰ Cf. *Koran* chs. 44 & 51-54f & esp. 52:17-20f.

³²¹ I Tim. 5:6 cf. Prov. 2:13-19 & 5:5 & 7:23-27 & 8:36 & 9:13-18 & Jh. 3:18-21,36 & 5:24f & Jude 12-19 & Rev. 3:1 & 20:4,7.

³²² See Schaff: *op. cit.* pp. IV:172.

³²³ Rev. 9:3b,5a.

³²⁴ Rev. 9:4 & Mk. 16:16 cf. Rom. 2:28f & 4:9-16 & 6:1-4 & I Pet. 3:20f.

³²⁵ Rev. 9:6 cf. Eph. 2:1f & n. 321.

³²⁶ Rev. 9:12 cf. n. 306.

Having already reached Central Asia between A.D. 700 and 730, Islam next infiltrated even Western China in A.D. 755 — and subsequently overwhelmed Afghanistan and the lands adjacent to it. Then, from around A.D. 1000, the Central Asian Turks (of Turkmenistan) not only spread Islam northward into Central Western Siberia and Southern Russia and the Ukraine. They spread it also southward throughout Northern India and thence eastward through Malaysia to the Philippines and to Indonesia.

Then, the Turks started moving **especially** westward — across the River Euphrates, through the Holy Land, and **into Asia Minor** (alias the Asian part of the modern 'Turkey'). That latter expansion **wiped out the nominal remnants of the seven Churches to which these very warnings in the Book of Revelation were originally addressed.**⁹

So despite almost two centuries of resisting the Christian 'Crusades' in Palestine against them from 1096 to 1291 — the Turks had pushed on further toward the West. During that time, all the nominally-'Christian' armies were ultimately unsuccessful in trying to dislodge the Saracens from Palestine.³²⁷

Thus "the sixth Angel sounded. And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is in front of God, saying to the sixth Angel which had the trumpet: 'Loosen the four Angels which are bound to the great River Euphrates!' Then the four Angels were unleashed — who were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year, to slay the third part of men."

Now this expression that the four Angels "were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year, to slay the third part of men" — on the year-day principle, apparently refers to the length of prophetic time for the completion of this entire enterprise. It amounts to 391 natural years — plus a further 15 natural days.

As Faber pointed out (in 1806):³²⁷ "The accurate accomplishment of this numerical prophecy, is singularly remarkable. The Turks, under Ortogrul, gained their first victory over the Greek Empire in the year 1281 — by the conquest of Cutahi. In the year 1357, they crossed over into Europe.

"In the year 1453, they took Constantinople. And the remaining Provinces of the [Eastern Roman] Empire soon followed the fate of the capital. In the year 1669, they made themselves masters of Crete. And in the year 1672, they wrested Camenice, their last conquest, from the Poles. If now we compute 391 years from the year 1281 — they will exactly bring us down to the year 1672."

The above view was widespread, both before and after Faber. Generally, it is that too of: Downham, Brightman, Mede, Parker, Durham, Goodwin, Increase Mather, Sherwin, Jurieu, Fleming, Cotton Mather, Daubuz, Sir Isaac Newton, Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Gill, John Brown of Haddington, Winthrop, Thomas Scott, Fuller, James Angell Brown, Alexander Keith, Bickersteth, Louis Gaussen, Bishop Elliott, Albert Barnes, and J.P. Lange.

³²⁷ See E.L. Marrison's *The Christian Approach to the Muslim*, Edinburgh House, London, 1959, p. 36; and Faber's *op. cit.* I:293.

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

Thus the Scottish Presbyterian James Durham wrote in 1657: "We conceive this...to show that such would be instrumental in this plague as was neither within the Church nor the Roman Empire, but such as would have their residence beside this river Euphrates [Revelation 9:14 cf. 16:12f] — as the Turks are observed to have had, before their dominion spread.... They are said to be loosed from that place...to destroy the waste part of the Christian World — which accordingly came to pass very speedily, when the Turks having prevailed over the Saracens did with them combine in one dominion under the Ottomanian family, which was about 1000 years [A.D.] and some more — from which time their power grew, till a great part of Europe was overrun by them...."

"The Turks...have led the greatest armies, especially of horsemen, unto Europe.... A great part of Europe, being destroyed and overrun by the Turks, are sufficient evidences of the truth of this.... The Turks also...are not more terrible in their armies to the bodies of men — than the pestiferous delusion of Mahomet is of itself hurtful and destructive to souls."

Continued the Apostle John: "Now the number of the army of the horsemen, were two hundred thousand thousand. So I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them who sat on them, having breast-plates of fire and of jacinth and brimstone. And the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions. And from their mouths fire and smoke and brimstone went forth."

"By these three plagues, **the third part of mankind was killed** — by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone which went forth from their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails. For their tails were like serpents, and had heads — with which they keep on causing pain."³²⁸

It needs to be asked at this point whether "the fire" and "the smoke" and "the brimstone" which "went forth" from the "mouths" of these terrible attackers — is a prediction of the Turks shooting shells propelled by **gunpowder** out of the mouths of their cannons. As Byron notes in his book *The Byzantine Achievement*: "The Fall of Constantinople...was the first event of historic importance engineered with the most important weapon of modern warfare: gunpowder.... If it was not for gunpowder, the siege of [Constantinople in] 1453 — would have failed."

Nevertheless, not one of God's elect lost his salvation at the hands of the Turks — nor indeed could do so. And very few of God's elect were killed by them.³¹⁴ On the other hand, great numbers of unsaved and purely-nominal 'Church Members' were exterminated.

³²⁸ Rev. 9:13-19. The four "Angels" here might even be fallen Angels alias demons — inasmuch as their mission is to "slay" one-third of mankind. It is interesting to compare this to the four 'Angels' (or 'Archangels') celebrated in Islam — namely Munkar, Nakir, Harut and Marut — who are allegedly under the control of Iblis or Shaitan (alias the Devil). See too at n. 332. Cf. too Rev. 9:12 with Gibbon's statement that "it was on July 27 1299 when Othman [after whom the Ottoman Empire was named] for the first time invaded the territory of Nicomedia." Thereafter, none of the Eastern Emperors dared to ascend the Byzantine throne without first obtaining permission from the Ottoman power. Exactly 150 years later (five 'prophetic months' according to the day-year principle of prediction), in 1449 John Palaeologus the last Byzantine Emperor died; and four years later, the Turks took Constantinople. See Byron's book *The Byzantine Achievement* (pp. 290f).

Eighth. It should be noted, however, that it was God in **Christ Himself** Who unleashed this Turkish scourge from the Euphrates against the West³²⁹ — because of **the Church's idolatry**. For the Voice from the four horns of the golden altar, comments Knox's *Geneva Bible*, is "the Voice of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father.... The four Angels which are bound in the great River Euphrates" mean "the enemies of the East Country who would afflict the Church of God — as did the Arabians, Saracens, Turks, and Tartars."

Comments Mede: "The second woe coming up, summons the **Turks** against the Roman World...with many horsemen — from the **Euphrates** where they had long been resisted." And Barnes: "The reference...to the Turkish power....[was] extending from the time of the[ir] first appearance...in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, to the[ir] final conquest of Constantinople in 1453."

Now similar as the **Turks** were to the previous plague of **Arabian "locusts"** — in fact, essentially a **Moslem** extension of that earlier Moslem **scourge**³³⁰ — there were also certain differences. For the Islamic Turks did not merely **hurt** men without killing them (as did the Islamic Arabians). But they actually **slew** fully one-third or "the **third** part of men" — in the eastern part of what was indeed at least a nominally-Christian Eastern-Orthodox Civilization.

Yet even here, there is no question of these Islamic Turks completely destroying³³² genuine Christians! The most that Islam then destroyed, were many purely nominal and lifeless 'Members' of the deformed Eastern 'Church' — itself tainted with the **idolatrous** principles of Babylon-on-the-Euphrates.³³¹

It is true that the Turks (reinforced by Mohammedan Mongols from A.D. 1250 onward) conquered Constantinople³³² in A.D. 1453 — and then overran **parts** of Russia and the Ukraine and Romania and Hungary and Austria, and the **whole** of the Crimea and Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and Albania and Greece. And it is also true that Islam, with its slave-traders, continued to march southward first through West Africa and then through East Africa and thereafter into Southern Africa. Nevertheless, the power of **Islam peaked around A.D. 1560** — just four years before the death of Calvin.

³²⁹ Rev. 9:13f cf. 8:3-5.

³³⁰ Rev. 9:4f,7,9f cf. vv. 16-19.

³³¹ Rev. 9:6,14f,18 cf. n. 332. Also interesting here is that, on the year-day principle of predictive fulfilment (cf. the Bible texts mentioned at n. 317), exactly 391 years elapsed between the time when Ali Arslan crossed the River Euphrates with the Turkish cavalry in A.D. 1062 (cf. Rev. 9:14-16f), and the time of the destruction of the eastern "third" of the Roman Empire (Rev. 9:18) at the Fall of Constantinople to the Turks in A.D. 1453. Cf. Rev. 9:15's "a day" (= 1 day-year), "and a month" (= 30 days-years), "and a year" (= 360 day-years) —yielding a total of 391 day-years. Thus: the Arabs destroyed the southern part of the Roman Empire in A.D. 610-760 A.D.; the Turks destroyed the eastern part in 1050-1450f A.D.; and the Protestant Reformation began to destroy the northern part of the 'Holy Roman Empire' as from 1517 A.D. onward. Hence, 'Babylon-on-the-Euphrates' is predictively linked with 'Rome-on-the-Tiber'; and that, not only spiritually, but even chronologically. Cf. too Rev. 13:1f (with Dan. 1:1 & 2:1,28-33,37-43 & 7:1-7,12 & Rev. 17:9-13); Rev. 13:11f & 14:8 & 16:12f,19; 17:1,5,10-12 (cf. Dan. 7:8,11f,19-25); Rev. 17:1,15-18; 18:2,10,21 cf. I Pet. 1:1 & 5:13 (the "Babylon" which, as even many Theologians concede, probably also here means Rome). See too nn. 44 & 332.

³³² Rev. 9:17-19. Cf. Mauro's *op. cit.* p. 321 (citing *The Standard Dictionary of Facts*): "The Ottoman Turks came originally from the region of the Altai mountains in Central Asia.... In the thirteenth century they appeared

None of God's Children hurt; and only a Third of Mankind killed!

For its new advance into Central Europe from the East, was checked by the rise of Protestantism and the resulting Counter-Reformation (and even **Semi-Reformation** even of the Romish Church. In A.D. 1683, the Turks were defeated decisively at the Battle of Vienna.³³² Subsequently, Islam slowly began to recede even in the Moslem parts of Eastern Europe and elsewhere — until after the weakening of the West during the Second World War.

Sadly, since the Second World War, there are again signs of a revival and **extension of Islam**. Even before the twentieth century, many commentators on Revelation 16:15-17f & 19:20 (q.v.) **predicted** such a **revival of Islam** — to be followed also by its **downfall** and the **conversion of many Moslems to Christ**.

That is why the 1643f Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* urges Congregations to "pray for the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all nations; for the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and the hastening of the Second Coming of our Lord; [and] for **the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad** from the tyranny of the antichristian faction and **from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the Turk**" etc.

It might certainly have been hoped that the Fall of Constantinople to the Moslem Turks in A.D. 1453 would have brought the nominally-Christianized yet still-unreformed Europe to her senses. If only the Eastern-Orthodox, but especially the then-unharmed but nevertheless then-threatened Papal West, had then repented!

Yet "the rest of the men who were not killed by those [Islamic] plagues, still did not repent of the works of their hands so that they should cease worshipping **demons** and **idols** (of **gold** and **silver** and **brass** and **stone** and **wood**) which can neither see nor hear nor walk. Neither did they repent of their **murders** nor of their **sorceries** nor of their **fornication** nor of their **thefts**." ³³³

For even the Christian Church in **Western** Europe had become deformed by the tyranny of the Romish **Papacy** — as described by John in his subsequent chapters.³³⁴ The nominal Church (both Eastern and Western) had become infested with the **worship of (fallen) Angels** and **icons** — and with **violence** and **witchcraft** and **lasciviousness** and **simonies**. Also the Eastern-Orthodox Church — even when under the tyranny of Islam — did not repent of those sins.

as the allies of the Seljukian Turks against the Mongols, and for their aid received a grant of lands from the Sultan of Iconium in Asia Minor. Their leader, Othman, became the most powerful Emir in Western Asia. In the year 1300, he proclaimed himself Sultan. Thus was founded the Empire of the Osman or Ottoman Turks in Asia. Osman's successors, princes of great courage and enterprise, who were animated moreover by religious fanaticism and a passion for military glory — raised it to the rank of the first military power in both Europe and Asia (1300-1566). In the reign of Soliman II the magnificent, 1519-1566, the Ottoman Empire reached the highest pitch of power and splendour. From his time [onward], the race of Osman degenerated."

³³³ Rev. 9:20f. Here, see too Mauro's *op. cit.* p. 323: "It is twice stated that they 'repented not.' And to this agrees the voice of history, which shows that the nations which suffered under the Saracenic and Ottoman scourges did not repent of their evil works, their idolatries and their worse than Pagan practices."

³³⁴ Rev. chs. 13 & 17 cf. 8:10-13 & 9:14f,20f & 10:3f,9-11 & 11:2f,7 & 12:3,6-17.

The **deformed** Church still needed — to be **reformed!** There would still have to be a progressive destruction not only of **Eastern-Orthodox icons** but even more so of the **idolatrous** Papal Tyranny³³⁵ **by a Protestant Reformation!**

That Protestant Reformation of the deformed Western Church, to liberate it from its Papal-Babylonish captivity — commenced in 1517, between the Fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and the defeat of the Turks at Vienna in 1683. That Protestant Reformation was firmly established by the middle of the sixteenth century — as the Turkish power was reaching its zenith.

Indeed, the Protestant Reformation was and is predestinated to reform the Church³³⁶ and to destroy the works of the false-prophet Mohammed and of all other false-prophets³³⁷ even down through all the subsequent centuries. For the Protestant Reformation — in spite of all setbacks — will continue to advance and to triumph during the remaining time of Earth's History.

That will keep on occurring, through the faithful preaching and application of the Word of God.³³⁸ It will continue — until "the kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ; and [also thereafter,] He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!"³³⁹

O Christian, may we believers thank the Lord for our God-given faith in Christ — and also praise the Lord that we have been baptized with the faith-affirming **seal** of the living God upon our foreheads! May we persuade also others to believe in the Lord — and to receive His seal, believingly!

May we stand firm against Islam and all other false-prophecies (such as Romanism, Communism, Socialism and Humanism)! May we work for the Papalized Church's full liberation from its Babylonian captivity! May we call upon all men to repent!

May we ourselves clearly understand that history is on **our** side! Because history is controlled not by Satan, but by our Saviour. And His Kingdom is yet destined to cleanse and to absorb — **all** of the kingdoms of this World. For His blessed reign shall continue to expand for ever and ever.³³⁹

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

³³⁵ Rev. 10:10f; 11:3-13; 12:7-11; 14:6f,12; 16:10; 17:14; 19:10,13,15,21.

³³⁶ Rev. 18:4 *cf.* Heb. 9:10 & Rom. 11:16-26 & II Th. 2:3 to 3:1 & Jude 3f,18-23.

³³⁷ Rev. 9:1,11; 16:13-19; 19:11,15,20f; 20:1,4,6,9f.

³³⁸ Rev. 12:11; 16:20,25f; II Th. 1:8 & 3:1; II Tim. 3:14-17 & 4:2-5.

³³⁹ Rev. 11:15.

Mighty Christ unites Heaven and Earth and Sea

Revelation 10

December 12

"Then I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was upon His head. And His face was like the sun — and His feet like pillars of fire.... Then the voice which I heard from Heaven spoke to me again and said, 'Go and take the *Biblion* which has been opened, in the hand of the Angel!'.... And He said to me, 'You must prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings!'"³⁴⁰

At the end of his remarks on Revelation chapter nine and at the beginning of his remarks on Revelation chapter ten, Albert Barnes rightly comments: "The judgments which were brought upon the World by the Turkish invasions...wrought no repentance or reformation [of the Church].... The **language** here is strictly applicable to these things. 'Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts'....

"In the previous apocalyptic revelations...the **history** had been brought down...to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks..., A.D. 1453.... The sketches of history pertaining to the Roman Empire in the *Book of Revelation* [9:20f], have been made with surprising accuracy.... The same state of things continued subsequent to the plagues brought on by those invasions, which had existed before.... The same sins of superstition, idolatry, sorcery, murder, fornication and theft prevailed **afterwards** that had prevailed before...in the Romish Church.... The next event in the order of time, was the Reformation.... In the exposition of the chapter...the symbols are such as accord well with the great leading events of the **Protestant Reformation.**"

Constantinople fell to the Islamic Turks in 1453. The new discovery of printing from movable type in Europe, took place in the following year.³⁴¹ Thus the stage was set for the re-emergence of the religion of **the Bible.**

For the appearance of the *Gutenberg Latin Bible* of 1454, soon led to the publication of the *Soncino Hebrew Old Testament* in 1488. That in turn was followed by the publication of *Erasmus's Greek New Testament* in 1516 — just one year before the resulting commencement of the Protestant Reformation under the able leadership of that great Bible Student, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Rev. 10:1,11.

³⁴¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed., New York, 1929 (art. *Printing*); and Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 325-27 & 331-39 & 347f.

³⁴² F.F. Bruce: *History of the English Bible*, O.U.P., New York, 1978, pp. 24f.

Mighty Christ unites Heaven and Earth and Sea

After his vision of the terrible onslaught against Eastern Orthodoxy's Christian Civilization by the Turks,³⁴³ John saw a "mighty Angel." This was apparently Christ Himself, seen as 'descending' **spiritually** from Heaven.³⁴⁴

Wrote John: "Then I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven — clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was upon His head. And His face was like the sun — and His feet like pillars of fire."³⁴⁴

As the 1560 Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments — this 'mighty Angel' "was Jesus Christ. He came to comfort His Church against the furious assaults of Satan and Antichrist"³⁴⁵ — especially *via* Islam and the Papacy.

After centuries of ecclesiastical stagnation during which the Bible had almost been forgotten, immediately subsequent to the **invention of movable-type printing** — the **Bible was once again made accessible** at least in the ancient languages (Latin, Hebrew and Greek). But then, it still needed to be **translated** — and **preached** in the **various living languages of the common people**.

The time and the means to do so, had now arrived. For the full reason for Christ's incarnation and the outpouring of His Spirit after His ascension and heavenly session — namely His Church's execution of His programme for the Christian conquest of the World — could now be re-explained. This is what Christ now came to tell His Apostle John — and, *via* John, to tell **all** of His Servants and especially all of His Ministers of the Word.³⁴⁶

Now this programme of World Christianization was to be executed through the publication of Christ's **Book** — the Bible — among men. So — according to the *Geneva Bible*, Albert Barnes, Mauro, Lenski, and B.H. Carroll — John now recorded how he saw that Christ Himself had an **open Bible** in His hand, and how a heavenly voice told His Church to "go and take the...**Book** [or *Biblion* or *Bibla-ridion*] which had been opened, in the hand of the Angel"³⁴⁷ Christ.

Comments the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*:³⁴¹ "Some take this to mean the *Book of the Gospel*, which, at the time Antichrist was at its highest — was like a closed book to the Church. But from the time onward that the Turks broke loose against Christianity, as seen in the previous chapter, it was once again more and more opened up, and more plainly presented to the Church — by several exceptional men of God" (such as Luther and Calvin *etc.*).

John (like any other Minister of the Word) was required to take the Bible and to preach it to all who would listen. So John "took the *Biblion* out of the Angel's hand, and ate it up"³⁴⁸ — thus thoroughly absorbing it into his very existence. Then the mighty Angel Jesus Christ said to John: "You must prophesy again before many peoples and Nations and tongues and Kings!"³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Rev. 9:13-21.

³⁴⁴ Rev. 20:1f.

³⁴⁵ Rev. 1:1-3 & 22:10-20.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Rev. 1:19f & Jh. 17:17-20.

³⁴⁷ Rev. 10:2,8.

³⁴⁸ Rev. 10:10.

³⁴⁹ Rev. 10:11.

Right after the 1453 invention of movable-type printing, Christ made His *Book* available to His Church as never before. The reading and preaching of that Bible then produced the Protestant Reformation. Thus Philip Mauro and B.H. Carroll. And the reading and preaching of that same *Book* — will still produce and maintain an ongoing Reformation in our own day too.

Next, Christ Himself sovereignly opened and explained the Bible to His Apostle John — even as He still sovereignly opens and explains the Bible to us today, and just as He had also sovereignly opened the seven seals of His bookroll.³⁵⁰ For "He had in His hand an opened *Bibla-ridion*. And He set His right foot upon the Sea, and His left foot on the Earth"³⁴⁷ — and "lifted up His hand to Heaven."³⁵¹

Unto Him, the Son of man, all power in Heaven **and on Earth** has now been given³⁵² — even from His resurrection onward. As the Second Adam, He has begun to subdue the Cosmos. Consequently, even as man, He now controls the **Earth** and the **Sea** and the **Sky** and everything in them — subduing them all, and having dominion over all of their contents, solely to the glory of God.³⁵³

So He commissions and enjoins all His Bible-receiving³⁴⁹ Ministers of the Word: "Keep on going therefore, and make all Nations into disciples; baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you! And look! I am with you always — even unto the end of the World. Amen."³⁵²

In other words, Jesus in essence here says to all His Ministers of the Word: 'You must keep on going into **the whole World!** As My Preacher-Angels, you must keep on baptizing all Nations upon their foreheads with the seal of the living Triune God!³⁵⁴ You must then keep on instructing them³⁵² — so that they may overcome the whole World³⁵⁵ and stand firm against all of the woes and plagues which will come upon the children of **dis**-obedience!'³⁵⁶

Whenever God's Word, the Holy Bible, is **believingly** preached by Christ's Ministers of the Word — the Lord Himself speaks through them. So Christ "cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And when He had cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁰ Rev. 5:5 & 6:1f.

³⁵¹ Rev. 10:5b.

³⁵² Mt. 28:18-20.

³⁵³ Gen. 1:26-28; I Cor. 10:31; 15:45-47; Heb. 2:5; Rev. 10:1f,5f.

³⁵⁴ Rev. 7:2-8; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4.

³⁵⁵ Rev. 12:11 & 14:6,12 & 17:14.

³⁵⁶ Rev. chs. 8 to 9 & 15 to 16 *cf.* Eph. 2:1f.

³⁵⁷ Rev. 10:3.

Mighty Christ unites Heaven and Earth and Sea

Now when Christ the Lion of Judah³⁵⁸ here read and preached from His own blessed *Book* — it sounded like a perfect or sevenfold series of thunderclaps in a mighty storm.³⁵⁹ Similarly, when Christ's Ministers of the Word read and preach from His Scriptures today in the power of His sevenfold Spirit, they too should thunder forth the Word of God against all iniquity.³⁶⁰ For as the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "The whole graces of God's Spirit [here] bend themselves against Antichrist."³⁶¹

Fifth. These seven thunders seem to be connected to the seven seals and especially to the seven trumpets.³⁶¹ As such, these thunderous messages seem to be warnings of lightning-like destruction to the impenitent — while also promising good illumination and the repeated refreshments of reviving rains and thundershowers to the penitent. This occurs right down throughout Church History — from Christ's ascension, to His Second Coming in Final Judgment.

As John declared: "When the seven thunders had uttered their voices..., the Angel which I saw standing upon the Sea and upon the Earth lifted up His hand to Heaven. Then He [that Angel] "swore by Him Who keeps on living for ever and ever, Who created Heaven and the things in it and the Earth and the things in it and the Sea and the things in it — that there would **no longer be a time**" of delay.³⁶² But in the days of the voice of the **seventh** Angel [yet to come], when he shall **begin** to sound [his trumpet], the **mystery** of God would be **finished** — as He had declared to His Servants the Prophets."³⁶³

Now this "mystery" which is to be finished after the time of the blowing of the seventh trumpet is not the end of World History. Rather will it mark the earlier end of "the **domination of Antichrist**" (thus the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Dr. William Whittingham).³⁶³ Too: Brown of Haddington; Bishop Thomas Newton; and D'Oyly & Mant.

³⁵⁸ Gen. 49:8-10; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5 & 10:3.

³⁵⁹ Ps. 29:3-9.

³⁶⁰ II Th. 2:8 & 3:1; II Tim. 4:2 *cf.* Jer. 23:29.

³⁶¹ Rev. 10:3 *cf.* 1:4 & 4:5 & 5:6 & 11:13,15,19 & 6:12 & 8:5.

³⁶² Rev. 10:4-6f. The meaning is not that "time shall be no more" —as in the imprecise words of the popular song '*When the trumpet of the Lord is heard and time shall be no more.*' To the contrary, time shall still be with us —even **after** the **Final Judgment** on the **New Earth yet-to-come** (*cf.* Rev. 22:2). The meaning of Rev. 10:6f is rather as follows. After the seven thunders have all occurred during Church History and have thoroughly been understood by the Christian Church —the till-then-undisclosed "mystery" will cease. For the "mystery" of the identity of Romish Babylon (*cf.* n. 331) will then not only be disclosed. Nay more! That Romish Babylon will then itself be overthrown by the true trumpet-preaching of God's Word not long after the expiry of the **time of delay** —**until** the sounding of the **seventh** trumpet (Rev. 10:4-7 & 11:15 *cf.* 10:8-11 & 11:1-5 & 12:3,11 & 13:1-12 & 14:5f,12 & 17:1,5,14-18 & 18:2f,20,24). That is to say, there shall then be **no further 'time of delay'** (*cf.* Mt. 24:40-48 with Rev. 10:6f) till the trumpet of the seventh Angel shall begin to sound. And **that** sounding will then mark **the beginning** of the **destruction** of Rome and **Romanism** —rather than the end of World History as such. *Cf.* too our study at nn. 422 & 427.

³⁶³ Rev. 10:4-7. *Cf.* especially the word "mystery" in Rev. 10:7 with the same word in Rev. 17:5, where it is applied to the Papal Whore as the mother of harlots in Rev. 17:1-18. It is true that the *Dutch Dordt Bible* and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes* refer this to the end of the World. But it rather seems to refer, after the collapse of Antichrist, to Earth's '**Jubilee**' (*cf.* Rev. 10:6f & 11:15f with Lev. 25:9-11f & Zech. 14:13-16f).

Matthew Henry and *Jenks's Comprehensive Bible* and Albert Barnes refer it to the downfall of **Papal Rome**.³⁶³ Indeed, Matthew Poole and Thomas Scott and B.H. Carroll refer it further to the subsequent dawn of a 'World Jubilee' of great earthly blessings.

Sixth. John was told himself to preach from the opened **Book** or *Biblion* — from which Christ Himself was then apparently reading so thunderously. The Apostle was first himself to assimilate that *Biblion* into his own very existence. Then he was to go and declare all of its warnings and its promises to others — even as modern Preachers are to do, also today.³⁶⁴

For the preaching of God's Word reveals the sovereignty of the Lord and of His Christ.³⁶⁵ It is to declare His absolute control over the Earth and the Sea and the Sky and all that is in them — even while God shakes the World in one judgment after the other.

For the kingdom of this World even now **already belongs to God** — namely **in principle** — because Christ created and redeemed it. Therefore it is — **progressively** — to become His **in practice too**.³⁶⁶

Seventh. The **time** of the commencement of this **new** preaching of God's Word — the time between the sounding of the sixth trumpet and the sounding of the seventh trumpet³⁴² — is very significant. Just previously, the sixth trumpet had announced the unleashing of the Islamic Turks from about 1000 A.D. onward — whose power reached its zenith and then began to wane during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Albert Barnes comments³⁴¹ that all this took place **at the very point in time** the invention of movable-type **printing** had promoted the publication of the Bible. That produced the Reformation of the Islamitically-threatened and papally-deformed Church.

Also Mauro explains:³⁴¹ "The question will naturally arise as to the **time** indicated by the loud voice of the mighty Angel and the seven thunders.... What marked this event outwardly, was **the Protestant Reformation**. That great event took place **at the time the waning of the Turkish power began**....

"There began at that time (sixteenth century), the era of the prophesying anew concerning peoples and Nations and tongues and many Kings. For certainly it was a new era of: the preaching of the Word of God; the separation of the true from the untrue in the House of God; and the final testimony of God by His two witnesses (the 'Law' and the 'Prophets' of Revelation eleven)....

"At that time also, there was a great and wonderful revival of learning. **The invention of printing** by means of movable type...gave us the printing press...[and] coincided with the translation of the Holy Scriptures out of the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, into the vernacular — English and German — with results that have been incalculably great.

³⁶⁴ Cf. nn. 346 & 358.

³⁶⁵ Mt. 28:18-20 cf. Rev. 10:2f & vv. 1 & 5f & 10f.

³⁶⁶ Rev. 10:6f.

Mighty Christ unites Heaven and Earth and Sea

"From that day to the present, **the diffusion of the knowledge of the Bible** has continued.... The printing press...is working toward the accomplishment of the purposes of God.... Most certainly, therefore, the era of the Reformation was one of the greatest of the entire dispensation [of History], and hence well deserving of a place in this prophecy" of John.

Great linguists in the Biblical languages, fled to Western Europe after Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453. The *Gutenberg Latin Bible* appeared in 1455, followed by many other editions first in Greek and Hebrew and then (during the sixteenth century) in the common languages of Europe.

The Protestant Reformation was the predictable result. For as people read and heard the Bible preached to them as the Word of God in their own mother-tongues, the errors of Romanism became more and more apparent.

Thus the power of the Papacy was checked, and then began to decline. Indeed, with the widespread circulation and study of the now 'opened' *Biblion*³⁶⁷ or the small and easily-transportable Bible printed in the common tongues of Western Europe, the resulting Protestant Reformation spread like wildfire.

It started just two weeks after Luther nailed the *Ninety-five Theses* on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral in 1517. And this Protestant Reformation shall yet continue, even today — until the Church of Jesus Christ is purged from the "mystery" of its Babylonish-Romish impurities,³⁶² and until the kingdom of this World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ.³⁶⁷

Last. Christ instructed John to "eat" and then to preach His *Book*. This involves the instruction also of His other Servants (or Ministers of the Word of God) — to preach the canonical book(s)³⁶⁸ to all men everywhere who are willing to listen to it.

Said the Mighty Angel to John: "'Go and take the *Biblion*...and eat it up!' ... Then He said to me: 'You must **prophesy again** before **many peoples** and **Nations** and **tongues** and **Kings!**'"³⁴⁰

As Hengstenberg challengingly comments: "**We too** must eat and even swallow it; not some choice portion of it, but **the whole**; not only that which is agreeable to ourselves, like those who separate the Gospel from the Law."³⁶⁷ And this **whole counsel of God** must be preached not just to each Nation as a whole but also even to the Kings alias the **Political Leaders** of every Nation.

It is therefore not just to a few little groups of enthusiasts here and there, but rather especially to **many** peoples and **Nations** that God's Word is to be proclaimed — in **many** tongues and **languages**. Matthew 28:19. And it is not just to the dregs of society, but indeed particularly also to **kings** and Political Leaders that the Word of God is to be preached.

³⁶⁷ Rev. 10:8-11 & 11:3,15 *cf.* Acts 9:15 & Mt. 6:9f,13. The word *legousin* in Rev. 10:11 is an impersonal plural, and should probably be translated "I was told" (as in the *New International Version*), rather than "He told" (as in the *King James Version*). See too the various comments of the *Geneva Bible* throughout Rev. ch. 10.

³⁶⁸ Rev. 10:9-11 *cf.* nn. 346 & 370-376.

Thus Luther preached it to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Fifth — and Calvin proclaimed it to Francis King of France. For it is in **this** way that the **de**-formed Church is to become **re**-formed. **This** is how Christ's rule is to be expanded. For it is in **this** manner that His Kingdom is to come with power — **here on Earth**, as it is in Heaven.³⁶⁷

The comments of the *Geneva Bible* on this tenth chapter of the *Book of Revelation*, are very instructive. The 'Book' is "the Gospel of Christ which Antichrist cannot hide." Christ the Angel's crying out 'with a loud voice' through His Preachers, "declares that despite Antichrist the Gospel would be preached through all the World — so that the enemies shall be astonished."

Just as 'the Voice...from Heaven' spoke to John, so too does Christ the Word enjoin "true Preachers to discover [or expose] the Pope and Antichrist." And Christ's injunction for John to 'prophesy again among the...Nations...and to many Kings' was "not only meaning [to prophesy] in his [John's] lifetime — but that this *Book* [**also**] **after his death** should be as a **preaching unto all Nations**."³⁶⁷

O Christian, may we too ever believe that Christ exerts all sovereignty over the Earth and the Sea and the Sky and everything in them — even here and now! May we, like John, love Christ's *Book* — the **Bible**! Like John, and like Luther and Calvin after John, may we too assimilate the contents of Holy Scripture — until it verily becomes bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh!

May we too — as did they — then fearless proclaim its contents to **many** Nations, and even to their **Kings** or **Political Leaders**! May we warn **them** to turn from **their** sins — or otherwise to receive the thunderous judgments of God, and perish! And may we keep on doing all of this without ceasing — till the kingdom of **this** World has become that of our God and of His Christ!³⁶⁶

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

God's Two loyal Witnesses prophesy on a Wide Scale for many Days

Revelation 11:1-13

December 13

"I will give power to My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days.... Then they ascended into Heaven with a cloud. Then their enemies beheld them. And the same hour, there was a great earthquake. And the tenth part of the city fell, and seven thousand men were slain in the earthquake. But the rest were terrified —and gave glory to the God of Heaven."³⁶⁹

Christ had just armed John with the 'Canon' of the *Biblion* alias the Word of God (thus Lenski).³⁷⁰ In this way, John had been given a 'Canonical'³⁷¹ Reed or Measuring-rod with which to measure the exact dimensions of the True Church here on Earth (which had been so pestered with heresies from within and assaults from without ever since the sounding of the third trumpet).³⁷²

Already the Church had been weakened by the emerging Papacy. Now, after the subsequent scourges of the Moslem Arabs and the Islamic Turks,³⁷³ she was further afflicted with the horrible corruptions of Mediaeval Romanism. Thus it was that she now fell into desperate need —of Reformation.³⁷³

This Reformation would be brought about through the instrumentality of Christ's *Biblion* — our 66-book Bible. This was and is the only 'Canon' or Measuring-rod — in all matters of faith and conduct in the Zion of the Holy Christian Church.³⁷⁴

Right after the discovery of movable-type printing in fifteenth-century Europe, the Bible quickly began to be published in its original tongues — and also in the languages of the peoples of the West. Consequently, the very widespread circulation of Holy Scripture at the beginning of the sixteenth century — was soon destined to produce the blessed Protestant Reformation of the then-deformed Church. For as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments, the phrase '[measure or] mete the Temple of God!' signifies and "declares that Christ Jesus will build His Church; and not have it destroyed!"³⁷⁴

³⁶⁹ Rev. 11:3,12f.

³⁷⁰ The word 'canon' means "reed" or "measuring-rod." Cf. the Greek word *kanoon* in II Cor. 13,15f & Gal. 6:16 & Phil. 3:16. See too Eph. 2:20 & Rev. 21:12-17 & n. 374.

³⁷¹ Rev. 10:2,8-11; 19:10b; 22:7,10,18f.

³⁷² Rev. 8:10-12; 9:14,20f; 10:3b,10b; 11:2b,7a,10a,13a; 12:3,7-17; 13:1-2,11-15 (cf. Dan. ch. 7 & Rev. 14:8f); Rev. 16:10-13; 17:1-16; 18:2-9f; Jer. 13:4,10 & chs. 50 to 51, esp. 50:35-38; Zech. 10:11; & II Th. ch. 2.

³⁷³ Cf. n. 44 and our studies for Dec. 10 to 12 with Rev. 12:7-17 & 14:6-13 & 16:10f & 17:14 & 19:14.

³⁷⁴ Rev. 2:9,14,20 & 3:9,12 & 4:7-10 & 10:2,8,10f & 11:1-3,6,8,18 & 12:17 & 14:6-12 & 21:10-13 & 22:14,18f. Cf. too n. 370. See too: Isa. 8:19f; II Tim. 3:15-17; II Pet. 1:16-21.

God's Two loyal Witnesses prophesy on a Wide Scale for many Days

Rightly does Albert Barnes comment: "The command to 'measure the Temple of God'...was a direction to take an estimate of what constituted the True Church — the very work which it was necessary to do in the Reformation! For this was the first point which was to be settled, whether the Papacy was the True Church, or was the Antichrist...."

"The Refomers made up their minds that the Papacy was [certainly] **not** the True Church.... The **Papacy** had exalted the **Lord's Supper** into a real **sacrifice**.... The **altar** in the Romish communion had...**displaced** the **pulpit**.... It **claimed** to be the **True Church**.... But it had the essential characteristics of **Heathenism**.... Can anyone doubt the truth of this representation as applicable to the **Papacy**?"

Jesus Christ the Angel of the Covenant³⁷⁵ commanded John to determine the true scope of the real Church here on Earth (as opposed to its merely visible aspect). Nominal Mediaeval Christendom would indeed be corrupted by Romish papal sins and Eastern-'Orthodox' icons from within — even as it would be harried by the assaults of Islam from without. So John was now predictively to evaluate nominal Mediaeval Christianity — against the Standard alias the Canonical Measuring-rod of the Word of God.

The Apostle John thus records about the Bible which he saw in his vision: "I took the *Bibla-ridion* out of the hand of the Angel, and ate it up.... Then He [the mighty Angel] said to me: 'You must prophesy again before many peoples and Nations and tongues and Kings!'

"Then there was given me a Reed, like a Measuring-rod. Then the Angel stood and said: 'Rise, and measure the 'Temple of God' [or the 'True Church'], and the 'Altar' [alias the 'True Clergy'], and those who worship there [alias the 'True Laity']! But leave out and do not measure the 'Court' [alias the 'Courtyard'] — which is **outside** the Temple!" Do not measure that 'Nominal Christendom' which was outside of the True Church of Christ during the Middle Ages! "For it has been given to the Pagans. And they shall tread under foot the 'Holy City' [or the 'True Church'] — forty-two months."³⁷⁶

Now this 'forty-two months' of dountreading has **nothing at all** to do with any persecution of the Ancient Jews (thus many Preterists). Also, it has nothing to do with any possible future desecration of any building in the **modern land of Israel** (thus many Futurists). Quite to the contrary, this forty-two months seems to refer to the **mediaeval** period of the **Papacy's** 'Babylonian captivity'³⁷⁷ **of the True Church Universal** — meaning the 'Holy City'³⁷⁶ under the enduring "**Semi-Pagan**" power of the **Romish** yoke (thus most Historicalists).

³⁷⁵ Rev. 11:1-3 & 10:1f,9-11 *cf.* Mal. 3:1f & 4:2,4f and Rev. 11:1,3f,6 with Ex. 7:20 & I Kgs. 17:1,7.

³⁷⁶ Rev. 11:2 & 10:8 to 11:2 *cf.* 21:15 & 22:15 and Eph. 2:19-21 & 3:8 & 4:16 & Ezek. 22:26 & 40:2f,5 & 42:20 & 43:4f. See too nn. 377-379 & 400 & 407 & 714.

³⁷⁷ Rev. 9:14; 11:2f,7,11; 12:6,13f; 13:1-5,11f; 14:8f; 16:10-12; 17:5; 18:2f *cf.* Dan. 7:1-25 & 8:1-27 esp. vv. 11-14 & 9:1-21.

Preterists consider the proclamation of the "two witnesses" to have occurred in A.D. 66-70 before the fall of Jerusalem and the pagan Romans' defilement of its temple (see n. [†] 13). They also identify Rev. 11:8's "Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified" — exclusively with the first-century Jerusalem in Palestine. Such Scholars include: Alcazar, Hoffmann, Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Abauzit, Wettstein, Herder, Hartwig, Herrensneider, Eichorn, Ewald, Scholten, Zuellig, Luecke, Duesterdieck, Moffatt, R.H. Charles, Zahn, Lohmeyer, Hadorn, Schlatter, Reisner, Vanderwaal, Chilton & Gentry. They also identify Rev. 11:1-2's

"temple" exclusively with the first-century Temple in Palestine until 70 A.D. They feel vindicated in doing so, by the cross-references in Mt. 23:37 to 24:28 & 27:50-54 & Jh. 2:19-22 & Acts 2:23 & 3:14 & 4:10 & 5:2-30 & 6:13f & 7:44,48,52 & Gal. 4:26,30 (*cf.* Vanderwaal's *op. cit.* pp. 249f & 260-63).

Furthermore, Preterists point to the relationship between: Rev. 1:7 *cf.* Mt. 24:20,42f; Rev. 3:2f & 16:5; Rev. 3:20 *cf.* Mt. 24:23; Rev. 6:4 *cf.* Mt. 10:34; Rev. 6:10 *cf.* Lk. 18:7f & 21:35; Rev. 6:12 *cf.* Mt. 24:7; Rev. 6:13 *cf.* Lk. 23:30; Rev. 8:12 *cf.* Mt. 24:14; Rev. 11:6 *cf.* Lk. 21:24 & Mt. 26:52; Rev. 13:11 *cf.* Mt. 7:15; Rev. 13:12 *cf.* Mt. 24:24; Rev. 14:4 *cf.* Jh. 1:36f; Rev. 21:6 *cf.* Jh. 7:37f; Rev. 21:10 *cf.* Mt. 4:8. All of the above texts really evidence no more than the continuity between the Pre-Calvary Jerusalem on the one hand—and on the other hand its Mt. Zion and the Post-Calvary Zion of Christ's Church during all ages (especially in its Protestant phase) in every Nation and throughout the entire World.

Now it is our conviction that Rev. ch. 11 describes the Mediaeval Church alias the Gentile-defiled "Outer Court[yard]" (Rev. 11:20). On the one hand, Rev. ch. 11 describes the True Church of Christ of the Late-Mediaeval Ages—namely "the Temple of God" or "the altar" (Rev. 11:1) alias "My two witnesses" (Rev. 11:3) or "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks" (Rev. 11:4). On the other hand, Rev. ch. 11 also describes the False-Church of Rome alias "the Beast" (Rev. 11:7 and *cf.* 13:11f) or "the Great City which spiritually is called 'Sodom and Egypt' where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8) alias the city which falls (Rev. 11:3). The setting, then—both of the True Church and of the False-Church well described in Rev. ch. 11—is the Late Middle Ages. Consequently, there is here no reference to the physical Jerusalem in Palestine (either ancient or modern).

For it should be noted from the Historicalist viewpoint that Rev. 11:1-8 is a direct continuation of Rev. 10:1-11, and that the latter apparently deals with the invention of printing in the time of the Pre-Reformation exactly when Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 A.D. (*cf.* Rev. 9:14-21). Consequently, Rev. 9:14 through 11:8 should all be read at one sitting—if not even in one breath. For this (and other) reason(s), most Theologians reject the identification of Rev. ch. 11 with the first-century's Jerusalem. Instead, some identify it with 'Babylonian Rome' (the City of the Antichrist). Thus: Hengstenberg, Mauro, Greijdanus, Ringnalda, Vandermeulen, Kraemer, Goppelt, Bouman, J.C. de Young, and Schilder. See Vanderwaal's *op. cit.* (pp. 22-35 & 249f), and Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* (I pp. 34 & 395-410).

Dr. Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* I:410 n. 1 & I:425 n. 1) rightly demonstrates "the inadmissibility of the literal view" of Rev. 11:1-9, namely that it is "in the actual temple" of Jerusalem prior to A.D. 70 "in which we are here placed." This is disproved by the fact that "there were not worshippers" or true believers in that temple after the flight of the Christians in 66.5 A.D., during that time of the A.D. 66.5 to 70 'cleansing' of the temple. See too: Rev. 11:1,3,9a,11,13b with 1:6f & 2:9 & 3:9,12 & 5:9f & 7:9-15 & 11:1-8,19 & 13:8 & 14:1-5,15,17 & 15:5 & 21:1-10 & Ps. 87:2 & Gal. 4:24 & 6:15f & Phil. 3:20 & Heb. 11:22. And *cf.* also esp. Ezek. chs. 40 to 48, which series of chapters "unquestionably refers not to an external building but to the spiritual Temple of God's Kingdom, as is evident in particular from ch. 47." Dr. Hengstenberg again comments on Rev. 11:2 & 11:13: "The truth, however, is that the Temple is preserved, and only the [Outer] Court[yard] given up.... The non-desolation of the temple includes in itself the non-desolation of the city. That this 'city' is to be thought of as not destroyed, is evident besides from ver. 13, according to which only the tenth part of the city falls. Only seven thousand men, who are hence to be understood to be the tenth part of the inhabitants of the city, are killed. The rest give God the glory, and are consequently preserved."

Clearly, at the A.D. 70 fall of the first-century Jerusalem in Palestine, on the other hand—fully ten-tenths of the city was destroyed. And the desolation was complete. Consequently, Rev. 11:8 is not referring to the actual Jerusalem then, but to "the great city which spiritually is called 'Sodom and Egypt' where also our Lord was crucified" spiritually! Accordingly, Rev. 11:8's "great city which spiritually is called 'Sodom and Egypt'" is squarely to be equated with Romanism. Thus Luther, Nigrinus, Funck, the *Geneva Bible*, Pareus, Pacard, Cramer, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Tillinghast, Goodwin, Beverley, Poole, Cressener, Gerhard, Phillipot, Jurieu, Horch, Whitby, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, De Bionens, Gill, Bishop Thomas Newton, Bengel, Petri, Bicheno, King, Valpy, Galloway, and perhaps most also of the subsequent expositors (such as Barnes and Lange *etc.*) For, to quote the *Geneva Bible*, Rev. 11:8's 'great city...called Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified' does, in one word, include "the whole jurisdiction of the Pope."

Similarly, Gen. 11:1's "Temple" is not a Jewish building in (ancient or modern) Jerusalem. To the contrary, it is the "Mediaeval Church" (thus the *Geneva Bible* and the *Dordt Dutch Bible* and Matthew Poole). It is the "Gospel Church" (thus Adam Clarke). It is the "True Church" (thus Albert Barnes). It is the "City of God" (thus Lange and Lenski and Carroll). It is "the Christian Church" (thus the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*).

God's Two loyal Witnesses prophesy on a Wide Scale for many Days

Here, the comment of the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham — is extremely significant. It points out that the 'Temple' and the 'Holy City' signify the true "Church of God."³⁷⁶ And it identifies the 'Court[yard]' with the Mediaeval Visible Church of the **Romanists**. It states that such "adversaries of Christ boast that **they** are in the Temple; and that none are of the Temple, but they!"³⁷⁶

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* is even more specific. It comments that this 'Holy City' is "the Visible Church, which was here being depicted by Jerusalem." That 'Holy City' was now occupied and trampled down by the idolators who glory in the title of 'The Temple of God' and 'The Holy Church' — but who suppress the True Church. Consequently, by the 'Outer Court[yard]' is meant those who have the most fame and respect in the kingdom of Antichrist or among their clergy."

Consequently, the 'forty-two months' during which the Holy City is trodden under foot, corresponds to the three-and-a-half "years" — the **one** "time" plus the **two** "times" plus "the **dividing**" of a time. This yields one **half** of the perfect number **seven** — the time during which the stout and arrogant **Roman** horn would wield power in its papal persecution of true Christians (according to the predictions of Daniel).³⁷⁸

Rev. 11:1's "Temple of God" is indeed located in Rev. 11:2f "Holy City." But the latter in its turn means not the actual Jerusalem in Palestine during the first century, but the "Visible Church" (thus the 1637 *Dordt Dutch Bible*), the "Christian Church" (thus Matthew Poole), the "True Church" (thus Albert Barnes), or "The Church" (thus the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*). Indeed, the latter further very compellingly points out that the word 'City' in Rev. 11:2 as well as in Rev. 11:8, **cannot** be the actual first-century Jerusalem in Palestine — inasmuch as **ten-tenths** of the latter was destroyed in A.D. 70, and not merely one-tenth of the 'City' (as clearly recorded in Rev. 11:13).

We believe, then, that the learned Hengstenberg is correct where he writes (*op. cit.* I:408f) that "no trace whatever is to be found here [in Rev. 11:1-8] of Jerusalem" in Palestine, its "temple being in ruins at the time of the vision" or to be in ruins very soon thereafter (F.N. Lee). "Nor [is there] any trace of a rebuilding to take place in the future, either here or in any other part of the *Book [of Revelation]*...."

"This [dispensationalistic] 'literal' method of exposition belongs to an entire chain of representations in regard to the Kingdom of God which has recently indeed obtained extensive support — especially in England, where in particular the *Society for the Conversion of the Jews* is pervaded by it. We cannot regard it as agreeable to the Scriptures. It is a kind of...idea that the converted Jews [or Hebrew-Christians] in it [the Church] are to form a sort of 'spiritual nobility' in the Church.... It nourishes in the converted [Hebrew-Christians] that natural pride, the extirpation of which should be one of the first objects of a true spiritual activity. It misleads the converted to form a sort of peculiar brotherhood among themselves [as self-styled 'Messianic Jews' rather than as 'Christians'], and prevents them from incorporating themselves properly with the general society of the Christian Church in which alone the means of recovery can be found for so many wounds as they have necessarily brought along with them from the corrupt social life of their Nation. Let us here also look back to the soundness of the Older Church [of the Patristic Fathers]...and cease to change Jewish Christians [alias Hebrew-Christians] into 'Christian Jews' [alias ecclesiastical Judaizers]!"

In similar vein, also Philip Mauro (*op. cit.* p. 351) himself adds: "We have before us in [Revelation] chapter XI, a picture of a real sanctuary — the **Temple** of God; an altar; and true worshippers (see Heb. 10:19-22 and 13:10,15). But there is appended to it a '**Court[-yard]**' which is thronged with '**Gentiles**' [alias nominal Romish 'Christians' who are really unbelievers]. Such has been the state of things since the days of the Protestant Reformation" which is the true Temple — whereas the Romanists are merely the nominal 'Court[yard]' of the 'Gentiles.' See too nn. 376-379 & 400 & 407 & 714.

³⁷⁸ Dan. 7:7f,19-26 esp. v. 25; cf. 12:1 & 13:1-12[‡].

As stated in Revelation eleven,³⁷⁹ this 'forty-two months'³⁷⁶ amounts to exactly one thousand two hundred and sixty days. These '1260 days' seem to be day-years, and hence **1260 years** or just over twelve-and-a-half centuries — according to the 'day-year' principle of predictive interpretation.³⁸⁰ Thus the **Classic Historicalists** Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Wycliffe, Osiander, John Bale, Flaccius Illyricus, Funck, Conradus, Nigrinus, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Napier, Brightman, Pareus, Mede, John Cotton, Gerhardt, Alsted, Jurieu, Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, Albert Barnes, Apostolos Makrakis and many others.³⁸⁰

This **Classic Historicalist** position was strongly advocated also by the greatest of all of the Protestant Reformers, **John Calvin himself**. He remarks that "the Spirit exhorts believers to prepare themselves for the exercise of patience...through an uninterrupted period of **many ages**.... For it is customary with men in adversity to compute time not by years or months but by **days** — a single day being, in their estimation, **equal** to a **year**....

"At the present time in the **Papacy** and throughout the whole World, impiety prevails so extensively that there is scarcely a single corner in which the majority agree in true obedience to God.... **I do not hesitate to suppose the Angel to promise the arrival of a period when God should collect many disciples to Himself**, although at the beginning they should be very few and insignificant.... Yet God should gather to Himself a **great multitude**.... The sons of God shall soon become increased.... The Lord will **at length** cause **many to embrace it to their own salvation**....

"Men must wait for '**the** time, [**two**] times, and **half-a-time**'.... I have stated my **objection** to the **opinion** of those who think **one year and two and a half [years]**, to be here intended.... Its meaning is very simple. 'Time' means a **long period**; 'times,' a **longer period**.... The 'half-a-time' is **added** for the comfort of the pious, to prevent their sinking under the delay.... The sum of the whole is this — **many years must elapse** before God fulfils what His Prophet had declared.

"I **admit** the allusion to **years**.... The words are **not** to be understood **literally, but metaphorically**.... How sad is the dispersion of the Church in these days! God indeed defends it.... Yet the **end** would be **prosperous**.... **The Angel**, then, **purposely** puts '**days**' for **years**, implying...that time may seem **immeasurably prolonged**.... Yet it must be endured... **After** God has sufficiently proved the patience of His People...and has **humbled His Church** and **purged** it...the **end** shall arrive." See *Westminster Larger Catechism* 191.

³⁷⁹ Rev. 11:2f. See too n. 377.

³⁸⁰ Rev. 11:2,7; 12:6,12,14 & 13:5 cf. Dan. 7:25 & 12:7-12 & nn. 317 & 381. The "many others" who yet advocate the day-year theory of predictive fulfilment, include not only Dr. John Calvin (see his *Harmony of the Gospels*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, n.d., III:133f on Mt. 24:15), and his *Commentary on Daniel*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, II:378-93 on Dan. 12:4-13), but also Matthias Hoe, Daniel Cramer, Samuel Hutchinson, William Sherwin, Jacques Phillipot, Thomas Beverley, David Cressener, Heinrich Horch, Thomas Pyle, Samuel Langdon, James Purves, James Winthrop, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, the *Columbia Family Bible*, the *Cottage Bible*, William Jenks's *Comprehensive Bible*, and Brown's *Self-Interpreting Bible*. For further details of the 'day-year' principle of predictive fulfilment, see too nn. [‡] 54 & 381 & 522.

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Even more strongly, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments that "the '**days**' mean **whole years**, as in [Numbers 14:34 and] Ezekiel 4:5f and Daniel 9:24. Some compute the beginning of those years from the year 606, when the Bishop of Rome for the first time took over the title of Bishop of the whole Christian Church (which is peculiar only to Christ)."

The **Preterists**, however, take the 1260 'day-years' to mean regular days. Hence, they suppress its major prediction of the papal apostasy — and apply it instead exclusively to the three-and-a-half years during which the Pagan Romans besieged Judaistic Jerusalem between A.D. 66.5 and 70.

Yet, while the latter may well be the first root of this particular prediction — it is hardly the mature outgrowth. In context, **only** the **Classic Historicalist** or **Protestant** view of these verses against the **centuries-long papal desecration** of the **True Christian Church** — does proper **justice** to it.

Now this period of 1260 years of papal persecution of the Church, began inconspicuously in the early centuries. Then the 'downtreading' increased from the seventh and peaked in the thirteenth century — as the Papacy gradually rose to prominence. Yet that period began to end from the fourteenth through the twenty-first centuries — as the Papacy gradually dwindled and yet keeps on dwindling — whenever bravely challenged by the powerful preaching of the Word of God.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ Rev. chs. 10 to 11 *cf.* nn. 380 & 542 & 562 & 569 & 574 *etc.* It is instructive to note that Revelation chapter eleven predicts that the Christian Church as a whole would be kept in a 'Babylonian captivity' of 1260 'days' alias 3.5 "years" or 'half of seven years' —*cf.* the "three-and-a-half 'days'" in Rev. 11:2,3,9,11. This is perhaps reminiscent of the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity of Israel in the past. Lev. 26:28-35; II Chr. 36:1-23; Jer. 25:11f & 29:10; esp. Dan. 9:1f,21-27 & 8:10 & ch. 10 & 11:31,36 & 12:1,7,11. Yet in addition, just before the invention of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century A.D., the Romish Papacy itself was in a similar "Babylonian Captivity" and also for about seventy years. For from 1309-76, Romanism's Popes (or 'Anti-popes') were all French (*cf.* at Rev. 11:13). And the Papacy then operated not from Rome in Italy, but from Avignon in France.

Note too that the Papacy only gradually rose to power. It was about 1000 years from the first faint ecclesiastical assumption of the primacy of the Bishopric of Rome in purely ecclesiastical matters (Bishop Stephen in A.D. 257) —to the actual exercise of the papal claim to universal secular rulership too. At that latter time, a number of important events rapidly took place. The whole of England and Ireland were placed under papal interdict in 1208, and in 1209 John her King was excommunicated until in 1213 he gave the Pope "our Kingdoms of England and Ireland, with all their rights and dependencies, in order [for the Pope] to receive them [King John and England and Ireland] anew —as vassals of God and of the Roman Church." At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 —the Pope resolved to reconquer the Holy Land; physically to punish all unrepentant heretics; and to require Jews and Saracens to wear distinctive clothing while debarring them from holding any public office over Christians.

It was also about 1000 years from the full establishment of the power of the Roman Bishop (in 461) —to the Fall of Constantinople and the beginning of the Renaissance (in the latter half of the fifteenth century), during which total time the secular power of the Pope alternately waxed and waned *vis-a-vis* Islam and the regal European power-wielders of the Holy Roman Empire. For here, we should note: the Papacy's loss of Spain, Sardinia and Sicily; the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*; the claims of Pope Nicholas I; the papal crowning of Emperor Charlemagne; Emperor Otto's appointment of Pope Gerbert; the rule of the Papal Office by the nobility of Italy; the 1054 division between the Eastern and the Western Church; the power struggle between King Henry IV of Germany and Pope Gregory VII alias Hildebrand; the Turkish inroads into the Eastern Roman Empire; and the Crusades; *etc.*

Nevertheless, even throughout the time³⁸¹ of **maximum** papal persecution — Christ would still have His faithful 'Proto-Protestant' or 'Pre-Reformational' and 'Continuing-Christian'³⁸³ Preacher-Witnesses. For, as the Lord Himself declared to John: "I will give power to My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy — one thousand two hundred and sixty days."³⁸⁴

These "two witnesses" have been given various identities. Sometimes they have been associated with Enoch and Elijah; with the Law and the Prophets; or with the Old and the New Testaments.³⁸² Perhaps most commentators, however, associate these "two witnesses" with the testimony of Christian Ministers before³⁸² and at³⁸³ and after³⁸⁴ the Protestant Reformation — or alternatively with the witness of the Church of all ages.³⁸⁴

Again, a significant amount of time elapsed from the first setbacks received by the Papacy (namely the loss of his African and Asian churches to the Arabian and the Saracen Moslem armies from A.D. 620 onwards) — to the loss of the last Papal State in Italy during the 1860s. That time-lapse embraced about 1200 years.

While it is difficult to set an **exact** point of departure or an exact point of fulfilment for the 1260 years of the papal desecration of the Church, it is perhaps significant that exactly 1260 years elapsed between each of the major dates in the rise of the Papacy — and each of the major dates in the decline thereof. For example: 1260 years elapsed from A.D. 257 (the first time the primacy of the Bishopric of Rome was asserted in ecclesiastical matters) — and 1517 (the time of Luther's launching of the Protestant Reformation against that primacy). Another 1260 years elapsed between the issuing of the 533 *Donation of Justinian* and its enforcement in 538 (by which the State recognized the ecclesiastical primacy of the Bishopric of Rome), and 1793 (when Romanism was abolished in France) — and 1798 (when Napoleon's General imprisoned the Pope in Rome). Another 1260 years elapsed between the decree of Emperor Phocas and the first time the Bishop of Rome alone was called "Pope" (in 606-610) — and the Pope's loss of his last Papal State (in 1866-70). For further details, see our monograph on *The Earthly Fulfilment of Bible Prophecy in Our Own Time — What Will Happen by and at the Third Millennium* (Jesus Lives, 3 Kenya St., Wavell Heights, Q. 4012, Australia, 1981), at its paragraphs 47 to 54.

³⁸² Rev. 11:3-12 cf. 14:6-9 & nn. 376 & 400 & 633f. Tertullian, Hippolytus, Ambrose, Primasius, Gregory the Great, Haymo, Arethas, Beatus, Adso, Aquinas, Arnold of Villanova, Pierre Jean d'Olivi and Ubertino of Casale — all of them Pre-Reformation-al! — together with the Romanistic Bellarmine and Romanism's *Douay Bible*, all identify the two witnesses with the Biblical 'Proto-Protestants'(!) Enoch and Elijah. Bruno, Flaccius Illyricus, Funk, Napier, Galloway, C.D. Maitland, Frere, Park, Croly, John Hooper and William Jones here all identify the 'two witnesses' with "the Old and the New Testament." The *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes* here reminds its readers *inter alia* of "the Spirit and the Word." However, the Post-Reformation-al *Dordt Dutch Bible* and Adam Clarke and J.P. Lange *etc.* all identify the 'two witnesses' with Mediaeval Proto-Protestants and/or with Pre-Reformers such as Gottschalk, Joachim of Floris, Wycliffe, Huss, and Savanarola. Lenski identifies the 'two witnesses' as the "Reformation Preachers"; John Brown of Haddington and the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible* claim they are "witnesses against the Papacy"; Thomas Beverley is reminded of the "Martyrs"; and Joachim of Floris (1190 A.D.) feels that the 'two witnesses' are to be expected in the "next age." Most authorities, however, see the 'two witnesses' as "the Church of all ages" and/or "her Ministers." Thus Alcazar and Brightman equate the 'two witnesses' with "Christians." Tillinghast and Cressener and Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Thomas Newton and Thomas Scott equate them with the "True Church." Berengaud and Matthew Poole and Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke and Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary* and Carroll equate them with "Christian Ministers." And the *Geneva Bible* compares them to "Preachers like Governor Zerubbabel and Highpriest Joshua" (in Zech. chs. 3 to 4 & 6).

³⁸³ Rev. 11:3-12 cf. 14:6-9 & nn. 400 & 633.

³⁸⁴ Rev. 11:3.

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The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* here truly comments that by these witnesses "are to be understood several excellent Preachers whom God raised up at different times here and there in His Church — during this time of the kingdom of the Antichrist.... Such were Waldo and Peter Bruys in France; Wyclif and Purvey in England; John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia.... God was pleased to raise up Luther and Melanchthon in Germany; Zwingli and Oecolampadius in Switzerland; Farel and Calvin in France; and more others in their place — who finished off their testimony with more power, and caused to fall a large part of that 'Babylon' whose total fall and destruction shall be predicted hereafter."

Encouragingly, Christ told John that the harried Church would be **revived mightily** at the end of its 1260 day-year ordeal. This 'revival' can now be seen to have started to take place at the end of the True Church's 'Babylonian Captivity' for many centuries.

For in the Protestant Reformation and thereafter, the Church is more and more being gripped by the Word of God. Indeed, wherever Protestantism thrives — the Church is increasingly delivered from the power of the Papacy.

John indeed saw that the 'Outer Court[yard]' of the Church would be desecrated first by the Roman and then by the Romish "Gentiles." That is to say, the Mediaeval Church would be desecrated by the Romish Papists³⁷² (and also by repeated attacks from Moslems). Yet the Apostle was also given to understand that the Gentile 'Court[yard]' would be **outside** the **true** 'Temple of God' alias the **regenerate** Church.

So the Apostle John was to "leave out" [or even 'cast out'] the Gentile 'Court[yard].' He was **not** to measure **it**³⁸⁵ together with the 'Temple of God' as if it formed part of the True Church. For it was only a "sham church" or a "false church."

As Rev. Prof. Dr. Martin Luther pointed out:³⁸⁵ "The shameful Mohammed with his companions the Saracens...inflicted a great plague on the Church.... Along with this" comes "the 'holy' Papacy with its great 'spiritual' show — the masses. They [viz. both the Moslems and the Papists] lay hold upon the Temple...and start a **sham church** or **outward 'holy place.'**"

This is exactly how also John Calvin³⁸⁵ regarded Romanism. Yet the great Genius of Geneva did not regard Roman Catholicism as a **Non-Christian** religion (like Judaism or Islam). Nor did he regard Romanism as a legitimate branch of the True Church (such as Lutheranism or Presbyterianism). Instead, Calvin regarded Romanism as a 'false church' — *ecclesia falsa* — as God's Temple's 'Outer Court[yard]' **polluted** by the 'Gentiles' alias the Romish Papists.

³⁸⁵ Rev. 11:2 margin, cf. 21:15 & 22:15 ("dogs" = 'Gentiles' cf. Dt. 23:18 & Mt. 15:26 & II Pet. 2:22 cf. Jh. 12:48). See too Luther's 1545 *Second Preface to the Revelation of Saint John* (in *Works of Martin Luther*, Muhlenberg, Philadelphia, 1932, VI:483) and Calvin's *Inst.* IV:2:11f & IV:15:16f & IV:16:19f and his *Appendix to the Tract on the True Method of Reforming the Church* (in his *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958 ed., III:344f).

This is why John measured only "the Temple of God and the altar and those who worship there."³⁸⁶ He did **not** measure the 'Outer Court[yard]' desecrated by the Roman and/or Romish Gentiles³⁸⁵ (and also by the Moslem Gentiles).

Yet the final fulfilment of the prediction was sure. For **ultimately** the thus-measured and the thus-purged true Christian Church shall **grow**, till it is plenteously populated and the 'Holy City' of 'Jerusalem' shall be inhabited like towns without walls because of the **multitude** of men and cattle in it.³⁸⁷

O, that we also today would realize that the 'casting out' of desecrating persons from the bosom of our Lord's Church — ultimately **strengthens** her! It does not weaken her (even numerically).³⁸⁸ For the cleansing of the sanctuary of the Christian Church³⁸⁹ will **always** result — in her **revival!**³⁹⁰

Christ next revealed to John that the two true witnesses would faithfully and effectively testify about the Saviour's Lordship throughout the period of the Babylonian captivity of the 'Holy City.' They would continue to proclaim God's Word right there — in spite of the defilement of the Temple's 'Outer Court[yard]' by the Roman-Romish Gentiles.

It is difficult to reconcile the above from the Preterist point of view. For Christ Himself predicted that **all** Hebrew Christians would have **left** Jerusalem by 66.5 A.D. **before** the beginning of its besiegement and later destruction at the hands of the Romans. From the Historicalist point of view, however, the two witnesses who stay **within** the 'Jerusalem' of the Late-Mediaeval Church would very suitably represent Pre-Reformers like Wycliffe and Huss *etc.*

Thus the 'Outer Court[yard]' would be "given to the Gentiles.... The 'Holy City' [and 'Zion' of Christ's Church], they shall tread under foot — forty-two months. But I will give power to my two witnesses; and they shall prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, a thousand two hundred and sixty days."³⁹¹

Here we should think not merely of specific **Pre-Protestant** witnesses such as the Waldensians and Savanarola *etc.*³⁸² Nor should we think exclusively of specific witnesses among the early **Protestants**, such as Luther and Calvin and the early Lutherans and the early Calvinists.³⁸³ But here we should rather think of all the papally-unaccredited "sackcloth" Preachers like Enoch (even before the Great Flood) — and like Gottschalk (from the earliest rise of the Papacy in the past, right down to its uttermost fall in the yet-future).³⁸¹

³⁸⁶ Rev. 11:1 *cf.* II Cor. 6:16f & Heb. 10:19-22 & 13:10,15.

³⁸⁷ *Cf.* Rev. 11:1 with Zech. 2:1f,4 & I Tim. 3:15 with II Tim. 2:19-21 & Rev. 3:12-22.

³⁸⁸ Rev. 11:1,13b,15,19 *cf.* 7:4,9 & Ezek. 47:1f & I Cor. 3:6,16f.

³⁸⁹ Dan. 7:25 & 8:10-14 & 9:1f,21-27 & 11:31,36 & 12:1,7,11 *cf.* Mt. 21:43 & 34:15 & 27:53 & Lk. 21:24 & Rom. 11:16f & Heb. 12:22-24 & Rev. 3:12 & 11:2,8,15 & 21:1f,10-27.

³⁹⁰ Hab. 1:12f; 2:14-20; 3:1-4,19; Ps. 72; *cf.* n. 387.

³⁹¹ Rev. 11:2f *cf.* too n. 384.

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For all such God-sent Preachers received, or shall yet receive, God-given "power"³⁸¹ to 'prophesy' — that is, to declare the Word of God to all who will listen. In the power of the Holy Spirit, they are the flames — kept burning with God's supply of olive oil — which illuminate the Earth and emit the fiery judgment-preachings of God in the midst of a sin-darkened people.³⁹² **Post tenebras, lux**³⁹³ — 'after the darkness' of Romanism, comes 'the light' of the Reformation!

Preaching the **Law** and the **Prophecies**,³⁹⁴ these two 'Protestant' witnesses "**pro-test**" or "witness **for**" the truth. They declare the Law, **like Moses**;³⁹⁵ and the Prophecies, **like Elijah**.³⁹⁶ They promise salvation to all those who heed and they promise destruction to all those who disobey — their God-given messages.³⁹⁷

As the *Geneva Bible* comments: "By the 'two witnesses' he means all the Preachers that would build up God's Church — alluding to Zerubbabel and Jehoshua. They were appointed chiefly for this thing — and also to the saying 'In the mouth of two witnesses, every word stands!'"³⁹¹

May we too, then, faithfully continue this twofold witness of promoting the message of the **Law** and the **Prophets**! May we do so — even today!

Now the Non-Christian religions (represented by Judaism and Islam) and the false ecclesiastical establishment (represented by the Romish Papacy and the icon-honouring Eastern-"Orthodox" communions)³⁹⁸ — are **never able to silence** the testimony of Christ's true 'Protestant' emissaries for the Word of God. For, although **desiring** to expunge that testimony — Judaism and Islam and the Papists and the Eastern-"Orthodox" (as instruments in the '**left**' hand of God) can ultimately **only promote it** (yet **unwillingly and unwittingly**).

Meantime, we are told about "the Beast that ascends from the bottomless pit." This probably represents the power of various anti-christian politico-religious establishments (including Islam), but also and especially the Romish Papacy. Thus the *Geneva Bible* comments — as too do many other authorities — that 'the Beast' who comes out of the 'bottomless pit' is "the Pope, who has his power from hell and who comes thence."³⁹⁸ So too Albert Barnes.

³⁹² Rev. 11:4f *cf.* Zech. 4:2-6 & Rev. 1:10,13,21 & 2:1,13 & 5:6 with Phil. 2:15.

³⁹³ This is the motto of Calvin's Geneva, to this very day.

³⁹⁴ *Cf.* Isa. 8:19f; Lk. 24:27,41; Rom. 16:25f; I Pet. 1:10f; II Pet. 1:16-21; I Jh. 3:4; Rev. 14:6-12f; 15:3f; 19:10; 22:6-19.

³⁹⁵ Rev. 11:6b *cf.* Ex. 7:20 & chs. 10 to 20.

³⁹⁶ Rev. 11:6a *cf.* I Kgs. 17:1,7.

³⁹⁷ Rev. 11:5f,11-13 *cf.* Dt. chs. 29 to 33 & I Kgs. chs. 17 to II Kgs. ch. 2.

³⁹⁸ Rev. 11:7 *cf.* 8:10-12 & 9:1f & 12:3 to 13:18 (& esp. 13:11f) & 16:10 to 17:16 & 19:20. For the correlation between Rev. 11:7's "Beast" that "ascends out of the bottomless pit" (*cf.* 17:8) and Rev. 13:1f's "Beast" in association with Rev. 13:1's "Beast" as the Antichrist or the Papacy — *cf.* nn. 581 & 589 & 611.

It is also true that this "Beast shall make war against" Christ's true emissaries, and "shall overcome them and kill them."³⁹⁸ Yet the bodies of Christ's true witnesses do **not remain** in the Romish Babylon or on the street of "the great city which spiritually is called 'Sodom-and-Egypt' where also our Lord was crucified."³⁹⁹

What, then, is this 'Sodom-and-Egypt'? It is not actually either the city of Sodom nor the land of Egypt — nor both together. For our Lord was crucified neither in the actual Sodom nor in the actual Egypt, but in the actual Jerusalem. Nor does the inspired John say Christ was crucified in the actual Sodom — nor in the actual Egypt. To the contrary. The inspired John clearly says that the place where our Lord was crucified is not actually but rather "spiritually" indeed "called 'Sodom-and-Egypt.'"

Now the righteous Lot did not remain in Sodom. Nor did either Moses or God's Ancient People remain in Egypt. Nor during the first century did the true Hebrew Christians remain in the 'Sodom-and-Egypt' of the judaized Jerusalem "where also our Lord was crucified." Nor did Gentile Christians later remain in the islamized 'Egypt' of the Dark Ages. And neither would God's true witnesses remain in the "Sodom" and "Egypt" and "Babylon" and Pseudo-Jerusalem of Papal Rome "where also the Lord was crucified" and keeps on being crucified afresh by Romish priests every time they celebrate their so-called 'mass' several times a day.⁴⁰⁰

God's true People, then, do not remain in the papal Sodom-and-Egypt. For there one finds especially its 'mass'-ive ongoing crucifixion and *de facto* **re**-crucifixion of the Saviour.

The great Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of Rev. John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Rev. Dr. William Whittingham, here makes some extremely luminous comments. It says that the great city which spiritually is called 'Sodom-and-Egypt' means "the whole jurisdiction of the **Pope**. This is compared to Sodom, for their abominable sin — and to Egypt, because the true liberty to serve God is taken away from the faithful. And Christ was condemned by Pilate, who represented the Roman power which would be[come] enemy to the godly."³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Rev. 11:8, cf. nn. 377 & 379f & 400.

⁴⁰⁰ Rev. 11:8 cf. 2:9,20; Jh. 3:9,12; Mt. 24:15; II Th. ch. 2; Rev. 9:1f,14f; 13:1-10; 14:8f; 16:10-13; 17:3-9,15-18; 18:2-21; 19:20; cf. n. 353. On the various attempts to identify this "Sodom and Egypt" of Rev. ch. 11 — see the *opera citata* of Greijvenstein, Schonfeld, Vanderwaal and Cohen. On different occasions prior to the fulfilment of Rev. ch. 11, the 'great city' where 'also our Lord was crucified' may indeed have been each of the cities of Sodom and Egypt (and also Babylon and Jerusalem) — quite 'literally' or actually. Yet the 'great city...spiritually called Sodom and Egypt' mentioned in Rev. ch. 11 is especially Rome as the ecumenical city as such (alias 'pagan-to-papal' Rome). Now Rome was the great ecumenical capital city of the Roman Empire of John's own day — and also throughout its later development, from the time of the pagan Roman Empire down through the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy and right down to the inception of the modern European Common Market by virtue of the 1948 *Treaty of Rome*. John's statement that 'they of the people and kindreds and tongues and Nations' shall see the two witnesses, is especially meaningful when seen through the searching eyes and the wily intelligence services of the Romish Vatican. Cf. Rev. 11:7-9 & 13:1f,11f.

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Also the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* here comments that "by this, the city of **Rome** is to be understood. That is sufficiently enough declared by the Angel himself in Revelation 17:9-18. It is 'spiritually'...called 'Sodom' on account of the immorality which is settled there; 'Egypt' on account of its suppression of God's People; and 'where also our Lord was crucified' because just as **Christ** Himself was crucified by the Roman Stadtholder, He is also yet today similarly being crucified in His Members by the **Romish** hierarchy."³⁹⁹

So God's children and His true witnesses **do not remain** within the Romish Babylon and the Papacy's Sodom-and-Egypt. At the end of the 1260 years — Barnes asserts at the Lateran Council in 1513 — the True Church "dies" temporarily. But three-and-a-half "days" or day-years later, during 1517, the True Church is resurrected from the dead at the start of the Reformation.⁴⁰¹

Accordingly, at the dawn of the Protestant Reformation, the True People of God's previous 1260 "**years**"-long testimony lives again — in 1517. It is revived or resurrected, and powerfully strengthened, by "the Spirit of life from God" only three-and-a-half day-**years** after their 1514 "death."⁴⁰¹ Then, after 1517, it even **continues** — right down throughout all subsequent Church History. For the blood of the martyrs is indeed the seed of the Church.

For John then further explains that "after three-and-a-half days, the Spirit of life from God entered into them. And they stood upon their feet. And great fear fell upon those who saw them."⁴⁰¹

Hence, after fully **1260 years** of testimony for Christ, there arrives just a few "days" of silence — from 1514 until 1517. But this would soon be followed by an age-long and indestructible testimony — for the truth of the most holy Word of God.

Explained Jesus to John: "My two witnesses...ascended into Heaven with a cloud. Then their enemies beheld them. And the same hour there was a great earthquake. And the tenth part of the city fell, and seven thousand men were slain.... But the rest⁴⁰² [alias the nine-tenths of the city left over after the slaying of seven thousand of its inhabitants] were terrified — and **gave glory to the God of Heaven.**"³⁶⁹

⁴⁰¹ Rev. 11:11. The three-and-a-half 'days' or day-years of Rev. 11:9-11, in contradistinction to the previous 1260 years, is but a "short time" (thus the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Henry, and J.P. Lange). Also Rev. Prof. Dr. J. Barton Payne correctly contrasts what he calls the "short defeat" of the two witnesses in Rev. 11:7-11's 'three-and-a-half days' —with what he calls the "effective proclamation" of the witnesses in Rev. 11:3-6. See his *Revelation in Sequence*, Lithocolor Press, Westchester Ill., 1972, p. 39, n. 65. (see n. 382).

Many Commentators equate these three-and-a-half 'days' with specifically three-and-a-half years. Thus Victorinus, Tichonius, Berengaud, Adso, Bruno, Peter Comester, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, and Albert Barnes. The latter even focuses those three-and-a-half years specifically on the "Reformation years" between 1514 as their "death" and 1517 as their "resurrection" and thus as those years 1514 and 1517 being the 'two witnesses' of the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, Barnes also insists that Rev. 11:11's "resurrection" and even Rev. 11:12's "ascension" of the 'two witnesses' is not a physical revivification and still less a physical ascent from our Earth into Heaven above, but rather a spiritual exaltation to a better status in this present World. Cf. too nn. 382 & 400 and esp. the citation from Payne in our previous paragraph.

⁴⁰² Note both here and elsewhere that the word "remnant" not necessarily implies a minority. It may very well represent even a majority (cf. Rev. 12:5,17 and esp. n. 574).

Now this Protestant "revival" of true witnessing for God's Word⁴⁰³ some time **after** the apparent "death" of such witnessing for a mere three-and-a-half "days" or years (following the end of the 1260 "days" or years),⁴⁰⁴ has four important results. First, it **rejuvenates a "dead" Protestantism** with the bold prophetic Spirit of the living God — and infuses great fear into its opponents.⁴⁰⁵ Second, **it exalts Protestantism** to a position of 'heavenly' rulership **over the Earth** in the presence of its enemies.⁴⁰⁶ Third, it is accompanied by an earthquake-judgment from God which slays only "seven thousand men" and **destroys barely one-tenth of the great city** of the 'Holy Roman Empire' (*sic*) or "the power of Antichrist" (thus the *Geneva Bible*).⁴⁰⁷ And fourth, it then seems to **convert** the remaining nine-tenths to **Protestantism**.

⁴⁰³ Rev. 10:9-11; 11:3-6,9-121 & II Chr. 7:12,14 & Isa. 1:4,10,18,21,26 *cf.* n. [‡] 401.

⁴⁰⁴ Rev. 11:2-7,11-13.

⁴⁰⁵ Rev. 11:11-13.

⁴⁰⁶ Rev. 11:12.

⁴⁰⁷ Rev. 11:13, *cf.* n. 377.

In the early Middle Ages, Charles Martel of France stopped the advance of the Moslems into Northwestern Europe, and Charlemagne of France was the chief builder of the Holy Roman Empire. Toward the end of the Middle Ages, the great earthquake of 1300 destroyed much of the city of Rome (which the great 1590 Protestant Reformer Francis Junius saw as a large part of the fulfilment of Rev. 11:13). Then, just before the Pre-Reformation, from 1309 to 1373 all of Romanism's Popes and Anti-popes were French and ruled from Avignon in France rather than from Rome in Italy. Indeed, even the 1637 *Dordt Dutch Bible* declares that the verse Rev. 11:13 predicts that "a big part of the Romish and antichristian dominion would apostasize from the Antichrist." See too, similarly: Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Joseph Priestley, Adam Clarke, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*, and Albert Barnes. They all regard the Protestant Reformation of Rev. 11:11f as responsible for the 'earthquake' which shook up Rome in Rev. 11:13 (and which ultimately 'earthquaked' Romanism in France).

On the other hand, the 'earthquake' also seems to refer to the actions of France herself —especially of the French Anti-popes, and of the later French Revolution of 1789. That de-romanized France —being 'one-tenth' of the 'City' or Commonwealth of the Holy Roman Empire with its ten "Toes" or ten "Horns" or ten "Kingdoms" or 'countries.' Dan. 2:41f & 7:7-24 & Rev. 13:1f & 17:3-17 *cf.* nn. 377 & 714 & 720. Moreover, it is arguable that only Wesley and Whitefield saved Britain (and America?) from themselves being atheized under the impact of the ungodly French Revolution.

From Rev. 11:13 & 16:13-19 & 17:7-16, the 1789 French Revolution was accurately predicted by: Archbishop Brown (1551), John Knox (1572), John Cotton (1639), Brightman (1644), Love (1651), Archbishop Ussher (1655), Durham (1657), Mede (1660), Henry More (1680), Goodwin (1683), Jurieu (1687), Phillipot (1687), Cradock (1696), Fleming (1701), Mather (1710), Whiston (1706), Vitringa (1719), Daubuz (1720), Robertson (1730), Willison (1742), Lowman (1745), Gill (1748), and Bishop Thomas Newton (1748). **After** the French Revolution, Theologians recognizing it as the fulfilment of Rev. 11:13, include the following: Priestley, Bicheno, King, Valpy, Daubuz, Simpson, Thube, Galloway, Dwight, Lathrop, Hopkins, Winchester, Elliott, Linn, Cunninghamame, Spalding, Austin, Bell, J.H. Livingston, Farnham, the *Christian Observer*, Keith, Faber, Lord, Scott, Fuller, Allen, Clarke, Toovey, Boudinot, Armstrong, Maitland, Croly, Burwell, Bickersteth, Jenks, Crandall, Barnes, and very many others.

On the French Revolution and its results, see too: L. Gentz & S. Possony's *Three Revolutions* (Regnery, Chicago, 1959); V.I. Lenin's *Can Jacobinism Frighten the Working Class?* (in his *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961 ed., Vol 25, p. 121); I.J.G.J.C. Nieuwenhuis's *Threat to the West* (Wever, Franeker, I-V, 1962f); L.E. Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Review & Herald, Washington, I-IV, 1950f); and F.N. Lee's *Communist Eschatology* (Craig, Nutley N.J., 1974).

God's Two loyal Witnesses prophesy on a Wide Scale for many Days

On this rejuvenation of a "dead" Protestantism the *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments that the slain "two witnesses" were to be followed by "the **greater power** and glorifying of those witnesses by those who replace them. The latter in turn are followed by yet others who are strengthened also by the power of the civil government in [Lutheran] Germany, [Huguenot] France, [Puritan] England, [Presbyterian] Scotland, [Calvinistic] Switzerland, the [Reformed] Netherlands, and other parts of the World — notwithstanding all the force of the Antichrist. This has...been accomplished and is **still being perfected.**"

The "great earthquake" is associated by some, with the 1300 A.D. great earthquake in Rome. Indeed, from 1309-76, Romanism's Popes (or 'Anti-popes') were all **French** and then operated not from Rome in Italy — but **from Avignon in France.** That was certainly 'earth-shattering.'

Yet because it is said to occur "at the same time" as the 'ascension' of the two faithful 'witnesses' — many Theologians have identified it with the later and much greater "earthquake" of the Anti-Romish Protestant Reformation of 1517f. And truly, the Protestant Reformers⁴⁰⁷ indeed did shake up Romanism and its Papacy as never before.

Yet others have seen a further fulfilment of the "great earthquake" in the very different and Anti-Christian **French Revolution** of 1789. Indeed, France was one of the ten Horns or Kingdoms of the Neo-Roman Empire.⁴⁰⁷ The 1789 French Revolution not only atheized France and polluted many other lands, but it also soon led even to the imprisonment of the Pope in his own Vatican.

There is no doubt that all three of those events very much shook up both Romanism and its Papacy. For such was especially the progressive impact of the 1300 earthquake in Rome; the 1517f Protestant Reformation; and the 1789 French Revolution.

A century **before** the French Revolution, already Jacques Phillipot wrote in his 1687 *Clarifications of St. John's Revelation*: "As the King of France did his utmost to enhance the glory of Popery — it will be the King[dom] of France who shall mostly contribute to her ruin.... The city here mentioned is Babylon — that is the Papal Empire, the Church of Rome, the Empire of the Antichrist...."

"France is one of the ten horns of the Beast, one of the ten Kingdoms which would be formed according to Daniel out of the debris of the Roman Empire.... According to St. John, she would rise at the same time with the Beast.... The French monarchy, like all the neighbouring states, was established upon the ruins of the Roman Empire and grew at the same time as the Bishop of Rome.... **France** is a place and a part of the **City**; that is, of the **Papal Empire.**"

Contemporarily with Phillipot, also Pierre Jurieu asked in his 1687 *Accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies* (II ch. 13): "What is this 'tenth' part of this City which shall fall? In my opinion, we cannot doubt that it is **France.** This **Kingdom** is the most considerable **part** or piece of the **ten Horns** or **states** which once made up the great **Babylonian City** [of Rome]...."

"Who must begin this last revolt? ... **France** shall.... It cannot be any country but **France** —which a long time ago has begun to **shake off the yoke of Rome**.... The **tenth part of the City** which must fall —is **France**."

Still 41 years **before** the French Revolution, also Bishop Thomas Newton in his celebrated *Dissertations on the Prophecies* (III:380) insisted during 1748: "Rome, therefore will finally be destroyed by some of the princes.... As the Kings of **France** have contributed greatly to her advancement —it is not...improbable that some time or other they may also be the principal authors of her destruction. **France** has already shown some tendency towards a reformation — and therefore may appear more **likely** to **effect** such a **revolution**."

After the **French Revolution**, many Theologians recognized **it** as one of the **chief** fulfilments of Revelation 11:13. Such included also: Joseph Priestley, Timothy Dwight, Samuel Hopkins, G.S. Faber, Thomas Scott, Andrew Fuller, Adam Clarke, Edward Bickersteth, and Albert Barnes.

In his 1806 *Dissertation on the Prophecies* (II:40f) Faber wrote: "In the year 1789, the 'earthquake' commenced, and in it fell a tenth part...of the great Roman city.... The **French Revolution alone** can be intended in this prediction.... Titles of nobility in general would be abolished or slain by **the earthquake** of the French Revolution.... Archbishops and Bishops...the same."

Also the Presbyterian Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia commented on Revelation 11:13f and 16:2f: "No events have ever taken place in history that would better be compared with the shock of an **earthquake**, than those which occurred when the long-established governments of Europe and especially the domination of the Papacy so long consolidated and confirmed, were shaken by the **Reformation**.... We should expect to find such a **series** of calamities, gradually weakening and finally terminating the papal power in the World.... The **French Revolution**...in the overthrow of the papal power...has more plausibility than any other explanation proposed....

"France in the time of Charlemagne was the Kingdom to which the Papacy owed its civil organization and its strength.... This Kingdom would be referred to, in the series of judgments that were to accomplish the overthrow of the papal dominion....

"The state [or condition] of Europe has been determined by the condition of France. 'A **revolution in France**,' said Napoleon, 'is sooner or later followed by a **revolution in Europe**'....

"The scenes which occurred in the times of the French Revolution...well represent the moral corruption, the pollution, the infidelity, the atheism, the general dissolution of society.... That was a universal breaking out of loathsome internal disease...extending over the countries where the Beast and his image were principally worshipped.

"The symbol would properly denote that tremendous outbreak of social and moral evil, of **democratic fury**, atheism and vice, which was specially seen to characterize **the French Revolution**.... The ultimate source was in the long and deep-seated corruption and **irreligion** of the Nation, the outward **Jacobin clubs**, and seditious and **atheistic publications** — the result, the dissolution of all society...and all religion....

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"From France as a centre, it spread like a plague through its affiliated societies to the **other countries** of '**Papal Christendom**'.... All the infidelity and **atheism** of the **French Nation** — before so strongly papal — went...far in **weakening** the power of the **Papacy**.... The horrid outbreaks in the **French Revolution** — were the first in the **series** of providential events that will **result in the entire overthrow of that Antichristian Power.**"

From an atheistic point of view, Marx wrote an appreciative tract *On the French Revolution*. Also Lenin (in his *Can Jacobinism Frighten the Working Class?*) declared that the "Jacobinism" of the French Revolution is "one of the highest **peaks** in the emancipation struggle of an oppressed class.

"**The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution.**" Modern Communism or 'Jacobinism' in Europe and in Asia during the twentieth century was to be "**the rule of the revolutionary class...for advancing Socialism**" alias "all the great, ineradicable, unforgettable things provided by the Jacobins in the eighteenth century." Thus Lenin.

For the bloody French Revolution of 1789 — quite unlike the reformatory American *Declaration of Independence* of 1776 — was thoroughly atheistic. It tried to abolish God and the Christian Sunday. It is provably the forerunner of both nineteenth-century "**Democratic Socialism**" and the twentieth-century **Communist Revolution** of 1917 in Russia and all of its succeeding communist revolutions in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Red China.

However, all these things ultimately result in the apparent **conversion** to **Christ** of nine-tenths alias all of the **rest** of the great city of civilized Western Europe. Thus the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Albert Barnes, and Rev. Prof. Dr. E.W. Hengstenberg.⁴⁰⁷

The *Geneva Bible* here comments that when they shall understand by God's Word the glory of His [Name] and the punishment of His enemies — **they shall fall [away] from the Pope, and glorify God.**"³⁶⁹ Also the *Dordt Dutch Bible* here comments that "**a large part of the Romish and Anti-Christian hier-archy falls away from the Antichrist**"; and many Romish priests become Protestants.

On Revelation 11:2 and 11:13, Hengstenberg comments: "The **Temple** is **preserved**, and only the **Court** is **given up**.... The non-desolation of the **Temple** includes in itself the non-desolation of the **City**" alias the Commonwealth of Western Civilization. "That this is to be thought of as **not destroyed**, is evident besides from verse 13 — according to which **only the tenth part** of the City falls.... **The rest** give God the glory, and are consequently **preserved.**"

Matthew Henry and Albert Barnes argue that this implies "**conversion.**" B.H. Carroll applies this to the blessed arrival of the Protestant Reformation — and all of its glorious results. May God be pleased to encourage **us** too, similarly — also in our own day and age!

At this point, it may well be asked whether John himself understood the **full** significance of the *Book of Revelation* in general and especially of all of these justmentioned predictions in particular. Very probably he did **not**.

Before John, Daniel too did not understand all of his own recorded predictions — and John drew heavily on Daniel. Hence, it is doubtful whether John understood **all** of the meaning of the *Book of Revelation of Jesus Christ* (even though that Apostle himself received and recorded it).

Christ in His vision to John on Patmos told that Apostle to measure the Temple and the altar and its worshippers with a reed. Here, John may indeed have thought about the first-century A.D. Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

Too, when Jesus told John that the Gentiles would trample down the holy city for forty-two months (alias three-and-a-half years) — John probably connected that with the three-and-a-half years' siege of Jerusalem at the hands of the pagan Romans. For he certainly knew that this siege was about to take place (if as we believe he was writing just beforehand) — or that the latter had taken place (if he was writing even several decades after that event).

Similarly, Christ told John that the Beast would make war against the two faithful witnesses and kill them. Here, John probably understood this to mean the Pagan Roman Beast's destruction by fire of the writings and proclaimers of the Law and the Prophets in the great Sodom-and-Gomorrhah city of Jerusalem — where the Lord Jesus had Himself been crucified during that very same generation.⁴⁰⁸

Again, Christ told John that those same witnesses would rise from the dead after three-and-a-half days and ascend into Heaven while the city fell and the remnant repented. Here, John doubtless understood this to mean that after the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem by the pagan Romans — the Law and the Prophets would (like Jesus) rise from the dead and live again in the ongoing testimony of the Christian Church as the God-fearing New Testament Israel and the ever-expanding remnant of the true People of God everywhere.

Yet, **at the deeper level**, Christ's *Book of Revelation* obviously goes **far beyond** John's own understanding of his own vision anent the predictions regarding the temple.⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, it is our own conviction that most of these predictions — like those God gave to Daniel in **that** Prophet's own earlier day⁴⁰⁸ — were **centrally** to be fulfilled only **many centuries after** John's own time (namely from the times of the rise of Islam and the Papacy right down to the period of the Protestant Reformation and way beyond).⁴⁰⁸

This is what we have outlined above in the preceding paragraphs. And this is what we shall elaborate in greater detail in the following pages of the rest of this present work.

⁴⁰⁸ Dan. 7:27f; 8:27; 10:5f; 12:6-10; Rev. 1:13f; 10:1f; 7:13f; 10:4,11 to 11:1f; 17:15-18; 19:15; 21:10,15-17; 22:6-10. Cf. too nn. 581 & 610f with Rev. 11:7 & 12:3,9,13 & 13:1f,11 & 14:8,11 & 15:2 & 16:10,12,19 & 17:1-5 & 18:2,10,21 & 19:2.

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O Christian, may we too (as truly Pro-testant witnesses for the Word of God) not only prophesy to many Nations and peoples and Kings⁴⁰⁹ — **for** our Saviour, and **against** the false-prophecies of Islam and the Papacy!⁴¹⁰ But may we also assuredly know that true Protestantism, however low its influence may have sunk in our own day, is **indestructible** and certain yet again to **revive!**

For in God's good time it will once again, as it were rise, from the dead — in the power of the Holy Spirit. It will not only stand on its own two feet (of the Law and the Prophets). But it will even go forward to **gain the ascendancy**. Under God, it will yet **rule the World** — till all God's enemies are either destroyed or converted, and until all men everywhere give glory to the God of Heaven.⁴¹¹

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

⁴⁰⁹ Rev. 10:11 & 11:3,7-10.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. n. 400 and Rev. 10:11 & 11:3-13 & 12:10-12 & 14:6-12 & 15:1-4 & 16:10-17 & 17:14 & 18:2-4 & 19:1f,13-21. Cf. too Rev. 11:13 with Ps.72 & II Th. 2:8,15 & 3:1f & Rev. 12:11.

⁴¹¹ Rev. 11:13.

The Kingdom of the World becomes that of God's Christ

Revelation 11:14-19

December 14

"And the seventh Angel sounded [his trumpet]. Then there were great voices in Heaven, saying: 'The kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!'"⁴¹²

Christ had just predicted: the birth of Romanism; the rise of Islam; the tyranny of the Vatican; the genesis of the Protestant Reformation; and the gradual destruction of the Papacy.⁴¹³ Next, John was told that "the second woe is past. But behold, the third woe comes quickly."⁴¹⁴

This seems to mean that after the first woe or the destruction wrought by Mohammad and his Moslem Arabs, and the second woe or the frightful waxing and the later merciful waning of the power of the Islamic Turks⁴¹⁵ — the third woe would come "quickly."⁴¹⁶ This does not mean, preteristically, that it would come during John's own lifetime. It means, historicalistically, that when it finally came (only many centuries later), it would come hastily.

Now the zenith of papal power occurred soon after the zenith of Turkish power. So this third woe, we submit, was and is the persecution inflicted by the Papacy and her allies during the time of her ascendancy⁴¹⁷ before her decline and gradual though ongoing destruction.

⁴¹² Rev. 11:15: "**the kingdom has become.**" The Greek phrase used, here has "the kingdom" (*hee basileia*, singular); not 'kingdoms' (plural), as in the *KJV*. This means "**the whole** of the kingdom-of-the-World-as-such" —and not a 'non-material' and a 'purely-spiritual' (*sic*) Kingdom-of-God in this World (yet essentially alien to it)! Again, the Greek phrase actually used, here reads: "the kingdom of the World" (*tou Kosmou*), and not 'the kingdoms of this World' (as wrongly rendered in the *KJV*). Accordingly, the Greek phrase actually used means "the kingdom of the World which God created" —and not 'the evil kingdoms of this present sinful age or world-age.' Again, the Greek phrase here has "the kingdom of the World has become" (*egeneto*), and not just 'are become' (as wrongly in the *KJV*). For this *egeneto* is a strong aorist verb-form, indicating in this context not only that the fulfilment of this promise is as certain to occur as if it had already happened —but also that it will have happened fully here on Earth, by the time when the "great voices in Heaven" utter these words. †

⁴¹³ Cf. our studies for December 11 to 13.

⁴¹⁴ Rev. 11:14.

⁴¹⁵ Rev. ch. 9, cf. perhaps also 16:12f & 19:20.

⁴¹⁶ Rev. 11:14 & 9:12. On Rev. 11:14's "quickly" —see n. 12.

⁴¹⁷ Rev. 9:1f,14 & 11:2,7 cf. chs. 13 & 17 with 16:10-13.

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First. Just as the initial woe marked the total result of the sounding of the fifth trumpet⁴¹⁸ and the second woe apparently marked the total result of the sounding of the sixth trumpet,⁴¹⁹ so too does the third woe apparently mark the total result of the sounding of the seventh trumpet.⁴²⁰ However, just as the opening of the seventh seal of the Lamb's book of history did not immediately bring in the Final Judgment but only anticipated its arrival⁴²¹ — so too does the sounding of the seventh trumpet **not immediately** bring in the Final Judgment, but only anticipates its certain occurrence.⁴²²

Accordingly, we should not think that the final judgment is already at hand as soon as the seventh trumpet is blown. For that seventh trumpet is blown as a **warning** about the **temporal** judgments (**and** blessings) — which are still to come, **thereafter**.⁴²³

An even further time will elapse after that. And **all** of the above would occur — **before** the end of the Earth's History, and the **Final** Judgment.⁴²⁴

Mauro says:⁴²⁵ "At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the silence is broken.... There is so to speak a **mighty shout** proceeding from 'great voices in Heaven' which announce the **downfall** of the rebel Kingdoms of this World."

Bengel says: "As soon as the seventh Angel sounds, the kingdom of this World becomes the Lord's and His Christ's — forever. It is **only in Heaven**, however, that this takes place so **immediately**.... In Heaven alone is it celebrated with joy. For **dreadful** things are **still** to intervene on **Earth**."⁴²⁵

Yet the "beginning"⁴²⁵ of the sounding of the seventh trumpet does indeed indicate the termination of the "mystery" alias the unexplained meaning of the seven "thunders."⁴²⁶ Now, their meaning is disclosed.

Thus begins the destruction of the scourge of the Islamic Turks. Thus too commences also the destruction of the "mystery" of "Babylon" alias the false and papal Romanistic politico-religious domination of this World. Indeed, such destruction is to be accomplished precisely through the means of the subsequently-described seven bowls or vials of the wrath of God.⁴²⁶

⁴¹⁸ Rev. 8:13 & 9:1,12.

⁴¹⁹ Rev. 9:12 *cf.* 11:14f & 10:7.

⁴²⁰ Rev. 8:13 *cf.* 10:7 & 11:14f,18f.

⁴²¹ Rev. 8:1,2,5 *cf.* 8:7-11 & 11:15,19 & 16:17f & 20:11-15.

⁴²² Rev. 10:3-7; 11:15,19 & 16:17f & 20:11-15.

⁴²³ Rev. 8:2,7-12 & 9:1 to 11:15 *cf.* n. 422.

⁴²⁴ *Cf.* n. 423. Even after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, many events must still take place before the arrival of the Final Judgment. *Cf.*: Rev. 16:18-21 & 17:5,15-18 & 18:2 to 19:21 & 20:3b,7-15.

⁴²⁵ Rev. 10:7a & 11:15a *cf.* Mauro & Bengel (in Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 359 & 356f).

⁴²⁶ Rev. 10:7a-b *cf.* vv. 3f & 5f & 11:15-19 & 15:5f & nn. 400 & 427. Lord and Cunninghame claim that the seventh trumpet heralds the arrival of the French Revolution as a prelude to the destruction of Romanism and the arrival of a time of great earthly blessing. Matthew Poole claims that Rev. 11:15's seventh trumpet destroys Babylon by means of the seven bowls or vials (Rev. 11:15-19 & 15:5f & 16:12-19), and also announces the arrival of earthly blessings thereafter (*cf.* Isa. chs. 24 & 26 & 27 & 66 and Dan. 7:11f and Mal. 3:4). *Cf.* Too n. 427.

Furthermore, the sounding of the seventh trumpet **also** announces the subsequent drawing nigh of the World's **Golden Jubilee** — after the destruction of 'Babylon.'⁴²⁶ Thus Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Thomas Scott, William Cunninghame, and B.H. Carroll.

For it is precisely after the powerful Protestant preaching of Christ's Gospel throughout the World, "**that there would no longer be a time**" of **delay**. But in the days of the voice of the **seventh** Angel [yet to come], when he shall **begin** to sound [his trumpet], the **mystery** of God would be **finished**."⁴²⁷

Indeed, as the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "Albeit Satan by the Pope, Turk, and other instruments troubles the World never so much — yet Christ shall reign!"⁴²⁷ He reigns now. And He will keep on expanding that reign — especially then, after the blowing of the seventh trumpet.

For then, great voices in Heaven keep on saying something very important. They say: 'The kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!'"⁴¹²

Third. It was only **after** the blowing of the seventh trumpet, that John heard the above message of those great voices in Heaven.⁴²⁷

As John himself wrote: "The seventh Angel **sounded**" or **finished sounding the trumpet** (*esalpisen*). **Then** "there **were** (*kai egenonto*) great voices in Heaven, saying: 'The kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall keep on reigning (*basileusei*) for ever and ever!'"⁴²⁸

This indicates that these "great voices in Heaven" were **not** commenting on the **immediate** results right at the **beginning** of the blowing of the seventh trumpet.⁴²⁵ To the contrary. They were rather commenting on the **ultimate** result at the **ending**⁴²⁹ of the blowing of that trumpet.⁴³⁰

Fourth. It is very important to note that all these heavenly voices were **not** referring to the situation in **Heaven**. To the contrary. They were referring to the **situation right here on Earth** — to an **alteration** of the kingdom or the **sovereignty** (*basileia*) of "**the World**" (or *tou Kosmou*).⁴³¹ For John here heard "voices...saying: 'The kingdom of **the World** has become that of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!'"⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Rev. 11:15-18 & 14:8-19 & 16:10 to 19:6 & 10:6f, and *cf.* nn. 362f. See too at n. 425. Regarding Earth's 'Golden Jubilee' referred to in our own text here, *cf.* nn. 424-426 with Lev. 23:24-28 & 25:8-13 & Zech. 14:9-21.

⁴²⁸ Rev. 11:15 *cf.* Ps. 103:19 & n. 412.

⁴²⁹ *Cf.* nn. 421-424.

⁴³⁰ Thus even the Futurist G.G. Cohen (*op. cit.* pp. 115-17). The powerful statement made by the great voices in Heaven at the blowing of the seventh trumpet — "The kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord" *etc.* (in Rev. 11:15-18) — is **proleptic** (anticipatory). This statement, like many predictions of old (*e.g.* Isa. ch. 53), is made with the absolute confidence that it certainly will be **fulfilled**. Accordingly, the statement treats things which have not yet fully occurred as if they were currently present or even already past. See J.B. Smith: *A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Herald Press, Scottsdale, 1961, pp. 149 & 157.

⁴³¹ Rev. 11:15's *hee basileia* means: sovereignty. Thus D. Brown's *Christ's Coming — Will It Be Premillennial?* (Johnstone & Hunter, Edinburgh, 1849, pp. 237 & 345 & 396).

⁴³² Rev. 11:15's *egeneto* means: "**has** become."

The Kingdom of the World becomes that of God's Christ

Fifth. This in no way implies that Christ has **not** been ruling here on Earth prior to that as-yet-still-future time being referred to here.⁴²⁸ To the contrary. He has been ruling **as God** from all eternity.⁴³³ And He has also been ruling **as man** — ever since His ascension and heavenly session.⁴³⁴

Yet our text⁴²⁸ certainly implies that Christ's present reign is still **expanding**.⁴³⁵ For that Kingdom is **not yet consummated**. It is only **after** the still-future destruction of the Papacy that this kingdom of the World will have become the universally-acknowledged Kingdom⁴²⁸ of our God and His Christ.

Then, it will be **recognized as such**: throughout the entire World. Thus: Ambrose, Augustine, Walafrid Strabo, Joachim of Floris, Arnold of Villanova, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, Matthew Poole, E.W. Hengstenberg, Albert Barnes, B.H. Carroll, and many others.⁴³⁶

Thus Hengstenberg comments (on Revelation 11:15): "'The kingdom has **become!**' The result is first actually attained in verse 19.... That royal word of the suffering Jesus — 'My Kingdom is not of this World' — has been greatly abused. His **Kingdom is not worldly**; but the **kingdom of the World is [to become] holy and Christian!** This province [of this World] — which has long enough been in [Satan] the enemy's hands — has at last [by the time predicted in Revelation 11:15-18] finally been recovered. It is possessed by the Lord **and** [by all of] His **anointed!**"

This means that Christ is to **possess** or **take possession of** the kingdom of **this** World. In Him, so too are all of His anointed or **baptized Christians**.

Then, our **already-reigning** King Jesus Christ will be **acknowledged** everywhere throughout the World. Then He will be acknowledged as the **King of the World** — acknowledged to be the ruling Lord He already and actually is. And thereafter — He shall **keep on reigning**, for ever and ever.⁴²⁸

Sixth. Christ's earthly Kingdom shall **not be consummated immediately after the destruction of the Papacy**. Once the Vatican has been demolished by the Protestant preaching of God's Word, **Protestantism will rule the World**.

We have already seen that the Post-Papal Protestant witnesses will not only revive or live again. Indeed, we have also seen how, after the destruction of one-tenth of the "great city" of the Romish Empire⁴³⁷ — the **increasing** testimony of Protestant witnesses will ultimately influence even the **remainder of mankind** or "the rest" or all "the remnant" of "the people and kindreds and tongues and Nations" to give glory to the God of Heaven.⁴³⁸

⁴³³ Acts 15:18; Ps. 103:19; I Tim. 1:17; 6:14-16.

⁴³⁴ Acts 2:30-36 & Eph. 2:1-6.

⁴³⁵ Heb. 11:15a,18a,19 *cf.* Rev. 15:4f & 16:17-19 & 19:21.

⁴³⁶ Dan. 7:12-14,25-27 *cf.* 2:34f,44f. *Cf.* too Hengstenberg's comment on Rev. 11:15 (in his *op. cit.* I:432f).

⁴³⁷ Rev. 9:14; 11:2,7f; 14:8f; 16:10-13; 17:3-5,15-18; 18:2f *cf.* II Th. 2:4 to 3:1[†].

⁴³⁸ Rev. 11:2,7,9-13 & 10:6f,9-11 *cf.* n. 436.

Thus we are told that — in practice too — the time will come when "the kingdom of the World has become that of our Lord and of His Christ."⁴³² But we are also further assured that even after that, "He shall keep on reigning for ever and ever."⁴²⁸ He will then keep on ruling thus — right **here** — in "**this** World."⁴²⁸ And, after the Final Judgment, He will continue so to rule also over the renewed Earth.⁴³⁹ **For ever.**⁴⁴⁰

Seventh. John was accordingly next transported to the time of **the Final Judgment itself**. Then, "the twenty-four Elders who sat in front of God upon their seats [or thrones] — fell upon their faces and worshipped God."⁴³²

At that time, they say:⁴⁴¹ "We give thanks to You, O Lord God Almighty, Who is and Who was!⁴⁴² For You have taken Your great power unto Yourself. And You have kept on reigning.... The Nations **were** angry; but Your wrath **has** come — and the time that the dead should **be judged**."

The time has come too "that You should **give reward** to Your Servants the Prophets and to the saints and to them who fear Your Name, small and great." The time has come, that You "should **destroy** those who destroy the Earth."⁴⁴²

As the *Geneva Bible* here comments: "This declares the office of the godly."⁴⁴² For that office or assignment "is to give God thanks for the deliverance of His" — that is, for the salvation of the children of the Lord.⁴⁴² And that assignment is also given, in order "to praise His justice for the punishing of His enemies."⁴⁴²

Lastly. Just at this very point in the Final Judgment — there is the suggestion that the World **already has been christianized**. For at that Last Assize, history shall have run its course. Then, the Elders in Heaven declare: "The Nations **were** angry" — but **are angry no more**, at that time of the end. Too, the **emphasis** will **then** be more on the **rewarding** of God's Servants — than on His punishing of the destroyers.

For that will be "the time of the dead — that they should be judged." That will be the time — the Elders tell their God — "that You should **give reward** to Your Servants the Prophets and to the saints and to them who fear Your Name, small and great."⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Rev. 21:1f,24-26.

⁴⁴⁰ Rev. 22:1-5 cf. 11:15.

⁴⁴¹ Rev. 11:17f. The latter's *ebasileusas* does not mean "You...have reigned" (as if that divine Reign were now or ever could be terminated). Instead, *ebasileusas* (which is an ingressive aorist) rather means: "You have begin to reign and You keep on reigning." See J.C. Coetzee's *Nation and People of God in the New Testament*, Pro Rege, Potchefstroom, 1965, pp. 293 n. 119 & 302 n. 119.

⁴⁴² The clause *kai ho erchomenos* ("and Who is to come" or better "and Who will keep on being") is not found in any of the important Greek manuscripts of Rev. 11:17. There, it is found only in Theo(dorus) Mopsu(estiensis) 2015 *al.* vg^{cl} (= *Vulgata Clementina*¹⁵⁹²). See W. Bousset's *John's Revelation*, Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, Goettingen, 1896, p. 387 & n. The omission of this clause here in Rev. 11:17 (*per contra* in Rev. 1:4 & 4:8), perhaps suggests that history will by then (in Rev. 11:17 cf. v. 18) have run its course, so that there will then be nothing further yet "to come."

The Kingdom of the World becomes that of God's Christ

The time will then also have come, the Elders go on to tell their God, that You "should **destroy** those who destroy the Earth."⁴⁴² But at least on a national and an international scale, the destruction of the then-resurrected wicked will be on account of their **past** transgressions committed long ago before their deaths — rather than with regard to widescale transgressions committed immediately prior to the Final Judgment. For such latter, apparently, shall have ceased — long before then.

For **then** the Elders say:⁴⁴² "The Nations **were** angry" — **not**: 'the Nations **are** angry.' And **then**, the Elders say to God: "Your wrath **came**." They do **not** then say: 'Your wrath **comes**' or 'Your wrath **shall come**.'

By then, the seventh trumpet will long ago have finished sounding. Also by then, the kingdom of this World will long ago have become that of our Lord and of His Christ. Indeed, thereafter He shall keep on reigning — for ever and ever. Thus too Bede, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas.⁴²⁸

As Matthew Poole points out,⁴²⁶ "it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown.... They shall come — which **were** ready to perish in the land of Assyria. And the outcasts in the land of Egypt...**shall worship the Lord** on the Holy Mount at Jerusalem" — that is, on the Mount Zion of the Christian Church.⁴⁴³

O Christian, let us then realize that Christ not only rules in this World today, in the hearts of His children. But let us also realize that the kingdom of **this** World — the **World-as-such** (with all its scientific and artistic contents)⁴⁴⁴ — is yet destined to become that of our Lord and of His Christ **in practice too**. Even thereafter, He shall keep on reigning **here; on this Earth; in the World** — for ever and ever!

Let us then, as Christ's loyal witnesses, redouble our efforts toward the realization of this noble goal! Let us ever seek to gain the ascendancy, in our testimony toward the World⁴³⁸ — until it becomes either **converted** or confounded! Either way, it will then give glory to the God of Heaven — Whose Kingdom is over all, and Whose Kingdom keeps on lasting for ever.⁴⁶⁸

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

⁴⁴³ Isa. 27:13 *cf.* Isa. chs. 2 & 65 to 66 and Zech. ch. 14 with Lev. ch. 25 and Heb. 12:22f and Rev. 12:1-5,17 & chs. 21 & 22.

⁴⁴⁴ Rev. 11:15 *cf.* 21:24-26. As Hengstenberg here comments (*op. cit.* I:446): "At the close of (Rev.) ch. 11, we are manifestly brought to the last end."

The Glorious Church reigns since Eden and subdues even the Moon

Revelation 12:1-2

December 15

"Then the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the ark of His Testament. And there were lightnings, and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. Then a great wonder appeared in Heaven — a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. And on her head was a crown of twelve Stars."⁴⁴⁵

John had seen the seven Angels and heard them sounding the seven trumpets one after the other. Next, the Apostle John was shown a completely different vision.

It was a vision about events occurring **prior** to the climax and downfall of the Papacy. For John was shown "the **Temple** of God...opened in Heaven. And there was seen in His Temple, the **ark** of His Testament. And there were lightnings, and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."⁴⁴⁶

This leads to yet another 'playback' of the history of redemption — this time, probably **from the first Gospel Promise** in Genesis 3:15 right down to the rise and development of the Papacy. But this in turn then leads on to a further presentation of a general **preview** of the **Papacy's** yet-future **fall** — and to the **victory** of the **True Church** alias the saints **over** all Non-Christian opposition, right **here** in this **present World**.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Rev. 11:19 to 12:2. Stephen Langdon, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 onward, was the person who divided our Newer Testament into its present divisions of chapters and verses. However, we believe that what he numbered as "Rev. 11:19" —should really have been numbered as "Rev. 12:1" (and what he numbered as "Rev. 12:1" should really have been numbered as "Rev. 12:2"; and so on). For this new section in John's Revelation seems to start at what is now numbered as "Rev. 11:19."

The "woman" mentioned in the verse Langdon numbered as "Rev. 12:1" is not the virgin Mary giving birth to her Baby Who is our Saviour (thus Bernard of Clairvaux, Albert the Great, and the Roman Catholic *Douay Bible*). But this "woman" is rather the Older Testament's Church (thus Lange and Lenski) giving birth to Christianity. Almost all Protestants (and even the Romanists Bede and Ribera!) identify this woman not with Mary but with the Church. Thus: Luther, Virgil Solis, the *Geneva Bible*, Nigrinus, Foxe, Napier, Brightman, Mede, Tillinghast, Hutchinson, Sherwin, Beverley, Matthew Poole, Gerhard, Cramer, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, Bellamy, Wesley, Bishop Thomas Newton, Bengel, John Brown of Haddington, Hopkins, Dwight, Faber, Adam Clarke, Fuller, Maitland, Cunninghame, Keith, Samuel Lee, and Hengstenberg, *etc.*

⁴⁴⁶ Rev. 11:13-15,19 *cf.* 15:1,5f & 16:17-19.

⁴⁴⁷ Rev. 12:1-2; Isa. 50:1f; 54:1f; 62:1-5; Hos. 2:1f; Acts 15:18; Eph. 5:25f & 1:4-7; and Rev. 13:8.

The Glorious Church reigns since Eden and subdues even the Moon

The first part of this playback⁴⁴⁷ **does not relate to the virgin Mary**. For even according to modern Romanism, before her pregnancy Mary had **not yet** been "clothed with the sun." Nor did she then yet have "the moon under her feet." Nor did she then yet have "on her head...a crown of twelve Stars" — at the time John says the woman first conceived and then gave birth to her "male son" (Revelation 12:1-5).

The "woman" here symbolizes **the earthly Church**. This means the whole of that Church-as-such — and specifically the **Older Testament's Church** right down to the time when Christ was conceived and soon thereafter born.

Thus most even of the Pre-Reformation-al Theologians — such as Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Methodius, Ephraim, Tichonius, Beatus, Walafrid Strabo, the Venerable Bede, Berengaud, Waldo and the Waldensians, Richard of St. Victor, Bruno Segni, Rupert Deutz, Joachim of Floris, Pierre Jean d'Olivi, Purvey, Walter Brute — and even Rome's 1590 Francisco Ribera. So too almost all Protestants, from Martin Luther right down to Hengstenberg *etc.*⁴⁴⁵

Explained the latter: "The woman...is not the community of Israel in contradistinction to the Christian Church.... Nor on the other hand does it denote the Christian Church in contradistinction to the community of Israel. For the Christ-ian Church did not have Christ born into it....

"On the head of the woman, is a 'crown of twelve Stars.' These cannot denote the twelve Apostles...for the woman has the crown of twelve Stars...**before** the birth of her Son.... They are rather the twelve Israelitish Patriarchs, as ideal representatives of the Tribes" of Older Testament's Israel alias the Church of the Older Testament — which later of its very own and self-same substance (*homo-ousios*) gave birth to the Newer Testament's Church.

Wrote John (during the first century A.D.): "A great wonder appeared in Heaven — a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. And on her head was a crown of twelve Stars."⁴⁴⁵

First. It should be noted that the Church had not yet been exalted unto Heaven. Except for the Church Triumphant of the saints already in glory, this is still the case.

Yet both the Church latent and the Church patent was, and indeed is, of heavenly **origin**. Thus John wrote that "a great wonder appeared in **Heaven** — a woman."⁴⁴⁵

The True Church of Christ is frequently compared throughout Scripture to a beautiful woman.⁴⁴⁸ She was chosen by the Triune God before the foundation of the World to become His bride — and the names of all her Members were even then written down in Heaven.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ Isa. 52:1f *cf.* Eph. 5:28-32 & Rev. 12:1-6,17 & 19:7f & 21:2,10 & 22:17.

⁴⁴⁹ Rev. 12:1f; Isa. 50:1f; 54:1f; 62:1-5; Hos. 2:1f; Acts 15:18; Eph. 5:25f & 1:4-7; Rev. 13:8.

Consequently, once Christians have been justified and brought into the Visible Church — they must never forget that they **derive** their 'citizenship' of the Kingdom of God, from Heaven.⁴⁵⁰ They do not derive it from this present sinful World — even though it is **here on Earth** that they are to **exercise** their heavenly citizenship, now, in everything they do.⁴⁵¹

May we too never forget the "**great** wonder" of our sublime heavenly origin — and our Heaven-on-Earth destiny! May we remember this — especially while we serve the Lord here and now **on Earth** (as the Angels do in Heaven)!⁴⁴⁵

Second. Though potentially existing in the 'mind' of God from all eternity,⁴⁴⁹ the Church as the Body of Christ came into actual existence only immediately after the fall of man. When God created man, He had communion with him. And He enjoined him, as the crown of His creation, to serve Him by being fruitful and multiplying and filling the Earth and subduing it to His glory — in accordance with the Law of God inscribed upon the human heart.⁴⁵²

When the Devil shortly thereafter misled man into sin — God Himself, as the Word, immediately came to man's assistance. For He promised to incarnate Himself later — as the virgin-born Second Adam or the Seed of the woman Who would crush the Devil's skull at the 'place of the skull' — Golgotha.⁴⁵³

As soon as Adam and Eve believed this promise — they became the first Members of Christ's Church here on Earth. And as soon as they and their believing children congregated together to call upon the Name of the Lord — the first Visible Congregation of Christ's Church was constituted, here on Earth.⁴⁵⁴

May we clearly see the relevance of the above also to us! May we too always understand that we also are but the continuation of that original Body of all Christian believers!

Third. The Church of Christ is indeed a "great wonder,"⁴⁴⁵ particularly on account of her glorious appearance. For this description is true of the **Church of all ages**.

During the times of the Older Testament, the Church was already "a woman clothed with the sun" with "the moon under her feet — and on her head a crown of twelve Stars."⁴⁴⁵ **In the times of the Newer Testament**, the Church is **even more glorious**. In **yet-future ages**, the Church **becomes more glorious still**. For she is predestined to grow — **from** glory, and **to** yet **greater** glory.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁰ Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6; Heb. 11:16; 12:22f.

⁴⁵¹ Jh. 17:13-18 & 18:36f.

⁴⁵² Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-19; Ps. 8 *cf.* Eccl. 7:29 & Rom. 2:13-15.

⁴⁵³ Gen. 3:1-15; Mt. 27:33; Rom. 16:20; Gal. 4:4f.

⁴⁵⁴ Mt. 18:17-20; Gen. 3:20f & 4:1,25f; Acts 7:28; Rom. 11:15-24.

⁴⁵⁵ Isa. 60:1f; 53:1f; Jh. 1:14-17; II Cor. 3:7-18.

The Glorious Church reigns since Eden and subdues even the Moon

It should be noted, however, that this glory is by no means limited to the Church as an institute. For the Church of Christ is His Church not only when she meets for worship, institutionally.⁴⁵⁴

In addition, she is **also** the Church — though the Church as an organism — even when her Members engage in different endeavours than public worship. Indeed, such other different endeavours include Christian involvement in the subjugation of the whole World and all of its contents to the glory of God — in exploration, in art, in science, in education, and in politics etc. (whenever done consciously to the glory of God-in-Christ).

It is, then, particularly as an **organism** that Christ's Church is "a woman clothed with the sun" — having Heaven's light and glory as her own.⁴⁵⁶ For she has "the moon under her feet"⁴⁴⁵ — and thus subjugates all the reflected cultural glory of the Earth.⁴⁵⁷

Again, she also wears "on her head...a crown of twelve Stars"⁴⁴⁵ as the symbols of **political** authority.⁴⁵⁸ All this indicates how the Church as an organism alias the Body of Christ should ideally (though only indirectly) **influence** even the **statesmen** of the World — through her powerful living-out and preaching of both the Law and the Gospel, both in public and in private.⁴⁵⁹

As the *Geneva Bible* comments: "The Church...is compassed about with Jesus Christ the Son [and the Sun] of righteousness.... The **Church treads under foot** whatsoever is mutable and inconstant with all corrupt affections!"⁴⁴⁹

Fourth. It is interesting to note how **even the Older Testament's Church** actually fulfilled this ideal role. For God created the sun and the moon and the stars for the use of elect mankind.⁴⁶⁰ Moreover, God told our first parents to have dominion over the Cosmos — by subduing the Earth⁴⁵² (and, in time, even the moon).⁴⁶⁰

Now all of this was to be enjoyed by the children of God — the true seed of the woman.⁴⁶¹ They, like political "Stars"⁴⁵⁸ — far more influential than movie stars! — were to rule the Universe to the glory of the Lord.⁴⁶²

It is, however, **especially from the times of the Newer Testament onward** that Christ's Church was powerfully to expand and to subdue the Earth. For after the Lord Jesus told His disciples to go into all the World and to preach the Gospel to every creature and to turn all Nations into His disciples⁴⁶³ — the Church began to do just that.

⁴⁵⁶ Isa. 30:26; 60:1-3,11,19f cf. Mal. 4:2f & Rev. 21:24f to 22:5.

⁴⁵⁷ Isa. ch. 60 cf. P. Fairbairn's *Prophecy Viewed in Respect to its Distinctive Nature, its Special Function and Proper Interpretation*, T.& T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1865, p. 321.

⁴⁵⁸ These "twelve Stars" in Rev. 12:1 are the twelve Patriarchs or Political Rulers of Ancient Israel, cf. Gen. 37:9. Thus Hengstenberg: *op.cit.*, I:453f. Cf. too nn. 272 & 288 & 298.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Gen. 17:6; Pss. 2 & 72; Isa. chs. 45 & 60 & 62.

⁴⁶⁰ Gen. 1:14; 1:26-28; Ps. 8:3-6.

⁴⁶¹ Gen. 3:15 and Isa. 27:1f & 28:14-16 & 54:5f,12f & 59:19-21.

⁴⁶² Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8; I Cor. 10:31; 15:24-28; Heb. chs. 1 to 2; Rev. 2:26-28.

⁴⁶³ Mt. 28:19 & Mk. 16:15.

Today, as Christians correctly understand this mandate from God, they are — in their various different capacities as Members of the non-institutional Church-as-an-organism — right now fulfilling this. For they are right now "being clothed" with the sun — as they help harness solar energy to the glory of God. They are right now subduing the moon under their feet — as they promote lunar explorations, for Christ's sake.

Indeed, they are right now — by the grace of the Spirit — wearing "a crown of twelve Stars." For — on the basis of the God-given teachings of the Older Testament's twelve Tribes of Israel, supporting the further structure of the God-given teachings of the Newer Testament's twelve Apostles of Christ's Church — Christians are right now infiltrating into, and will ultimately take over, even the political governments of this World.⁴⁶⁴

They do this not for their own sake, but **for Christ's sake**. And they do this not as the institutional Church, but as the organic Body of Christ. Yet when they have finished doing this, "the light of the moon shall be like the light of the sun. And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, like the light of seven days."⁴⁶⁵

Sixth. All of this, however, will ultimately come to pass only because the Older Testament's Church produced Christ-according-to-the-flesh.⁴⁶⁶ He obtained this great dominion, on behalf of and for His People.

The pre-incarnational **Church** is the "**ark** of the covenant" — which **bore** God's Testament: **Jesus Christ**.⁴⁴⁵ For Jehovah's wife,⁴⁴⁹ the beautiful woman of the Older Testament — "was pregnant. She cried out; travailed in birth; and was in pain to be delivered."⁴⁶⁷

According to many Theologians, this probably refers to the birth of Jesus Christ as the Second Adam. Thus Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Walafrid Strabo, Berengaud, Richard of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, Albert the Great, Joachim of Floris, and Pierre Jean d'Olivi.

According to many other Theologians, the above verse probably refers to the ongoing 'birth' of new Christians especially in the Early Church and in the Mediaeval Church. Thus Methodius, Tichonius, Bruno Segni, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, and even the Roman Catholic *Douay Bible*.

The above two views about the above verse are by no means exclusive of each other. Frankly, each — in turn — seems to be appropriate and correct.

⁴⁶⁴ Rev. 12:1; 21:12-14; 11:15; 15:4.

⁴⁶⁵ Isa. 30:26.

⁴⁶⁶ Rom. 1:3; 9:4f; Gal. 4:4-6,22-28.

⁴⁶⁷ Rev. 12:2 *cf.* Jer. 4:31 & Mt. 2:1,13,18.

The Glorious Church reigns since Eden and subdues even the Moon

The above verse represents also the beginning of the Newer Testament's fulfilment of the Older Testament's *Protevangelium* or 'First Gospel Promise.' There, God declared that the Seed of the woman would redeem elect **mankind** and crush the Devil.⁴⁶¹

That was the beginning of the fulfilment of the predictions of Isaiah — where God promised that the virgin would conceive and bear Immanuel, Whose Kingdom would be established with judgment and Whose government would **increase** without end. And it is the beginning of the fulfilment also of the predictions of Micah — where God promised that "the first dominion" and "the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" when her birth-pangs would overtake her like "a woman in travail," when "out of Bethlehem He shall come forth Who is to be **Ruler** in Israel."⁴⁶⁸

Christ's birth from the Older Testament's Church is just the **beginning** of His Kingdom. The Older Testament's Church becomes the Early-Christian Church and then increases into the Mediaeval Christian Church — even **after** the rise and reign of the Papacy. As the **True Church**, she continues to be fruitful and to give birth also to the remainder alias "**the rest of her seed**" (including the Reformed Church) — even in spite of dragon-like papal persecution.⁴⁶⁹

Observes Jonathan Edwards:⁴⁷⁰ "**For the first three hundred years** after Christ, the Church was for the most part in a state of great affliction — the object of reproach and **persecution first by the [Judaistic] Jews and then by the Heathen [Romans]**. After this, from the beginning of **Constantine's time** [A.D. 312f], **the Church had rest and prosperity** for a little while....

"But presently...the **Church again suffered persecution**.... [The Papal **Romish] Antichrist arose** and the Church was driven away into the Wilderness and was kept down in obscurity and contempt and suffering for a long time under Antichrist — **before the Reformation** by Luther and others....

"This suffering state of the Church — is, in Scripture, represented as a state of the Church's travail.... **Revelation 12:1-2**.... **Before** the time of Constantine, the troubles of the Christian Church were from [**Pagan or] Heathen Rome**. **Since** that time, its troubles have been mainly from [**Papal Antichristian Rome**]."

Nevertheless, O Christian, let us catch the glorious vision of what God says the Church should be — and is! For the Bible declares that the Church is "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve Stars."⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁶⁸ Isa. 7:14 & 9:6f and Mic. 4:8f & 5:2.

⁴⁶⁹ Rev. 12:2,5-7,14,17 & 13:2-11f.

⁴⁷⁰ J. Edwards: *History of Redemption*, Period III, Part II, Section I, First.

Let us as Members of this glorious Church-as-an-institute, praise God for the birth of Jesus Christ the Lord — and make known His saving power and restorative work even unto the very ends of the Cosmos! Too, let us also, as Members of the Church-as-an-organism — then exploit the sun; subdue the moon; and (at least economically and politically) even reach for the stars!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

Satan drags only One-Third of the Angels into Perdition

Revelation 12:3-4

December 16

"Look, a great red Dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads! And his tail drew down the third part of the Stars of Heaven, and cast them to the Earth. Then the Dragon stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth — in order to devour her child as soon as he was born."⁴⁷¹

John had just been given the glorious vision of the Church of God (from Eden onwards), clothed with the sun and dominating the moon and crowned with Stars. In the fullness of time, this Church was to give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ. But next, the Apostle was given another vision of an entirely different character.

Wrote John: "There appeared **another** wonder in Heaven. And look, a great red Dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads! And his tail drew down the third part of the Stars of Heaven, and cast them to the Earth. Then the Dragon stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth — in order to devour her child as soon as he was born."⁴⁷¹

First. It should be noted that although not a "**great** wonder" as was the previous vision of the sun-clothed woman — even this "another" and sinister vision of the Dragon, was nevertheless a "wonder." The nature of this "wonder" is, of course, that God would ever **allow** this Dragon — whom He Himself created to His Own glory at the beginning as an originally-sinless creature — later to drag fully one-third of the created "Stars" down onto the Earth.

It is also a great wonder that God would allow the Dragon to threaten especially His Own beloved Son at the time of His incarnation — **and** His Own beloved Church during her earthly history. As the Christian poet William Cowper reminds us: "God moves in a mysterious way, His **wonders** to perform!"⁴⁷²

Second. It should be understood, however, that this originally-sinless creature had undergone a detrimental change of character. That change occurred between the primordial time when God created him in original rectitude, and the later time when that creature draconianly pulled down the stars (and later still threatened the infant Jesus).

⁴⁷¹ Rev. 12:3f.

⁴⁷² Compare W. Cowper's *Hermon* (first line).

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That creature, the Dragon — we are told — is the Devil, alias Satan.⁴⁷³ We are also told that it was through the dragonlike instrumentality of pagan Rome⁴⁷⁴ — that Satan sought to destroy the man Christ Jesus.⁴⁷⁵ Yet though He made the one who is now the Devil, God did not make him **as** the Devil.⁴⁷⁶

Neither did God create Rome — as pagan Rome. To the contrary. Our God created the Romans as blessed sons of Japheth⁴⁷⁷ the son of Noah, the son of Adam, the son of God.⁴⁷⁸ And God created the one who is now the Devil, as a beautiful and originally "very good" angelic creature — Lucifer⁴⁷⁹ (the great 'Upholder of the Light').

Third. We should note that Lucifer did not **stay** good. He was originally created to uphold **the** Light, namely God the Son. For the Son: is the Arch-angel; the *Archee* alias the Beginner of creation; the divine Mon-**arch** Who ruled all the created Angels; the One Who always was and still is the One and Only divine Light of the World;⁴⁸⁰ the One called 'Michael.'⁴⁸¹ That latter Name means: 'Who is like the Triune God?' Yes, Who indeed(?) — save that One Who Alone in His Own Self is the Central Person of the Triune God!

Yet, instead of upholding Michael the Light, Lucifer the "Light-bearer"⁴⁸² apparently desired himself to become **just like** that Light.⁴⁸³ But in so doing, he only became "that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan."⁴⁷³ And as such, he misled some of the other "Stars" or created Angels⁴⁸⁴ — when he with "his tail drew the third part of the Stars of Heaven" after him "and cast them to the Earth."⁴⁷¹

Fourth. The result of this Satanic rebellion was that "there was war in Heaven." God the Son alias "Michael and His Angels, fought against the Dragon. And the Dragon and his Angels fought — but he did not prevail. Neither was their place any longer found in Heaven. So the great Dragon was cast out — that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole World. He was cast out onto the Earth; and his Angels were cast out with him"⁴⁸⁵ — by now themselves having become his Demons.

From then on, also through his Demons, Satan deceived the whole World.⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, he and they then kept on doing so — until the Lord Jesus Christ came as the mighty God-man to begin the reversal of that process.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁷³ Rev. 12:9.

⁴⁷⁴ Rev. 12:3f & 17:8f *cf.* Dan. 8:9-13,16f; 9:21,26f; 11:31,26; Mt. 24:15,28 *cf.* n. 408.

⁴⁷⁵ Lk. 2:1-4 & Mt. 2:1-4; Lk. chs. 19 to 23; Jh. 11:48f; 18:28 to 19:15; Acts 4:25-27.

⁴⁷⁶ Gen. 1:31; Rev. 4:11; Ezek. 28:13-15.

⁴⁷⁷ Gen. 9:27 & 10:2-5 *cf.* 17:20.

⁴⁷⁸ Gen. 1:26-28; 5:1-32; Lk. 3:38; Acts 17:28.

⁴⁷⁹ Isa. 14:12-19 *cf.* n. 476.

⁴⁸⁰ Jh. 1:1-5 & 8:12.

⁴⁸¹ Dan. 8:11,25; 9:27f; 10:5-9,10f (*per contra* vv. 13,21); 12:1,5-7; I Th. 4:9; Jude 9 *cf.* Zech. 3:1f; Rev. 1:13,16,20; 3:1,14; 12:5,7 *cf.* I Pet. 3:21f.

⁴⁸² This is the meaning of the word "Lucifer" in Isa. 14:12.

⁴⁸³ Gen. 3:5 *cf.* Isa. 14:12-15 & Ezek. 28:1-18.

⁴⁸⁴ *Cf.* nn. 46 & 458.

⁴⁸⁵ Rev. 12:7-9 *cf.* nn. 408 & 471 & 482-484.

⁴⁸⁶ Jh. 12:31-34; I Jh. 3:8; Heb. 2:6-15; Rev. 12:5-9; 20:1-3a *cf.* Mt. 12:26-29.

It was that old Serpent the Devil⁴⁷³ who deceived our first mother in the garden of Eden⁴⁸⁷ and thus brought untold miseries onto the entire human race. Thereafter, he restlessly went forth to and fro throughout the Earth⁴⁸⁸ —and proceeded to mislead nearly all individuals.

Satan misled even all the Nations⁴⁸⁹ —except the True Israel within the Older Testament's Nation of Visible Israel,⁴⁹⁰ from whose bosom the Messiah was to be born.⁴⁹¹ And Satan misled the Nation of pagan Rome in particular. For he dragged down and debased the "Stars" or the Political Leaders there too⁴⁹² —in his grim attempt to destroy the Messiah at His human birth, and later again at His death.⁴⁹³

Fifth. This awesome spectre is described as "a great red Dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads."⁴⁷¹ Clearly, this refers to the Devil specifically **in the guise of the Roman Empire**.

That is an identification plainly made in many portions of Holy Scripture.⁴⁹⁴ It is therefore the conviction also of Tertullian, Victorinus, Pareus, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Mede, Tillinghast, Goodwin, Sherwin, Matthew Poole, Cramer, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Bishop Elliott, David Brown, Albert Barnes, and many Theologians.

Furthermore, the spectre seen by John was that of "a **great** red Dragon" with "ten **horns**."⁴⁷¹ This corresponds to the Roman or fourth "**great**" Beast in Daniel's vision. For that Beast there was "dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong" —with "**great** iron teeth" and "**ten** horns."⁴⁹⁵

Moreover, John's Dragon had "seven crowns" upon its seven heads. These seven crowns and heads were probably successive and not contemporaneous. But either way, they clearly identify the beast as the temporal political power corresponding to the "seven mountains" surrounding the ancient city of Rome.

In addition, those "seven crowns" or seven Kings or Kingdoms —may also represent the seven successive and heathen ancient World Empires (of which Rome was the then-current one). And again, the "seven Kings" remind one **both** of the seven successive forms of government of the Roman Empire itself —**as well as** of Rome's seven chief "Kings" or **Emperors** during John's own century in particular, at the time that Apostle received this very vision.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁷ Gen. 3:1-6,13-16; II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:11-15.

⁴⁸⁸ Job. 1:6 & 2:1.

⁴⁸⁹ Rev. 12:9; 20:3f; I Jh. 5:19,21; *cf.* n. 408.

⁴⁹⁰ Dt. 7:1-8 & Rom. 9:6.

⁴⁹¹ Rom. 1:3 & 9:4f.

⁴⁹² Rev. 12:4,7b,9b *cf.* nn. 408 & 474 & 481.

⁴⁹³ *Cf.* nn. 474f & 498-500.

⁴⁹⁴ Rev. 17:3,8-18; 13:1f *cf.* Dan. chs. 2 & 7:7f,19 & 9:26f & 11:30.36 to 12:1,11 *cf.* Mt. 24:15,28.

⁴⁹⁵ Dan. 7:3,17,19.

⁴⁹⁶ Rev. 12:3f & 13:1-3 & 17:8-11 *cf.* Dan. 7:7f (where the 10 minus the 3 yields 7 horns and where the next horn is the 8th).

The seven successive Heathen Empires of the Ancient World are:

- (1) the Ancient Egyptian Empire, 2700 to 1000 B.C. (*cf.* Gen. 12:10 to Ex. ch. 15 & Is. 52:4);
- (2) the Ancient Assyrian Empire, 1000-625 B.C. (*cf.* Isa. 52:4 with II Kgs. 15:19 to Jer. 50:17f);

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It should be noted, however, that this prediction would not be fulfilled completely — until long **after** John's own day. For it was only **after** the time of Constantine that Rome would clearly be seen to have **ten** uncrowned horns or provinces. And those ten provinces would thereafter soon be broken up into ten distinct Kingdoms, subsequently held together in an artificial way only by the Romish Papacy.⁴⁹⁷

Barnes says: "John meant to describe what occurred in the World at the time when the True Church seemed to be about to extend itself over the Earth — and when that prosperity was checked by the rise of the Papal Power.... The woman is driven for 1260 years into the Wilderness and nourished there.... I regard this therefore as referring to the time of the rise of the **Papacy**."

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- (3) the Ancient Babylonian Empire, 625-539 B.C. (*cf.* Isa. ch. 13 to Dan. ch. 5);
 - (4) the Ancient Medo-Persian Empire, 550-331 B.C. (*cf.* Isa. ch. 41 to Mal. ch. 4);
 - (5) the Ancient Grecian Empire, 336-64 B.C. (*cf.* Dan. chs. 2 & 7 to 8 and 10 & 11);
 - (6) the Ancient Roman Empire, 338 B.C. in Rome or 64 B.C. in Palestine, down to A.D. 321 (*cf.* Dan. chs. 7 & 9 & 11 to 12; Mt. chs. 24; Rev. chs. 1 & 12:13f & esp. 13:1f & 17:10's "one is [now]"); and
 - (7) the Papal Romish Empire, A.D. 606-???? (*cf.* Rev. 13:11f *cf.* 17:10's "and the other has not yet come": *i.e.*, "not yet" at the time John wrote this).

The seven different forms of Ancient Roman Government are: Monarchy, Consulate, Dictatorship, Decemvirate; Tribune; Military, and Emperorship.

The so-called seven "Kings" or Emperors of Pagan Rome, are very problematic. Sulla's Roman Republic fell in B.C. 70. After Pompey conquered Palestine in B.C. 63, Julius Caesar ruled first as the last consul and then as a would-be Emperor from B.C. 59-44 (*cf.* Dan. 11:36-42). Thereafter there was no "King" or Emperor until the emergence of Octavian as Caesar Augustus in B.C. 37 - A.D. 14 (*cf.* Dan. 11:41,45 & Lk. 2:1f). He was then followed by Tiberius Caesar, A.D. 14-37 (*cf.* Lk. 3:1); Caligula, A.D. 37-41 (*cf.* Acts 11:11,28); Claudius, A.D. 41-54 (*cf.* Acts 18:2); Caesar Nero, A.D. 54-68 (*cf.* Phil. 4:22 & II Tim. 4:6-8 & probably too Rev. 1:9f); Galba (A.D. 68-69); Otho (Jan. to Apr. 69 A.D.); Vitellius (Apr. to late 69 A.D.); Vespasian, late 69-79 A.D.; his son Titus, 79-81 A.D. (*cf.* Mt. 24:15-28); and Domitian (81-96 A.D.); *etc.* See the *ca.* 69-140 A.D. Suetonius's standard history *The Twelve Caesars*. If this count of seven "Kings" or Emperors of Roman begins with Julius Caesar, the seventh Roman Emperor would have been Galba. On the other hand, if one starts the count of Roman Emperors from Christ's death and resurrection and ascension, the seventh "King" or Emperor would be Vitellius. Either way, that would still harmonize with a 69 A.D. date for the *Book of Revelation*.

Whether the seven "Kings" or "Kingdoms" or Empires or Emperors are taken to refer to the Ancient World Empires or to the first seven Emperors specifically of Rome, the seven "Kings" or "Heads" certainly seem to be viewed not contemporaneously but successively. See Rev. 13:1-3 & 17:8-11 *cf.* nn. 497 & 590-594.

The *Geneva Bible* (at Rev. 13:1 *cf.* 12:3) interprets these seven heads as representing **Rome**, her **seven hills**, and her **Post-Neronian Emperors**. The *Dordt Dutch Bible* (at Rev. 12:3 & 13:1 & 17:9f) regards the heads as seven hills and **seven forms of government in** or from **Rome**. Similarly: Bishop Thomas Newton; Priestley; the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*; the *Columbia Family Bible*; and the *Cottage Bible*. B.H. Carroll regards the Heads as seven ancient Empires; the seventh as Pagan Rome; and the eighth as **Papal Romanism**. Even the *Scotfield Bible* (at Rev. 12:3 and at ch. 17) regards this as "apostate Christendom headed up under the **Papacy** and...the Beast's confederated Empire...*viz.* **Rome**" and as "a confederate ten-Kingdom Empire covering the sphere of authority of ancient **Rome**." And the *Holy Bible Pilgrim Edition* alias the *New Scotfield Bible* (1948) at Rev. 17:9 & 13:3 points out that "Rome the capital of the Beast's Empire is built on seven mountains" which "also picture seven Kings or **seven forms of government in the Roman Empire**. At the time John was writing, five of these had already come and passed away, one was ruling, and **the last had not yet come**.... The Roman Empire came to an end and its parts became separate Kingdoms."

⁴⁹⁷ Rev. 12:3 *cf.* and contrast with 13:1 & 13:11-12 & Dan. 7:7f,19-25.

Sixth. The third part of the stars which the Roman Dragon drew down with his tail do indeed remotely refer to Satan's original dragging down of some of the Angels. Yet it probably also (and more immediately)⁴⁹⁸ refers to the corruption of the Political Leaders (or "Stars") of that significant part of the Satan-bound World then governed as the worldly Roman Empire.⁴⁹⁹

There had indeed been Roman puppet-princes like King Herod of Palestine (who wickedly attempted to destroy the Lord Jesus at His birth) — as well as Roman puppet-governors like Pontius Pilate (who Satanically tried to destroy the Messiah at the time of His death). So too in later centuries, there would also be Roman Puppet-Emperors like Julian the Apostate and the cruel Phocas (who as Satan's agents would wage war against the followers of Christ).⁵⁰⁰

It is precisely these later imperial Roman persecutions of Christianity which are emphasized by many Theologians. Prominent examples of such, include: Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, and Albert Barnes.

But even at the very zenith of their power, both Satan the Dragon and his dragonlike Roman Empire could muster **minority** support only — for their evil machinations. Previously, when Lucifer became Satan, only "the **third** part of the Stars of Heaven" followed him in his rebellion.⁴⁷¹ At the birth of Jesus Christ, again only a minority of the World's Rulers uselessly tried to prevent it.⁵⁰¹

During the subsequent Roman centuries, only the third part of the Mediterranean World's resources and peoples were destroyed or impaired.⁵⁰² And thereafter, even the cumulative spread of violence at the hands of Antichristian Emperors and Romish Popes all together — destroyed hardly a third of the heartland of the West.

O Christian, thanks be to God Who always causes His Kingdom to triumph! For Satan's party is a **minority**. Already, he is a defeated foe.

⁴⁹⁸ Rev. 1:9 & 12:1-10 & 17:8-11. Cf. too Dan. 7:7f & 7:19-27. †

⁴⁹⁹ Rev. 12:3-7 & 17:8-11 cf. Dan. 7:7f,19f & 8:10-14,23-26 & 9:21,26f & 11:31,36 to 12:1,11f cf. Mt. 24:15,28 & II Th. ch. 2 & Rev. ch. 18 & n. 408.

⁵⁰⁰ Rev. 12:4 cf. Lk. ch. 2 & Mt. ch. 2, & Rev. 12:5 & Jh. chs. 18 & 19.

⁵⁰¹ Mt. 2:1,3,16,22 (*per contra* Mt. 2:1,6,11; Ps. 72; Isa. ch. 42 & 45:22; chs. 49 & 60; Hag. 2:6-9).

⁵⁰² Rev. chs. 8 & 9.

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He was defeated in his initial rebellion; defeated at Christ's birth when the infant Jesus escaped Herod's bloodbath; defeated by our Christ at Calvary, when His foot crushed the Serpent's skull; and defeated when Jesus rose from the realm of the dead, which could not hold Him there. Furthermore, Satan is constantly and progressively defeated by Christians too. For God continually and increasingly bruises Satan under **their** feet **also**.⁵⁰³

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

⁵⁰³ Rom. 16:20; I Cor. 15:25-27; II Cor. 2:14.

Christ now rules All Nations, reigning over Them from on High

Revelation 12:4-5

December 17

"The Dragon stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth — in order to devour her child as soon as he was born. Then she brought forth a male child, who was to rule [or shepherd] all Nations with a rod of iron. Then her child was caught up to God and to His throne."⁵⁰⁴

John had described that great red Dragon Satan, and his dragon-like Roman vassal (the Pagan Roman Empire). Next, he went on to explain how "the Dragon stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth — in order to devour her child as soon as he was born."⁵⁰⁴

Although probably also referring to the Satan-inspired persecution of the true children of God in the Early and in the Mediaeval Church⁴⁷⁰ — even the latter obviously **roots** in the persecution of Jesus Himself from the time He was a child.⁴⁶⁷ Accordingly, the human life of Christ Himself will be the main focus of this particular exposition here in our present study — reserving Satan's subsequent persecution(s) of Christ's Church till our next study.

The Satanic Dragon inspired his Pagan Roman lackey and the latter's wicked Puppet-King Herod of Judea to attempt to destroy the Saviour right at His very birth. For when he heard that Jesus had been "born King" — Herod "was troubled" and "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem." For that was the city out of which God said "He shall come forth to Me Who is to be Ruler in Israel — Whose goings-forth have been...from everlasting."⁵⁰⁵

First. Satan's futile attempt to destroy the infant Jesus soon after He was born — predictably ended in utter failure. For the woman, the Older Testament's Church, through the agency of the blessed virgin Mary as a Member of that Church,⁵⁰⁶ "**brought forth** a male child" alias a baby boy⁵⁰⁴ in the person of the infant Jesus.⁵⁰⁷

Not only was the then-tiny Jesus **not** destroyed by wicked Herod as Rome's Puppet-King. Too, **many** also in **Israel** even then confessed His Lordship.⁵⁰⁸ And three important leaders also from the East even then acknowledged Him as **their** King, too.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁴ Rev. 12:4f. Cf. v. 4's *poimanein* (= "to rule" or "to shepherd") & n. 67.

⁵⁰⁵ Mt. 2:1-7,16 cf. Mic. 5:2 & n. 470.

⁵⁰⁶ Lk. 1:26-38 & 1:46-55.

⁵⁰⁷ Lk. 2:4-21 cf. Mt. 1:18-25.

⁵⁰⁸ Lk. 1:32 to 2:3.

⁵⁰⁹ Mt. 2:1-11.

Christ now rules All Nations, reigning over Them from on High

At that very time, when the Roman vassal Herod was about to strike, the infant Messiah was "caught up unto God."⁵¹⁰ For an "Angel of the Lord" appeared to Joseph [the husband of Mary the mother of our Lord] in a dream, saying: 'Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt!'

Too, "when Herod was dead — look! An Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying: 'Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel! For they who sought the young child's life, are dead.'"⁵¹⁰

Also shortly thereafter, when he heard that Herod's son Archelaus was reigning in Judea — Joseph and his wife and the infant Jesus again escaped and went to live in Galilee.⁵¹¹ That was the region where the Saviour had been predestinated to shine forth as a great Light and as a reigning King and with an **ever-increasing** government.⁵¹² Indeed, the one brought forth by the woman in John's vision was — of course — None Other than He "Who was to **rule all Nations** with a rod of iron."⁵⁰³

The *Geneva Bible* makes a valuable comment on this. It observes that "Jesus Christ, the first-born among **many** brethren" — whom He benefitted — "was born of the virgin Mary, as a **special** Member of the Church."⁵⁰³

Second. At the end of our Lord's earthly life, however, the Satanic Dragon — through his dragonlike Pagan Roman lackey — again threatened "to devour" Jesus.⁵⁰⁴ For then "the Heathen raged, and...the Kings of the Earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together — against the Lord and against His Christ."⁵¹³

Too, also the Early Church's Christians prayed to the Lord while recounting that very event. They then reminded God: "Truly, against Your holy child Jesus Whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate together with the Gentiles and the People of Israel were gathered together — in order to do whatsoever Your hand and Your counsel predetermined to be done."⁵¹⁴

However, again Christ was rescued — being "caught up to God."⁵⁰⁴ For He was raised up from the dead⁵¹⁵ on the third day after His crucifixion by the Romans.⁵¹⁶ Thereafter, yet again He was "caught up" at the time of His ascension into Heaven just forty days later.⁵¹³ Once more — Satan and his Roman tool had failed to stem Christ's **advancement** of the Kingdom of God.

Third. Christ was, however, not only "caught up" — at the time of His ascension. Immediately thereafter, He also sat down at the right hand of His heavenly Father — where **as the Son of man** He started to reign, and whence He now **reigns** for evermore, and **keeps on ruling** throughout His Cosmos.

⁵¹⁰ Mt. 2:13,19f.

⁵¹¹ Mt. 2:22.

⁵¹² Isa. 9:1f,6f.

⁵¹³ Acts 4:25f.

⁵¹⁴ Acts 4:27f.

⁵¹⁵ Acts 2:24,32.

⁵¹⁶ Jh. 19:15-23 *cf.* Mt. 27:27-35.

For the "male child" Jesus was "caught up to God and to His throne."⁵⁰⁴ And the man Jesus, as the Christ, now sways His royal sceptre as King of the **entire Universe**. For He commands in His Great Commission⁵¹⁷ that **all must submit to Him**. And, **through the efforts of His earthly Church**, He steadily **expands** His sovereignty as the Son of man — throughout the **World**.⁵¹⁸

Fourth. This must **necessarily** be the case. For Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the World to become the Second Adam or the Son of man and "**to rule all Nations** with a rod of iron" — namely "to shepherd" and "**to feed them**."⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, right now, he is even **extending** the boundaries and greatly **strengthening** the principles of His Church here on Earth — until all those same principles first **encircle** and finally **permeate** everything.

For as God the Father said of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion!"⁵¹⁹ And as the risen Saviour proclaimed to the World: "I will declare the decree. The Lord has said... 'You are My Son. This day I have begotten You.'"⁵²⁰

Indeed, as the Father then replied to the risen and ascended and then-enthroned Messiah: "Ask of Me, and I shall give You the Heathen as Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for Your possession! You shall [rule or] break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them into pieces, like a potter's vessel"⁵²¹ or brittle earthenware.

As also the Apostle John affirmed, after the death of the Messiah, the Latter "was caught up to God and to His **throne**." For, henceforth — as the great **Provider** — He "was to rule [or **shepherd** and **feed**] all Nations."⁵⁰⁴

O Christian! Our Saviour has **overcome** the **Devil**, and also the latter's tool Pagan Rome. And now, from His celestial throne on high precisely as **the Son of man**, our Saviour henceforth **rules** the Universe — yes, rules the whole **Universe** — including **even our own World** as part of that Universe.

He firmly guides the further unfolding of even our own Earth's History. Indeed, He superintends also the **expansion** especially of His heavenly-minded Church — here and now — throughout the World.

He expects also us to share in that rule, here and now. Satan indeed threatens to devour us — even as he threatened to devour our Saviour. But in the Name of Christ the Conqueror — we are to 'devour' Satan. For we too are to subdue the Devil, to the glory of God. Each of us is to do so in his or her own daily life; in the area of the Church in general; and particularly in the public sphere.

⁵¹⁷ Mt. 28:19 *cf.* Gen. 1:26-28.

⁵¹⁸ Isa. 9:6f; I Cor. 15:24-28.

⁵¹⁹ Ps. 2:6.

⁵²⁰ Ps. 2:7 *cf.* Acts 13:30-33.

⁵²¹ Ps. 2:8f.

Christ now rules All Nations, reigning over Them from on High

Albert Barnes comments: "The Dragon stood...to prevent the increase and spread of the Church in the World." Yet "the Church...was destined to reign in all the Earth.... All the Earth was to become subject to its laws.... The Church would yet have the ascendancy or the dominion over the Earth....

"I understand the 'man-child' here therefore to refer to the Church in its increase under the Messiah, and the idea to be that that Church was...to be enlarged.... Though its increase was opposed, yet it was destined ultimately to assert a mild sway over all the World."

Christ reigns **now** from His throne above. Indeed, through the born-again child of God who reigns with Him here and now — Christ is even **now** expanding His rule right here on Earth —and among **all** Nations.

So on, then, Christian soldiers!
On, under the ever-expanding rule of Christ over this Earth of His!
Onward, to victory!

Christ ejects Satan from Above, and Christians too overcome Satan

Revelation 12:6-11

December 18

"Then the woman fled into the Wilderness...so that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.... Then the Dragon and his Angels fought, but did not prevail.... Then I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven: 'Now salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ has come! For the accuser of our brethren has been cast down.... Then they [our brethren] overcame [or conquered] him!'"⁵²²

The Apostle had just described the frustration of the Satanic Dragon and his dragonlike tool Pagan Rome. For futile had been their attempts to devour the true child of God as rooted in the birth, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly enthronement of Jesus Christ the Second Adam.

John next went on to explain how Satan and Rome were again even further frustrated **thereafter**. For now they sought, but failed, to destroy also the People of God which had given birth to Christ — and which (as the Newer Testament's Church) was still left behind on Earth to christianize it after the Lord Jesus Christ's Own ascension into Heaven.

Jesus had said those who hated Him, would hate also His followers.⁵²³ Thus, no longer able to reach the now-ascended and enthroned Christ Himself in Heaven — Satan and his lackey Pagan Rome, in their hatred of Christ, now turned against the other children of God (alias the 'Christ'-ians). Indeed, Satan and Rome drove them into the cultural Wilderness — for "a thousand two hundred and sixty days."⁵²²

First. It should be noticed that the **result** of this Satanic and Pagan Roman hatred of Christians — was **war**.

This was a grim warfare between the Satanically-inspired Rome on the one hand — and God's Spiritually-inspired Christian Church on the other. The purpose of this warfare, was the acquisition of **control** over the Roman Empire⁵²⁴ — within the huge area of which nearly all of the Early Christians then resided.

⁵²² Rev. 12:6-8,11 *cf.* n. 525. Note that 3.5 years or 42 months or 1260 days elapsed between Christ's Baptism and His death (*cf.* Dan. 9:24-27) — and also between the beginning of the siege and the later destruction of Jerusalem (in A.D. 66.5-70). See too Jas. 5:17f. For the possible meaning of "days" in Rev. 12:6, *cf.* n. 381 above.

⁵²³ Jh. 15:18-21.

⁵²⁴ Rev. 12:6-9. Verse 9's *teen oikoumeneen holeen* clarifies that the struggle between Michael-Christ and His Church on the one hand, and Satan's lackey (the Pagan Roman Empire) and their seed on the other — was not confined solely to the land of Judea. For the battle raged throughout the whole Ecumenical World of the Ancient Roman Empire. The immediate context of Rev. 12:7, *viz.* Rev. 12:5-12, seems to imply that the "war"

Christ ejects Satan from Above, and Christians too overcome Satan

So, while Christ's bride fled into the spiritual Wilderness to be kept alive there for "a thousand two hundred and sixty days" — there "was war in Heaven. Michael and His Angels fought against the Dragon. And the Dragon fought, and his Angels."⁵²⁴

But Michael and His followers won. For Michael — *Mi ka-'El* — is **the divine Christ**. Indeed, Who is like God or *Mi ka-'El*? Who indeed? Except the One Who Himself **is** God or *'El!* 'Michael' is the uncreated Divine Word or *Logos*. Thus Calvin, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Hengstenberg, Lenski, and Carroll.⁵²⁴

It is true that this specific warfare is rooted in the initial rebellion of Lucifer and his Angels (who thus became Satan and his Demons) — fighting against Michael-Christ and His Angels even before the fall of man.⁵²⁵ And it is also true that this warfare thereafter continued, down throughout Old Testament times, in the struggles between the Gentile Nations and Israel.⁵²⁶

Moreover, this same war was decisively waged by that Greater Israel (our Lord Jesus Christ). He did so, for us, at His death and resurrection and heavenly session.⁵²⁷

Yet in its **immediate context**, this verse⁵²⁴ seems specifically to be referring (at least centrally) to an event some time **after** Christ's heavenly session. And that later event seems to be the spiritual struggle between Christians and Non-Christians for the control of the Roman Empire — here on Earth — during the early centuries of the Christian era **after** the ascension and heavenly session of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.⁵²⁷

commenced perhaps especially right after or at any rate rooted in the ascension of Christ (*cf.* v. 4). That "war" then continued during the time that the woman herself fled into the Wilderness, from A.D. 34 until A.D. 66.5 (Acts chs. 8f & Mt. ch. 24). Indeed, her 'Wilderness life' continued still further even until the resulting nominal christianization of that Ancient Roman Empire (in A.D. 313-21). *Cf.* Rev. 12:7-12. See too n. 408. For the identification of Michael = Christ, *cf.* too Dan. 10:13,21 & 12:1 and n. [†] 525.

⁵²⁵ See Rev. 12:3f and our study for Dec. 16, and *cf.* with Isa. ch. 14 and Ezek. ch. 28. Calvin (*Comm.* on Dan. 12) and Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* on Rev. 12:7-9) both identify "Michael" with the Son of God (Jesus Christ). *Cf.* too n. 408.

⁵²⁶ Dt. ch. 7; Isa. chs. 14 to 66; Dan. chs. 2 to 12; *etc*

⁵²⁷ Rev. 12:5 *cf.* Col. ch. 2 & Heb. ch. 2 *etc.*

During this **later** time, the harried Christians gradually kept on rising to ever greater heights.⁵²⁸ They were repeatedly inspired by the memory of the triumphant example of Michael-Christ — during His Own previous earthly struggles against Satan and his followers.⁵²⁹ They were also encouraged especially by Christ's final earthly struggles, all Alone, against all those agents — and without any help even from His Own Angels.⁵³⁰

So the Early Church's Christians — together with their Preachers as some of Christ's "Angels" or Heralds⁵³¹ — now themselves **continued** that holy "war" in "Heaven" — that is, they too now fought especially on a 'heavenly' plane alias at the **spiritual** level.⁵³² And, under Christ the Captain of their salvation, they fought the good fight of faith against the Satanic Dragon and his dragonlike Pagan Roman lackey which had previously sought to destroy even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.⁵³³

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* here correctly comments, 'Michael and His Angels' here means "**Jesus** Christ and **His Members**." The latter, it adds, includes "apostles, **martyrs**, and the **rest of the faithful**."⁵³⁴

Similarly, also the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* here comments that by "this '**Michael**' — that is, 'who is like God?' — most expositors understand **Christ Himself**. So too, by 'His Angels' many understand the **believers** who have overcome the Dragon and his Angels, as is hereinafter asserted (v. 11)."

Second. The **course** of this grim war should very carefully be noted. "Michael and His Angels fought against the Dragon. And the Dragon fought, and his Angels — but he did **not prevail**. Neither was their place any longer found in Heaven. So the great Dragon was **cast out**, that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole World. He was cast out onto the Earth, and his Angels were cast out with him."⁵³⁴

Here we learn that the Devil and his agents and wicked Pagan Rome as his lackey and all of its leaders — **would not prevail** in that sustained warfare. To the contrary!

⁵²⁸ Rev. 2:10. Also *cf.* (subsequent to the previous A.D. 64f persecutions under Emperor Nero) — the later Pagan Roman persecutions of Christians during the reigns of Emperors Domitian (81-96 A.D.), Trajan (97-138), Marcus Aurelius (161-80), Septimus Severus (193-211), Maximinus Thrax (235-38), Decius (249-51), Valerian (253-60), Aurelian (270-75), and Diocletian (284-303 A.D.) — prior to Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity during his reign (312f) and the resultant immediate cessation of all persecutions of Christians within the Roman Empire; and (from 321f) the beginning of its rapid nominal christianization. *Cf.* Lk. 10:18; Rom. 8:29-39; I Cor. 15:25,55-58; Jas. 4:7 — and see too n. 536.

⁵²⁹ Mt. 4:1-17; Jh. 8:44; 12:31-35; Heb. 2:14; I Jh. 3:8-14.

⁵³⁰ Mt. 26:53,56; 27:46.

⁵³¹ *Cf.* n. 46 & Rev. 7:1-4 & 8:2-6 & 11:15f. For the view that these "Angels" are the human Members of Christ's Church, see the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, and Matthew Henry.

⁵³² Rev. 12:17a,10a,12a *cf.* Mt. 6:9f & 13:24,31,33,44-47; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; Acts 3:20f; Heb. 12:22f.

⁵³³ Rev. 12:2-4 & nn. 499-516.

⁵³⁴ Rev. 12:7-9. For the interpretation that "Heaven" here represents the influential places of [Roman] civilization, see D. Brown's *Christ's Second Coming: Will It Be Premillennial?* See too n. 408.

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Christ and His followers **would prevail over** Satan — especially during the days of Constantine. Thus Andreas of Caesarea, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Aaron Burr, Isaac Backus, Adam Clarke, and Albert Barnes.

In fact, Christ and His followers prevail over Satan — right down to Christ's Final Coming. Thus Augustine of Hippo and Bernard of Clairvaux.

As David Brown points out, Lucifer and his Angels, who became Satan and his Demons, lost their **hold** in "Heaven" (alias the high and influential place of civilized life). They were driven out "onto the Earth" (alias into the lower and less-influential positions of civilized life) — and then even outside of civilization and into the barbarian parts of the Earth.⁵³⁴

Previously, Satan himself had been 'enthroned' in Smyrna and in Pergamos and in Thyatira and in Philadelphia and throughout the Pagan Roman Empire.⁵³⁵ Yet that was followed by a protracted war in those places — between Satan's followers on the one hand, and the followers of Michael-Christ on the other.

During that struggle, Christians slowly but surely gained the ascendancy. Indeed, Satan and his followers were finally driven out of the 'heavenly' or high and important places of the Roman Empire. That occurred especially at the time of its formal christianization from 313-321 A.D. onward (following the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity).⁵²⁸

That did not totally eliminate Paganism even within the Roman Empire. Yet it certainly **dethroned** it throughout the Mediterranean World. It replaced Pagans with Christians **in positions of control** — alias in all the 'heavenly' socio-political offices in the nominally christianized Roman Empire.⁵³⁶

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments, "**the dragon was deprived of all his dignity.**" In fact, he "**had no more place**" to stand in high society.⁵³⁴

Third. The result of this downfall of Pagan Rome, was the **recognition of the Kingdom of Christ** as the one and only **official government of the Roman Empire** from that time onward.

This does not, of course, mean that the Kingdom of Christ had not existed (on a small scale) here on Earth before that time.⁵³⁷ Nor does it mean that the kingdom of Satan did not continue to exist here on Earth (and even in the lower or 'earthly' regions within the now-nominally-christianized Roman Empire itself) after that time.⁵³⁸ But it certainly means that now, for the first time in the History of the World since the incarnation of Christ, not just an entire Nation but even a whole powerful **Empire** did at least **profess allegiance** to the Lord Jesus as the only King of kings.

⁵³⁵ Rev. 2:9f,12f,18-24 & 3:7-9 *cf.* I Jh. 5:19-21.

⁵³⁶ I Sam. 2:6-10; Job 5:11; Isa. 2:17f; 53:12; 66:8,23; Jer. 2:10f; 10:11; Lk. 1:48-52,69-79 *cf.* n. 528.

⁵³⁷ Jh. 3:3-8 & Col. 1:13f.

⁵³⁸ Rev. 12:9,12b; 17:1 to 20:15 *cf.* n. 408.

For that reason, the Apostle could now predict: "I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven: '**Now** salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ has come! For the accuser of our brethren has been cast down.... Then they [our brethren] **overcame** [or **conquered**] him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony. And even unto death, they did not love their lives [the way they now loved the Lamb]!' "⁵³⁹

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments in its heading to this chapter, here "the **victory** is gotten, to the comfort of the faithful."⁵³⁹ Even prior to their deaths, Members of the Church Militant here on Earth **overcame** Satan. **By the grace of Michael-Christ**, they conquered. They actually **conquered** Satan. Indeed, it was **they** (they **themselves**) that conquered him.

Satan had accused the Early Christian Church. Sometimes, He had persecuted her. But she and her Angel-Preachers,⁵²² fighting with the spiritual weapons of the blood of Michael-Jesus and the prophetic Word of God, had witnessed faithfully —without swerving.

Now, they and their successors had **overcome** Satan and his party. They had driven him from his previously-dominant control of the Roman Empire. And henceforth, the Christians themselves would now begin to exercise that control —now that Rome had been christianized, at least nominally.

For "the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ" **had** now come to a position of "salvation and strength"⁵³⁹ or blessing and vigour or health and haleness. Indeed, that had now occurred even within the very **leadership** of the Roman Empire itself.⁵³⁶

"Therefore rejoice — you Heavens, and you who dwell in them!"⁵⁴⁰ Rejoice — you Heavenly Bodies; you Stars; you now-christianized Political Leaders!⁵²² And rejoice — you who dwell in such heavenly places; you who live within the now-at-least-nominally christianized Roman Empire! Rejoice — because now you can rest from the persecutions which your fathers suffered here and there, from time to time, in the Roman Empire — **before** Satan was dethroned in its territories!

Rejoice too, you Westerners of the twenty-first century, in your freedom to worship God in Spirit and in truth! Rejoice in the freedom most of your forefathers in less-christianized times and lands did **not** have!

Indeed, rejoice all you peoples —everywhere! Rejoice in the benefits of Western civilization, itself the fruit of its earlier christianization — in spite of its recent backslidings especially since the French Revolution!

⁵³⁹ Rev. 12:10f *cf.* the heading (11) in the *Geneva Bible* at this chapter (Rev. ch. 12).

⁵⁴⁰ Rev. 12:12a.

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See in Satan's **Roman** dethronement (and in his being cast out thence onto the "Earth"), a blessed **foretaste** of his ongoing dethronement **everywhere!** We conclude from all of this, the actuality and the ever-increasing **certainty** of Satan's progressive arrest —and his relegation even into the bottomless pit to which he has so justly been predestinated.⁵⁴¹ For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* again comments — when Satan "was cast onto the Earth," he "was **overcome** by Christ."⁵⁴¹

O Christian, may we too overcome Satan and all his followers **in our own day!** May we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of our testimony! And with those spiritual weapons, may we cast Satan's cohorts too out of all of their positions of influence!

May we see to it that **Christians** replace them there — to the glory of God! May salvation and strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ come into their own — even among **us!** And may we ever rejoice to see Satan and his followers cast down — and Christianity everywhere on the rise toward its **ascendancy!**

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

⁵⁴¹ Rev. 20:2f *cf.* our study at its n. 196f.

Furious Satan fails to harm and cannot even reach the True Church

Revelation 12:14-17

December 19

"Then to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle so that she might fly into the Wilderness, into her place where she is nourished for a time and [two] times and half a time, away from the face of the Serpent.... Then the ground helped the woman. And the ground opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the Dragon cast out of his mouth."⁵⁴²

It should not be presumed that the nominal christianization of the Pagan Roman Empire during the fourth century A.D. represented the termination of the struggles of Christ's Church even within that Empire. To the contrary. In some respects, it chiefly changed merely the **nature** of the struggle between the Christians on the one hand and the Devil's party on the other.

For down until then — the greatest opposition to Christianity, at least **after** the breaking of the power of the Judaists in 70 A.D., had come from the **Roman State** and her Political Leaders.⁵²⁸ But from then on, these latter were now the **allies** of the Church — though allies much lacking in dedication.

First. It should carefully be noted that this nominal christianization of the Roman Empire by Constantine — by no means implies that **all** opposition to Christianity from outside the Church now ceased. For outside the Church, and especially **outside the now-nominally-christianized Roman Empire**, the Devil still retained his hold as tightly as ever in the never-christianized areas of the World.⁵⁴³

Indeed, even **inside** the now-nominally-christianized Roman Empire, Satan henceforth concentrated on the lower social strata and on those that dwelt in the less-important regions on the fringe of the Roman landmass or "Earth." This would before too long be seen first in the attacks of the Pagan Visigoths and Huns and Vandals and Ostrogoths upon the Roman Empire; then in the speedy spread of Islam in the peripheral areas of and adjacent to the Roman Empire from the seventh century onward;⁵⁴⁴ and finally in the increasing Papal-Roman persecution of the saints right down to the Protestant Reformation and beyond.

⁵⁴² Cf. Rev. 12:14,16 with nn. 381 & 522.

⁵⁴³ Rev. 12:9,12b & 20:3 cf. I Jh. 19,21 & n. 408.

⁵⁴⁴ Rev. ch. 9, & cf. our study for December 11.

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The "Heavens" alias the higher powers of the Empire and those who dwell in them, might well indeed rejoice.⁵⁴⁵ But the "Earth" or the lower regions of the Empire and of the distant parts of the (Mediterranean) Sea⁵⁴⁶ and their still-unchristianized residents, would soon have little to rejoice about. For (in the opinion of many expositors) through first the Pagan Visigoths and Huns and Vandals and Ostrogoths, and then through Mohammad's Moslem persecution of the Church in those lower regions and also through Papal Rome's persecution of True Christians — "the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath."⁵⁴⁷ "Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea!"⁵⁴⁷

Second. It is comforting to note that the duration of the Devil's new "great wrath" — is severely limited. In fact, his very knowledge of this big limitation heightens the intensity of his wrath — precisely "because he knows that he has but a short time"⁵⁴⁷ to terrorize the inhabitants of the Earth and the Sea.

For even while venting his wrath upon the unsaved, the Devil — however gradually — was constantly in retreat before the steadily advancing expansion of Christianity. And this, even in spite of many temporary setbacks to the True Church.

The Devil had but a short time before he lost yet more ground even among "the inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea" in the lower strata of the Empire. And after that, when Christianity would continue its expansion into "the regions beyond" even outside of the Roman Empire, the Devil would slowly but surely lose ground there too — till later still "he would deceive the Nations no more."⁵⁴⁸ For ultimately — not only the "Heavens" or the higher regions but even **the Earth** shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."⁵⁴⁹

Third. A new time of persecution, however, first awaited the True Church of Christ. For even after the political dethronement of Satan the Dragon and his tool the Pagan Roman Empire following the conversion to Christianity of Emperor Constantine and the resultant nominal christianization of the Empire from the fourth century onward — "when the Dragon saw that he had been cast onto the Earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the male child.... Then the Dragon got angry with the woman, and went to make war against the rest of her seed which keeps the Commandments of God and holds to the testimony of Jesus Christ."⁵⁵⁰

The "war in Heaven" between Michael-Christ and His Angels [and Disciples] on the one hand and the Satanic Dragon and his party on the other, thus by no means ceased after the victorious nominal christianization of the heavenly regions of the Roman Empire during the third century.⁵⁵¹ To the contrary, from now on, that "war" still continued⁵⁵⁰ — but on a different plane.

⁵⁴⁵ Rev. 12:7f,12a; *cf.* our study at its nn. 534-536.

⁵⁴⁶ Rev. 12:10,12b; 13:1,7; 17:1,5; Dan. 7:2f *cf.* n. 545.

⁵⁴⁷ Rev. 12:12b *cf.* 8:10-13 & 9:1-11.

⁵⁴⁸ Rev. 15:4 & 20:3.

⁵⁴⁹ Isa. ch. 11, esp. v. 9.

⁵⁵⁰ Rev. 12:13,17 *cf.* n. 408.

⁵⁵¹ Rev. 12:7-12 *cf.* nn. 408 & 536.

Hitherto, the war against Christianity had been waged chiefly by **political** power. Yet from now on, however, it would be waged chiefly for **religious** reasons — and by apostates and heretics.⁵⁵²

Horrible persecution⁵⁵⁰ of the Christian Church would be inflicted by the Moslems — first by the Arabs, and centuries later again by the Turks.⁵⁴⁴ It is instructive to note that Islam was originally nothing but a syncretism between apostasy from Christianity, and Paganism.⁵⁵³ Nevertheless, Islam does not consider itself to be Christian.⁵⁵⁴ Rather does Islam regards itself as the perfection of the True Religion taught by all of the Prophets from Adam to Jesus — which True Religion Islam asserts Christianity had later corrupted.

An even greater though less obvious threat to Christianity, however, was soon to come **from inside the Christian Church herself** — from the syncretism between Christianity and Neo-Paganism in general and the institution of the Papacy in particular. This Romish syncretism, though not completely apostate, was and is nevertheless heretical — even though (unlike Islam) Romanism still considers itself to be legitimately Christian.⁵⁵⁵

Fourth. We should clearly distinguish: the Pagan-Roman Beast; Mohammad the False-Prophet; and the Papal-Roman Whore. By the latter, we mean the system of Roman Catholic-**ism** (including even such apostate "Protestants" as appease it) — and **not**, of course, individual Roman Cathol-**ics**, some of whom are genuine Christians in spite of their 'Babylonian captivity' within the very bosom of the Papal-Romish Whore (within which most of them were conceived and from which they all should certainly withdraw themselves).⁵⁵⁶

Pagan Rome (and each of its **political** successors, such as Humanism in our own day) was a **Beast**. It was an instrument of brute **political** force, but one making no religious claims. Mohammad's Islam is a system of false-prophecy — a **politico-religious** force which claims to be religiously-prophetic even while opposing Christianity. But the Romish Papacy is pre-eminently a **Whore** which, while **claiming to be the very bride of Christ**, is in fact "the mother of harlots and abominations of the Earth."⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵² Rev. 8:10 to 9:19 & 11:2f.

⁵⁵³ Mohammad learned his Antitrinitarian "Monotheism" (as evidenced by the traces of Biblical History in his *Koran*) — from un-orthodox Judaists and un-orthodox "Christians."

⁵⁵⁴ The *Koran* itself not only in practice but even theoretically repudiates the Triune God. Romanism, however, has not done this theoretically. On the other hand, her Mariology and Patrology come perilously close (Pneumatologically) to usurping the role of the Holy Spirit and thereby weakening in practice Romanism's declared Trinitarianism (in theory).

⁵⁵⁵ Thomas Aquinas, still the outstanding official Theologian of Papal Rome, deliberately attempted to synthesize orthodox Christian Theology with Pagan Greek Philosophy.

⁵⁵⁶ Rev. 18:2-4 *cf.* ch. 17.

⁵⁵⁷ Rev. 17:5.

Furious Satan fails to harm and cannot even reach the True Church

Fifth. Papal Rome, then, **imitates** the True Church or bride of Christ. The **Proto-Protestant** or **True Church** is the good "woman [which] fled into the Wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God."⁵⁵⁸ Yet even the Romish Whore sometimes fled away (from the advancing armies of Moslems)⁵⁵³ into the Wilderness — so that many nominal Romanists too perished, as did also Proto-Protestant Christians, in the Wilderness or deserts of North Africa at the hands of the hordes of Islam.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, even those who did not perish thus, lived on in their **monasteries** — or in the **Wilderness**.

However, the Bishop of Rome alone was **called "Pope" for the very first time** — precisely **in the very generation Islam got under way**, at the beginning of the seventh century.⁵⁶⁰ From about that time onward, Papal Rome began to persecute the Proto-Protestant True Church of Christ and her children, ever-increasingly — just as fiercely as did Rome's co-heretical Islamitic cousin.

In all of this, the True Church of Christ became the **Refugee Church** — "the Church in the Wilderness,"⁵⁶⁰ as it were. For it was there in the Wilderness that she crept away into isolated areas — to avoid persecution from the essentially-political Islam, as well as (almost contemporaneously) from the increasingly-politicizing Papacy.

Comments the Historicalistic because Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* (on Revelation 12:7-15): "This war and victory must here be understood of an exceptional appropriation of the first victory of **Christ** which would yet follow against Satan in the Members of Christ. Of this Christ Himself speaks in Matthew 16:18 and Paul in Romans 16:20 — namely during the times of persecution and seduction under **Pagan and Arian** Emperors and other heretical kings.

"Then, Christ was opposed severely, in His Members — especially also when the [**papal**] **Antichrist in the West** and the **Mohammadans in the East** got the upper hand, and suppressed the Church of Christ throughout the whole World. This is clearly proved from the time of one thousand two hundred and sixty days attributed to the flight of the woman in the Wilderness, after this struggle."

Opposing both Preterism and Futurism the *Dordt Dutch Bible* goes on: "Some here take 'a time' as a year; '[two] times' as two years; and 'half a time' as half a year.... They hold that the time of Antichrist's dominion would last no longer than three-and-a-half years.... But this view has been refuted at 11:3. Moreover, it is powerfully refuted in that — if it were to be correct — the Day of Judgment would, **against** the testimony of Christ [in] Mark 13:32, already have been **known** even during the time of the Antichrist...."

⁵⁵⁸ Rev. 14:6.

⁵⁵⁹ Rev. 17:1-5,15-18.

⁵⁶⁰ The Bishop of Rome alone was first called "Pope" at the time of "Gregory I" (A.D. 590-604). Islam was launched by Mohammad just ten years later in A.D. 614 (but began to persecute True Christians even earlier than did Romanism).

"Scripture testifies that this mystery of unrighteousness already began working in Paul's time, Second Thessalonians 2:7, and that the Jews themselves will be converted and gathered unto the True Church of Christ before the end of the World. Romans 11:35; Second Corinthians 3:14; etc. Therefore this 'time' and [two] times' and 'half-a-time' must be taken as a time indeed known to God but not to us before it has ended....

"**Every day is taken as a year....** This time, the Church of Christ shall be nourished in the Wilderness — when the Outer Court of the Temple shall remain unmeasured; and the Holy City shall be trampled down by heathen; and the two witnesses shall prophesy; and a holy war shall be waged against the [true] saints....

"Some think that these are the persecutions which [the papal] Antichrist stirred up against the Greek Church — because the latter [then] did not wish to received **idolatry** and invoking the saints and honouring of its relicts and its dominion — which was long resisted by a few of the **Greek Emperors**. Others think that these are rather the persecutions stirred up against the **Hussites** in Bohemia and other places...together with the co-operation of the Emperors and Kings with the [papal] **Antichrist** when the Church began to stick her head out after the time of **Luther**."

Sixth. God, however, **protected** His true bride even against the Satanic anger of both Islam and the Papacy.⁵⁶¹ "To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly into the Wilderness into her place where she is **nourished** for a time and [two] times and half a time [alias one thousand two hundred and sixty years], away from the face of the Serpent."⁵⁶²

Here the True Church, like a great eagle with her two God-given wings of faith and prayer,⁵⁶² soars aloft and easily escapes her unsuccessful pursuit by the Serpent Satan and his new tool of Papal Rome.⁵⁶³ Nor is the wilderness or the desert a culturally-barren locality. For it was precisely in the Wilderness that also the Older Testament's Church developed all her arts and crafts to the glory of God.⁵⁶⁴

Indeed, it was also precisely in the Wilderness that even the Whore of Papal Rome — imitating the True Church — acquired its own great wealth, and attained its own impressive cultural achievements.⁵⁶⁵ Thus, even in the rough parts of the Wilderness, the Church is **nourished** with God's good food at the hand of faithful Christian servants — food in the Wilderness, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, "which the Lord had appointed for her."⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶¹ Rev. 12:3,13-17; 13:1-12; 17:1-5; cf. n. 408.

⁵⁶² Rev. 12:14. The overwhelming majority of Theologians equate the '3.5 times' with 1260 years, cf. nn. † 381 & 54 & 522. Other interpretations of the phrase, however, include: 3.5 years (thus Walafrid Strabo, Bede, & Nicholas de Lyra); 350 years (Tichonius); an indefinitely-long period (Thomas Aquinas, Purves & Calvin); a mystical period (Methodius); and simply '3.5 times' (Tertullian, Hippolytus & Victorinus).

⁵⁶³ Rev. 12:14,17; 13:1-15; 17:1-18.

⁵⁶⁴ Ex. chs. 19 to 35.

⁵⁶⁵ Rev. 17:4f & 18:10-16.

⁵⁶⁶ Rev. 12:6,14.

Furious Satan fails to harm and cannot even reach the True Church

Still, the True Church was now indeed in the **Wilderness**. No longer was she in the "heavenly" position of political influence, as she was right after the conversion of Constantine. For, with the later rise of the Papacy, the leadership of the Roman Empire certainly became de-christianized in practice (if not also in theory).

This happened in a subtle and highly deceptive way. The leadership also of the visibly-organized "Church" became corrupt — just as the Pharisaical leadership of the Israelitic Church had previously become — right prior to its Christian Reformation.⁵⁶⁷

Now the True Church had fled away from corrupt Israel into the Wilderness of Judea before A.D. 70.⁵⁶⁸ So too, after the Papal-Romish corruption of the nominally-christianized Pagan-Roman Empire, would the True Church again flee into the Wilderness — but this time, **for the centuries-long period of 1260 "day"-years.**⁵⁶⁹

During that time, the resuscitated and reheathenizing Roman Empire would work in conjunction with the Papal-Romish Whore. Together, they would persecute the true bride of Christ in the Wilderness.⁶⁰⁰

For the Papal Whore persecuted the Waldensians in the "Wilderness" of their mountain fastnesses. She accused⁵⁷⁰ and indicted Huss and Wycliffe and even Luther and Calvin and others in her heretical ecclesiastical councils and even on the torture-racks and in the dungeons of her iniquitous inquisitions. And this is why even the Pilgrims and the Puritans fled both from Romish and from Apostate-Protestant persecution, to havens like the North American and South African "Wildernesses" both before and after that general time.⁵⁷¹

However, even during that centuries-long time of Papal-Romish and even Prelatical persecutions, Christ would nevertheless continue to sustain His true bride. For His Earth itself — would swallow up the flood-waters of persecution and false-doctrine that belched forth out of the mouth of that Satanic Serpent, the great red Dragon.⁵⁷²

As the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "God gives means to His Church to escape the fury of Satan." For thus God Himself causes "His creatures to serve to the support thereof."⁵⁷²

Moreover, the "rest" of the woman's "seed" is the Body of Christ of which Jesus Himself is the Head (thus the *Geneva Bible*).⁵⁷⁴ It is "the Church **after** the Roman Emperors" (thus Matthew Poole), and includes the loyal Proto-Protestants (thus Adam Clarke). It represents especially "the Church after 1260 years" (thus Joseph Priestley and even the Roman Catholic *Douay Bible*) — yes, even post-mediaeval True Christians (thus Albert Barnes). In one word, it means 'the True Church' (thus the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Thomas Scott, and the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*) — and "includes all of Christ's brethren" (thus the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*).

⁵⁶⁷ Mt. chs. 15 & 23.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Acts chs. 8f.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. nn. 381 & 522 & 562 & 13 (paras. 11, 13, 17 & 21).

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. Rev. 12:10,13 with n. 408.

⁵⁷¹ Cf. Rev. 12:3,6,13f & 17:1-5,16-18 cf. n. 408.

⁵⁷² Rev. 12:15f cf. 8:9-11 & Dan. 9:26f & 9:27h & Pss. 90:5 & 124:4f & Jer. 47:2.

Albert Barnes comments: "These [are] prophetic days, in which a day denotes a year. **Twelve hundred and sixty years**...I regard...as referring to the proper continuance of the **papal power** — during which the **True Church** would remain in comparative obscurity, as if driven into a **desert**.... After the **pagan** persecutions ceased and Christianity was firmly established in the Empire..., Satan['s]...enmity was vented...in the rise of the **Papacy**, and in the persecutions under that....

"Pure spiritual religion — that of the New Testament — has never been wholly extinct. In the history of the **Waldenses** and...the **Bohemian Brethren**...in...places of obscurity...the True Religion has been kept up in the World....

"The reference here is to the **opposition** which Satan makes to the True Church, under the persecutions and corruptions of the **Papacy**.... It were the purpose of **Papal Rome**, to sweep it [the True Church] entirely away....

"Cruelties practised in the **Inquisition** on individual Christians" — were intensified "in the persecution of such men as **Wycliffe**, **John Huss**, and **Jerome of Prague**.... This **warfare** against individual Christians was **continued long in the Papal Church**....

"The **Papacy** commences a new opposition against the spiritual Church of Christ.... Still filled with rage — though incapable of destroying the True Church itself — he [Satan] turns his wrath, under the form of **papal persecutions**, against individual Christians."

Consequently, the "rest" of the woman's "seed" is **much greater in number** than was her first male child Whom the Roman Puppet-King Herod had so feebly sought to destroy. And this ever-increasing "seed" continued to keep **the Commandments of God** and to hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ even in the Wilderness — without flinching.⁵⁷³

For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* remarks: "Satan was **not able to destroy the Head — or the Body**."⁵⁷³ Meantime (according to some of the manuscripts), the Dragon — **unable to reach that remnant in the Wilderness** — frustratedly went and "stood upon the sand of the Sea."⁵⁷³

However, one day, the centuries-long 1260 years of the True Church's sojourn in the cultural Wilderness would **terminate**. It **began** to terminate, about the time of the Protestant Reformation and the establishment of the new Protestant powers (of Switzerland and the Netherlands and Great Britain and Huguenot South Africa and especially Puritan North America). And it still **continues** to terminate, **in progressive stages**, by the powerful and still-increasing preaching of the unadulterated Word of God by the True Church.

⁵⁷³ Rev. 12:17. On the idea of the "remnant," cf. esp. n. 574. The following verse, Rev. 13:1 (= "12:18"), is to be rendered "then I stood" etc. and is to be applied to the Apostle himself. Thus the *KJV*, *Moffatt*, and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*. They all follow the reading *estatheen*, as found in: the *Koinee*, *P*, *Q*, *T*, & *Hesych*. However, if the word is to be rendered "and he stood" — it is to be applied to the dragon of Rev. 12:17. Thus the *RV*, the *ARSV*, the *NEB* and the *NIV*. These all follow the reading *estathee*, as found in: *'Aleph*, *A*, *C*, *Arm*, & *Aeth*. (see too Dan. 7:14). In this latter reading, the "he stood" of Rev. "12:18" (= 13:1) is then probably to be referred to the Dragon mentioned in both Rev. 12:17 & 13:2. Cf. too n. 578.

Furious Satan fails to harm and cannot even reach the True Church

For that **ever-increasing remnant**⁵⁷³ of the **woman's "seed"**⁵⁷⁴ will triumph over the Satanic Serpent and the Roman Whore — as too did Jesus Christ as the '**firstborn**' "child" or "seed" of the "woman." This triumphant advance will continue — until the expanding Christian **remnant**, like Christ Himself, is exalted to the throne of God and participates in Christ's shepherdly rule over all Nations, right here on Earth, with His rod of iron (or the sword of the Lord which is **the Word of God**).⁵⁷⁵

O Christian, Satan bellows loud! But he cannot even **harm** — and **still less destroy** — the True Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Soaring higher aloft on the faithful and prayerful two wings of a great eagle, as it were — she ever ascends away from the Devil and toward the heavenly-enthroned Christ Himself. For even God's Earth assists her cause — and frustrates all the iniquitous inundations of the Devil and all his agents.

Let us then keep the Commandments of God⁵⁷³ and overcome Satan and all his agents! And let us **expand** that Decalogue-demanding loyal remnant — until the True Church's 1260 years in the cultural Wilderness completely fade into the unpleasant memories of the past, and until the Church fully emerges from that Wilderness to **repossess** the **inheritance** of the **entire World** as her **Promised Land!**⁴⁷⁵

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

⁵⁷⁴ Rev. 12:6,11,17 *cf.* Gen. 3:15 & 15:5 & 22:16 & Rom. 16:20 & I Tim. 2:15. The word "remnant" in the expression "the remnant [*loipon*] of her seed" only means "the part left over." It can therefore even mean a majority, as attested to by Rev. 12:4,17 & 2:20-24 & 9:18-20 & Mt. 27:48f & Mk. 16:12f & Lk. 12:25f & 18:11 & Acts 2:37 & 5:13 & 15:17 & I Cor. 9:5 & II Cor. 12:13 & I Th. 4:13 & 5:6 & II Pet. 3:16 *etc.* In the light of all this, Rev. 11:13,15f & 12:17 & 19:21 (*cf.* our studies on all those texts), may well be very much more encouraging than is sometimes assumed by such Christians as have embraced an eschatological pessimism. *Cf.* Rev. 12:6,14 also with Isa. 53:10-12 & 54:3f,13f & Jh. 14:12 & I Jh. 4:4.

⁵⁷⁵ Rev. 12:5,17 *cf.* 2:24-27 & I Cor. 3:21f & 4:8 & Eph. 6:17 & Heb. 4:12.

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

Revelation 13

December 20

"Then the Beast which I saw was like a leopard, and its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the Dragon gave it its power and its seat, and great authority. Then I saw one of its heads — as it were, wounded to death."⁵⁷⁶

We have seen how the dragonlike power of Satan's agents, even **after** the nominal christianization of the Roman Empire, would sometimes still continue to persecute the true children of God.⁵⁷⁷ Next, we give details as to how the later Romish Papacy — would give a new lease of life to the increasingly corrupt elements in the political body then soon to become the 'Holy Roman Empire' (which the latter had inherited from earlier Rome as its predecessor).

First. John had just described how the great red Dragon Satan himself was frustrated — in that he could not even reach the True Church in the Wilderness.⁵⁷² The Apostle then went on to record that either that Dragon or he himself (or both) now went and "stood upon the sand of the Sea."⁵⁷³

The God-inspired John then predicted: "I saw a Beast [now] rising up out of the Sea. It had seven Heads and ten Horns; and upon its Horns ten crowns; and upon its Heads the name of blasphemy."⁵⁷⁸

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments about this first Beast of Revelation chapter thirteen: "Here is a description of the **Roman Empire**, which stands in [or consists of] cruelty and tyranny."⁵⁷⁸ The 'seven Heads' signify "**Rome** — because it was first governed by seven Kings or Emperors **after** Nero, and also is compassed about with seven mountains."⁵⁷⁸ And the Roman Empire's 'ten Horns' are said to "signify **many provinces**."⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Rev. 13:2f, *cf.* n. 408.

⁵⁷⁷ *Cf.* our study for Dec. 19.

⁵⁷⁸ Rev. 13:1, *cf.* nn. 408 & 573. Possibly Rev. 13:1 should be read: "Then he [the Dragon of Rev. 12:17] stood upon the sand of the sea, and I [the Apostle John] saw a Beast" *etc.* This would imply the Dragon's utter powerlessness to reach the True Church in the Wilderness — hence his journey to the Sea. *Cf.* n. 573.

Again, Rev. 13:1's Greek *ek tees thalassees theerion anabainon* should be rendered: "a Beast now rising up out of the sea." For the present participle *anabainon* is used here — not the perfect participle *anabebeekos*. As Hengstenberg (with Bengel) correctly points out, "the Beast ascends now out of the Sea; has not ascended previously." And the "now" is after the Dragon fails to reach the Church in the wilderness subsequently to the eclipse of Constantine's victory at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. It perhaps points to renewed persecution of the Church, such as under the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate or the cruel Phocas.

The ten crowned Horns of Rev. 13:1, correspond to those of Dan. 7:7 & 7:20 and represent the ten Kingdoms of Western Europe after the breakup of Imperial Rome in A.D. 476 and before the rise of the Papacy (*cf.* Rev. 13:11f) as from 606-666 A.D. onward. *Cf.* nn.[†] 593-594 & 597 & 722. Thus the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Bishop Thomas Newton, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*, and B.H. Carroll. *Cf.* too Dan. 7:7f,20,24 with n.[†] 594.

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

Now here, the **Post**-Constantinian Roman Beast standing on the edge of the **Wilderness** (and seen at the **end** of Revelation chapter twelve) — seems to call forth a similar Beast from the **Sea** (seen at the **beginning** of Revelation chapter thirteen). At any rate, according to the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, the First Beast of Revelation thirteen having **blasphemy** upon its Heads and wearing crowns upon its **Horns** — is **not Nero** but "seven Kings or Emperors after Nero." (For the **Calvinistic Geneva Bible** is **not Preteristic** — but **Historicalistic**.)

Revelation thirteen's **Post**-Neronian blasphemous Beast wearing **ten crowns** not on its seven Heads but **upon its ten Horns** (which grew out of only **one** of the **later** Heads), strongly resembles the red and dragonlike creature described at the **beginning** of Revelation chapter twelve. For both have seven Heads and ten crowns; both are infused with the evil spirit of that old Dragon and Serpent the Devil; and both are apparently aspects of the Ancient Roman World.

Indeed, both Revelation twelve's red and dragonlike creature and Revelation thirteen's first Beast — are 'ancestors' also of Revelation thirteen's second Beast (which looks like a lamb but which speaks like a dragon). More-over, together with that second 'lamb-like' Beast — they are 'ancestors' also of the later or third and "scarlet-coloured Beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven Heads and ten Horns" — the Beast that **then** carries, and then **carries**, the Papal-Romish Whore.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁹ Rev. 17:3f cf. 13:11 & n. 408. The continuity of the three Roman Beasts is seen in Rev. 11:7, 12:3-6, 12:13-17, 13:1-10, 13:11f, 16:13, 19:1-18, 19:19f & 20:10. See M. Luther's *Second Preface to the Revelation of St. John* (in *Works* VI:484). See too Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* II:2.

The following Theologians regarded Rev. 13:1f's Sea-Beast as Antichrist: Irenaeus (A.D. 185), Tertullian (200f), Cyprian (250), Victorinus (300), Lactantius (315), Ephraim (370), Ambrose (390), Augustine (430), Primasius (560), Andreas of Caesarea (580), Bede (730), Berengaud (830), Walafrid Strabo (840), Haymo (850), Bruno Segni (1120), Peter Waldo (1120), Bernard of Clairvaux (1130), Richard of St. Victor (1170), Joachim of Floris (1200), Eberhard of Salzburg (1240), Pierre Jean d'Olivi (1240), Albert the Great (1280), Ubertino of Casale (1305), John Wycliffe (1384), Walter Brute (1390), Matthias of Janow (1394), John Purvey (1428), John Huss (1415), Tyndale (1536), Osiander (1552), Joye (1553), Bale (1563), Von Amsdorff (1565), Virgil Solis (1567), Conrad (1570), Jewel (1571), Bullinger (1575), John Foxe (1587), John Napier (1593), Pacard (1604), Brightman (1614), Cappel (1615), David Pareus (1618), Cramer (1619), James the First (1625), Alsted (1627), Mede (1631), Grotius (1640), Gerhard (1643), Helwig (1643), John Cotton (1652), Tillinghast (1655), Durham (1657), Holyoake (1658), Cocceius (1669), Increase Mather (1669), Spener (1670), Sherwin (1670), Goodwin (1680), Roger Williams (1683), Jurieu (1687), Phillipot (1695), Cotton Mather (1696), Fleming (1701), Matthew Henry (1712), Cressener (1718), Daubuz (1720), Burnet (1724), Sir Isaac Newton (1727), De Bionens (1729), Pyle (1735), John Willison (1745), Jonathan Edwards (1747), Bengel (1752), Aaron Burr (1757), Isaac Backus (1767), Petri (1768), John Gill (1771), Langdon (1774), Bishop Thomas Newton (1782), Hans Wood (1787), Ben Gale (1788), Thomas Scott (1788), John Wesley (1791), Samuel Hopkins (1793), Timothy Dwight (1796), Jeremy Belknap (1798), Faber (1806), Romeyne (1808), Elias Smith (1808), Andrew Fuller (1810), Cunninghame (1813), Alexander Keith (1828), Robert Scott (1834), Junkin (1836), Hinton (1842), Bishop Elliott (1844), Albert Barnes (1851) and most Protestant commentators from then onward prior to the Church's later and massive collapse into theological liberalism.

The following Theologians, following adumbrations already in A.D. 840 by Walafrid Strabo, regarded Rev. 13:1f's Sea-Beast as the Papacy-in-embryo: Peter Waldo (1120 A.D.), Eberhard of Salzburg (1240), John Wycliffe (1384), Matthias of Janow (1394), John Purvey (1428), John Huss (1415), Tyndale (1536), Osiander (1552), Joye (1553), Bale (1563), Von Amsdorff (1565), Virgil Solis (1567), Conrad (1570), Jewel (1571), Bullinger (1575), James the First (1625), Helwig (1643), Cocceius (1648), John Cotton (1652), Tillinghast (1655), Thos. Goodwin (1680), Roger Williams (1683), Phillipot (1695), Cotton Mather (1696), Cressener (1718), Sir Isaac Newton (1727), Burnet (1724), Bengel (1740), John Willison (1745), Jonathan Edwards

As such, there is a **basic continuity** underlying **all three of these Roman Beasts**.⁵⁷⁹ They are all driven by the Satanic Dragon of Revelation twelve.

Yet there are also **important differences** between the three Beasts. These differences show that those monsters are **not wholly identical**, but that the latter two each as it were 'evolves' from its predecessor.

As Rev. Professor Dr. Martin Luther points out:⁵⁷⁹ "Here, then, are the **two** Beasts. The one is the **Empire**. The other, with the two horns, is the **Papacy** — which has now become a temporal Kingdom yet with the reputation and **Name of Christ**....

"The Pope restored the fallen Roman Empire.... It [the thus-restored Empire] is an **image** of the Roman Empire, rather than the body of the Empire as it once **was**. Nevertheless, he [**the Pope**] puts **spirit and life** into this image...and actually **operates** it to some extent. This is the image [of that] which was wounded, but did live" or still kept on surviving nevertheless.

Also Hengstenberg comments on Revelation 12:18 to 13:10, that "these three enemies of God's Kingdom to which the whole group refers, are not coordinate with each other.... The second [Revelation 12:2b-3a] is the vassal and instrument of the first [Revelation 12:17-18 alias 13:1a & 13:2b]. And the third [Revelation 13:11] is the abettor of the second [Revelation 13:16]." Consequently, many have identified **even the Sea-Beast** of Revelation 13:1f with the **Papacy-in-embryo** of Revelation 13:11f.⁵⁷⁹

Now the red and dragonlike monster at the beginning of Revelation chapter **twelve** — wears **seven crowns** upon its **seven Heads**.⁵⁸⁰ The latter, seven mountains and seven Kings, represent Pre-Constantinian Pagan Rome. Thus Tertullian, Victorinus, Pareus, Mede, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Tillinghast, Goodwin, and Matthew Henry *etc.*

Yet the Roman 'Sea Beast' at the Beginning of Revelation chapter **thirteen** no longer wears its crowns upon its seven Heads. Nor does it have only seven — but fully **ten crowns**. Indeed, it wears those ten **crowns not upon its seven Heads** but upon its **ten Horns** — apparently all of which grow out of only **one of the Heads** — its seventh or youngest and **latest** Head which succeeded the previous ones.

The great Puritan, Rev. Professor Dr. Joseph Mede, points this out. So too does Hengstenberg: "The ten Horns [in Revelation 13:1], which denote ten Kings (chapter 17:12) — that is, ten Kingdoms — do not exist along with the Heads [alias all seven Heads]. But they sit upon the **seventh** Head."⁵⁸¹

(1747), Bengel (1752), Aaron Burr (1757), Isaac Backus (1767), John Gill (1771), Bishop Thomas Newton (1782), John Wesley (1791), Samuel Hopkins (1793), Timothy Dwight (1796), Jeremy Belknap (1798), and most Protestant commentators such as David Brown and Bonar and Fairbairn from 1800 onward — prior to the Church's massive collapse into theological liberalism (as a result of the impact of the so-called 'Enlightenment' and the French Revolution).

⁵⁸⁰ Rev. 12:3 *cf.* 17:9f,18 & nn. 408 & 494 & 497.

⁵⁸¹ *Cf.* nn. 408 & 496 & 580 & 590 with Rev. 13:1f & 13:11-15. † On all ten (crowned) Horns being on the Roman Head alone, *cf.* Dan. 7:7,24 & Rev. 17:3,10-12 & Mede (in Chr. Wordsworth's *Babylon — Is the Church*

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

This clearly points to an **Early-Mediaeval tenfold dismemberment** or "deadly wound[ing]" of the only-nominally-christianized Roman Empire **after** the Fall of Rome in the fifth century A.D. Thus: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, the Venerable Bede, Walafriid Strabo, Waldo, Luther, Melanchthon, Knox, and many other Theologians.

The transfer of the **political** throne of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople already in 330 A.D., gave a stimulus for Rome itself to become the **ecclesiastical** throne of the the Romish Church. But the former also hastened the collapse of the Western Roman Empire politically, before the barbarian hordes from the North — to be followed by the political fragmentation of the Western Roman Empire into the ten toes or the ten Horns alias the ten Kingdoms or divided Political Governments of mediaeval Western Europe.

of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse?, Rivington, London, 1856, p. 36 n. 7) & Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* III:77. Cf. too esp. nn. [‡] 708 & 729.

It is true that Preterists have sought to identify the Sea-Beast of Rev. 13:1f not with Rome but rather with the Judaistic State in Judea right before A.D. 70 (*cf.* n. 408). However, Rev. 13:1-7's Sea-Beast is obviously a projection of the Fourth Beast of Dan. 2:34-43 & 7:19-25[‡]. And that Fourth Empire was clearly identified as Rome by the Ancient Hebrews (Daniel, Jaddua, the *Talmud*, the *Targums*, and Josephus); by subsequent Judaists (Johanen ben Zakkai, Akiba ben Joseph, Pirke Eliezer, Saadia ben Joseph, Sahl ben Mazliah, Jepheth ben Halevi, Rashi Solomon ben Isaac, Abraham ben Ezra, Moses Maimonides, David Kimchi ben Joseph, Levi Gersonides, Isaac Abranavel, Mordecai ben Judah, and Manasseh ben Israel).

Rev. 13:1-10's Sea-Beast was also equated with Rome by the Early Church Fathers. Thus Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:1-3,15,28 *cf.* Dan. 9:27 & 12:11), John the Apostle (Rev. 13:1 *cf.* Dan. 7:17f), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V:25:1-3 & 26:1 & 28:1 & 30:3), Tertullian (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* chs. 24-25 *cf.* nn. 6934f), Hippolytus (*Treat. on Christ and Antichrist* ch. 50), Victorinus (*Commentary on Revelation*), Lactantius (*The Divine Institutes* VII:15-17), Tichonius, Ambrose, Augustine (various writings), Orosius (VI:1:i-iii & VII:2), Jerome (*Epistle to Marcella* and *Commentary on Isaiah* ch. 24), Andreas of Caesarea (*Commentary on Revelation*), Oecumenius, the Venerable Bede, Walafriid Strabo, Aretus, and also many others.

Rev. 13:1-10's Sea-Beast was identified with Post-Constantinian degenerate Imperial Rome by Mid- and Late-Mediaeval Theologians. Thus Berengaud, Waldo, Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Pierre d'Olivi, Ubertino of Casale, Dante, Michael Rupercissa, Petrarch, John Milicx, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Purvey, Walter Brute, Huss, and Savanorola. That same identification was made by the Early Reformers Luther, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, Tyndale, Joye, Osiander, Knox, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Hooper, Bale, Latimer, Ridley, Von Amsdorff, Flaccius Illyricus, Bullinger, Funck, and Virgil Solis—and also by nearly all of the later Classic Lutherans and Classic Calvinists and Classic Episcopalian Anglicans and other Protestants such as Jewel, Nigrinus, Cranmer, Chytraeus, Foxe, Napier, James the First, Brightman, Downham, Pacard, Broughton, Helwig, Pareus, Hoe, Cramer, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Gerhard, Alsted, Mede, Durham, Sherwin, Cocceius, John Cotton, Parker, Holyoke, Phillipot, Increase Mather, Cappel, Spener, Cressener, Jurieu, Matthew Henry, Fleming, Daubuz, Burnet, Jonathan Edwards, Langdon, De Bionens, Pyle, Bishop Thomas Newton, Bengel, Petri, Wood, Gale, Osgood, Winthrop, Linn, Dudley, John Brown of Haddington, Farnham, Priestley, Romeyne, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Hinton, Junkin, Lacunza, Faber, Fuller, Cunninghame, the *Cottage Bible*, Keith, Cox, Bishop Elliott, David Brown, Patrick Fairbairn, William Symington, Albert Barnes, J.P. Lange, Apostolos Makrakis, J. Marcellus Kik, and many others. *Cf.* too n. 494 for the further development of this Roman Political Beast.

Even many Preterists who apply Rev. chs. 4 to 11 against Ancient Jerusalem—still apply Rev. chs. 12 to 18 against Rome. Thus Alcasar, Grotius, Hammond, Lightfoot, Bossuet, Wetstein, Herrenschneider, Eichorn, Ewald, Scholten, Luecke, Duesterdieck, and Vanderwaal (*cf.* the latter's *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1971, p. 272).

Incidentally, the Arminian Grotius was the very first 'Protestant' to adopt Romish Preterism pioneered by the Romanistic Jesuit Alcasar. He was later followed by other **Preterists**, such as the Rationalists Eichhorn, Ewald, Luecke, De Wette and Wellhausen.

So this first Roman monster alias the Sea-Beast is **immediately** followed and kept 'alive' by the **second** (or '**lamb-like**) **Beast**' — mentioned in the latter half of Revelation **thirteen**. This second Beast, the **Papacy** — which **looks** like a two-horned **lamb** but **speaks** like a **dragon** — revives and perpetuates the commemoration of the first Roman monster alias the Sea-Beast.⁵⁸¹

The **next** Roman monster (of Revelation chapter **seventeen**) is the **international political Beast** of "peoples and multitudes and Nations and tongues" **after** the Papal-Romish scarlet Whore (alias the 'lamb-like Beast' of Revelation thirteen) has **mounted it** and sought to **steer it** — particularly from the time of the papal crowning of Emperor Charlemagne at the beginning of the ninth century **onward**.⁵⁸² Thus Joachim of Floris, Dante, Osiander, Von Amsdorff, Chytraeus, Hooper, Pareus — and even Romanists like Blasius Viegas, Francisco Ribera, Cornelius De Lapide, and Cardinal Bellarmin.

First. There is **continuity** between these three phases in the 'evolutionary' development of **Rom-an-ism**. Indeed, Daniel's Fourth Kingdom and Fourth Beast can be identified as **Rome-as-such**.⁵⁸¹ **Throughout**, John was describing **all** of these developments in terms of conditions already operative in his own day.

The following **Pre-Reformation Theologians** regarded Rev. 13:1f's **Sea-Beast** as **Antichrist**: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Lactantius, Ephraim, Ambrose, Augustine, Primasius, Andreas of Caesarea, Bede, Berengaud, Walafrid Strabo, Haymo, Bruno Segni, Peter Waldo, Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard of St. Victor, Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Pierre d'Olivivi, Albert the Great, Ubertino of Casale, John Wycliffe, Walter Brute, Matthias of Janow, John Purvey, and John Huss.

The following **Protestant Reformers** did the same: Tyndale, Osiander, Joye, Bale, Von Amsdorff, Virgil Solis, Conrad, Jewel, and Bullinger.

And the following **Post-Reformational Pre-Puritan Protestants** did the same: Foxe, Napier, Pacard, Brightman, Cappel, Pareus, Cramer, James the First, Grotius, Alsted, Mede, Gerhard, and Helwig.

The same view was taken by **Puritans** and **Post-Puritans** like: John Cotton, Tillinghast, Durham, Holyoake, Cocceius, Increase Mather, Spener, Sherwin, Goodwin, Roger Williams, Jurieu, Phillipot, Cotton Mather, Fleming, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, John Willison, and Jonathan Edwards. Thus was done also by **later Conservatives** such as: Bengel, Backus, Petri, John Gill, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Wesley, Hopkins, Dwight, Belknap, Faber, Fuller, Cunninghame, Keith, Scott, Junkin, Hinton, Bishop Elliott, and Albert Barnes.

⁵⁸² Rev. 13:1-10 *cf.* 17:8-17 & 19:19f. For evidence that the international political Beast of Rev. 17:3f is indeed the 'Holy Roman Empire' as steered by the Papacy, *cf.* nn. 720 & 722 & 729 & 736.

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

Already in A.D. 840, Walafrid Strabo suggested that Rev. 13:1f's **Sea-Beast** adumbrated the **Papacy-in-embryo**. In this he was followed, with increasing emphasis, by: Waldo, Eberhard, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Purvey, Huss, Tyndale, Osiander, Joye, Bale, Von Amsdorff, Virgil Solis, Conrad, Jewel, Bullinger, James the First, the Westminster Theologians who authored the *Westminster Confession*, John Cotton, Tillinghast, Cocceius, Goodwin, Roger Williams, Cotton Mather, Sir Isaac Newton, John Willison, Jonathan Edwards, Bengel, Aaron Burr, Backus, Gill, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Wesley, Hopkins, Dwight, Belknap, and most Protestant commentators⁵⁷⁹ from 1800 onward such as David Brown and Bonar and Fairbairn — prior to the Church's massive collapse into theological liberalism through the impact of the earlier so-called 'Enlightenment' and the French Revolution.

Second. This continuity between the various Roman Beasts of Revelation chapters twelve and thirteen and seventeen, however — although it applies to Rome throughout most of the period of her historical development — applies not only to Rome. It also reaches **back** even to Ancient Babylon itself — and even stretches **forward** to the religious establishments and/or political dictatorships also of **today and tomorrow**.

For the Beast mentioned at the beginning of Revelation chapter thirteen, does in fact symbolize **all** of the successive heathen World Empires of the past (and perhaps all those of the future too).⁵⁸² For like all four of Daniel's Beasts, the First Beast of Revelation thirteen also rose up "out of the Sea" — out of the troubled Heathen World.⁵⁸³

To stress its **continuity** with **Daniel's** four Beasts, it is recorded in Revelation thirteen that the First Beast there "was like a leopard, and its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth like the mouth of a lion — and the Dragon gave it its power."⁵⁸⁴ This reminds one of Daniel's Babylonian lion and Medo-Person bear and Grecian leopard and Roman 'dragon' all rolled into one.⁵⁸⁵

Again, like the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the remnants of all four of these different Beasts in Daniel are here at the beginning of Revelation thirteen amassed into one as **the godless State** — in this case, as the dechristianizing **Post-Constantinian** "Power State."⁵⁸⁶ For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "By these Beasts are signified the Macedonians, Persians and Chaldeans — whom the Romans overcame."⁵³⁴

Yet throughout, "**the** Dragon" alias Satan himself⁵⁸⁷ gave the Babylonian-Medopersian-Grecian-Roman World-imperial Beast both its **religious** as well as its **political** power. For the Devil gave both the Beast and its **throne** or "its seat" very "**great** authority."⁵⁸⁸ As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* once again comments, the Dragon which gave the First Beast of Revelation thirteen its power, "is the Devil."⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ Dan. 7:2f and Rev. 13:1 & 17:1,15 cf. 21:1 with Isa. 57:20f.

⁵⁸⁴ Rev. 13:2a.

⁵⁸⁵ Dan. 2:31f & 7:1-7 cf. Rev. 12:3,7-10 & 13:2 & 17:3,7-13.

⁵⁸⁶ Rev. 13:1-10 & 17:12-14,16 & 19:19-21 cf. Dan. 2:31f.

⁵⁸⁷ Rev. 12:9,17 & chs. 2 to 3 cf. n. 578.

⁵⁸⁸ Rev. 12:2b, where the Greek has *thronon* (translated "seat" in the *KJV*).

Third. We are told that but one of the seven Heads of this 'Antichristian'⁵⁸⁹ Beast, was then "wounded to death."⁵⁸⁹ Here again, inasmuch as this was a **deadly** wound, the supposition is that the seven Heads of the Beast were successive⁵⁹⁰ rather than contemporaneous — and that the first six Heads were by then all **defunct**. For otherwise, the remaining six Heads — if they themselves had still been functioning — could easily have kept the Beast alive. And in that case, its wound would then not have been "deadly" or mortal.⁵⁸⁹

Yet being successive, the seven Heads probably signify not merely **seven Roman Emperors**.⁴⁹⁶ But — as can be seen from the other lion-like and leopard-like and bear-like and dragon-like parts of that same Beast⁵⁹¹ — the latter far rather seems to represent **seven successive World Empires**.⁵⁹⁵

Accordingly, the Head that was "wounded to death" at that time — was the **Roman** Head of a successive series of seven Ancient World Empires. Such would then be: the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, the Pagan-Roman, and the modern Papal Empire.⁴⁹⁶ For the wounded Head is the sixth or **Roman Head that was already ruling in John's own day**.⁵⁸¹

Revelation 13:1-10's **Sea-Beast** was equated with **Rome-as-such** by the Early Church. Thus: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Lactantius, Tichonius, Ambrose, Augustine, Orosius, Jerome, Andreas of Caesarea, Oecumenius, the Venerable Bede, Walafrid Strabo, Aretus, and many others.

It was equated with **Post-Constantinian and degenerate Mediaeval Rome** by many Mid- and Late-Mediaeval Theologians such as Berengaud, Waldo, Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Pierre d'Olivi, Ubertino of Casale, Dante Aleghieri, Michael Rupercissa, Petrarch, John Milicx, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, John Purvey, Walter Brute, Huss, and Savanorola.

The same identification was made by the Early Protestant Reformers. Thus: Luther, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, Tyndale, Joye, Osiander, Knox, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Hooper, Bale, Latimer, Ridley, Von Amsdorff, Flaccius Illyricus, Bullinger, Funck, and Virgil Solis. Indeed, before the rise of theological liberalism round about the time of the French Revolution, the same identification was made also by nearly all later Protestants — such as: Jewel, Cranmer, Foxe, Napier, James the First, Brightman, Pareus, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Gerhard, Cramer, Alsted, Grotius, Mede, Durham, Alsted, Cocceius, John Cotton, Parker, Increase Mather, Spener, Cressener, Jurieu, Matthew Henry, Fleming, Daubuz, Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Thomas Newton, J.A. Bengel, Petri, John Brown of Haddington, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Hinton, Junkin, Lacunza, Faber, Fuller, Cunninghame, Keith, Cox, Bishop Elliott, David Brown, Patrick Fairbairn, William Symington, Albert Barnes, J.P. Lange, Apostolos Makrakis, J. Marcellus Kik, and many others.

⁵⁸⁹ Rev. 13:3a,12,14. This wounding of the Sea-Beast (*cf.* n. 578) takes place after Rev. 12:7-17. See, on the latter, our study for Dec. 19.

⁵⁹⁰ *Cf.* Rev. 13:2 & 17:10 & nn. 408 & 585.

⁵⁹¹ *Cf.* nn. 582-588.

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

Fourth. The international political Beast's sixth or Pagan-Roman Head — endured from the fall of the Grecian Empire prior to 64 B.C., right down to the emergence of the lamb-like Beast alias the Papacy **after** the destruction of Rome at the hands of the Goths in the fifth century A.D. This shows that it was during **this** time that the Roman **Head** (as distinct from the Beast-as-such alias the successive series of World Empires), was "wounded to death."⁵⁸⁹

Indeed, it was **only during that (Gothic) age** that the Beast was now said to be rising up out of the Sea — the great Sea of Nations.⁵⁷⁸ And it was only **after** this Fall of Rome to the Goths that the previously-monolithic Roman Empire began to **break up** into the **ten provinces** or kingdoms of Early-Mediaeval Western Europe represented by the Beast's ten Horns **each** wearing a **crown**.⁵⁷⁸

Certainly the **Pre-Constantinian Pagan-Roman** Empire was also wounded to death **in principle** when Christ Himself was wounded to death **in practice** — before He rose again three days later.⁵⁹² And, **again** like the resurrected Christ Who revived after His death — also the 'resurrected' Beast's deadly "wound was healed."⁵⁹³ This occurred when the Pagan-Roman Empire remarkably continued for centuries, even **after** Calvary. Yet this is not one of the many events to which Revelation thirteen is referring.

Once more. The Roman Beast was later yet again "wounded to death" at its nominal christianization during the fourth century — after Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity. However, even this "deadly wound was healed" — in the subsequent apostasization of much of the Visible Christian Church after Emperor Theodosius (thus Matthew Poole), and under the influence of wicked Emperors such as Julian the Apostate and specially the cruel Phocas.

Thus the Roman Empire was "wounded to death" by **the Fall of Rome to the Goths in A.D. 476**. This is perhaps the central meaning of the text here at this point.⁵⁹³

However, even that barbarian and "deadly wound" was "healed" once more. That occurred when political Rome was 'resurrected from the dead' — and re-emerged under the Papacy as the so-called '**Holy** Roman Empire' with its ten Kingdoms of Europe (namely England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe).⁵⁹⁴

The above-mentioned ten Kingdoms do seem to be represented here by the Beast's ten crowned Horns⁵⁷⁸ or Hings or Kingdoms.⁵⁹⁵ For those ten Kingdoms grew precisely out of the very Head — the sixth or Roman one — which received the deadly wound.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁹² Rev. 13:3a & 5:6 & Acts 4:25-28 & Heb. 2:14f & Gen. 3:15 & Rom. 16:20 & Col. 2:9-14 & Rev. 12:1-10.

⁵⁹³ Rev. 13:3f. In this "(re-)apostasization" of the Roman Empire after Constantine and before the emergence of the Papacy about A.D. 600f, see Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* II:244f, which so quotes Constantine, Jerome, Orosius, Theodosius and Salvian.

⁵⁹⁴ Namely the Anglo-Saxons in England, the Suevi in Portugal, the Visigoths in Spain, the Lombards in Northern Italy, the Ostrogoths in Austria, the Vandals in Central Europe (and thence *via* Iberia through Northwest Africa and Sicily and even to Rome), and the Heruli in Eastern Europe. See L.E. Froom: *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Review & Herald, Washington D.C., I-IV, 1945 —[†] and our n. [†] 722.

⁵⁹⁵ Rev. 13:1 to 17:11 *cf.* Dan. 2:33-35,40-43 & 7:3,7f,17,19-25 & n. 408.

It is, therefore, particularly this A.D. 476 wounding which is probably being referred to here. For historically, it was precisely **after** the division of the later Roman Empire into ten Romish Kingdoms since 476 A.D.⁵⁹⁴ that the deadly wound was indeed healed — particularly by the next-mentioned and 'lamb-like' Beast⁵⁹⁶ of the Romish Papacy.

Observe: that the ten Romish Kingdoms only came into being after the beginning of the sixth century; that the Bishop of Rome alone was called sole "Pope" only from the beginning of the seventh century; and that the first clear augmentations of the powers of the revived 'Holy Roman Empire' (under Emperor Pepin the Short) and of the rising Papacy (under Pope Zacharias) began to show themselves very conspicuously only from about the middle of the eighth century onward. That was after Pepin's father Charles Martel had defeated the even more religio-political Islamic armies in France, and saved Europe from the religion of Mohammad.

As the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* notes: "Constantine, the two Theodosiuses, Gratian, and a few other good and Christian Emperors promoted the Church for a period of time. Yet there were then also a few pagan and heretical Emperors and Kings who, having given their power to the Dragon, persecuted the Congregations of Christ and orthodox Preachers — until finally, under imperial rule in the West, around the years 400-500 A.D., this Beast received a mortal wound when the northern Nations (the Lombards, Goths, Huns and Vandals) captured the city of Rome up to five times, and finally destroyed it.

"From that demise, the Antichrist finally brought forth his kingdom — when Emperor Justinian around 550 drove off these barbarian Nations...and exalted the Bishop of Rome anew, whom the cruel Emperor Phocas pronounced to be Universal Bishop [alias sole Pope] in the year 606[-666f A.D.].

"Thereby the wound in the Head of the Beast was again healed, and he was revered among all Nations.... This wound was fully healed by Pepin — and Charlemagne, who around 700-800 enthroned the Bishop of Rome in his full possession when the ten Kings who arose with him added their power to him."

Fifth. After the Beast's sixth or Roman Head's mortal wound was been healed,⁵⁹⁷ "all the World wondered after the Beast. And they bowed down to the Dragon which gave power to the Beast" — by "receiving the statutes, ordinances, decrees, ceremonies and religion of the Roman Empire" (comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*).⁵⁹⁸ John continues: "They bowed down to the Beast, saying: 'Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war against him?'"⁵⁹⁸

Note that after the attention-demanding Islamic scourge had been stopped in France in A.D. 732 by Charles Martel, his son Pepin the Short had his own coronation approved by Pope Zacharias. In return — Pepin forced the Lombards⁵⁹⁴ to surrender part of their territory in Italy to the Pope. This marks the beginning of the so-called "Papal States."

⁵⁹⁶ Rev. 13:1,3,11f *cf.* n. 408. *Cf.* Rev. ch. 9, and our study for Dec. 11. *Cf.* too esp. nn. 597-612.

⁵⁹⁷ Rev. 13:3,11-15 & *cf.* nn. 408 & 596.

⁵⁹⁸ Rev. 13:3f, *cf.* the Greek word *hoti* (translated by "which" in the *KJV*). *Per contra*, Ex. 15:11!

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Indeed, that was to be followed by Pope Leo III's coronation of Pepin's son Charles as the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne in A.D. 800 — in return for Charlemagne's recognition of the Pope as the ultimate Head of all temporal and political power. By the time of Charlemagne's death in A.D. 814 — his 'Holy Roman Empire' embraced Northern Italy and Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and much of Germany and Austria. At that same time, the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire comprehended the Balkans, Asia Minor, and Southern Italy. And the Islamic Empire then stretched from India through to Northwest Africa and on into Southern Spain.

The so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' — lasting from the time of the first clearly-recorded Pope (the 590-604 Gregory) in the seventh almost down to the sixteenth century and the Reformation — was powerful. In conjunction with its papal teammate,⁵⁹⁹ "there was given to it a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. And power was given to it to continue forty-two months" — during which time the true saints would be persecuted.⁶⁰⁰

This expression 'forty-two months' means 1260 day-**years**, and represents the time of Antichrist's power. Thus: Victorinus, Lactantius, Ribera, Bellarmin, Luther, Flaccius Illyricus, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Conrad, Nigrinus, Napier, Brightman, Downham, James the First, Mede, Tillinghast, Sherwin, Beverley, Poole, Cressener, Gerhard, Cramer, Pacard, Jurieu, Hoe, Matthew Henry, Bengel, Fleming, Daubuz, Whiston, Bishop Thomas Newton, Wesley, Horch, Bengel, Priestley, B.H. Carroll — and many others, including even the Roman Catholic *Douay Bible*.⁶⁰⁰ During that time, the Sea-Beast "opened its mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name and His Tabernacle and those who dwell in Heaven."⁶⁰¹

Sixth. This Sea-Beast is **political Rome** — and the continuation of the Fourth Beast in Daniel's vision.⁶⁰² The Beast blasphemously demands political homage throughout the then-known World of the 'Holy Roman Empire' (*sic*). Yet the Beast has power for only 'forty-two months.' For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "Antichrist's time and power, is **limited**."⁶⁰⁰

Indeed, in spite of all his **persecutions** of the true saints (before **they** finally overcome him) — the 'resurrected' Roman Beast is **unable** to **conquer** them. For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* once again comments, the Beast overcame these saints only "in their bodies, **not in souls**."⁶⁰¹ Moreover, very far from the Beast being able to exterminate the Church — the very gates of hell shall not prevail against the ongoingly-aggressive Church of the true saints of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶⁰³

⁵⁹⁹ Rev. 13:3-5,11-15 *cf.* Dan. 7:7-25 & nn. 372-401 & 408 & 596 and our study for Dec. 13 on Rev. 11:1-13 (*cf.* ch. 17).

⁶⁰⁰ Rev. 13:5 & Dan. 7:25 & 8:12,25 & 11:2f,28,31f & 12:6f *cf.* nn. 380-382f.

⁶⁰¹ Rev. 13:6f *cf.* Dan. 8:10f.

⁶⁰² *Cf.* Dan. 2:33f,40f & 7:7-25 & 8:9-25 & 9:26f & 11:21-37 & 12:1-11.

⁶⁰³ Rev. 12:11 *cf.* 17:14 & Mt. 16:18. Note that Rev. 13:7's words "And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds" — is not found in the manuscripts A & C & P & I* and 69 others, and is omitted in some of the Church Fathers (and notably in the Early Church Father Irenaeus whose comments are the first extant remarks about Rev. 13).

Meantime, **only the unsaved** inhabitants of the then-known "Roman" World (as opposed to the entire Globe) bowed down to the Beast. He received homage only from those "whose names are **not** written from the foundation of the World in the book of life of the Lamb Who was slain."⁶⁰⁴ Even at the very zenith of the power of the revived Beast — all the great multitudes of the elect of God, bought by the precious blood of Jesus,⁶⁰⁵ keep on standing loyal to their Lord and King.

So too should the elect of God even today. And so too **shall** they keep on standing — even till the end of the World!

As Calvin remarks in his *Adultero-German Interim*: "Christ is called 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the World' inasmuch as His blood cleansed the faults of **all** ages — from the very commencement of the World."⁶⁰⁴ And as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "Antichrist has no power over the elect."⁶⁰⁴

Seventh. The doom of that Roman Beast is **sure**. For "he who keeps on leading into captivity — shall [himself] go into captivity! He who keeps on killing with the sword — must be killed, with the sword!"⁶⁰⁶ For "here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

As Hengstenberg comments: "The True Members of the Church may indeed be overcome outwardly, and even killed by the Beast. But they can never be drawn by him into apostasy." Hence they are always **more** than **conquerors!**

The saints, then, are to **stand firm** — until, in God's Own good time, He Himself kills the Roman Beast with the Word of the Lord.⁶⁰⁷ Ordinary Christians not in government service, are not physically to wield the punitive sword against the State. But they **are** spiritually to wield the sword of the Spirit which is the **Word of God** — not only in favour of the State, but where necessary even against the State.⁶⁰⁸

So "let the saints...sing upon their beds! Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand — to execute vengeance upon the Heathen and punishments upon the People; **to bind their Kings with chains** and their nobles with fetter of iron; **to execute** upon them the judgment written! **All** the saints have this honour."⁶⁰⁹

Eighth. The **Second** Beast in Revelation chapter thirteen, which **looks** like a **lamb**⁶¹⁰ but which **speaks** like a **dragon**, would come up only **gradually**.

⁶⁰⁴ Rev. 13:8 *cf.* Lk. 2:1 & Calvin's *Adultero-German Interim* (in *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, III:222).

⁶⁰⁵ Rev. 13:8,16; *per contra* 17:14 & 7:1-4 & 9:4 & 14:1 & 15:2-4 & 22:4 *cf.* Eph. 1:4 & I Pet. 1:18-20.

⁶⁰⁶ Rev. 12:10a *cf.* Jer. 15:2.

⁶⁰⁷ Rev. 13:10b *cf.* Judg. 7:20 & n. 608.

⁶⁰⁸ Rev. 13:10 & 19:15-21 & 1:16 & 2:1,12 *cf.* Eph. 6:10-17 & Heb. 4:16; *per contra*, Rom. 13:1-7.

⁶⁰⁹ Ps. 149:5-9.

⁶¹⁰ Rev. 13:11-16. This lamb-like Beast is the Romish-Babylonish Papacy. It is **not** a **particular** Pope, but **the Kingdom of the Papacy-as-such**. For it corresponds to the stout and arrogant Horn in Dan. ch. 7, which there comes up **after** the other ten Horn-Kingdoms. As Hengstenberg rightly comments (on Rev. 13:1): "If the ten Horns in Daniel represent not persons but Kingdoms — then neither can the **eleventh** [alias the stout and arrogant Horn] signify an individual, but only a **power**." *Cf.* Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 411 & 413, and Rev. 16:13f & 18:1-19 & 2:14-28 (esp. vv. 20-23) & 17:4-15 (esp. v. 5) & 18:1-9 *cf.* Mt. 15:1-9 & I Tim. ch. 4 & II Tim. ch. 3

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The A.D. 185 Irenaeus (as too did the later Andreas of Caesarea) held that this lamb-like Beast would be "a false-prophet." Later, it was identified with "**the** False-Prophet" (Revelation 13:1-12 with 16:13 & 19:30 *cf.* Deuteronomy chapter 13) — and even with "**Antichrist**" (*cf.* First John 2:18f & 4:1-3 with First Thessalonians 2:7f). Thus the *Franciscan Spirituals*, the Waldensians, the Hussites, Luther, Calvin, the *Westminster Confession* (25:6), the *Belgic Confession* (article 29) — and also Hellenbroek, Gomarus, Kersten, Eykman, and Todd, *etc.* Indeed, this lamb-like Beast was also a 'false-king.'

Around 200, Tertullian called the lamb-like Beast "**the** Antichrist." In 380, Tichonius said it would be a "false-priest" — and later, so too did many Mediaeval Scholars (such as Walafrid Strabo, Haymo, Berengaud, Richard of St. Victor, Albert the Great, Joachim of Floris, and Pierre Jean d'Olivi). Indeed, in 1259 Ubertino of Casale even equated it with the "**Romanist Clergy.**"

Also before then, this lamb-like Beast had already been identified specifically with **the Papacy**. Thus the A.D. 1170 Pietro Waldo, and Eberhard of Salzburg in 1230 and Robert Greathead in 1240. This was confirmed, **still before the Protestant Reformation** — by Scholars like Dante, Michael of Cesena, John Rupescissa, Petrarch, John Milicx, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Purvey, Walter Brute, Huss, and Savanorola.

& II Th. 2:3-8 & perhaps too Dan. 11:13,26-39,43. Also see n. 611. *Cf.* Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* [1776], Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1905 rep., IV:90,92f,97,192f & VII:112f; L. von Ranke: *History of the Popes*, 1834-85, VIII:9; A. von Harnack: *What Is Christianity?*, 1903, pp. 269f. As to this Papal Beast, notice here especially: his appearance (semi-lamblike); his religio-political power (*cf.* his ultramontanism); his 'miracles' (*cf.* Lourdes); his deceit (*cf.* the so-called forgeries known as *The Donation of Constantine* and *The Isidorian Decretals* and all the intrigues of the Jesuits); his pseudoreligiosity (*cf.* his claim to be the 'Holy Father'); and his vast economic power (with the Vatican's wealth alone estimated to be in excess of several trillion dollars). See esp. Rev. 13:11-16 & 17:1 to 19:2 and Dan. 7:7-25 & 11:30f to 12:1f and Mt. 24:15,28 and II Th. 2:3-8 and nn. 408 & 610 and F.N. Lee's *The Earthly Fulfilment of Bible Prophecy in Our Own Time*, paras. 129 to 163.

As to the gradual rise of the Papacy (Rev. 13:11's "coming up" = *anabainon* = Greek present continuous participle), *cf.* too Rev. 8:10-13 & 9:14,17 & 11:2-7f & 12:6-17 & 16:12f & Mt. 16:18-23. Also compare Rev. 13:11's *anabainon* with the remarks on that same word in n. 578. Note too: the A.D. 257 elevation of Stephen the Bishop of Rome; the A.D. 461 further exaltation of Leo the Bishop of Rome; the 604 naming of the Bishop of Rome alone as sole 'Pope' for the very first time; the 751 approval by Pope Zacharias of the coronation of Emperor Pepin; and the 800 crowning of Emperor Charlemagne by Pope Leo III; *etc.* See too nn. 381 & 596f & 612 — and also Loraine Boettner: *Roman Catholicism*, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1962, pp. 113 & 125f.

There was, of course, even further elevation of the Pope after 800 A.D. Thus Pope Nicholas I (858-67) believed the Pope is the ruler of the entire Church, and is superior to all earthly powers. Popes Hildebrand and Alexander II & III further exalted their office, subduing even the Emperors of the 'Holy Roman Empire' — and Pope Innocent III subduing even King John of England. See B.K. Kuiper: *The Church in History* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970, pp. 79 & 102f & 124f). Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1198-1216) tried to extract from King John title to the whole of England and Ireland, and Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) claimed to be able to do almost everything which God can do. *Cf.* n. 612.

After the defeat of the Puritans in Britain, many (*cf.* Rev. 17:5) included even "Apostate Protestantism" (alongside of Romanism) in their identification of the lamb-like Beast of Rev. 13:11-16f. Indeed, the present-day Papacy has been promoting ecumenism not only with Eastern-Orthodoxy and with apostate 'Protestantism' and even with Buddhism and Islam — but it also keeps on seeking secular power, even through the United Nations Organization.

Among the Protestant Reformers the very same identification was made by: Luther, Oecolampadius, Osiander, Joye, Tyndale, Bale, Jewel, Von Amsdorff, Bullinger, Virgil Solis, Conrad, Knox, and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham. It is also the teaching of all of the leading Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols. Thus: the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Articles of Smalcald*, the *Formula of Concord*, the *First Scots Confession*, the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Confession*, the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Second Scots Confession*, the *Irish Articles*, the Preamble to the *Canons of Dort*, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and the *Savoy Declaration*.

This Second Beast, the lamb-like Beast, would come up out of the Earth — or from the very **Heartland** of the First Beast's Roman Empire. It would come up — as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of 1560 correctly maintained — precisely as "**the Pope's kingdom.**"⁶¹⁰

Also **after the Reformation**, the lamb-like Beast was identified with the Papacy by Napier, Foxe, James the First, Pacard, Helwig, Brightman, Hoe, Mede, Cramer, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Goodwin, Durham, Sherwin, Tillinghast, Poole, Gerhard, Cocceius, John Cotton, Roger Williams, Increase Mather, Alsted, Spener, Jurieu, Cotton Mather, Daubuz, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, Bengel, Willison, Bishop Thomas Newton, Aaron Burr, Gill, Wesley, Backus, Petri, Dwight, Hopkins, John Brown of Haddington, Keith, Lacunza, Faber, Fuller, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Bishop Elliott, David Brown, Fairbairn, Dabney, Albert Barnes, Bonar, Makrakis, Philip Mauro, B.H. Carroll, and J.M. Kik.

Calvin records in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (IV:2:12 & IV:7:25): "Daniel and Paul foretold that **Antichrist** would sit in the Temple of God.... We regard **the Roman Pontiff** as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom.... We call the **Roman Pontiff Antichrist.**"

Mauro comments: "Beyond a doubt, **Romanism** did arise during the course of existence of the Roman Empire. It is a system of religious character and political aim.... It has been, from the very beginning, closely identified with the Nations composing the Roman Empire. Moreover, it corresponds with what is said in the text concerning the Second Beast.... For how could the remarkably peculiar manner in which Romanism came into existence (in close alliance from the very start with the Roman Empire) — be more appropriately symbolized than by the picture of a Beast coming up out of the Earth, in guise like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon and exercising all the power of the First Beast before him?"

The lamb-like Beast would come up not as any one particular Pope but as the centuries-lasting **institution** of the Babylonish-Roman-Romish **Papacy**.⁶¹⁰ It would finally include even all of her romanizing **Pseudo-Protestant** daughters — which themselves later apostasize from Biblical Protestantism.⁶¹⁰

It is not any one Pope, but rather **the institution of the Papacy as such that is the Antichrist**. This is the view even of great Secular Historians of Rome and Romanism — such as Gibbon, Ranke, and Harnack.

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Edward Gibbon says: "The images of gold or silver or brass that might serve to represent the Nations and their Kings, were successively broken by the 'iron' monarchy of Rome. See Daniel 2:31-40.... 'And the fourth Kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things'.... The Roman Pontiff fought and conquered.... The cardinals and favourites were enriched with the spoils of Nations.... The ambitions of the Popes subsided in the meaner passions of avarice and luxury.... They freely tolerated the impunity of vice, disorder and corruption."

Leopold von Ranke suggests that the Papacy arose under the protection of the Roman Emperor, and that the Pope even stepped into his shoes. And Prof. Dr. Adolf von Harnack insists that "the Bishop of Rome...was the chief person there, after the Emperor's disappearance.... The Roman Church, in this, privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire — of which it is the actual continuation. The Empire has perished." But "it has only undergone a **transformation**.... The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and '*Pontifex Maximus*' [or 'Highest Priest'] — is Caesar's successor!"

Rome's Pope alias the 'Lamb-like-Beast' alias the Babylonish Whore "exercises all the power of the First Beast" and "causes the Earth and those who dwell there to bow down to the [First] Beast"⁶¹¹ as the 'Holy Roman Empire.' The 'lamb-like' Papal Beast "does great **signs** [or **pseudo-miracles**]...and deceives those who dwell on the Earth by the means of those **signs** which it was given him to do." The Papal Beast causes "as many as **would not** bow down to the [Romish] image of the [First or 'Holy Roman'] Beast, to be killed."⁶¹¹

The Second or Papal Romish Land-Beast enlivens the image of the First or Roman Sea-Beast. For the Papal Beast itself is the very **image** of the First Roman Beast. Thus the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Thomas Watson, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*, the *Cottage Bible*, and Albert Barnes. And the Papal Beast wields the tyranny of image-worship or idolatry over the people. Thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* and Matthew Poole.

Ninth. This Second or Papal Romish Land-Beast or **false** lamb-like Beast causes "those whose names are **not** written in the Lamb's book of life...to receive a **mark**" of their enslavement to him. This is a token of their acknowledgment of his own antichristian authority over them.⁶¹¹

The comments of the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* at this point, are dramatic indeed. "The Pope's Kingdom," it declares, "is of the Earth — and leads to perdition." It is begun "and established by ambition, covetousness, beastliness, craft, treason, and tyranny." The 'two horns' of the Second Beast "signifies the priesthood and the kingdom — and therefore he gives in his [coat of] arms two keys, and hath two swords carried before him.

⁶¹¹ Rev. 13:14-16. See n. 610, and *cf.* the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* and the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* at Rev. 13:11-19. Observe that the lamb-like Beast steps into the shoes of the Sea-Beast precisely by enlivening the Sea-Beast's "image" and by exercising "all the power of the First Beast before him" and by forcing the land (or the Earth) and its inhabitants to pay homage to the First Beast whose deadly wound he [the Lamb-Beast] heals. See nn. 408 & 581 & 613 and esp. 729 & 775. On Papal Rome 'stepping into the shoes' of Imperial Rome and the 'Holy Roman Empire' — see further F.N. Lee's *The Earthly Fulfilment of Biblical Prophecy in Our Own Time*, para. 35 & 67.

"So Boniface the Eighth" who 'reigned' as Pope from 1294 to 1303 "showed himself one day in apparel as a Pope, and the next day in harness as the Emperor.... The two horns in the Bishop's mitre, are signs hereof."

The Second Beast "spoke devilish doctrine, accused God's Word of imperfection, set up man's traditions, and spoke things contrary to God and His Word. For the Pope in ambition, cruelty, idolatry and blasphemy **did follow and imitate the Ancient Romans.**"

Moreover, the Pope brings people "to idolatry" and impresses them with "the name of that 'Holy [Roman] Empire' (as he terms it).... For the First Roman Empire was like the pattern, and this Second [Papal] Empire is but an image and shadow thereof...."

"Except **the Pope**...according to the operation of Satan" proceeds to "confirm the authority of the King of the Romans —he [the latter] is not esteemed worthy to be made Emperor. This **Antichrist** will accept none but such as will approve...the **Pope's doctrine.**"⁶¹¹

Now this Second and 'lamb-like' Beast demands homage and obeisance.⁶¹² He gives a "**mark**" to his slaves.⁶¹³ Here the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments that the Papacy's "chrismatories, graisings, vows, oaths and shavings — are **signs**" or **marks** of submission to him.

⁶¹² Rev. 13:11-18 *cf.* 12:12-17 & 16:12-14 & 17:1 to 18:19 and chs. 19 & 20 with II Th. 2:4, and with our studies on all these.

The A.D. 858-67 Pope Nicholas I declared: "It is in my power to change times and seasons, to alter and to rescind laws [*cf.* Dan. 7:25!], to abolish all things, yea, even the prescriptions of Christ. Whereas Christ told Peter to sheathe his sword in its scabbard, and warned His disciples not to avenge themselves by force —do not I, Pope Nicholas, urge the Bishops of France in my decretals, precisely to unsheathe their actual swords?" See F.W.C. Nesper's *The Book of Revelation*, Box 757, Vereeniging, RSA, n.d., pp. 159f.

Cf. too Pope Gregory VII alias Hildebrand (A.D. 1073-85), who not only humiliated King Henry IV of Germany at Canossa, but who also wrote to King William the Conqueror of England: "Like the two great luminaries fixed by the Creator in the firmament of the Heaven to give light to His creatures [*cf.* Rev. 12:1-4], so also hath He ordained two great powers on Earth by which all are to be governed and preserved from error. Those powers are the pontifical and the royal; but the former is the greater, the latter the lesser light. Yet under both, the religion of Christ is so ordered that, by God's assistance, the apostolical power shall govern the royal; and Scripture teacheth that the apostolical and pontifical dignity is ordained to be responsible for all Christian Kings, nay for all men, before the divine tribunal." On these grounds the Pontiff demanded of King William, "upon the peril of his soul" —to render to him "unconditional obedience." Thus Henderson's *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, Bohn's ed., 1896, as quoted in Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 414.

Cf. too Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1198-1216), who had many Non-Catholic Albigenes and Protestant Waldensians murdered in Southern France and Northern Italy, and who forced King John of England to "grant to God, to His Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to our Mother the Holy Roman Church, and to our Lord Innocent [the Pope] and to his Catholic successors...our Kingdoms of England and Ireland, with all their rights and dependencies, in order to receive them anew, as a vassal of God and of the Roman Church. In testimony whereof we take the oath of vassalage.... Our heirs will always be obliged to take the same oath. And as a sign of our being vassals, we and our successors will pay annually to the Holy See, besides the *denarius* of St. Peter [= 'Peter's pence'], seven hundred marks for England and three hundred marks for Ireland, derived from the royal revenues." *Cf.* Kuiper's *op. cit.* p. 126.

Cf. too Pope Boniface VIII (A.D. 1294-1303), who in his Papal Bull *Unum Sanctum* (issued on November 18th 1302), claimed that "the Roman Pope judges all people; but nobody may judge him at all. We declare, claim, determine and lay down that it is absolutely essential for salvation for every human being —to submit to the Pope of Rome.... The saying of Christ that 'Thou hast put all things under his feet' can certainly be seen to be fulfilled in me. I have the authority of the King of kings. I am all things in all people and above all people, so that God Himself and I as the Vicar of God together have only one and the same Ecclesiastical Council, and so

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that I am able to do almost everything which God can do. What else can you therefore regard me as, than as God? [Cf. II Th. 2:4].... I am Caesar! I am Emperor! ... Both swords [of Luke 22:39], the spiritual and the temporal, are in the power of the Church." Cf. Nesor's *op. cit.* p. 160 & Mauro's *op. cit.* p. 416. See too: McCabe's *History of the Popes I & II* (Douglas, Auckland, n.d.); Lehman's *Behind the Dictators* (Douglas, Auckland, n.d.); E.G. White's *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*; P. Blanshard's *Democracy and Catholic Power*; and Arbenez's *Roman Catholicism and Religious Liberty*.

⁶¹³ Rev. 13:16 to 14:1,9; 7:1-4; 9:5; 15:2; 22:4; cf. Mt. 28:19 & Mk. 16:15f. Rev. 13:16 has *hina doosin autois* in the Greek, meaning "they **give themselves**" (a **mark**). This shows that the slaves of the Beast enter into their enslavement voluntarily and wittingly, rather than by duress. Cf. Rev. 13:8,16!

It is perhaps significant that the 'Hebrew-Roman' names *Romith* (thus Luther) and *Qeysar Rom* (thus Ewald) and the Latin names *Caesar Nero* (thus Reuss) and *Lateinos* (see Bousset's *op. cit.* p. 430 n. 3) and the 'Papal-Roman' name *Vicarius Filii Dei* (see in Nesor's *op. cit.* p. 171) —when given the Hebrew or Latin numerical signification to each letter in either of those languages —all add up to 666 (cf. Rev. 13:11,16-18). The Latin numeral letters for '666' —namely 'DCLXVI' —are in their turn said to point to the Pope of Rome. And some (such as Helwig and Uriah Smith) have demonstrated that the numeral letters in one of the papal titles ('VICARIUS FILII DEI') add up to 666 [V=5 + I=1 + C=100 + I=1 + U(V)=5 + I=1 + L=50 + I=1 + I=1 + D=500 + I=1, totalling 666].

The Beast's mark "on their foreheads" cannot, however —as the Antipaedobaptist B.H. Carroll ridiculously imagines —be 'Infant Baptism' (which he wrongly insists derives from Romanism). For all Biblical Baptisms should be administered on the forehead, as a token even of our intellectual submission to and servitude of Christ as the Central Person of the Triune God. Compare Mt. 3:16f & 28:19 and Acts 2:38f and Rev. 7:2-4f & 14:1 (against Rev. 13:16-18!) & 22:3-5. After all, even what Baptists (and Catabaptists) wrongly call 'Romish Baptism' is still administered in the Name of the Triune God —and not in the name of the Papacy! Thus Calvin not only repudiated the Unitarian submersionisms of Servetus, but also wrote to the Unitarian Socinus in defence of the validity of his own Romishly-administered Triune Baptism when he was but an infant. Explained Calvin: "It matters not to me whether he who performs the Baptism is a diabolical man or even the Devil!" For even Satan would then be baptizing not in his own perfidious name, but only in the fully trustworthy and valid name of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. See *Corpus Reformatorum XIII* pp. 308 & 486 and Calvin's *Inst.* IV:2:11 & IV:15:16f.

On the mark of the beast on the forehead "it was customary among the ancient for servants to receive the mark of their master...on their right hand or on their forehead." Thus Bishop Thomas Newton's *Dissertations on the Prophecies* [1754], Wm. Butler, Northampton Mass., 1976 rep. II:296. And especially "among the Romans, slaves were stigmatized with the master's name or mark on their foreheads." Thus Albert Barnes's *op. cit.* on Rev. 13:16f. Obviously, the mark there evidences ungodly politico-religio-economic subjugation by the marker of the one marked, cf. Dan. 3:1-6,14-20.

The number 666 denotes imperfection and human inability to attain to the perfect and divine number seven (or to attain even to the blessed sabbath number of seven hundred and seventy-seven). Cf. Gen. 5:28-32, esp. v. 31. As such, '666' represents a trinity of evil (cf. Rev. 13:18 with 16:13), and embraces the sum-total of all godless human achievement —the synthesis of false and pagan politics to try to save the World by man's efforts (as in Islam, Romanism, and Modern Humanism such as in the World Council of Churches and the United Nations Organization). It rejects the God-ordained separation between Church and State and their need to be subjugated, under God, to His Law. Cf. Mauro's *Man's Day* (1908), and also his book *The Number of Man* (1910) —both published in London by Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

Indeed, as Mauro (*op. cit.* pp. 428-31) rightly observes: "The first part of [Revelation] chapter 13 refers to and exactly delineates the Roman Empire.... The second part of the chapter as clearly pictures Papal Rome — exercising 'all the power of the First Beast before him'.... The movements now in progress in the three great departments of human affairs —the political, the commercial, and the religious —are all converging to one end, and will eventuate in a single system comprehending in its vast embrace all human affairs of every sort and kind. This monstrosity will be a [World-wide] supergovernment.... Its religion will be 'Humanism' —the worship of Man.... Catholicism too is thoroughly humanistic; and in the person of the Pope a mere human being is already worshipped by millions.... As I see it, there are but two things requisite for the accomplishment of what is briefly outlined above:

first, a sufficient motive, which must be one that has a World-wide appeal;

Tenth. John then goes on: "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding, count the number of the Beast. For it is the number of a man. And his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

Now many have identified the "666" in Rev. 13:18 with *Lateinos* alias 'the Latin one' and/or *Romith* alias 'the Roman one' and/or *Papa* alias 'Pope.' See, **before** the Protestant Reformation: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Bede, Pierre d'Olivivi, and Purvey.

Similarly, **at** the Reformation, the very same identification was made by: Luther, Melanchthon, Osiander, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham, Nigrinus, Chytraeus, Foxe, and Napier. **Later**, this was restated by: Hellenbroek, Pareus, Cramer, Mede, Gerhard, Alsted, Matthew Poole, Cocceius, Vitringa, 'a Brakel, Whitby, Sir Isaac Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Thomas Scott, Farnham, G.S. Faber, Ethan Allen, Adam Clarke, Bishop Thomas Newton, Cunninghame, Frere, Keith, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, the *Columbia Family Bible*, the *Cottage Bible*, Jenks's *Comprehensive Bible*, Junkin, Albert Barnes, and many more.

Thus, already about A.D. 185, the famous Celtic Church Father Irenaeus of Lyons had in his *Against Heresies* (V:25:1-3 & 26:1 & 28:1 & 30:3) referred to "Antichrist" the "Apostate" — whom Christ had said would be the fulfilment of the "Abomination of desolation which has been spoken about by Daniel the Prophet." For "Daniel too, looking forward to the **end** of the Last" or Fourth alias the **Roman** "Empire — *i.e.*, the **ten last Kings** amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned and **upon whom the Son of Perdition shall come** — declares that ten Horns shall spring up from the [**Roman**] Beast, and that another Horn **shall arise** in the midst of **them**."

That other Horn would, of course, be the Romish Papacy. Indeed, John's Revelation — continues Irenaeus — indicates "**what** shall happen...concerning the ten Kings who shall **then** arise, among whom the [**Roman**] Empire which **now** rules" the Earth in A.D. 185 "**shall** be partitioned."

After the ten Kings appear, the subsequent Papal Antichrist or "he who is to come shall slay three [of those ten] and subject the remainder [or the other seven Kings] to his power — so that he shall himself be the **eighth** [Horn or Kingdom] among them." Compare Daniel 7:7f & 7:20f. "Then they shall lay Babylon" alias the Neo-Roman Empire "waste, and burn her with fire...."

second, an adequate political machine also capable of embracing the whole World. And these necessary things already exist.

This first is seen in the insistent and universal demand for WORLD-PEACE —and the second in the LEAGUE OF NATIONS [the immediate forerunner of our present UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION]. And in estimating the possibilities of the present situation, account must be specially taken of the great expansion of the political influence of the Vatican since the great European War [1914-18], and of the fact that political leaders are more and more looking in that direction for the salvation of the World and of Civilization." How much more so is all this occurring today (2000)!

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"For when he [the **eighth Horn** alias the Antichrist] has come; and of his own accord concentrates in own person the apostasy; and accomplished whatever he shall do according to his own choice" — he will then be "sitting also in the Temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as Christ" or as the Vicar of Christ (Second Thessalonians 2:2-3). "His coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: 'And the Beast which I saw was like a leopard' etc. (Revelation 13:1-7)....

"**After** this, he likewise describes" the **next** (namely the Papal) Beast — alias "his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false-prophet." This **latter** Beast has the number '666' (cf. Revelation 13:18), and means **Romish** or **Latin**. For, concluded Irenaeus in 185 A.D., "**Lateinos** has the number six hundred and sixty-six. And it is a very probable [solution] — this being the name of the Last [or **Roman**] Kingdom" of the four Empires seen by Daniel (in his chapters 2 & 7). "For the **Latins** are they who **at present** bear the rule."

Irenaeus connected '666' to the measurements of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel 3:1-6f, which should be compared to the previous image's **Roman** legs in Daniel 2:34,38,41f. Too, the numeral characters for '666' are the Greek letters *chi-xi-sigma* () — as found in the Biblical Manuscripts A, 046 and T. In another way too, this would suggest the **Antichrist**. For the *chi* and the *sigma* combine () to form an **abbreviation** for *Ch-risto-s* alias 'Christ' once the intermediate and in-the-Greek 'snake-like' letter *xi* () has been omitted.

Also the A.D. 200f Tertullian of Carthage in his tract *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* (chapters 24 & 25) identifies the power then 'holding back' the manifestation of Antichrist alias the 'man of sin' in Second Thessalonians 2:3-8. Asks Tertullian: "What obstacle is there, but **the Roman State** — the falling away of which, by being **scattered into ten Kingdoms**, shall **introduce Antichrist** upon **its** ruins?" For the souls of the martyrs in glory await to see how that "**City of Fornication**" may receive **from the ten Kings** its deserved doom, and that **the Beast Antichrist** together **with his False-Prophet** may wage war on the Church of God." Cf. Revelation 6:9-11 & 13:1f & 17:7-12.

Similarly, Hippolytus of Portus wrote in his A.D. 230 *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* (chapter 50): "It is manifest to all, that those who at present still hold the power, are **Latins**. If then we take the name [or number] '**666**' [in Revelation 13:18] as the name of a single man — it becomes **Latinus**."

With this number '666' — one may perhaps compare also the Synod of Whitby. For there, in the year A.D. 664, the new Church in England most tragically decided to reject the Proto-Protestantism of the Ancient Celtic Church — and instead to embrace **Roman Catholicism** and its **Papacy**. By A.D. 666, that had become quite apparent to the earlier Celtic Church of Britain and Ireland.

Comments the famous *Geneva Bible* of Rev. John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham: "About **666 years after** this revelation, the Pope or the Antichrist began to be manifest in the World.... These characters *chi-xi-sigma* signify **666**....

"This number is gathered from...**Lateinos**.... This notes the **Pope** or **Antichrist**, who uses in all things the Latin tongue.... The Italians are called *Latini*.... Hereby he [John] notes from what country he [the Antichrist] would come."

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments: "It is their confession that they are Roman Catholics or good Papists. They regard [the Pope] as Head of the Church, and they cannot stray from his doctrine and institutions.... The Latin or Romish Church...performs her most important religious services in Latin.... Whence the name Romish or Latin, which this number expresses...."

"This [666] is a number calculated, in the manner of the Hebrews and the Greeks who use the letters of their alphabets to express numbers, from the letters of the name of a man or of an order of humans.... The oldest and most probable explanation is that of Irenaeus, who lived shortly after the time of the Apostle.... He applies it to the word **Lateinos**, in which the number 666 is found.... For the Pope claims to be the Head of the Latin Church, and wishes to conduct religion in the Latin tongue."

The 1615 *Irish Articles* was authored probably by the Puritan Archbishop James Ussher, who was later appointed a delegate to the Westminster Assembly. In its art. 80, it declares: "The Bishop of Rome is so far from being the supreme Head of the Universal Church of Christ, that his works and doctrine do plainly discover him to be 'that man of sin' foretold in the Holy Scriptures, 'whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His Mouth.'" Second Thessalonians 2:3-8.

The 1643f *Westminster Confession* (at 23:4° and at 25:6°) denies to "the Pope any power or jurisdiction" over magistrates "in their dominions or over any of their people...if he shall judge them to be hereticks or upon any other pretence whatsoever.... Revelation 13:15-17."

Indeed, "there is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the **Pope of Rome** in any sense be Head thereof; but is **that Antichrist**, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalts himself **in the Church** against Christ and all that is called God.... Revelation 13:6."

The Scottish Presbyterian James Durham says in his 1657 *Complete Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation*: "This agrees well to **Antichrist** in the doctrine, and to the **Pope** in the fact.... It is no dead image but an Empire that can speak and can cause such as will not worship it, [to] be killed...."

"He is that Antichrist.... For the **letters** of a name which in Greek and Hebrew are numerals...gather a **name** including that number **666** in it.... Others reckon it...so many **years**...before he came [by 666].... Irenaeus...was hearer of Polycarp, disciple of John.... He who has all the character of Antichrist's doctrine, and has a name which in the numeral letters make up 666, he is Antichrist.... To the Pope, both these agree...."

"Antichrist is no open professed enemy but a **false counterfeit** [and] **pretended friend**.... He is already come —and **so must be the Pope**.... That therefore is a truth of Chrysostom's that **he sits in the Temple of God** which is not at Jerusalem but in the Church, pretending to have a prime place in it.... He is the seventh Head of the Beast. Yes, he is a Beast...."

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"The Antichrist has horns like the Lamb; sits in the Temple of God; looks like Christ.... This Antichrist sits at Rome and by a new sort of idolatry heals the wound the sixth Head had gotten, *i.e.* by worshipping idols, images, &c.... This Antichrist does great signs.... This Antichrist...drives all his designs under a resemblance of making use of Christ's power, as having horns like a lamb — and by a pretext of and claim under a vicarship and deputation from Him.... We conclude that Antichrist **is** come — and **not** [yet] **to** come.... The Pope is the very Antichrist, and the Papacy the very anti-christian kingdom here described."

Also the 1658 *Savoy Declaration* of British Congregationalists declares: "The Pope of Rome...is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalteth himself in the Church against...all that is called God — whom the Lord shall destroy.... We expect that in the latter days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of His dear Son broken — the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in **this** World a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed" up till now. See too the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, QQ. & AA. 191f.

Eleventh. The false religion of Romanism will probably yet in the future **absorb the apostate Protestantism**⁶¹⁰ represented by the increasingly socialistic and **humanistic and revolutionary World Council of Churches** — and maybe even the false religio-political system of revitalized Islam.⁶¹⁰ This would give new life to the international political Beast. They would then constantly reinforce one another — just as in the past they have sometimes openly while at other times surreptitiously persecuted the true saints of God.⁶¹³

Even back in 1806, after the French Revolution of 1789, Faber anticipated this in his *Dissertation on the Prophecies* (I:269). There he wrote: "Nor can we wonder that that era should be marked with peculiarly horrible events.... We recollect that it is to witness the dying struggles not only of Atheism but likewise of Popery and Mohammedism.

"It is an era, however, which will be terrible only to the enemies of the Church of Christ. Those who have come out of the mystic Babylon [Revelation 18:2-4] and have refrained from polluting themselves with the Antichristian abominations of infidelity, will not be partakers of her last plagues....

"This favoured servant of God [*viz.* John] has, with inimitable simplicity and wonderful accuracy, given us three distinct paintings of **three great enemies of the Gospel of Christ: Popery, Mohammedism, and French Atheism**.... The first two being...the two feet of the great apostasy with which it trampled both upon the East and the West during the same period of 1260 years....

"For Popery and Mohammedism had these features in common, that they were each a lesser or a greater defection from pure Christianity.... They each equally affected to act not contrary to the will of Heaven but under its immediate sanction.... The last [Atheistic French Revolution], being completely a monster *sui genesis*" was "predicted by St. John...as if **no symbol could be found adequate to describe the enormous wickedness of its character.**"

Twelfth. Even the agency of the Romish Papacy itself and its associates can, however, only **postpone** but **not prevent** the **death** of the mortally-wounded international political system which is the continuation of the secular World Empire. As John's subsequent chapters (16:13-19f and 18:2-21 and 19:20f) all clarify, its future downfall and total destruction is absolutely certain.

For God's elect stand firm. They have not been branded with the '666' mark of the Beast. But they have been branded on their foreheads in Baptism with the '333' mark of the Triune God — guaranteeing cradle-to-the-grave and eternal security to all of the faithful.

They decline to submit to the Romish Papacy and to accept the mark of the Beast.⁶¹⁴ For, believing in Christ Whose perfect and divine number is eight hundred and eighty-eight,⁶¹⁵ they refuse to receive six hundred and sixty-six as the purely-human and imperfect number of the religio-political Beast.

Albert Barnes has stated this same truth well. He comments: "The reference...is therefore to Rome considered as a civil or secular power — yet Rome regarded as giving support to the Second Beast, the Papal power.... This [secular Roman] power was restored, by being brought into alliance with the Papacy.... Every wound that was inflicted on that power by the incursion of barbarians and by the dividing off of parts of the Empire — was healed by the Papacy....

"The waning secular power of Rome was thus restored by connecting itself with the spiritual or ecclesiastical power, thus prolonging what might properly be called the 'Roman domination' far beyond what it would otherwise have been.... The fact that so large a portion of the Kingdoms of the Earth was under the influence of the Papacy, and sustained it; and the claim which it set up to universal dominion and to the right of deposing Kings and giving away Kingdoms — corresponds entirely with the language here used....

"'He who leadeth into captivity, **shall go into captivity**. He that killeth with the sword, **must be killed with the sword**' [Revelation 13:10].... This is yet, in a great measure, [still] **to be fulfilled**.... It discloses the manner in which **the Papal secular power will come to an end**....

"Rome now is practically held in subjection by foreign arms, and has no true independence. Perhaps this will be more and more so, as its ultimate fall approaches.... Nothing can secure its continuance for any very considerable period longer."

⁶¹⁴ Rev. 13.8.

⁶¹⁵ John 20:1 & 20:26 *etc.* See too Bousset's *op. cit.* p. 429 and Panin's numerology (in K. Sabiers's *Astounding New Discoveries Prove the Bible True*, Robertson, Los Angeles, n.d.).

The Beast is wounded to Death and the Church acquires the Victory

O Christian, neither Pagan Rome and its political successors nor the Romish Papacy and its 'Apostate Protestant'⁶¹⁰ religious successors nor their combination as the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' and all of its successors — shall ever be able to deceive the truly elect of God!⁶¹⁶ Baptized and sealed with the mark of the Lamb, they are more than a match against the Antichrist — as they patiently await the fall of all of the enemies of God.

Wielding the sword of the Lord alias the Word of God — they know that they shall yet overcome all their persecutors. For those very enemies will yield to the sword of the Lord, the Church-preached Word of God — and thus be brought into captivity to Christ. Or otherwise — they themselves will either 'go into captivity' or otherwise be killed with the punitive sword wielded by the instruments of God's Own choice in the days of His vengeance.⁶¹⁷

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

⁶¹⁶ Cf. Mt. 24:15,22,28.

⁶¹⁷ Rev. 13:10 & 19:15-21 cf. Eph. 4:8f & 6:17.

Preaching the Everlasting Gospel causes Romish Babylon to fall

Revelation 14:1-12

December 21

"Then I saw another Angel fly in mid-air, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them who dwell on the Earth and to every Nation and kindred and tongue and people. He said with a loud voice: 'Fear God and give glory to Him! For the hour of His judgment has come. And worship Him Who made Heaven and Earth and the Sea and the fountains of waters!' Then there followed another Angel, saying: 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen thoroughly — that great city! Because she made all Nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' And the third Angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any man worship the Beast and his image and receive his mark on his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy Angels and in the presence of the Lamb.... The smoke of their torment keeps on ascending for ever and ever.... They who worship the Beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name have no rest day nor night.'" ⁶¹⁸

John had just seen the Second Beast branding the mark of the dragon-like First Beast onto all under his control. ⁶¹⁹ Then "look! The Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand having His Father's Name written on their foreheads." ⁶²⁰

This is the faithful number of those who believe and are baptized. Thus they get marked on their foreheads in the Name of the Triune God. ⁶²¹ They all represent **the sum-total of God's elect** — everywhere, and down through the centuries. ⁶²² $144,000 = (3 \times 4) \times (3 \times 4) \times 10^3$ — where '3' represents the Trinity; where '4' represents all the points of the compass; and where '10³' represents the perfect number of fullness cubed (as it were). Such are all those who refuse to bear the mark of the Anti-Christian Beast. ⁶²³

They all stand on Mount Zion; that is, they all live within the Christian Church. ⁶²⁴ They are the 'spiritually-faithful' — the True Members of the Church Militant here on Earth. They represent all the 'virginally-faithful' who have not defiled themselves with the whorish woman Babylon alias the lamb-like Beast of Papal Rome and all of her **Pseudo-**'Protestant' daughters.

⁶¹⁸ Rev. 14:6-8. The twofold *epesen epesen* here found in the Greek, seems to be a Hebraism (transliterating an infinitive absolute). It means: "has fallen thoroughly!" Cf. too n. 633.

⁶¹⁹ Cf. Rev. ch. 13 and our study for Dec. 20.

⁶²⁰ Rev. 14:1f cf. n. 202.

⁶²¹ Mt. 28:19; Rev. 7:2-4; 14:1; 22:4.

⁶²² Rev. 7:1-8 cf. the studies for Dec. 8 & 9.

⁶²³ Rev. 11:2f; 12:6,14f; 13:5f,12,17; 14:1,9,11; 15:2; 16:1; 22:4. Cf. too n. 408.

⁶²⁴ Isa. 62:1f; Eph. 2:4-6; Heb. 12:18-24; cf. the study for Dec. 20.

Preaching the Everlasting Gospel causes Romish Babylon to fall

Those sealed on their foreheads with their Father's Name, sing the song of victory — even amid worldly oppression.⁶²⁵ They sing, in the knowledge that all Nations shall yet come and worship before Jehovah.⁶²⁶ Like virgins undefiled, they loyally follow the Lamb wherever He goes⁶²⁷ — if needs be, even into the cultural Wilderness.⁶²⁸

Yet these baptismally-branded believers know their new song rises up even into Heaven itself.⁶²⁹ They know too that the predictive parts of that song will in God's good time be fulfilled. They believe, even as a result of their own Christian testimony, that all Nations will yet come and worship God.⁶²⁶

The meaning here, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, is that the Lamb "Jesus Christ rules His Church ['on Mount Zion'] to defend and **comfort**" alias to strengthen her. The 'hundred and forty-four thousand' implies "**a great and ample Church.**"

Further, 'the **sound of many waters**' is for "signifying that the number of **the Church should be great** — and that they should **speak boldly.**"⁶²⁰ For, as the 'firstfruits' unto God, the Lamb's "faithful ought to live **justly and holily** — so that they may be...an excellent offering to the Lord."⁶³⁰

First. Like a mighty 'Angel' or Messenger preaching from God to the people of the whole World — the faithful Christians, through their Ministers of the Word, "preach to them who dwell on the Earth and to every Nation and kindred and tongue and people."⁶¹⁸ Indeed, they say "with a loud voice: 'Fear God and give glory to Him! For the hour of His judgment has come. And worship Him Who made Heaven and Earth and the Sea and the fountains of waters!'"⁶³¹

This is the message that is to be brought to the World; **from** the Lord; and **by** the Church of all ages. It was preached by the Apostolic Church.⁶³²

But it was particularly sounded forth by the Church of the Protestant Reformation.⁶³³ It is the message of the first Angel, boldly preaching the everlasting Gospel to all Nations on Earth — even by **radio** and **television!**

⁶²⁵ Rev. 14:3,12f; 12:7,15f *cf.* Dan. 7:21-25.

⁶²⁶ Rev. 14:13 *cf.* 15:3f & 5:6b,9.

⁶²⁷ Rev. 14:4 *cf.* II Cor. 11:2 & Eph. 1:4 & 5:27. Even celibate Roman Catholic Theologians do not restrict these "virgins" only to those practising celibacy. *Cf.* too n. 630.

⁶²⁸ Rev. 12:6,14.

⁶²⁹ Rev. 14:2f *cf.* chs. 4 & 5.

⁶³⁰ Rev. 14:4,8 *cf.* 17:2-5. Two Coptic translations and one Ethiopic translation and about ten Greek manuscript copies here in Rev. 14:4 do not have (with most extant manuscripts) the plural word "women" in the phrase "these are they which were not defiled with women" — but instead the singular word "woman" (there to be translated as "a woman" or perhaps even as "the woman"). This "woman" would then probably be the woman 'Babylon' of Rev. 14:8 (*cf.* 13:11 & 17:1f) — the common Whore of 'Babylon' and her false religion of Rev. 17:3,5,18 & 13:11f *cf.* 11:7f & 2:20. See too n. 627 & 637.

⁶³¹ Rev. 14:6f *cf.* n. 30.

⁶³² Acts 4:24-31 & 14:15.

⁶³³ *Cf.* Rev. 10:9-11 & 11:1-3,11f & 16:10. John Purvey (1428) held that the first Angel "exposes Antichrist"; the second Angel, he claimed, indicates "evangelical Preachers"; and the third Angel, he suggested, represents "Preachers against Antichrist."

As a result, a second Angel or Messenger predictively announces: "Babylon has thoroughly fallen!" And a third Angel warns that everyone who honours the Beast and his image, shall drink of the wrath of God. However, all three preach the same **triune** message — viz. the everlasting 'good news' Gospel; the everlasting doom of Babylon; and the everlasting damnation of the wicked.

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* regards the first Angel as representing Waldo and the Waldensians; the second Angel as representing Wycliffe, Jan Huss and Jerome of Prague; and the third Angel as representing Luther and Zwingli etc. Interestingly, since the beginning of the nineteenth century this everlasting Gospel is being **broadcast** and **published** specially by the modern Missionary Movement — in its continuing evangelization of the whole World.⁶³³

It is the **preaching of this everlasting Gospel** which will demolish the Papal Babylon and all of its Pseudo-'Protestant' daughters.⁶³³ For this message, exalting as it does the Sovereignty of **the Triune God** over all the Universe, **effectively calls upon all men everywhere to repent and to worship Him** — and to **honour** Him in all they do (by subduing the Earth and the Sea and the Sky **only** to the **glory of the Triune God**).⁶³⁴

Many Theologians identify the fulfilment of the second Angel's message announcing that 'Babylon' has fallen — with the advent of the **still-future latter-day glory** of the Church, as a result of the long-sustained preaching of the Gospel. Revelation 14:6-8 & 17:1-5,14. Especially Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Timothy Dwight, Adam Clarke, Elias Smith, Ethan Allan, Lyman Beecher, Edward Griffin, Albert Barnes and B.H. Carroll seem to hold this view.

Comments Albert Barnes: "The design of this vision is...to sustain the courage and the Faith of the Church — in the persecutions and trials which were yet to come — by the assurance that the Gospel would ultimately be **triumphant**.... The Gospel is to be preached to all men as on an equality.... It is implied also that, at the time referred, this **will** be done. **When** that time will be, the writer does not intimate, farther than that it would be **after** the Beast and his adherents had attempted to stay its progress....

Some Theologians identify the first three Angels of Rev. 14:4-9 as the early Anti-Papal Preachers (thus Matthew Henry, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Adam Clarke, the *D'Oly & Mant Bible*, and the *Cottage Bible*). Others identify those "Angels" or Messenger-Preachers as Wycliffe, Huss, and Luther (thus Thomas Brightman and Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*). Others add Waldo and his Waldensian emissaries to the **beginning** of this list (thus Bishop Thomas Newton and Thomas Scott and A.L. Crandall). Yet others add "evangelical Preachers" to the **end** of this list (thus Pareus).

Others, especially from the beginning of the nineteenth century onward, identify the first Angel preaching the everlasting Gospel World-wide with the explosion of World Missions and Evangelism during the last three hundred years. Thus Matthew Henry, Priestley, Adam Clarke, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary* and the *Cottage Bible*. Cf. too n. 669.

The third Angel would then be the Gospel of judgment against the unbelievers, implicit in the messages also of both the first and the second Angels. Probably, all three Angels cover merely three different aspects of one and the same triune everlasting Gospel of salvation, condemnation, and (even terrestrial) renovation.

⁶³⁴ Gen. 1:26-28 & I Cor. 10:31.

Preaching the Everlasting Gospel causes Romish Babylon to fall

"For the fulfilment of this, therefore, we are to look to a period **subsequent** to the rise and **fall** of that great **Antichristian power** symbolized by the Beast.... It is not, I suppose, Rome considered as **Pagan** that is here meant — but Rome considered as the prolongation of the ancient power in the **Papal** form.

"Alike in this book and in Daniel, Rome — Pagan and Papal — is regarded as **one** power, standing in direct opposition to the Gospel of Christ; resisting its progress in the World; and preventing its final prevalence.... When that **falls** — the last enemy of the Church will be destroyed, and the final **triumph of the True Religion** will be speedy and complete."

As the *Geneva Bible* comments here: "The Gospel teaches us to fear God and honour Him — which is the beginning of heavenly wisdom."⁶³¹ O, that **we** too also **today** might always sound forth **this** very message — and **ourselves** practise what we preach to **others!**

Second. The **result** of this powerful Gospel-preaching of the whole counsel of God (according to the **totality** of His Word)⁶³⁵ — is the destruction of '**Babylon.**' "Then there followed another Angel, saying: 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen thoroughly!'"⁶³⁶ Here, so **certain** is 'Babylon' to crash — as a result of the ongoing and future preaching of the everlasting Gospel — that her fall is described as an **already-accomplished** fact.

This is the first direct mention of 'Babylon' (as such) in the *Book of Revelation*. But there have already been many indirect allusions to it.⁶³⁷ For 'Babylon' is clearly to be identified with the lamb-like Second Beast's attempts to revive the mortally-wounded Sea-Beast. Consequently, according to very many Theologians, '**Babylon**' here is not at all Pagan Rome — but instead **the Papal-Romish "Church"** (and her sycophantic and miserably pathetic Pseudo-'Protestant' daughters in their **Babelic** confusion).⁶³⁷

For "Babylon" is the sum-total of religio-politico-economic iniquity.⁶³⁸ She is seen to be the 'false lion' of Daniel's Babylonian Beast — **masquerading** as the true Lion of Judah.⁶³⁹ She is shamelessly disloyal to the heavenly Bridegroom she falsely claims to love. Indeed, rather does she attempt to make "all Nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁵ Acts 20:27; I Pet. 1:22 to 2:4; II Pet. 1:16-21.

⁶³⁶ Rev. 14:8a. The *KJV* here reads: "is fallen, is fallen!" This is a literalistic rendition of *epesen epesen*. Yet if, as we believe, these Greek words are a Hebraism for the infinitive construct — the meaning would be: "has fallen thoroughly." Cf. too Rev. 18:2 with nn. 408 & 618.

⁶³⁷ See n. 630 & 729 and *cf.*: Rev. 2:14,20-23; 8:10-12f; 9:14; 11:2-8; 12:3; 13:1f; 16:12f,19; 17:1-18 (esp. v. 5); 18:1-19; I Pet. 5:13 & nn. 408 & 611.

⁶³⁸ Rev. 17:1-5 *cf.* 13:11-18.

⁶³⁹ Dan. 7:1-4 & 2:38 *cf.* Rev. 13:2; *per contra* Rev. 5:5.

⁶⁴⁰ Rev. 14:8b *cf.* n. 408.

As the *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham correctly comments: '**Babylon**' here signifies "'Rome,' forasmuch as the **vices which were in Babylon are found in Rome in greater abundance** — [such] as persecution of the Church of God, oppression and slavery; with destruction of the People of God, confusion, superstition, idolatry, impiety....

"Babylon the First Monarchy, was destroyed [cf. Daniel 2:31-37f & 7:3-5]. So [likewise] shall this wicked **kingdom of Antichrist** have a **miserable ruin** — though it be great, and seems to extend **throughout all Europe**."⁶³⁶ For "God is provoked to wrath — so that He suffers many to walk in the way of **the Romish doctrine, to their destruction**."⁶³⁶

Comments Albert Barnes: "On what principles should **idolatry** be denounced and condemned anywhere, if it is not in **papal Rome**? ... This formidable **Anti-Christian** power, would be **overthrown**."

Third. Those who serve 'Babylon' and who disregard the True Church's testimony to separate from her⁶⁴¹ — shall later be destroyed. Indeed, they shall thereafter — ultimately spend all eternity, together with that Babylonian Beast, in the Lake of Fire.⁶⁴²

After the above messages of the first two Angels, "the third Angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: 'If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand — the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy Angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever. And they have no rest, day nor night — they who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.'⁶⁴²

That **too** is to be part of the True Church's message to a Christ-rejecting and Beast-worshipping World which serves either the totalitarian Anti-Christian State and/or a totalitarian and false religious system. For he who does not trust **Christ alone** for his salvation — is doomed. Indeed, "he who does not believe the Son, shall not see life — but the wrath of God keeps on abiding upon him."⁶⁴³

Fourth. God's Gospel-proclaiming People must be **patient** in awaiting the Fall of 'Babylon.' They must indeed work for that event, and witness about their Saviour. But meantime, "here is the patience of the saints."⁶⁴⁴ For the sanctified Members of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ are patiently to await the fall of the totalitarian imperialistic State — as they faithfully keep on proclaiming their powerful Gospel (just as already seen).⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴¹ Rev. 18:2-4 cf. II Cor. 6:14-18.

⁶⁴² Rev. 14:9-11 cf. 19:20 & 20:10-15 & cf. nn. 408 & 637.

⁶⁴³ Jh. 3:36.

⁶⁴⁴ Rev. 14:12a.

⁶⁴⁵ Rev. 13:10 cf. 14:6-12f & 17:12-14 & 19:1-21.

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They are also to await the fall of the apostate religion of Babylon. For fall it will — in God's good time.⁶⁴⁶ But the 1260 day-years of 'Babylonian captivity' must first run their course.⁶⁴⁷ Only **after** that, will the saints really come into their own — throughout the World.⁶⁴⁸ And meanwhile, they must — while working and witnessing — be patient.

Fifth. While expectantly awaiting the ultimate downfall of Babylon, the saints are to **obey the Decalogue**. For "here are they who **keep the Commandments of God**."⁶⁴⁹ **Antinomian Babylon** (alias deformed Rome) and also her semi-deformed daughters⁶³⁷ (such as all the Anti-Reformed and Pseudo-'Protestant' Antinomians) are distinguished by the **breaking** of the Commandments of God — by idolatry,⁶⁵⁰ blasphemy,⁶⁵¹ murder,⁶⁵² deceit,⁶⁵³ theft,⁶⁵⁴ and fornication.⁶⁵⁵ As would be expected, the **True People** of God are **contrasted** with Babylon in such a way that all will recognize the difference between the True Church on the one hand and false religion on the other. Accordingly, God's True Children **fear God** and give glory to Him.⁶³¹ For they "fear God and **keep His Commandments**."⁶⁵⁶

Finally. God's True People remain **loyal** to the Christian Faith. "Here are they that **keep the Commandments of God** and the **Faith of Jesus**"⁶⁵⁷ alias the Christian Faith. This is not mere emotion — nor even intellectual assent to certain Christological dogmas which even Papal Rome acknowledges. To the contrary. This is a simple and a whole-hearted **trust** in the merits of Jesus Christ alone.

But this simple trust in **Christ's** merits, Rome denies — in her homage rendered to Angels and Saints (such as Mary).⁶⁵⁸ Moreover, the required trust **only** in **Christ's** merits, is **denied** in Rome's idolatrous obscuring of His **finished** work on the cross⁶⁵⁹ — especially by the blasphemous papal doctrines of purgatory and the mass and the meritoriousness of human works of so-called supererogation *etc.*⁶⁶⁰

Like many modern 'Evan-jellyfish' — Rome too professes to **love** the Lord. But her denial of the **fear** of God — is powerfully evidenced in her **not keeping His Commandments** against idolatrous image worship and against sabbath desecration; and in her ungodly requirement of compulsory celibacy and poverty as regards her clergy *etc.*

⁶⁴⁶ Rev. chs. 17 & 18.

⁶⁴⁷ Rev. 11:2f; 12:6,14; 13:5.

⁶⁴⁸ Rev. 15:4; 19:14-21; 20:1-6 *cf.* Dan. 7:11-14,25-27 & n. 633.

⁶⁴⁹ Rev. 14:12b.

⁶⁵⁰ Rev. 13:11,15. *Cf.* Hislop, McCabe, Woodrow, Montano, Boettner, Fulton, Blanchard, Vidler, Kerr, Butler, Martin and Rone (*opera citata*) for massive evidence of Rome's commission of those sins mentioned in our text at nn. 650-655.

⁶⁵¹ Rev. 13:1,5,11f *cf.* 17:3 & n. 650.

⁶⁵² Rev. 13:11,15 *cf.* n. 650.

⁶⁵³ Rev. 13:11,14 *cf.* n. 650.

⁶⁵⁴ Rev. 13:11,17; 17:4; 18:11-17 & n. 650.

⁶⁵⁵ Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:3,9 *cf.* n. 650.

⁶⁵⁶ Rev. 14:7,12 *cf.* Eccl. 12:13.

⁶⁵⁷ Rev. 14:12bc.

⁶⁵⁸ Jh. 2:3-5; Acts 4:10-12; 14:11-18; Col. 2:18,23; Rev. 19:10 & 22:8f.

⁶⁵⁹ Jh. 19:30 *cf.* Heb. chs. 9 & 10.

⁶⁶⁰ Heb. 9:27; Mt. 26:26-29; Lk. 17:10; *cf.* Heb. chs. 9 & 10.

Nevertheless, the Romish Beast and her antinomian daughter-denominations shall be overthrown. Not they but the True Church of consistent Protestantism finally triumphs.

"This chapter," comments Albert Barnes in his *Analysis*, "is "designed to hold out the symbols of **ultimate and certain victory**.... The hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion, as emblematic of the final **triumph** of the redeemed, have the Father's Name in their foreheads.... They sing a **song of victory**" and have "the vision of the **final triumph** of the Gospel.... The Gospel **will** thus be preached among **all Nations**.... Babylon the mighty Anti-Christian power...**is** overthrown!"

O Christian, let us then follow our Lamb — whithersoever He leads us! Let us spread the everlasting Gospel to every Nation and kindred and tongue! And, while awaiting the certain fall of unclean Babylon as the ultimate result of such **powerful Gospel-preaching** — let us patiently **keep the Commandments of God** and the **Faith of Jesus**, as a testimony for the conversion of sinners; but above all, to the glory of God!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory**!

Blessed are the Dead in Christ —and their Works follow Them!

Revelation 14:13-20

December 22

"Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they who keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me: 'Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord — from henceforth!"' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labours. And their works follow them.'"⁶⁶¹

John had just mentioned the necessity of the saints patiently **keeping the Commandments of God** (alias the Decalogue) and the concomitant **Faith of Jesus** (alias the Christian Faith). They were to do so, even while themselves **publishing the whole counsel** of the everlasting Gospel throughout the World. For that is the Lord's Own **means** of bringing about the fall of the false religio-politico-economic system of 'Babylon.'⁶⁶²

John went on **to encourage** his immediate addressees (who would faithfully help to start bring about this ultimate fall of 'Babylon'). At the same time, the Apostle wanted to encourage also those who would **later** faithfully follow in their footsteps (and who would themselves too help bring about the final fall of 'Babylon').

Next, the Apostle John wrote: "Then I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me: 'Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord — from henceforth!"' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labours. And their works follow them.'"⁶⁶¹

First. John here assures his readers: "**Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord — from henceforth!"⁶⁶¹ Many Christians may suffer; and some may even be killed for the sake of their most holy Faith. But whether they die naturally or violently — those "who die in the Lord" should certainly know that they die the death of the "blessed."

As Albert Barnes suggests in his *Analysis and Commentary*: "The blessedness of all those who die in the Lord" refers to those who "would be found faithful unto death.... We owe much to a system of religion which will enable us to say and to feel that it is a blessed thing to die...."

⁶⁶¹ Rev. 14:13. Here we are assuming, with most manuscript collators and translators, that the Greek autograph had or meant *ap' arti* (= 'from then on' or 'henceforth') — rather than *aparti* (= 'amen' or 'certainly'). Again, we are assuming that the Greek *erga autoon akolouthei met' autoon* is to be understood as implying that their works follow the believers (into glory) — **immediately** after their deaths. Otherwise — "henceforth" in Rev. 14:13 would seem to mean: **after** "Babylon is fallen" in Rev. 14:8 (*cf.* Rev. 14:8-13).

⁶⁶² Rev. 14:6f,12; *cf.* our study for Dec. 21.

Blessed are the Dead in Christ—and their Works follow Them!

"We should be grateful...thus to speak of those who **are** dead" — and "with corresponding feeling to look forward to our **own** departure from this World.... They who thus die, are the friends of the Lord Jesus.... The assurance, then, is limited to those who are sincere Christians.... They will be ever-onward blessed."

The death of the saints of the Lord indeed **is** precious in His sight.⁶⁶³ For there is no Romish-Babylonish **uncertainty** about the eternal destiny of the children of the Lord. No final computation is either necessary or possible, in order to try to ascertain whether they are "good enough" to get to Heaven. For it is solely the blessed righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to their account, which makes them "good enough" and which ensures that they **will** indeed get to glory.

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* here rightly observes: "The faithful are exhorted to patience."⁶⁶² For those "are ingrafted in Christ, by faith — who rest and stay only on Him, and **rejoice** to be with Him."⁶⁶¹

Second. John also insists that the true believer goes to be with the Lord **immediately** after death. "Blessed are **the dead who die** in the Lord — **from henceforth!**"⁶⁶¹

Right after their deaths — "from **henceforth**" — the Lord's People go to be with Him. **Forthwith**. No Romish period of 'Purgatory' ever follows.⁶⁶⁰

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* correctly comments: "**Immediately** after their death, they are received into **joy**."⁶⁶¹ And Albert Barnes: "Immediately after their dissolution, they would be blessed.... Henceforth blessed — are the dead [in Christ].... Their condition was not to be regarded as one of misfortune, but of blessedness and joy."

Third. John also here describes the **tranquillity** of the condition entered into by the blessed dead immediately after their death. There is no Romish-Babylonish cleansing or striving to become "better" which then awaits them. For they die — "**so that** they may **rest** from their labours."⁶⁶¹

They had laboured very hard for the Lord and His cause while they were here on Earth.⁶⁶⁴ And thereafter, they enter into the saints' everlasting sabbath rest which remains for the People of God. The tempestuous wicked, however, go to hell — where they have no rest, day nor night.⁶⁶⁵

As Dr. Calvin remarks in his *Psychopannychia*, the blessed dead go to "the throne of God's glory" or "the bosom of Abraham." For there, "they are admitted with Abraham the father of the faithful — where they enjoy God fully, without weariness."⁶⁶⁵

Fourth. There will be no more toil for the godly in their next life. The Apostle John declares that "the dead who die in the Lord...henceforth rest from their **labours**."

⁶⁶³ Ps. 116:15.

⁶⁶⁴ Heb. 4:11a; Mt. 6:10; I Cor. 15:58.

⁶⁶⁵ Rev. 14:11-13 *cf.* Isa.57:20f & Calvin's *Psychopannychia* (in his *Tracts & Treat.* III:433f).

States Albert Barnes in his *Analysis and Commentary*: "The word here rendered 'labour' (*kopos*), means properly...toil, labour, effort.... It is here used in the sense of wearisome toil in doing good; in promoting religion; in saving souls; in defending the truth. From such toils, the redeemed in Heaven will be released. For although there will be employment there, it will be without the sense of fatigue or weariness."

Fifth. John assures His Christian addressees that, when they arrive in glory, "their works **follow** them."⁶⁶¹ This important statement establishes that all our good works performed while here on Earth to the glory of God —will last for ever.

All of our "very good" works of subduing the Earth and the Sea and the Sky and everything in them, as conscious attempts to extend the Lord's Kingdom,⁶⁶⁶ will not be annihilated after our deaths. To the contrary. These good "works" will in fact be preserved from then onward, for all eternity.⁶⁶¹

For this reason, Paul could joyfully command his Christian addressees: "Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do —do all to the glory of God!"⁶⁶⁷ And for this reason, he could also promise them: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, you must be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord —forasmuch as you know that **your labour is not in vain** in the Lord!"⁶⁶⁸

States Albert Barnes in his *Analysis and Commentary*: "The works of mercy which they had done on the Earth, would follow them to the Future World, securing rich and eternal blessings there.... 'Their works do follow them'.... The **rewards** or the consequences of their works — will follow them to the Eternal World...."

"**All** that the righteous **do** and suffer here, will appropriately be recompensed there.... We can make the present affect the future — for good.... By our conduct on the Earth, we can lay the foundation for happiness millions of ages hence.... What we do today — may determine our happiness in that future period."

Sixth. John's verse perhaps also refers to an extended **earthly period** of 'postmillennial' **blessings** "from henceforth" —namely, from **after** the time of the fall of the Romish Babylon,⁶¹⁸ and **before** the Final Coming of Christ.⁶⁶⁹ Thus Timothy Dwight, Elias Smith, Ethan Allen, J.H. Livingston, Lyman Beecher, Edward Griffin, and B.H. Carroll.⁶⁶¹

Here, "henceforth" would mean: after "Babylon is fallen."⁶⁶¹ Namely: when "delivered from the horrible troubles which are in the Church" (thus the *Geneva Bible*); in the coming time of great earthly blessings (thus Matthew Poole and Matthew Henry); and "after the fall of the Papacy" (thus Carroll).

⁶⁶⁶ Gen. 1:28,31.

⁶⁶⁷ I Cor. 10:31.

⁶⁶⁸ I Cor. 15:58.

⁶⁶⁹ Rev. 14:14-16 *cf.* n. 633. Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke regard even Rev. 14:14 as being principally indicative of the **end** of the Romish Antichrist, rather than indicative of the end of World History.

Blessed are the Dead in Christ—and their Works follow Them!

In that as-yet-still-future **blessed** period here on Earth, those that are "in the Lord" will apparently be **very fruitful** in their Commandment-keeping "labours" here on **Earth** while they are yet alive. Then, when at a ripe old age they finally "**die**" —they will enter their joyous heavenly "rest."⁶⁶¹

Seventh. As Earth's blessed future History continues to unfold, however —while the centuries roll on **after** the destruction of Romish 'Babylon' — the **end of the World** inexorably approaches. "Then I looked," wrote John, "and behold — a white cloud! And upon the cloud One sat — like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

"Then another Angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him Who sat on the cloud: 'Thrust in Your sickle, and reap! For the time has come for You to reap. For the harvest of the Earth is ripe.' "Then He Who sat on the cloud, thrust in His sickle on the Earth. Then the Earth was reaped."⁶⁶⁹

At the end of History, Jesus will come on the clouds and Himself gather His harvest into His heavenly barn — for all eternity.⁶⁷⁰ For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments, this signifies that "Christ shall come to judgment on a cloud — even as He was seen to go up"⁶⁶⁹ on a cloud, at His ascension into Heaven.

The Postmillennialist Albert Barnes here comments: "The **time** alluded to here — is the end of the World.... The **design** is to state that the Redeemer will then gather in a great and glorious harvest, and by this assurance...sustain the hearts of His People in times of trial and persecution."

But meantime, it is the duty of all Christians to sow the Gospel-field. They themselves are to proclaim the Good News. And they are to encourage their Preachers to preach the Word of God — everywhere.⁶⁷¹

Eighth and last. When Jesus comes for His harvest at the end of History, He will not only gather His wheat into Heaven. At the same time, He will also thrust the tares into Hell — after He has uprooted those weeds from the World (as His very Own wheatfield).⁶⁷⁰

"Then another Angel came out from the altar — having power over fire. And he cried out with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying: 'Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the Earth! For her grapes are fully ripe.'⁶⁷²

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "The **overthrow of the people** is compared to a harvest." It is "compared...also to a vintage."⁶⁷²

⁶⁷⁰ Mt. 3:12; 13:30[†].

⁶⁷¹ Gal. 6:7-9.

⁶⁷² Rev. 14:17-20. Various places are proposed as to the location of "the winepress...outside the city" —e.g.: on Earth (*Geneva Bible*); in the New Jerusalem (*Dordt Dutch Bible* & Adam Clarke & Lenski); on Earth at the end of the postmillennial millennium, cf. Rev. 19:19-21 (Poole & Matthew Henry); and in the 'Jerusalem' of the Church (Hengstenberg cf. n. 678).

Then "the Angel thrust in his sickle into the Earth. He gathered the vine of the Earth." And he "cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."⁶⁷²

Jesus, when He was previously here on Earth, had "trodden down the winepress alone." Similarly, He **eschatologically** declares: "I will tread them down in My anger, and trample them in My fury. Then **their** blood shall be sprinkled upon **My** garments."⁶⁷³

Having **sprinkled** many Nations⁶⁷⁴ in **Christian Baptism**⁶⁷⁵ when He in the Spirit wrote His Father's Name on their foreheads — His Own blood-baptized vesture will then be sprinkled with the blood of the wicked. That already occurs somewhat, in His repeated judgments down throughout History. It will finally occur, and in full force — when "He treads down the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"⁶⁷⁶ at His Final Coming.

Then — he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved. But he who does not believe, shall be damned⁶⁷⁷ and burned up with unquenchable fire. The latter shall then be trodden down outside the Christian Church (thus the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Brakel, Hengstenberg, Schlatter, Greijdanus, and others)⁶⁷⁸ — until his blood reaches up its full⁶⁷⁸ distance from the winepress even unto the bridles of the horses ridden by the victorious armies of the Lord as they follow the Word of God down through the centuries, and as they wield the conquering Biblical message of the sword of the Lord.⁶⁷⁹

The Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments correctly on John's words. "By this similitude, he declares **the horrible confusion of the tyrants and infidels**"⁶⁷⁹ in the days of Christ's wrath.⁶⁷²

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* adds that "the godless shall be punished.... Their sins have reached up to the highest, and God's patience with them has ended.... God's judgment is executed...over the godless.... God shall cast His wrath onto the godless, in the abyss."

In his *Analysis*, Albert Barnes here describes: "The final **overthrow** of all the enemies of the Church.... To this, all things are tending. This will certainly be accomplished, in due time.... This whole chapter therefore is designed to relieve...the mind...[to] be cheered with the assurance of the **final triumph** of truth and righteousness.... To the Church at large in the darkest times...there is the **certainty of final victory**.... This should be allowed to cheer and sustain the soul."

⁶⁷³ Isa. 63:3.

⁶⁷⁴ Isa. 52:15.

⁶⁷⁵ Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-18.

⁶⁷⁶ Rev. 19:13-15.

⁶⁷⁷ Mk. 16:16 *cf.* Mt. 3:11f.

⁶⁷⁸ The "city" in Rev. 14:20 is not the "Babylon" of 14:3 but the "Zion" of vv. 1 & 12 *cf.* 21:1f. Thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Brakel, Tirinus, Hengstenberg, Schlatter, Kraemer, Greijdanus, Ringnalda, and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*. The 1,600 furlongs of Rev. 14:20 is 4 x 4 x 10 x 10 — four being the number of the World (*cf.* Rev. 4:6 & 7:2 & 9:14 & 21:16a), and ten being the number of intensification (*cf.* Rev. 2:10 & 12:3 *etc.*) — so that the multiplication of the square of four times the square of ten, suggests the fullness of the World. *Cf.* Rev. 7:4 = 144,000 = [4 x 3] x [4 x 3] x [10 x 10 x 10] with Rev. 14:20's 1,600 = 4 x 4 x 10 x 10 and with Rev. 21:16's 12,000 = [4 x 3] x [10 x 10 x 10].

⁶⁷⁹ Rev. 19:11-21 & 13:10 & 14:3,6-8,20 *cf.* nn. 607-609

Blessed are the Dead in Christ—and their Works follow Them!

O Christian, may we too—in the words of the famous hymn—'labour for the Master from the dawn till setting sun!' May we wield the sword of God's Word in all that we do—as a witness to His sovereign control over our lives in every field of our endeavours!

For then, we shall indeed live the life and die the death of the blessed. Then, we too shall rest from our godly labours of being fruitful and multiplying and filling or replenishing and subjecting the Earth and the Sea and the Sky and all they contain to the glory of God.

Then, also we shall rest from our labours of promoting the preaching of the Gospel in all the World—toward the christianization of all the Nations. Then, we too shall rest in glory, until the Earth has become filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the Sea—and until all those labours follow us unto Life Eternal to be enjoyed in this life, and in the next, and on the New Earth yet to come. For ever and ever.

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

The Victory over the Beast: all Nations come and worship God!

Revelation 15 & 16

December 23

"Then I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous.... I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire; and them who had gotten the victory over the Beast.... They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. They say: 'Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, You King of saints [or "King of Nations"]! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your Name? For You alone are holy. For all Nations shall come and worship before You.'"⁶⁸⁰

Christ had just given John an insight into the outcome of the believer's testimony to His Own Mediatorial Lordship here on Earth. That would culminate in His Second Coming in Final Judgment — when there will no longer be any further time of waiting for the very end of History.⁶⁸¹

Then the Lord Jesus went on to give His Apostle details about "the seven **last** plagues"⁶⁸² (thus Tertullian). For those plagues would bring about the downfall of the false religio-politico-economic 'Babylon'⁶⁸³ — a long period of time still prior⁶⁸⁴ to Christ's Final Advent in ultimate judgment.⁶⁸⁵

Those last plagues would destroy the **Papacy**. Thus Pierre d'Olivi, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, John Cotton, Thomas Goodwin, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Adam Clarke, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*, Albert Barnes, and B.H. Carroll.

⁶⁸⁰ Rev. 15:2-4, "gotten the victory over" = *nikoontas*; see too Rev. 12:11 & 17:14. The *Textus Receptus* "saints" or *hagioon* (at the end of v. 3) probably represents a translation back into Greek from the Latin rendition *sclorum* (being an abbreviation of *saeculorum* = "of Nations" [or "of ages"]) —but then misread as *sctorum* (being an abbreviation of *sanctorum* = "of saints"). *K^{ca}* & *A & P & Q & Arm. & Aeth.* all have *Ethnoon* (= "of Nations"). In light of Rev. 15:3f & 18:3,9f & 19:5-7, this should perhaps be regarded as the preferred reading (cf. J.C. Coetzee: *Nation and People of God in the New Testament*, Pro Rege, Potchefstroom, 1965, pp. 293 n. 118 & 302 n. 118). Cf. too n. 408.

⁶⁸¹ Rev. ch. 14, cf. our study for Dec. 22.

⁶⁸² Rev. 15:1 cf. 2, & cf. too 4:1-6.

⁶⁸³ Rev. 16:4,12,19 cf. chs. 17 to 18 & n. 408.

⁶⁸⁴ Rev. chs. 17 to 20 cf. 13,10,15-18 & 14:1f.

⁶⁸⁵ Rev. 14:14-20 & 20:11-15.

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Observes Barnes in his *Analysis*: "The 'plagues' are described as if they were a succession of physical calamities that would come upon this **Antichristian power**, and bring it to an end.... The course of the exposition thus far will lead us to regard this chapter as a description of **the successive blows by which the Papacy will fall**. A **part** of this is **still** undoubtedly **future**, though perhaps not far distant.... The great mass of Protestant commentators suppose that **it refers to the Papacy**."

However, it refers further also to the **allies** of the Papacy. For the Papacy does not exhaust but is rather the great **standard-bearer** of the **Anti-christ** (as **such**). Thus Beatus, Joachim of Floris, John Calvin, Matthew Poole and Thomas Scott. So, when the Papacy is destroyed — also its antichristian **allies** are themselves soon destroyed by the last of these seven plagues.

Yet these **latter-day allies** of the Papacy have still **not yet** been welded into the final **Pan-Antichristian Religious Alliance**. Such future allies of the Papacy, will ultimately include: **Apostate Pseudo-'Protestantism'** (thus Goodwin, Backus, Adam Clarke, David Brown, and Fairbairn); **Islam** (thus John Cotton, Goodwin, and Carey); **Paganism** (thus John Gill, Dowling, and Albert Barnes); **the French Revolution** (thus Joseph Priestley, the *Cottage Bible*, and Albert Barnes); **and all of the latter's radical daughters, such as Socialism and Humanism** (thus Philip Mauro and Francis Nigel Lee).

First, however, John saw "another sign in Heaven — great and marvellous." He saw "them who had gotten the **victory** over the Beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."⁶⁸⁶

Already when they were still on Earth and before they died and went to Heaven, these children of God had been singing this song of triumph.⁶⁸⁷ At that previous time, they had been anticipating the certainty of the earthly Church's future victory throughout the World and the fall of the great city of 'Babylon' — even as Moses in his own day had sung about God's triumph over all of His enemies.⁶⁸⁸

And now, right after their deaths at the end of their fruitful earthly lives,⁶⁸⁹ the saints sing in Heaven too. They do this **after** their deaths — thus **after** they, also at their death, have "gotten the victory over the Beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name."⁶⁹⁰

There in the glory of Heaven itself, the Church Triumphant stands on 'the sea of glass.'⁶⁸⁶ There were indeed many "troubles and afflictions" for the Church Members while they were previously here on Earth (as the Church Militant). However, she sang her way out of all of them — and **conquered** them.

⁶⁸⁶ Rev. 15:1-3 *cf.* nn. 408 & 611.

⁶⁸⁷ Rev. 14:2f.

⁶⁸⁸ Rev. 14:6-8 *cf.* Ex. 15:1-18 & Dt. 31:30 to 32:43 & 33:2f & Hab. 3:2-4 & Rev. 5:5-14 & 4:1-11 & 7:11-14 & 14:2-4 & n. 408.

⁶⁸⁹ Rev. 14:13.

⁶⁹⁰ Rev. 15:2 *cf.* n. 408.

Indeed, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, in that way "the saints of God **overcame them all.**" For even before their deaths, the saints, while yet here on Earth, "sing divine songs unto God — by Whose power they **get the victory.**"⁶⁸⁶ And thereafter — once in Heaven — the Church Triumphant sings this song even more convincingly and invincibly than she ever did when still only the Church Militant.

Hear the Church Triumphant sing in Heaven! "Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways — You King of saints [or 'King of Nations']!"⁶⁸⁰

Second. From Heaven above, **after** their death but **before** the Fall of Babylon and the resultant christianization of the World, the dead saints further **prophecy**. There they predict the universal triumph of the Gospel **here on Earth** — and its conquest of the Earth, even **before** the end of the History of the World.⁶⁸⁸

For they victoriously sing: "**Who shall not** fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your Name? For You alone are holy. For **all Nations shall come and worship before You.**"⁶⁸⁰ Indeed, it is precisely **because** Jehovah **is** the "King of the Nations"⁶⁸⁰ — that **all Nations shall** yet come and worship Him.⁶⁸⁰

Third. The heavenly saints are certain that all people on Earth shall yet come and fear the Lord. They are convinced that all Nations shall yet come and worship before Him. "For Your judgments [or ruling operations] are made manifest."⁶⁸⁰

Well they know it is precisely the manifestation of God's **judgments** — the outpouring of "the seven last plagues" — that will shake the kingdom of the Beast to its very foundations. That is what will help bring about both the Fall of 'Babylon' — and the christianization of the World.⁶⁹¹

May we too fearlessly sing out the judgments of God in our own day, over all who resist the Lord Jesus' claims on their lives! And may we keep on doing so — until the 'walls of Jericho' as it were come tumbling down⁶⁹² and 'the saints go marching in!'

Explains Albert Barnes in his *Analysis* and his *Commentary*: "The Church would ultimately be triumphant.... That formidable **Antichristian power** represented by the [**Roman**] '**Beast**' would be destroyed.... Wrath is to come upon the Beast; or the complete overthrow of this formidable Antichristian power" over the Nations.

"As the result of these punishments inflicted on this dread Antichristian power, they shall come and worship Thee. Everywhere in the New Testament, the destruction of that power is connected with the promise of the speedy **conversion of the World**.... That formidable power is overthrown, and the grand hindrance to the **universal spread of the True Religion** is now taken away....

⁶⁹¹ Rev. 15:1f *cf.* 16:1f,10-14,17-19 & chs. 17 to 18 & n. 408. *Cf.* the first three paragraphs in our study for Dec. 23.

⁶⁹² Josh. ch. 6 *cf.* Rev. 16:18f & 14:6-8. *Cf.* Barnes's *Analysis* of Rev. ch. 16; and his *Commentary* at Rev. 16:12f, including his comment on Rev. 18:24 at its n. 6 (referring back to Rev. 16:10-16).

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One great hindrance to the spread of the true religion, would be taken away by the decline and fall of the **Turkish** power."⁶⁹² Hence, both the **international Romish Antichrist** and 'the Turkish power' or **international Islam** will crash!

Fourth. John saw how the tabernacle of God in Heaven was opened. Then the seven Angels came out of it, and poured forth upon the Earth the seven last plagues of the wrath of God — which they received from one of the four living beings in Heaven.⁶⁹³

The seven Angels, according to the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, include the Church's **Preachers** as "God's Ministers."⁶⁸² And by the four living beings, "are meant all the creatures of God which willingly serve Him for the punishment of infidels." For "God gives us **full** entry into His Church, **by destroying His enemies.**"⁶⁹³

Moreover, the seven plagues greatly resemble the seven trumpets which John had previously heard sounding. For plagues too affect the Earth and the Sea and the Rivers and the Sun — and also 'Babylon-on-the-Euphrates.'⁶⁹⁴

But whereas the **trumpets** were essentially instruments of **warning** — the **plagues** poured out from the seven vials or bowls of the wrath of God, are essentially instruments of **punishment**. And whereas the **trumpets** generally warn against the destruction of **but one-third** of the items affected — the **plagues** actually smite **the entirety** (alias three-thirds) of the items affected.⁶⁹⁴

The Puritan James Durham, in his 1657 *Complete Commentary upon the Book of Revelation* (p. 604), has rightly remarked: "The four first vials [in] chapter 16...carry on **Antichrist's ruin**.... The fifth vial **overturneth Rome his seat**.... The sixth **overturneth Turks, Popes**, and the rest of that kingdom; **bringeth in the Jews**; and setteth the Gospel at its full brightness. The seventh vial sometime after that, bringeth the end upon all enemies...and **fully overturneth the Devil's kingdom in the World.**" Cf. Romans 11:25-32.

Now it should be recognized that the plagues poured out, represent God's judgments particularly on the **Beast** (and its associates) in its **Babylonish-Romish** or **Pagan-Papal** manifestations.⁶⁹¹ As such, the series of "the seven **last** plagues"⁶⁸² commence at a **later** (or Papal) stage of history than did the series of trumpets (the first of which had commenced sounding perhaps even as early as the time John was writing down the *Book of Revelation*).⁶⁹⁵

This makes the series of plagues **very relevant** — to our **own day**. For Papal Rome, though greatly weakened since the Protestant Reformation, has by no means yet been destroyed.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹³ Rev. 15:1,5-8 cf. 10:10 & 8:5f & 11:2,13,19 & 16:17-21 & nn. 132 & 408.

⁶⁹⁴ Rev. 8:1-12 & 9:14f cf. 16:1-8,12f,19 & n. 408.

⁶⁹⁵ Rev. 8:7f cf. our study hereon (for Dec. 10).

⁶⁹⁶ Rev. 13:2 (*per contra* 12:3) & 16:12f & 17:8-11,16-18 & ch. 19. Cf. our study on these texts, & n. 408.

Fifth. The **first plague** was poured out of its terrible vial or bowl⁶⁹⁷ only **after** the Babylonish-Romish Papacy had set up the image of the Imperial Beast alias the Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages.⁶⁹⁸ Thus John Cotton, Thomas Goodwin, and Moses Lowman. For the first Angel "went and poured out his vial upon the Earth" of the Holy Roman Empire. "Then there fell a malignant and afflictive sore [or system of ulcers] upon the man who

⁶⁹⁷ Rev. 16:1 cf. Pss. 7 & 8 & 79:6 & Jer. 10:25.

⁶⁹⁸ Rev. 13:1,3,10f,13f & 17:2,8-11 & cf. our study on Rev. ch. 13 for Dec. 20.

Even before the Westminster Assembly, the 1642 American Puritan John Cotton wrote about this in his book *The Pouring Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642, pp. 4f,7,20,26) and his book *The Church's Resurrection* (London, 1642, p. 8). He claims the pouring out of the first vial causes bad diseases upon those who worshipped the Beast alias "the damnable estate of a Catholic...Religion" during the reigns of the British monarchs Henry, Edward and Mary—which estate "was but the worship of God after the devices of men, even will-worship, such as they were led into, by the man of sin" alias the Pope. When the second vial was poured out, turning the sea into blood, the English Protestant Martyrs were reinforced by the Theologians Chemnitz and Junius and Perkins and Ames and others, who "by their doctrine and writings from the Word have poured out such clear conviction and refutation of [Catholic] worship." The third vial, turning the rivers and waters into blood, were Good Queen Bess' laws of 1581 and Calvinistic Holland's laws of 1586 which branded Jesuits and Romanistic priests as national traitors and which established "the Christian State Polity" and "raised all Christendom in combustion" especially during the attack on England by the Spanish Armada in 1588. The fourth vial, poured out upon the scorching sun, represents Elizabeth's repudiation of the Pope's civil supremacy and Protestant Sweden's defeat of Romanistic Austria. The fifth vial represents the Scottish Presbyterian repudiation of both the papal See (or the seat of the Beast) and Episcopalian Prelacy [following Beza and Cartwright]. The sixth vial dries up the Euphrates or the idolatry and revenues nourishing both the Pope and the Turk, and converts the Jews—so that "then shall we see God's ancient people brought home, and the Lord shall be one over all the Earth and His Name [shall be] one" [cf. Zech. 14:9]. And the seventh vial inaugurates the thousand years' reign of Christ on Earth, as soon as the power of the Word finally defeats Antichrist at the first resurrection. That first resurrection would be spiritual, not bodily; would commence at the fall of Antichrist; would regenerate individuals; and would resurrect whole churches "when they are recovered again from their Apostatical and dead estate in Idolatry and Superstition."

The 1654 Thomas Goodwin's *Exposition of Revelation* (in *Works*, ed. Miller, Edinburgh, rep. 1891-96, III:28,80,89) denounced Rome as Daniel's fourth beast. The first vial, he held, represents the Waldensians. The second vial is Wycliff, Huss, and Jerome of Prague—who exposed the papacy as Antichrist. The third vial is Luther's preaching. The fourth vial is the present time of "glorious peace and sunshine of the Gospel" and the setting up of Puritan Christonomic Protestantism through which Jesus is "ruling by Christian Magistrates—they using their power for Him" in spite of "carnal Protestants" (cf. Rev. 17:5). The fifth vial was just beginning in Goodwin's time, and strikes at the throne of Romish Babylon. The sixth vial will destroy the Turks and convert the Jews to Christianity. And the seventh vial is Christ's initiation of the 'Millennium' by destroying the united remnants of the antichristian Papists and the antichristian Turks.

Moses Lowman, in his 1737 *Paraphrase and Notes upon the Revelation*, sees the first vial as causing commotions in the Papacy after Charlemagne. The second vial unleashes Crusaders against the Saracens; the third, civil war (in 1200-1371); the fourth, the Great Schism and the Fall of Constantinople to the Turks; the fifth, the Protestant Reformation against Rome; the sixth, the Turks and the Papacy; and the seventh, the beginning of the postmillennial 'Millennium.'

Jonathan Edwards, in his 1739 *History of Redemption*, understands the first five vials in much the same way as Lowman. States Edwards: "A certain very late expositor (Mr. Lowman), who explains the first five vials in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation with greater probability perhaps than any who went before him, explains the fifth vial which was poured out on the seat of the Beast, of what came to pass in the Reformation—explaining the four preceding vials of certain great judgments God brought on the Popish dominions before the Reformation. It is said, Rev. 16:10, that 'the fifth Angel poured out his vial on the seat [or throne] of the Beast'.... He poured out his vial...on the authority and dominion of the Pope.... The Pope's authority and dominion was greatly diminished.... He lost...about half his dominion. And besides, since the Reformation, the Pope has lost great part of that authority even in the Popish dominions which he had before."

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had the mark of the Beast, and upon them who worshipped [or continuously went on worshipping] his image."⁶⁹⁹

This seems to point to the Middle Ages, when the Holy Roman Empire became ulcerated. Even at that time, it evidenced signs of its own later fragmentation. For this 'afflictive sore' — as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments — "was like the sixth plague of Egypt, which was sores and boils or **pocks**. And this reigns commonly among Canons, Monks, Friars, Nuns, Priests and such vermin which bear the mark of the Beast."⁶⁹⁹ Just think of the **Black Death!**

O, may the wicked turn from their evil to the living God, also in our own day! For we too live in a similar day of ulceration — the day of the moral and political decline of the West, as evident in the spread of the plague of *AIDS* especially among homosexuals.

It is perhaps significant that Albert Barnes attributes a role to the 1789 **French Revolution** and its ongoing aftermath — in bringing down the Papacy. Thus he comments that that ungodly revolution, "from France as a centre, spread like a plague throughout its affiliated societies to the other countries of Papal Christendom.... All the infidelity and atheism of the French Nation, before so strongly Papal, went just so far in weakening the power of the Papacy.... The horrid outbreaks in the French Revolution, were the first in the series of providential events that will result in the entire overthrow of that Antichristian power" of the Papacy.

Sixth. The second and the third and the fourth vials were next poured out (on the Sea and the Rivers and the Sun). The second vial containing the **second plague** probably refers to the Late-Mediaeval plunging of the uncivilized **sea** of Nations into an ocean of blood, by the Turks and the Mongols.

Seventh. The third vial containing the **third plague** probably refers to the poisoning of the **rivers and fountains** of the truth, by the false doctrines of the Papacy. Here one thinks of the Celibacy and the Mass and Purgatory and Mariolatry *etc.*, which then polluted both the Eastern-'Orthodox' Church as well as the Western Church.

Eighth. "The fourth Angel poured out his vial [containing the **fourth plague**] upon the Sun; and power was given to it to scorch men with fire." This 'inflammation' of the **Sun** seems to refer to the Holy Roman Emperor and his satellites, who then scorched mankind. It seems to suggest the fiery politico-religious persecutions of the various mediaeval Inquisitions against the Waldensians, the Wycliffites, the Lollards, and the Hussites.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁹ Rev. 16:2's word "worshipped" translates *prokonountas* (a present-continuous participle after an aorist verb).

⁷⁰⁰ Rev. 16:1-9 *cf.* nn. 288 & 458 with Rev. 12:1 & 13:3-15 and our study for Dec. 20 & nn. 597-612. See too the *opera citata* of B.K. Kuiper and Barnes and Makrakis.

May we too, in our own day, beware of the threats of barbarians against civilization! May we guard against the poisonous and even lethal effects of antisciptural doctrines even in many 'churches' (*sic*)! May we steer clear of the burning fury of corrupt politicians, in their hatred of Christianity! But may we also know that even while plagues like these are being poured out upon the wicked, all things still work together for good to those who love the Lord. For all things are also working toward the abolition of the Romish and the Islamic tyrannies, and in the direction of the ultimate christianization of our own great planet Earth.⁷⁰⁰

Ninth. We need to remember that the Late-Mediaeval 'Holy Roman Empire' was controlled by the **Vatican** as the seat of power of the persecuting Beast. "So the fifth Angel poured out his vial [containing the **fifth plague**] upon the throne of the Beast. Then his kingdom was full of darkness. And they gnawed their tongues for pain. And they blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores. But they did not repent of their deeds."⁷⁰¹

This fifth plague, according to the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, "signifies that the **Pope's** doctrine is a horrible plague." Similar to this are the many views of Martin Luther, Henry Bullinger, Virgil Solis, Georg Nigrinus, John Cotton, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Thomas Goodwin, James Durham, Matthew Poole, Brakel, Vitringa, Matthew Henry, Moses Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, Samuel Hopkins, Thomas Scott, John Brown of Haddington, Adam Clarke, Bishop Thomas Newton, T.H. Horne, Ewald, Hengstenberg, Moffat, R.H. Charles, Zahn, Carroll, and many others.⁷⁰² For **all** of the above identify the seat or "throne of the Beast" with the **Vatican in Rome**.

According to the two great American Theologians Edwards and Hopkins, the fifth plague is probably a reference to the "outpouring" of the antipapal 1517 **Protestant Reformation** commencing with the Pope's repudiation by Luther and that great Reformer's exposure of the Papacy as Babylon and of the Vatican as the very throne of the Beast.⁷⁰³ For, after the Mediterranean World had become "full of darkness" through the twin blights of Islam and Romanism, the light broke through again with the rediscovery of the Bible by Luther and Calvin. After the darkness of the Papacy, came the light of the Protestant Reformation. *Post tenebras, lux!*

⁷⁰¹ Rev. 16:10f *cf.* nn. 408 & 700.

⁷⁰² Rev. 16:3-10 *cf.* 11:7 & 13:1-12 & 14:8,11 & 15:1f & chs. 17 to 18 *cf.* nn. 408 & 611. In addition, to those mentioned by us above, the following further authorities too all identify Rev. 16:10's "throne of the Beast" with Rome: Ogden, M'Corkle, Farnham, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Ethan Allen, W.C. Davis, Kinne, Frere, Robert Scott, Agier, Junkin, Crandall, U. Smith, Holzmann, Bauer, Hadorn, & Visser. See too nn. 408 & 581 & 610 & 697.

⁷⁰³ See S. Hopkins's *Treatise on the Millennium* (Arno, New York, 1972 rep.), pp. 99-101; M. Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (in his *Collected Works*). Even Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* (II:166) concedes that the throne of the Beast "was at Rome" (at the time the *Book of Revelation* was being written). *Cf.* Too nn. 702 & 704.

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Even more remarkably. Almost a century **before** the **French Revolution** of 1789, Robert Fleming in 1701 first published his *Apocalyptical Key*, subtitled *An Extraordinary Discourse on the Rise and Fall of Papacy; or the pouring out of the Vials* (of Revelation chapter 16). There he wrote about "the **fifth** vial (verses 10-11) which is to be poured out on the seat of the Beast or...on the Roman see.... This judgment will probably begin about the year 1794 and expire about A.D. 1848.... Seeing the Pope received the title of Supreme Bishop no sooner than A.D. 606, he cannot be supposed to have any vial poured upon his seat...until the year 1848 — which is the date of the 1260 years, in prophetic account, when they are reckoned from A.D. 606. **But yet we are not to imagine that this will totally destroy the Papacy** (though it will exceedingly weaken it). For we find that still in being, and alive, when the **next** vial is poured out."⁷⁰⁴

It is significant that the judgment against Rome predicted by the 1701 Fleming indeed began in 1794, just before Napoleon's 1798 invasion of the Vatican through General Haller. Furthermore, the predicted judgment indeed expired, as forecast, in A.D. 1848 — being the year of the *Communist Manifesto* and the year of its resultant European **Revolutions**.

Yet Rome would not repent! Instead, she blasphemed God and His Holy Word. She did so at the Council of Trent, anathematizing the Bible-upholding Protestants — and persecuting them in the Jesuitical Inquisition. And even **since Trent** — Rome has further blasphemed God by enacting ungodly *ex cathedra* pronouncements such as those of the *Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary* (1854), the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), the *Infallibility of the Pope* (1870), and the *Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary* (1950), etc.

So tenth. "The sixth Angel poured out his vial [containing the **sixth plague**] upon the great river Euphrates. Then its water became dried up, so that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared."⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁴ See J. Edwards's *Hist. of Redemption* (as cited in n. 698), and the 1701 Fleming, as cited in Barnes's *Notes...on the Book of Revelation* (at 16:11), pp. 416f fn. *.

⁷⁰⁵ Rev. 16:12 cf. Jer. 50:38 & Dan. 4:30f & nn. [†] 408. Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* II:170) believes the expedition of the 'Kings of the East' is not directed against Babylon-Rome, but against the true Church-Canaan (cf. Rev. 16:12-16). See too at n. 702.

Explains Nesper (*op. cit.* pp. 224f): "The grandeur and splendour of the ancient city of Babylon has certainly never been excelled. Here, famous hanging gardens are still today regarded as one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World. Her walls were between 250 and 300 feet high, and 80 feet broad. Horses and chariots four abreast ran races on top of the walls. There were 250 towers on the walls. They were square, and had a circumference of 56 miles. The River Euphrates flowed right through the middle of the city. Inside the walls of the city, was the most fertile meadow and cultivated land in the whole World. So self-sufficient was the city of Babylon, that ancient Historians estimated she could withstand a twenty-year siege. There were 100 gates in the outside walls of the city, with 25 streets or paths which ran in each of the four directions.... The inhabitants of Babylon used to stand on the walls and mock the Medes and Persians when they besieged the city. They must have looked like grasshoppers to the inhabitants of Babylon.

"However, all of a sudden, Cyrus the Commander of the Medes and Persians thought of a very clever plan to capture this proud and 'unconquerable' city. He withdrew his troops from round the city, and put them to work a few miles away — diverting the water of the Euphrates into an old river bed followed by the river in previous centuries. The task was completed, and the water ceased to flow through Babylon on the very night Belshazzar held his great banquet in honour of the gods of gold and silver, brass, iron, wood and stone — Dan. 5:4.... Cyrus and his soldiers came back that very night and, marching through the bottom of the river bed of the dried-up Euphrates, they captured the city. Belshazzar was killed in that same night (Dan. 5:30), and Cyrus the General handed over the Kingdom to Darius the Mede."

Here, at Revelation 16:12, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* explains what is meant by the waters of the "Euphrates." Those waters are "the strength of Babylon." They are "the riches, strength, pleasures and commodities of Rome the second Babylon." This vial, held both Cotton and Goodwin, will destroy the Turks (or Moslems), and convert the Jews to Christianity.

Now this drying up the life-waters of Babylon-in-the-Euphrates, takes place **after** the outpouring of the fifth vial on the throne of the Papal Beast **at the time of the Protestant Reformation**. And the Protestant "**faithful**", which are the true kings and priests in Christ, "are those who **have taken away**" the Romanists' strength and the pretensions of the Pope — by "disclosing their wicked deceit."⁷⁰⁵

Revelation 16:12 seems to have a further meaning, too. The drying up of 'the water' of 'the great river Euphrates' so 'that the way of the 'Kings of the East might be prepared' — also seems to indicate an Oriental and possibly even a Pan-Moslem thrust westward.

Comments the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*: "Some here understand the thus-named actual River Euphrates, on both sides of which the **Turks** and the **Persians** [or **Iranians**], and **similar** Nations of the East have their territory — as noted in chapter 9:14. They would still **unite with one another**" — in a **Pan-Islamic Jihad** or 'Holy War' apparently against the West.

Others point out that Rev. 16:12's "Euphrates" is not the literal river running through the Ancient city of Babylon, but the "river" of mystical Babylon — and even the River Tiber flowing through the city of Rome the mystical Babylon. Thus John Cotton, Thos. Goodwin, Matt. Henry, Hopkins, Mason, Dowling, Pond, and Makrakis. See: Archbald Mason's *Remarks on the Sixth Vial Symbolizing the Fall of the Turkish Empire* (Ogle, Glasgow, 1827, p. 17); 1, and Enoch Pond's *The Kingdom Given to the Saints* (Andover, 1848), p. 10. Cf. Isa. 8:5-8; Jer. 13:4; 50:38; Zech. 10:11. See too *Euphrates as a Symbol in the Prophetic Books* (being Appendix M in P. Fairbairn's *Prophecy Viewed in Respect to its Distinctive Nature, its Special Function, and Proper Interpretation*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1865).

Yet others insist that the Euphrates in Rev. 16:12 is a barrier against Judaism (thus Pond), against Paganism (thus Dowling), or against France (thus Barnes). In 1909, even Scofield noted in his *Reference Bible* (at Dan. 2:41): "This is precisely what has come to pass...with the Republic of France and the despotism of Turkey." Indeed, most see it as a barrier against Islam (thus Huit, Hutchinson, Hooke, Goodwin, Whitby, Matthew Henry, Cheever, Faber, Fuller, Mason, Fry, Vaughan, Begg, Hoare, Leslie, Thorp, Cox, Dowling, Cumming, Pond, Elliott, Baylee, Barnes, & Makrakis). Cf. too n. 707.

Of those who see Rev. 16:12 as predicting many converts to Christianity some see this as referring to Westerners (thus Noyes & Mason cf. Rev. 15:4 16:10-14 & 17:14-17 & 18:9f & 19:14-21 & 21:24-26); Romanists (Fleming & Lampe & Gill); Jews (thus John Cotton, Goodwin, Matthew Henry, Fleming, and Lampe); Moslems (thus Matthew Henry, Gill, Barnes, Makrakis and McFarlane); Pagans alias the fullness of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25f cf. Fleming, Lampe, Gill and Barnes); or the Orient (thus Brightman, John Cotton, Huit, Hooke, John Owen, Goodwin, Noyes, Matthew Henry, Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, John Brown of Haddington, Faber, Farnham, Robert Scott, Fuller, Ethan Allen, W.C. Davis, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Mason, M'Corkle, A. Armstrong, T.H. Horne, Junkin, J. Wilson, Burwell, U. Smith, Makrakis, and William Symington). See: R. Fleming Sr.'s *The Fulfilling of the Scripture* (London, 1726, pp. 157-63 & 171f); J. Gill's *Glory of the Church in the Latter Day* (London, 1753, pp. 19-21); M. Henry: *Complete Works* (1859 ed., I:465); A. Makrakis's *Interpretation of the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Orthodox Christian Educational Society, Chicago, 1972, pp. 401f & 437 & 479-83); N. Noyes's *New England's Duty and Interest to be an Habitation of Justice and Mountain of Holiness* (Green & Allen, Boston, 1698, pp. 68f); and W. Symington's *Messiah the Prince* (Christian Statesman Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1845f).

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Yet the drying up the waters of Babylon refers **also** to an event **prior** to the **final** Fall of Babylonish Papal Rome.⁷⁰⁶ As such, the result of the outpouring of the sixth vial seems to relate to the **diminishing power of Rome-on-the-Tiber** (and also to the diminishing power of **Islam-at-the-Euphrates**).⁷⁰⁷

Because of that diminished power of Romanism as well as of Islam, the "**Kings of the East**" shall come to Christ. Revelation 15:4 *cf.* 16:12. Thus: Brightman; John Cotton; Huit; Hooke; John Owen; Goodwin; Fleming; Noyes; Matthew Henry; Lowman; Jonathan Edwards; Lampe; Gill; John Brown of Haddington; Faber; Farnham; Robert Scott; Fuller; Ethan Allen; W.C. Davis; the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*; Mason; M'Corkle; A. Armstrong; T.H. Horne; Junkin; J. Wilson; Burwell; Albert Barnes; McFarlane; U. Smith; Makrakis; and William Symington.

⁷⁰⁶ Rev. 16:12 *cf.* vv. 10 & n. 705. See too J. Cotton's *op. cit.*; J. Edwards's *op. cit.* pp. 302-6; and Hopkins's *op. cit.* pp. 99f & n. 707. Wrote Edwards: "I will not now stand to inquire what is intended by the pouring out of the sixth vial on the river Euphrates...but would only say that it seems to be something immediately preparing the way for the destruction of the spiritual Babylon—as the drying up of the river Euphrates which ran through the midst of old Babylon was what prepared the way of the Kings of the Medes and Persians, the Kings of the East, to come in under the walls and destroy that city. But whatever this be, it does not appear that it is anything which shall be accomplished before that work of God's Spirit is begun by which, as it goes on, Satan's visible kingdom on Earth shall be utterly overthrown."

⁷⁰⁷ Rev. 15:14 *cf.* 16:10,12,19 & 17:14-17 & 18:2,4. It is well-known that the Medo-Persians captured the Ancient Babylon by diverting the waters of the adjacent Euphrates. Rev. 16:12f *cf.* Isa. 21:9f & Jer. 50:1,38 & 51:36f *cf.* Dan. 5:30 & Xenophon's *Cyrop.* vii.5. See too n. 675.

According to the seventeenth-century Puritans, this drying up of the waters of the Euphrates refers to the universal proclamation of the Gospel, and thereafter even to the Orient's embracing thereof. Compare Isa. 27:12f with Rev. 15:4 & 16:10-12 & Mt. 2:1-11 & Lk. 4:16-21. According to John Cotton and Hopkins (*cf.* n. 705f), this refers to the vital waters of the Romish Babylon progressively drying up after the victorious Protestant Reformation and prior to the evangelization of the Kings of the East. Hopkins's expectation may well be fulfilled before the realization of Edwards's expectations of the ultimate christianization of the Orient. *Cf.* n. 698. *Cf.* too the *Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, which urges Christians to pray: "For the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all Nations; for the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and...the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the **[Romish] Antichristian faction** and from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the **Turk**" *etc.* See too Jonathan Edwards (*Hist. of Redemption* III:327), & *cf.* nn. 705 & 714. On the Turks and the Moslems, *cf.* further also Barnes on Rev. 16:12-14 & 16:16 and on Rev. 18:24 at its n. 6 (referring back to 16:10-16).

The independent Greek-Orthodox Scholar Makrakis says (*op. cit.* pp. 401f): "'The great river Euphrates' [of Rev. 16:12] is taken as a symbol of the barbarian peoples of Asia from which the Beast received new and fresh strength. At the time when the Arab race became emasculated, the Beast was reinforced by Turkish and Tartar Tribes, and the Osmanli power was advanced by the Tartars and the Asiatic hordes to which the Scriptures refer as the waters of the river Euphrates. Thus, the sixth vial rendered this spring of Turkish power dry—so that Mohammanism might vanish in Europe."

According to Hengstenberg as well as Dijk, the preparation of the Kings of the East here represents **the modern rise of the Non-Christian Orient against Western Christianity**. Hengstenberg and Dijk may well be correct in their interpretations of the course of events before the happy realization of the expectations of many other Scholars predicting rather the (re-) protestantization of backslidden Pseudo-'Protestants' and Romanists, and the ultimate christianization of the East and of the West and of the Moslems and of the Pagan Gentiles and of the Jews—before the end of the World. For **ultimately, the whole World shall indeed be christianized**. See *Westminster Larger Catechism*, QQ. & AA. 191f.

Comments Barnes: "There is **every reason** to suppose that this passage has reference to something in the **future** history of the **Turkish** dominions, and to some bearing of the events which are to occur in that history on the ultimate **downfall** of the Antichristian power referred to by the 'Beast'.... The Euphrates is represented as **a barrier** to prevent the passage of 'the Kings of the East' on their way to the West....

"Applying the symbol of the Euphrates as being the seat of **the Turkish power** — the meaning is, that that power is **such** a hindrance.... In some way that hindrance **is to be removed**.... It refers to what is **still future**."⁶⁹²

"The Kings of the East would be **converted** to the **True Religion**.... There was some **hindrance** or obstruction to their **conversion**.

"That is, as explained, **from the Turkish power**.... The **destruction** of that power, represented by the drying up of the Euphrates, would remove that obstruction....

"The way would thus be 'prepared' for their **conversion**.... We should most naturally therefore look, in the fulfilment of this, for some such **decay of the Turkish [or Moslem] power** as would be **followed by the conversion of the rulers of the East to the Gospel**."

Eleventh. Both **Islam** and **Romanism** are **crumbling** in our own day, as a result of the impact of **Protestantism** — and as a result of the technological and other advances which that Protestantism has either directly or indirectly produced. The Islamic Caliphate has now been shattered. And the vital life-waters of the Vatican also continue to dry up.

Indeed, there is today slowly but very surely an increasing spread of Protestant-Christian truth in both Moslem and Romish lands, and elsewhere too — throughout the World. There is an increasing drought in the hearts of both Moslems and Romanists, and an increasing thirst for the refreshing waters of God's most Holy Word.

God's true children, some of them still imprisoned in what Luther calls the 'Babylonian Captivity' of Romanism (and of Islam) — are gradually, yet constantly, being liberated into the Congregations and Denominations of the Reformation.⁷⁰⁷ Thus John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, and Samuel Hopkins.

In this manner, "the way of the Kings of the East" is being "**pre-pared**." As a result, they too are to come to the True Protestant-Biblical religion — and to be saved by its Christ-according-to-the-Scriptures.⁷⁰⁷

According to Thomas Brightman and John Owen and Jonathan Edwards, this refers to the **universal proclamation of the Gospel** — and to its willing embracement by the Orient alias "the Kings of the East." According to John Gill and Albert Barnes and the independent Greek Orthodox Scholar Apostolos Makrakis, it similarly represents **the christianization of the Moslems**.

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It further represents **the protestantization of the many Apostate Pseudo-'Protestants' and Romanists** (according to Fleming, Lampe, and Gill); **the on-going christianization of the West** (according to Noyes and Mason); **the calling of the Pagans alias 'the fullness of the Gentiles'** (according to Matthew Henry and Fleming and Gill and Barnes); and **the conversion of the Jews** (according to Cotton, Goodwin, Matthew Henry and Fleming). See too Moses Lowman, John Brown of Haddington, George Stanley Faber, and many others.⁷⁰⁷

Twelfth. Rome will never completely relinquish her power, however, without a final fight. That fight will be furious and fanatical — even though undertaken in frustration and doomed to failure. For ultimately, Rome and Islam will employ even **demonic** influences — and to some extent do so even today on the foreign Mission Field — in order to try stop the slow but steady and World-conquering advance of the Protestant Reformation.⁷⁰⁸

Thus John saw "**three unclean spirits like frogs** come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False-Prophet. For they [the unclean spirits] are the spirits of Demons, working [pseudo-]miracles." And the spirits of the Demons too "go forth unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole World — to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."⁷⁰⁸ And God "gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue 'Armageddon.'"⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁸ Rev. 16:13-15 cf. I Kgs. 22:21-23 & Dt. 13:1-9 & 32:17. Note too that the Demon-spirits go forth to stir up the political leaders of the whole World (*Oikoumenees holees*) against the Lord Jesus and His People (Rev. 16:14). Cf. too nn. 30 & 408 & 581 & 611. The frog-like "unclean spirits" are here declared to be "the spirits of Devils" alias Demons — whether operating in or through Roman Catholic emissaries (thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*), the Papacy and/or Paganism (thus Albert Barnes), the False-Prophet of Islam (thus Brightman & Barnes & Symington), or Spiritism (thus L.E. Froom cf. n. 710).

Together — they constitute a syncretism (thus Arethas, Brightman, Goodwin, Owen, Matthew Henry, Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, Hopkins, Faber, John Brown, Hengstenberg, Albert Barnes, Fairbairn, & Makrakis) — under the leadership of the Papacy (thus Fairbairn cf. Calvin's *Inst.* IV:2:12 & IV:7:25). See too J. Edwards's *History of Redemption* (Period III Part II Application 4). Indeed, also to Barnes, the Papacy and Islam and Paganism will then constitute as it were a false and an accursed 'trinity' of evil.

Especially the famous independent Greek-Orthodox Scholar Makrakis (*op. cit.* pp. 404 & 406-8) is well worth quoting on this point: "The 'spirit of the mouth of the False-Prophet' is the spirit of pseudo-religion which fires the Pope and the Jesuits, Mohammad and the Ulemas [or interpreters of the *Koran*], and the simonical high-priests who have gained control of the holy temples and altars of the Eastern-Orthodox Church. This spirit is the third power of Satan.... In reality, the system of Satan is inimical only to that of Christ. Hence, the three unclean spirits of Satan's system 'go forth unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole World' and persuade them by means of deceitful words and signs to oppose with all their strength Christ's new social order, which fundamentally destroys and exterminates the old. What is the religion of all Europe today? Islamism in the East; Popery in the West; simony, the ally of Islamism.... And in the midst of these, wandering Judaism. And last, but not least, is [Free]masonry — that lurking yet obvious enemy of all religions.... The Worldwide kingdom of Satan is today threatened and endangered by the emerging Kingdom of Christ.... All this is announced by the Divine for our sake, so that we may also make ready for this great 'battle' by mustering our forces, by organizing ourselves in accordance with the spirit of Christ's religion, government and philosophy; and by abolishing and destroying, as much as we can, Satan's false religion, false governmental systems, and false philosophies."

⁷⁰⁹ Rev. 16:16. Cf. perhaps too Dt. 8:7 & 11:11 & Josh. 12:21 & 17:11 & Judg. 1:27 & 5:19 & I Kgs. 4:12 & 9:15 & II Kgs. 9:27 & I Chr. 7:29 & II Chr. 33:22 & Ps. 23:4 & Zech. 10:10f & 12:11.

These 'three unclean spirits like frogs' — says the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*⁷⁰⁸ — signify "a **strong number** of this great **Devil**." They indicate "**the Pope's ambassadors**, which are ever crying and croaking like frogs, and come out of **Antichrist's mouth**, because they would speak nothing but lies and use all manner of crafty deceit to maintain their rich Euphrates against the True Christians....

"Albeit they call themselves 'spiritual and holy fathers' — in actual fact they are really 'spirits of Devils'⁷⁰⁸ alias **Demons**. The 'go unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole World.' For — by way of diplomatic representatives from the Vatican — "in all Kings' courts, the Pope has had his ambassadors to hinder the Kingdom of Christ."⁷⁰⁸

Comments Jonathan Edwards: "In this last great opposition which shall be made against the Church to defend the kingdom of Satan — all the forces of **Antichrist**, and **Mahometanism**, and **Heathenism**, will be **united**...through[out] the **Whole World**.... It is said that 'spirits of Devils shall go forth unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole World, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty'....

"These spirits are said to come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False-Prophet.... There shall be the spirit of **Popery**, and the spirit of **Mahometanism**, and the spirit of **Heathenism** — all **united**. By the **Beast**, is meant **Antichrist**.... By the **False-Prophet**...an eye seems to be had to **Mahomet**, whom his followers call the 'Great Prophet'.... Christ and His Church shall in this battle obtain a complete and entire victory over their enemies. They shall be **totally routed** and overthrown....

"It is said, Revelation 16:16, of the great army that should be gathered together against Christ.... Then it is said, 'And the seventh Angel poured out his vial into the air. And there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"'....

"The Devil is utterly baffled and confounded.... He now sees his **Anti-christian**, and **Mahometan**, and **Heathenish** kingdoms through[out] the World, all tumbling about his ears....

"Satan has set up in opposition to the Christian Church...his **Mahometan** kingdom. **It shall be utterly overthrown**. The '**locusts**' and '**horsemen**' in the ninth [chapter] of Revelation, have their appointed and limited time set them there.... The False-Prophet shall be taken and destroyed. And then, though Mahometanism has been so vastly propagated in the World and is upheld by such a great Empire — this smoke which has ascended out of the bottomless pit shall be utterly scattered before the light of that glorious day, and the **Mahometan Rmpire shall fall** at the sound of the great trumpet."

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Albert Barnes comments that the phrase 'out of the mouth of the Beast' here refers to "**the Papacy**" — whereas 'the False-Prophet' here means Mohammad's religion of Islam. "The word rendered 'False-Prophet' — *Pseudopro-pheetou* — does...seem then to refer to some power that was similar to that of the Beast.... There is no opinion so probable as that it alludes to **the Mahometan power**...as such. That was still to continue for a while in its vigour...and was yet to exert a formidable influence against the Gospel; and probably in some **combination**...with **Paganism** and the **Papacy**....

"The name '**False-Prophet**' would, better than any other, describe that power.... To no one that has ever appeared in our World, could the name be so properly applied as to **Mahomet**.... That power...in **connection** with the **Papacy** and with **Paganism** — constituting the sum of the obstruction to the spread of the Gospel around the World....

"**Evil spirits** [alias Demons]...'go forth unto the Kings of the Earth'.... No class of men have been more under the influence of **Pagan** superstition, **Mahometan** delusion, or the **Papacy** — than Kings and Princes.... It might be presented as affecting the whole World — to wit, the **Heathen**, the **Mahometan**, and the **Papal** portions of the Earth."

Also today, we live in a very significant age — the age first of Pius XII ("the Fascist Pope"); then of John XXIII ("the Worker's Pope"); next of Paul VI ("the Maoist Pope"); and thereafter of John-Paul II ("the Evolutionistic and Pro-Moslem Pope"). We now find the Romish Papacy promoting **demonic collaboration** with other religions, with Socialism, and with Communism.

Indeed, the modern Papacy is flirting even with Zionism (alias international Judaistic Imperialism); with Islam (the religion of "the False-Prophet"); and with Animism and **Spiritism**⁷¹⁰ (especially in South America and Africa and Asia). All of this is, of course, in substantial agreement with what Christ told John **would come about** — after the outpouring of the sixth vial.

Now the **end-result** of the outpouring of this sixth vial, will be the decisive struggle of **Armageddon**, at the **time of the outpouring of the seventh vial**. Yet this future 'Battle of Armageddon' will prove to be the end of the Romish **Papacy** — and also of all its Neo-Babylonian **syncretisms**.⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ See F.N. Lee's *Earthly Fulfilment of Bible Prophecy in Our Own Time*, paras. 71 to 74 and 88 to 91 and 100 to 105. On the possible role played by Spiritism in such a modern or future ecumenical syncretism, note L.E. Fromm's *Spiritualism Today and Fellow Travelers of Spiritualism* (both Review & Herald, Washington, D.C., respectively 1966 & 1963), and R.A. Anderson's *Secrets of the Spirit World* (Pacific Press, Mountain View, Ca., 1966). See too B.B. Beech's *Vatican II: Bridging the Gap* (Review & Herald, Washington, D.C., 1968, esp. pp. 227-87). Cf. too Rev. chs. 8 & 9 and our studies thereon (for Dec. 10 & 11). And also cf. n. 708.

⁷¹¹ Rev. 16:16 cf. 16:12-21 & 17:1 to 18:21 & 19:17-21 & 20:1-11 & nn. 408 & 714f.

Armageddon will bring about the division of 'Babylon' into three parts, and prepare the way for the christianization of the Nations of the World⁷¹¹ and 'the Kings of the East.' For Armageddon will no more prove to be the end of World History, than were the various decisive battles of Armageddon during the times of the Older Testament.⁷¹²

Comments Albert Barnes: "There will be a mustering of spiritual forces. There will be a **combination** and a **unity of opposition** against the Truth. There will be a **rallying** of the **declining** powers of **Heathenism, Mohametanism, and Romanism...**

"The **Turkish power**, especially since its conquest of Constantinople under Mahomet II in 1453 and its establishment in Europe, has been a grand hindrance to the spread of the Gospel.... By its laws, it was death to a Mussulman to apostasize from his faith and become a Christian....

"It was not until quite recently...that evangelical Christianity has been tolerated in the Turkish dominions.... The prophecy before us implies that there would be a **decline** of that formidable power, represented by the 'drying up of the great river Euphrates' [Revelation 16:12]....

"Events are occurring which would properly be represented by such a symbol.... There is, in fact, now such a decline of that Turkish power.... There has been for centuries a gradual weakening of the Turkish power.... This gradual decay will be continued.... Turkish power will more and more diminish.... One portion after another will set up for independence.... By a gradual process of decline...what is here symbolized by 'the drying up of the great river Euphrates' will have been accomplished.

"We may look for a **general turning** of the princes and rulers and people **of the Eastern World to Christianity** —represented (verse 12) by its being said that 'the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared'.... Nothing would be more likely to contribute to this or to prepare the way for it, than the removal of that Turcoman dominion which...has been an effectual barrier to the diffusion of the Gospel in the lands where it has prevailed. How rapidly...the Gospel would spread in the East, if all the obstacles thrown in its way by the Turkish power were at once removed....

"We may look for something that would be well represented by a **combined** effort on the part of **Heathenism, Mohametanism, and Romanism** —to stay the progress and prevent the spread of evangelical religion.... We are to suppose that something will occur which...will determine the **ascendency of True Religion** in the World."

Great, however, will be the future slaughter on *Har Megiddo* alias the 'Mount of Slaughter' or 'Mount of Idolatry'⁷¹³ — when Christ commands the emptying out of the **seventh plague** from the last bowl of His wrath! For when "the seventh Angel poured out his vial into the air" —predicted John — "there came a great voice from the throne out of the temple of Heaven, saying: 'It is done!'

⁷¹² Judg. 4:5-16 & 5:4-21, esp. v. 19; II Kgs. 23:29f; II Chr. 22:25 *cf.* Zech. 12:11.

⁷¹³ *Armageddon* is the Newer Testament's Greek rendition of the Older Testament's Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, meaning "Mount of Slaughter." Another possible meaning, is *Har Mo(g)eed* or "Mountain of Idols." *Cf.* too n. 709 & Joel ch. 3 & Zech. chs. 12 & 14 & Ezek. chs. 38 & 39 & Pss. 2 & 46 & 48 & 68 & 76. Yet another

The Victory over the Beast: all Nations come and worship God!

"Then there were voices and thunders and lightnings. And there was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the Earth —so mighty an earthquake, and so great! And the great city was divided into three parts. And the cities of the Nations fell. And great 'Babylon' came into remembrance before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away. And the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail from the sky, every stone about the weight of a talent. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail. For its plague was exceedingly great."⁷¹⁴

The 'great city' to be divided, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, even includes "the whole number of them that shall **call** themselves 'Christians' — of whom some are indeed so; some are Papists (but, under pretence of Christ, serve Antichrist); and some are neuters (which are neither on the one side nor on the other)."⁷¹⁴ The 'cities of the Nations' or of the heathen Gentiles, signify "all strange religions — of the **Jews**, **Turks** [alias **Moslems**] and others which then shall fall [together] with that great Whore of **Rome**."⁷¹⁴

The great Puritans — men like Thomas Brightman, the Calvinistic commentators in the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, John Cotton, John Owen, James Durham, Thomas Goodwin, Matthew Henry, Moses Lowman and Jonathan Edwards — all give a similar assessment.⁷¹⁴ So too do John Brown of Haddington, Samuel Hopkins, G.S. Faber, Patrick Fairbairn, Albert Barnes, and Apostolos Makrakis.

possible meaning is perhaps "Mount of the Place of God." The Battle of Armageddon in Rev. 16 marks not the end of History, but the end of Antichrist and his allies. *Cf.* n. 715.

⁷¹⁴ Rev. 16:17-21 *cf.* 11:13 & nn. 377 & 407 & 408 & 720. See too Makrakis's *op. cit.* pp. 414f: "Through the revolution of the Greek race against Turkish authority—a movement inspired in the name of the very same justice and the very same principles that fire the French Revolution, the East has been divided into three racial and political sects or parties: the Greek, the Slavic, and the Turkish.... The possession of Constantinople is the symbol of authority over the entire East. In fact, it is the aspiration of each of the racial sects brought out distinctly by the French Revolution aimed against the mediaeval and Popish-Turkish social systems. For this reason, the sacred writer says that as a result of the great earthquake, 'the great city was divided into three parts'—the great city being taken to represent the entire Turkish Empire. Furthermore, 'the cities of the Nations fell'—on account of being attacked by new revolutionary French ideas and by the power of Napoleon the Great who subjugated all Europe to the new right or principle of national will by which he was the first after the revolution to be inaugurated Emperor. The ideas promulgated by the French Revolution everywhere attacked the nobility, the hierarchy, and the concept of divine right.... Europe politically abides by the ideas and theories of the French Revolution, recognizing the will of the majority as the fundamental law of social government. Therefore 'the cities of the Nations fell'.... The French Revolution destroyed kingly thrones and exterminated the power of kings by subjugating the great earthquake of the seventh vial." *Cf.* too n. 761.

The French Revolution, temporarily defeated in France by Napoleon around 1796, then went underground into the Italian Carbonari in the 1820s—and re-emerged in France in the 1830s. There, radicalized, it communized Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1840s, and prompted them to help organize the Second French Revolution of 1848—shortly after writing their *Communist Manifesto* in that same year. *Cf.* too Rev. 6:9-11; 6:12-17; 11:2,13-19 & our studies hereon for Dec. 7 & 13 & 14. *Cf.* too Josh. 10:1,11; Isa. 27:13; Nah. 3:1f; Hab. 3:12-14; Heb. 12:26-28; Rev. 17:9-18 & 18:1-21.

For the relationship between the Romish Papacy and romanizing Pseudo-'Protestants' *etc.*, see Rev. 17:5 & n. 736. On the increase of a revitalized Islam (possibly later in tandem with Rome), *cf.* Rev. 9:1-20 & 13:11-18 & 16:12-19 & 19:19-20 & 20:8-10 *cf.* Mt. 24:11,26 & Dt. 18:15-20.

The 1637 *Dordt Dutch Bible* even says that by the words 'the cities of the Nations fell' — "is to be understood all other cities outside of Christendom, such as those of the **Turks**, **Persians** [or **Iranians**], and other Heathen."

Great indeed will be that international and interreligious shake-up. For **after that** — according to Thomas Brightman, John Cotton, William Sherwin, Thomas Goodwin, Matthew Henry, Moses Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Scott, Ethan Allen, W.C. Davis, Albert Barnes, E.W. Hengstenberg and many others — the ongoing Protestant Reformation **here on Earth** will then (postmillennially) **triumph** — **World-wide**.⁷¹⁵

The outpouring of the seventh vial, comment both John Cotton and Matthew Henry, overthrows the Antichrist and inaugurates the 'Millennium.' Goodwin observes it is directed against both Islam and the Papacy, and brings in the 'Millennium.' Carey says it brings about the fall of Islam. Barnes argues it overthrows the Papacy and Heathendom.

The '**great city**' or commonwealth which then collapses into three parts, is apparently that of **Rome** and its **Empire**. Thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Brakel, Vitringa, Ewald, Hengstenberg, Barnes, Charles, Zahn, Hadorn, Munck, Lohse, Visser, and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*.

Yet also "the cities of the **Nations fell**." This means the domains even of: the Turks alias the **Moslems**; the **Jews**; the **Heathen**; and also the **apostate Western Nations** such as **France** (some time **after** its **French Revolution**). Thus Brightman, the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Barnes, and Makrakis.

Here, Albert Barnes rightly comments that 'the great city...divided into three parts' means "the city of 'Babylon'...representing **Rome**." Revelation 11:13 & 14:8 & 16:19. "It refers to **Papal Rome**, or the **Papal power**.... It relates to something **yet future**...."

"The certain and entire ruin of the power, is predicted by this.... As the capital fell, the dependent cities fell also.... 'The cities of **the Nations**' — that were **allied with it** — would share the same fate. The cities of numerous 'Nations' are now, and have been for ages, under the control of the Papal power.... The calamity that will smite the central power **as such** — that is, **as** a 'spiritual' power — will reach and affect them **all**."

From then onward, very rapidly, **the saints of the Lord conquer the whole Earth**. Thus Brightman, Sherwin, Lowman, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Scott, Ethan Allen, W.C. Davis, and E.W. Hengstenberg. The saints will go marching in, and come into the possession of their rightful inheritance. For the meek, the Law-abiding citizens of the Kingdom of God, shall inherit the Earth.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹⁵ Hengstenberg implicitly comments on Rev. 16:16f that neither Armageddon (nor the battle of Rev. 19:11f) constitutes the absolute end of History, but the end only of Babylon-Rome-Antichrist Worldwide. Cf. too Dan. 7:14,18,22,25-27 & 13:10 & 14:6-8 & 15:1-4 & 17:14 & 18:20f & 19:14-21 & 20:3-6. Cf. too nn. 707f & 711.

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Thomas Brightman taught (in 1614f) that the passage Revelation 16:16 to 18:24, marks not the end of History — but the fall of Romanism and of Islam. He believed it would also mark the conversion of the Jews, and the erection of long-lasting Christian-international harmony throughout the World. So too — a century after Brightman — also Theologians like Jonathan Edwards. Another century later, this was again confirmed by Albert Barnes and many others.⁷⁰⁸

O Christian, may we — like Luther and Calvin before us — then concentrate all our energies on spreading the Gospel and applying the Bible to the whole of life and to every field of human endeavour! Let us not be afraid to stand up against the apostate religious and political and ecumenical movements that are producing the cacophonous towers of Babel in our own day — such as the United Nations, the 'World Council of Churches' and the Socialist International! But let us continue our Christian witness to the glory of God — until suddenly, like a thief in the night, God comes in temporal judgments and destroys that "great Babylon" as well as "the cities of the Nations" associated with her!⁷¹⁶

Let us tenaciously advance Christ's Kingdom on all fronts, in the teeth of all 'Babylonian' opposition! And may we do so in the sure knowledge that **the 'Babylonian' conspiracy shall fail** — and that thereafter "**all Nations shall come and worship before the Lord**"; even "**the Kings of the East**."⁷¹⁷

So on, then, Christian soldiers!
Onward — **for** the Lord Jesus Christ's Kingdom!
Onward — **against** the Anti-Christian 'Babylons' of this present World and
its wicked 'age' or epoch!
Onward — to **victory!**

⁷¹⁶ Rev. 16:15-19; 3:3; 22:12; Mt. 24:15,28,42; n. 408.

⁷¹⁷ Rev. 15:4; 16:12; 17:15-17; 18:20 to 19:6; 19:15-21; 20:1-6.

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

Revelation 17

December 24

"Then the Angel said to me..., 'The Beast that was, and is not — even he is the eighth [Kingdom], but [he] is of the seven and goes into perdition.... And the ten Horns which you saw, are ten Kings which have not as yet received a Kingdom.... These shall make war with the Lamb; but the Lamb shall overcome them — for He is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.... And the ten Horns which you saw upon the Beast — these shall hate the Whore; and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.'" ⁷¹⁸

John had just described the pouring out of the seven last plagues of God upon the Roman Beast in coalition with the Papal Beast and all its allies. That results in the final fall of that great 'Babylon.' ⁷¹⁹ Next, the Apostle gives his readers a partial 'playback' of this. ⁷²⁰

Writes John: "I saw a **Woman** sit upon a scarlet-coloured Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven Heads and ten Horns.... And upon **her** forehead, was a name written: 'Mystery Babylon'" etc. Revelation 17:3-5.

Here, John outlines the close co-operation of these two Beasts (long after his own day and right before the beginning of the time of the termination of that partnership). ⁷²¹ That termination (at the outpouring of the seventh and last vial), ⁷¹⁴ would be brought about in two ways, says John. (1), the Lamb and His followers — by the powerful preaching of and obedience to the whole counsel of God — would start to **overcome** the "ten Horns" or Kings or Kingdoms of the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' and all its successors. ⁷²² (2), by the remarkable providences of that same God — the ten Horn-kingdoms of the international Beast ⁷²² would themselves finally turn against 'Babylon.' ⁷²²

⁷¹⁸ Rev. 17:7,11,12,14,15.

⁷¹⁹ Cf. Rev. chs. 15 to 16 and our study hereon for Dec. 23.

⁷²⁰ That Revelation ch. 17 is indeed a 'playback' (cf. n. 341), is obvious when it is considered that by and large it is describing circumstances prior to the Fall of 'Babylon' — which already in the anticipatory references at Rev. 14:8 and 16:15-21 and esp. at 16:18f have been referred to in anticipation of the certainty of their occurrence. Cf. too Rev. chs. 15 to 16 & n. 719 with Rev. 17:1-4,8f,15-17 & 13:1-3,11-15 & nn. 408 & 722.

⁷²¹ Rev. 17:8abc & 17:8hi & 10cde & 11 & 16f.

⁷²² Rev. 17:3,12-14 cf. 12:11 & 19:15-21. On the Fall of Pagan Rome and the emergence of the ten Kingdoms of the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' even the *circa* 345-430 Jerome (in his *Ep. 123 to Ageruchia*) shrewdly observed that "innumerable and most ferocious Nations occupied the territories of the Gauls. The Quades, the Vandals, the Sarmatians, the Halani, the Gipedes, the Heruli, the Saxons, the Burgundians, the Alemanni and (O sorrowful Republic!) the armies of Pannonians —wasted whatever lay between the Alps and the Pyrennees, from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the Rhine." And Berengaud, writing his *Exposition of the Apocalypse in the Works of Ambrose* (Tome vii, ed. Ven., 1781), claimed in the ninth century that by Daniel's fourth Beast "the

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

Right at this point, two preliminary questions need to be asked regarding Revelation chapter seventeen. Here, just who or what is the scarlet-coloured Beast? Here, exactly who or what is the Woman called 'Babylon'?

The scarlet-coloured Beast is **Rome**. Thus Joachim of Floris, Dante, Osiander, Hooper, Von Amsdorff, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* (of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham), Chytraeus, Pareus, Grotius, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Albert Barnes, and B.H. Carroll. Indeed, this is agreed upon even by many Romanists — such as Blasius Viegas, Ribera, De Lapide, and Bellarmin.

The Beast's seven Heads are **Kingdoms** — whether those of Pagan Roman Emperors, of the 'Holy Roman Empire' (thus Adam Clarke), or of an international Neo-Roman Empire (thus Barnes and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*). The ten **Horns** on the Beast, are **Nations** (thus Luther and Conradus). All in all, the Beast is intimately associated with **Antichrist** (thus the A.D. 650 Andreas of Caesarea, the Venerable Bede (700f), and Walafrid Strabo (840) — and specifically with the **Papacy** (thus Cranmer, Napier, and Adam Clarke).

This 'Babylon' is **not** the very ancient Pre-Assyrian Babylon of Genesis eleven. Nor is it the Post-Assyrian 'Neo-Babylonia' of Isaiah fifty. For **both** of those Babylons had **ceased** to reign by the time of the Apostle John's 'Babylon.' Yet those earlier Babylons were indeed **types** of John's later Babylon, the "Great City" that reigned even in that Apostle's own lifetime.

Papias, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all equate John's 'Babylon' with **Rome**. Accordingly, one could say that Babylon was the Eastern Rome; and that Rome was the Western Babylon (thus Augustine).⁷²³

Romans are designated. It is described as having had ten Horns, signifying those Kingdoms which destroyed the Roman Empire.... The Vandals conquered Africa for themselves; the Goths, Spain; the Lombards, Italy; the Burgundians, France; the Franks, Germany; the Huns, Pannonia; and the Alani and the Suevi...depopulated many areas." The 1560 *Geneva Bible* here lists: "Goths, Vandals, Huns and others." The 1639 *Dordt Dutch Bible* specifies: Hungary, Spain, France, England, Scotland, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Bohemia, and Naples *etc.* Even the great 1650f Roman Catholic Bible commentator Bossuet remarks that the ten Kingdoms seem to be those of the "Vandals, Huns, Franks, Burgundians, Suevi, Alani, Heruli; to whom succeeded Lombards, Germans, Saxons." See too Mauro's *op. cit.* p. 483^φ.

⁷²³ Rev. 17:8-10,16-18 & 19:19-21. Eusebius (*Church History* II:1,5:1f & II:25:5 & III:1:2 & III:1:14-16 & 39 *cf.* VI:14:1 & 6), after stating that Papias and Clement of Alexandria (*Hypotyposes* VIII) wrote about the connection between Mark and Peter and Rome, further states that "Peter makes mention of Mark in his *First Epistle* [5:13], which they [Papias and Clement] say he [Peter] wrote in Rome itself, as indicated by him when he calls the city by the figure 'Babylon.' See too Augustine's *City of God* 16:17 and 18:2 & ch. 22. Also see Vitranga on Revelation, as cited in C. Wordsworth's *Babylon: Is the Church of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse?* (Rivingtons, London, 1856, p. 31 n. 2).

As the great Campegius Vitringa insists: "Rome is said to be **Babylon** [in Revelation 17:5 *etc.*], on account of idolatry; is said to be **Egypt** [in Revelation 11:8], because tyrannizing the People of God; is said to be **Sodom** [in Revelation 11:8], on account of the corruption of morals; but is **spiritually** said to be **Jerusalem** [Revelation 11:8], because in her the Lord is said to be crucified in a mystical way [that is, in the Romish Mass and in His Members]. From this, we easily gather that this means not Pagan but **Papal** or **Pseudo-'Christian'** Rome —because it is no way probable that the Holy Spirit would compare **Pagan** Rome with Jerusalem."⁷²³

First. Long before the emergence of those ten Horns on the 'scalp' of the Beast, the Apostle was given a dramatic description of '**Babylon**' —in the period of her adult maturity. After she had become well-established and very much in control of a by-then-crownless international political Beast —'Babylon'⁷²⁴ is described as a crowned **scarlet Whore**.

⁷²⁴ Rev. 15:1 *cf.* 17:1f,16-18. *Cf.* n. 736. The Papacy's reign over the ten Kings of Europe (*cf.* Rev. 17:12f,15,17f) —is celebrated even by the inscriptions on the papal coins ("*Omnes reges servient ei*" and "*Gens et regnum quod tibi non servient, peribat*" (or: "All Kings shall serve him" and "The Nation and Kingdom which will not serve you, shall perish"). At every papal coronation the new Pope is reminded: "Know thyself to be the Father of Kings and Princes, Ruler of the World!" Wordsworth's *Babylon: Is the Church of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse?*, p. 38 & n.

To those Romanistic and Romanophilic Scholars who would question the identification of the Papal 'Church' (or of any other alleged 'Church') with a "Whore" or *Pornee* —it must be pointed out that in the Septuagint version of the Older Testament, even the Israelitic 'Church' was called a "Whore" (*Zoonaah* in the Hebrew and *Pornee* in the *Greek Septuagint*), once it had degenerated and apostasized. Thus the (Romish-Papal) Whore of Rev. ch. 17 closely resembles apostate Jerusalem and/or Israel in the times of both the Older and the Newer Testaments. *Cf.* I Kgs. 9:6-9; 19:10; II Kgs. 9:7,30; *Isa* 1:9f & 1:21 & 3:8f; Jer. 2:2,5,20,23f,32-36; 3:1f,6,8f,20; 4:30f; 12:7; 13:27; 22:5; Lam. 4:13; Ezek. 16:15-17,22-33,48,58; 23:2-5,7f,11,14,17-19,29,35,43-45f; 43:7,9; Hos. chs. 1 to 3 (esp. 1:2 & 2:2,4f,9f); Mt. 23:29-38 *cf.* I Pet. 2:16 & II Pet. 2:6,13f & Jude 4 & 7 and Rev. 2:14,20 & 11:8 & 17:4f,16 & 18:7 & 19:2.

We believe, however, that Rev. ch. 17 nevertheless centrally refers to the "last" stages (*cf.* Rev. 15:1 & 17:1) of Papal Romanism as the later "apostate 'Jerusalem'" to which John was referring ever since Rev. ch. 9:20 (*cf.* nn. 408 & 581 & 611).

Here are our reasons for this view.

- (1) In Rev. 13 (*q.v.*), the second or Papal Beast out of the Earth comes in the place of the first or Roman Imperial Beast that arises out of the sea. The Beast in Rev. 17 is clearly a continuation of the second or Romish-Papal Beast of Rev. 13, but at a rather later stage of its development. Rev. 15:1 *cf.* 17:1f.
- (2) In Rev. 12:1,6,14 —the True Church alias the bride of the Lamb with the names of the twelve 'patriarchal' stars on her forehead, is in the Wilderness (*Ereemos*) of God's protection. But in Rev. 17:3,5,18 —the Romish Anti-christ's False-Church alias the Whore with the Babylonian name on her forehead, is in the "Wilderness" (*Ereemos*) of sin.
- (3) In Rev. 15:1 & 17:1f, one of the seven Angels with the seven last plagues shows John the great Whore atop the Beast or *Theerion* in the city of 'Babylon.' But in Rev. 21:9f, one of the same Angels with the seven last plagues contrasts the above —by now showing John the true bride of the lamb or *Arnion* in the 'City of God.'
- (4) In John's Gospel, it is the word *Amnos* which is always used for 'Lamb.' But in John's Revelation, the word used for 'Lamb' is *Arnion* —in onomatopoeic contrast with the word for 'Beast' (*Theerion*) —as in the phrases *hee Pornee* and *to Theerion* in contrast to the phrases *hee Nymphée* and *to Arnion* in Rev. 17:1-3 & 19:2,7,20 & 21:2,9 & 22:17.
- (5) Even the greatest of all Romish Theologians, Thomas Aquinas, believed Rev. 17's "Whore" to be a teacher of heresy [and therefore a corrupt 'Church'] —"*habens poculum, id est, erronem doctrinae; hoc maxime in hereticis locum habet*" (Bossuet's *Preface sur l'Apocalypse* on ch. 17).

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

"Then there came one of the seven Angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying to me: 'Come here! I will show to you the judgment of the great Whore that sits upon many waters, with whom the Kings of the Earth have committed fornication. And the inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication!'"⁷²⁴

This description of the Whore was given to John by one of the holy Angels who would (in later Church History) pour out the contents of a bowl containing one of "the seven **last** plagues" of "the wrath of God."⁷²⁴ Too, this description is termed "the **judgment** of the great Whore."⁷²⁵ These two facts indicate that the description refers not to an incipient but rather to an **advanced** stage in the development of this 'Babylon.'

Especially **prior** to the Reformation, and to a much lesser extent thereafter, this **great Whore** was often equated with **Pagan Rome**. Thus Rabbi Kimchi, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Eusebius, Ambrose, Oecumenius, Tichonius, Augustine, Andreas of Caesarea, Arethas, Cassiodorus, Bede, Berengaud, Joachim of Floris, Thomas Aquinas, Salmeron, Pererius, Bellarmin, Baronius, Cornelius de Lapide, Ribera, Bossuet, Grotius, and Hammond.

Even the eminent Romish Historian and Statesman the Duc de Broglie stated in his famous book *History of the Church* (VI:434 & VI:456): "The **Popes mounted** the throne voided by the **Caesars**." Thus the Popes "grasped, little by little, the place left vacant —deserted by the successor of Augustus."

However, even **before** the Reformation, the **great Whore** of Revelation was sometimes equated with **the Romish Papacy**. Thus: Peter of Blois, Waldo and the Waldensians, Joachim of Floris, Pseudo-Joachim, Eberhard of Salzburg, Robert Grosseteste, Pierre d'Olivivi, Marsilius of Padua, Dante, Petrarch, Michael of Cesena, John Rupe-scissa, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Purvey, Walter Brute, Huss, and Savonarola.

At and after the Reformation, a whole **torrent** of Theologians equated the **great Whore** with the **Papacy**. Thus: Luther, Flaccius Illyricus, Calvin, Coverdale, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Knox, Bale, Tyndale, Hooper, Ridley, Cranmer, Jewel, Napier, Francis Junius, James the First, Brightman, Mede, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Gerhard, John Cotton, James Ussher, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Roger Williams, Increase Mather, Vitringa, Fleming, Sir Isaac Newton, Backus, Dwight, Carey, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Austin, Wolf, Lacunza, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Keith, David Brown, Albert Barnes, B.H. Carroll, Marcellus Kik, and many others.

Moreover, as time goes on the great Whore of the Romish Papacy produces also a whole litter of **Daughter-Whores**. Cf. Ezekiel 16:44-57 and Hosea 2:2 & 4:12f. For Neo-'Babylon' is "**the Mother of Harlots**." Revelation 17:5. In light of the apostasy of today's Ecumenical Movement, it is clear that these Daughter-Whores include even **Pseudo-'Protestants.'** Thus Thomas Goodwin, Isaac Backus, Gatchel, Austin, Hopkins, Simpson, Adam Clarke, M'Corkle, Cunninghame, Lampe, Hinton, David Brown, Patrick Fairbairn, and many more.

⁷²⁵ Rev. 15:1,7 & 11:1f cf. n. 408. See too C. Wordsworth's *op cit.* pp. 15-18 & 21; cf. too pp. 23, 26, 25, 29, 37, 39, 41f, 44-46, 86-88, 99f & 107-18.

So too does John's description of the **woman herself**. For she is no more the virgin bride of Christ⁷²⁶ — of which the Church of Rome was once a part, prior to the rise of Papal Vaticanism. No! By the time reflected in John's description, in much the same way that the Older Testament's Israel degenerated into a veritable Sodom — also the Early-Christian Virgin had now degenerated into a mediaeval "Whore" or a painted Jezebel.

This Whore had been unfaithful, constantly, to the heavenly Bridegroom to Whom she owed loyalty.⁷²⁷ For she had fornicated with the Kings of the Earth. Thereby she had also intoxicated the inhabitants of the Earth with the wine of all this fornication — all this immoral commerce going on between an apostate ecclesiastical power and international political leaders.⁷²⁸

The great Whore, then, is **Rome**. Thus Tertullian, Eusebius, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Bede, Berengaud, and many others.⁷²² Specifically, she is the **Romish Papacy**. Thus Waldo and the Waldensians, Joachim of Floris, Eberhard of Salzburg, Pierre d'Olivi, Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Wycliffe, Huss, Savanorola, and **all** of the Protestant Reformers.⁷²⁸

Eschatologically, Rome will (also through devices such as the modern 'Ecumenical Movement') unite with and thus ultimately include even many **whorishly re-romanizing Pseudo-'Protestants.'** Thus Thomas Goodwin (1680), Isaac Backus, Samuel Hopkins, Adam Clarke, David Brown, Patrick Fairbairn, and others.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁶ Rev. 14:4 cf. Jn. 3:29.

⁷²⁷ Isa. 1:2,10; 3:9; 57:3-5; Jer. chs. 2 to 3; Ezek. chs. 16:(48) & 23; Hos. chs. 1 to 2; II Pet. 2:6 & Jude 7 & Rev. 11:2-8.

⁷²⁸ Rev. 17:1f & 18:9 cf. nn. 408 & 596 & 612 & esp. n. 611. Cf. too I Kgs. 16:31; 18:19; II Kgs. 9:30; Rev. 2:20-23; 9:14-20; 13:14f; 14:8-11; 16:13; 17:1f,5,15; 18:3,9; 19:2. See too at n. 729.

⁷²⁹ Rev. 17:5 & 14:4-8 cf. n. 408 & 512 & 581 & 630 & 637 & 724 & 736 (and the commentators cited there). The great Scarlet Whore which John called 'Babylon' is Rome (Rev. 17:1-6,18). This Whore 'Babylon' is identified with Pagan Rome by Rabbi Kimchi, Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V:26:1 cf. 30:3), Tertullian (*Against the Jews* ch. 9 and *Against Marcion* III:17), Hippolytus (*On the Antichrist* ch. 36), Victorinus, Eusebius, Ambrose, Oecumenius, Tichonius, Augustine of Hippo, Andreas of Caesarea, Arethas, Cassiodorus, Bede, Berengaud, Joachim of Floris, Thomas Aquinas, Salmeron, Pererius, Bellarmin, Baronius, Cornelius de Lapide, Ribera, Bossuet, Grotius, and Hammond.

Yet even **before** the Reformation, the **great Whore** of Revelation was sometimes further equated with the Romish Papacy. Thus: Peter of Blois, the Waldensians, Joachim of Floris, Pseudo-Joachim, Eberhard of Salzburg, Robert Grosseteste, Pierre d'Olivi, Marsilius of Padua, Dante, Petrarch, Michael of Cesena, John Rupescissa, Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Purvey, Walter Brute, Huss, and Savonarola.

At and after the **Protestant Reformation**, a whole **torrent** of Theologians equated the **great Whore** with the **Papacy**. Thus: Luther, Flaccius Illyricus, Calvin, Coverdale, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, Knox, Whittingham, Bale, Tyndale, Hooper, Ridley, Jewel, Cranmer, Napier, Francis Junius, James the First, Brightman, Mede, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Gerhard, John Cotton, James Ussher, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Roger Williams, Increase Mather, Vitranga, Fleming, Sir Isaac Newton, Backus, Dwight, Carey, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Austin, Wolf, Lacunza, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Keith, David Brown, Albert Barnes, B.H. Carroll, Marcellus Kik, and many others (including the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, the *Columbia Family Bible*, and Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*). See too A. Hislop's *The Two Babylons* [namely that on the Euphrates and that at Rome], Loizeaux Bros., Neptune N.J., 1959; Cook's *Light from Patmos* (pp. 187-90); and Naser's *op. cit.* (pp. 210-12).

The first mention of Babylon in Scripture is in connection with the World's very first and apostate politico-religio-economic World-Empire of Nimrod 'the mighty hunter' or 'man of strength' (*gibbor* in Gen. 10:8-10 & 11:1-9 cf. 6:4's word *haggibboriyim*).

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

In the later times of the Older Testament, Babylon was resurrected in a very sophisticated form—again horribly combining apostate politico-religio-economic imperialism. Cf. Isa. chs. 13 to 14 & 21:9 & chs. 46 to 47 and Jer. chs. 25 & 50 to 51 esp. vv. 5-13 and Dan. chs. 1 to 8 esp. 3:37f and chs. 3 & 4 & 7:1-4 & Rev. 13:1-3 & 14:8 & 17:1-5 & 18:2-21.

In the Older Testament's Babylon, the king was also the supreme priest of the idolatrous Babylonian religion. On important festive occasions, he would appear dressed in scarlet, with a scarlet mitre on his head, and officiate with his fornicating concubines and the 'sacred' golden cups. Cf. Jer. 51:7,13 & Dan. 5:1-4 with Rev. 17:1-5.

After the death of the last king of the Older Testament's Babylon (Dan. 5:1-31), the priests of Bel-Babel fled to Pergamos and the nearby Thyatira in what is now the modern Turkey, where they re-erected and re-promoted the idolatry of the Ancient Babylon. Rev. 1:11 & 2:12-14,18-24 cf. Num. 22:5 & 23:14f & 25:1-3 & 31:8-16. There, the kings of Pergamos would dress up and behave at their pagan religious feasts just as had the kings of Babylon in the times of the Older Testament.

The last king of Pergamos, Attalus III, "donated" all his lands and cultural possessions to the rising power of Imperial Rome—round about 35 B.C. Thus were Babylon's mitre, scarlet robes, golden cups, celibacy, 'Queen of Heaven' alias Astarte the sex-goddess and her doctrine, croziers, holy water, purgatory, images and priestcraft—all absorbed by Pagan Rome. Julius Caesar himself took on the Babylonian title of Supreme Priest alias *Pontifex Maximus*, and subsequent Emperors performed these Babylonian priestly functions until after the nominal christianization of the heathen Roman Empire (in the fourth century A.D.)—after which time (subsequent to the removal of the political capital of the Empire to Constantinople) those functions were all gradually transferred to the Bishop of Rome who then became the Pope.

Thus the Pope now became the cup-bearing, idolatrous, scarlet-robed and mitre-crowned *Pontifex Maximus* or Pontifical High Priest of Rome as the New Babylon. Cf. too Jer. 7:9,18 & 13:4-18 & 29:1f & 44:17-25,30 & Rev. 18:7 with the Romish Mass and Mariology (where the Babylonians' sex-goddess Astarte became the Roman Venus and where she, later syncretized with Our Lord Jesus Christ's pure mother, became the Romish 'Mary Queen of Heaven.' See too nn. 730 & 736.

Note too the Papal-Romish explanation given in her own 1516 *Ceremoniale Romanum* (iii:5:5)—written by Rome's own Archbishop Marcellus and dedicated to Pope Leo X—namely that "the colour red pertains pre-eminently to the Pope." Also Pope Paul II made it a penal offence for any but Cardinals to wear scarlet hats, and he also gave them scarlet trappings for their mules and horses (cf. Platina, Vitringa and J.H. Heidegger as cited in Wordsworth's *op. cit.*).

Cf. too Cook's *op. cit.* p. 190: "Whenever a cardinal is exalted to the office of Pope, he is attired in the most magnificent garments, of which five different items are of scarlet; while the under-garment is covered with pearls, and the 'crown' or cap is adorned with gold and precious stones" most of which have been plundered from the Nations of the World in general (cf. Rev. 17:1,4,15 & 18:3,7-19) and the lands of Central and South America in particular. Indeed, when the present writer (F.N. Lee) visited the Vatican in 1965, and beheld only part of all the jewels there—his very helpful guide (a Romish priest) explained to him that all the Vatican's treasures were so valuable, that no insurance company (or even consortium of insurance companies) in the whole World was or is prepared to insure them.

As regards the Papal blasphemies or its own appropriations unto itself of what is properly divine—cf. Grotius and Wordsworth (*opera citata*). Note that, according to the Romish *Ceremoniale Romanum*, at papal coronations in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, "the Pope rises, and, wearing his mitre, is lifted up by the Cardinals, and is placed by them upon the ALTAR—to sit there [cf. II Th. 2:3-8]. One of the Bishops kneels... The Cardinals kiss the feet and hands and face of the Pope," which Romish writers commonly call "the ADORATION" of the Pope. Thus the 1716 *Histoire du Clerge'*, Amsterdam, I, p. 17; cf. Lettenburgh's 1683 *Notitia Curiae Romanae*, p. 125.

Furthermore, the commemorative papal coin bears the inscription: *Quem creavit, adorant*—meaning "Whom He created [Pope], they adore." Indeed, at the "Adoration" of Pope Innocent X, he was called "Ruler of the World...whom the Angels in Heaven revere and the gates of hell fear and all the World adores." Cf. Rev. 13:3-6,11-12 with 17:3-5. As to Rome's "abominations" in Rev. 17:5, cf. Mt. 24:15 & Dan. 8:13 & 9:27 & 11:31f & 12:11 with the twelfth century A.D. Joachim's and Abbes's comparison of Daniel's "abomination of desolation" with modern prelates and ecclesiastical teachers (*in Jerem.* c. 31). Thus Wordsworth's *op. cit.* pp. 71-75 & n.

At this point, one should note the warnings against the "False-Church" in art. 29 of the *Belgic Confession* (which here refers to Rev. ch. 17). Cf. too John Knox's "horrible Harlot, the Kirk-malignant" and "the filthy

As many of the finest Protestant (and even some Romish) Bible commentators declare: **Papal Romanism** is the **Mother of Whores** — and, here, is herself called "**Babylon the Great.**" For she whorishly and progressively absorbs and syncretizes all the **Pseudo-Christian** (and ultimately also very many of the **Non-Christian**) religious elements already described and noted at the end of the previous chapter right after the outpouring of the sixth vial of the seven last plagues.⁷³⁰

Second. After hearing the Angel's description, John was actually shown a **vision** of the **Papacy at the height of her powers.** Wrote John of the Angel: "So he carried me away in the Spirit, into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast, full of names of blasphemy. It had seven Heads and ten Horns."⁷³¹

This represents an advanced stage of History. Toward the end of Revelation chapter twelve, we found a description of the **birth of the Papacy** at the end of the early centuries of the Christian Church when the latter was forced to flee into the Wilderness to avoid imperial and papal persecution.⁷³²

In Revelation chapter thirteen, we were given a description of the **later growth of the Papacy** in her healing of the wound of the international political Beast of the so-called "Holy Roman Empire" — and also of her own gradual absorption of that Beast's politico-economic functions.⁷³³ However, here in Revelation chapter seventeen — we are given a description of the **still-later Papal control of the international political Beast.**

Here in Revelation chapter seventeen, the Whore is still masquerading as the woman in the "wilderness" — and thus is still **claiming** to be the True Church of Christ.⁷³⁴ **Yet now,** she is in fact **seated or enthroned on top** of the Beast with the ten Horns. She herself is (as it were) the 'eleventh' or 'stout and arrogant Horn' in Daniel's vision.⁷³⁵ For the Whore is now seen to be **steering** and **guiding** the international political Beast — and she has it carry her wherever she would have it go. For now she "**reigns**" — and "**reigns over** the Kings of the Earth."⁷³⁵

Third. John not only "saw a Woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast full of names of **blasphemy.**" But he also noted that, **herself,** "the Woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour; and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls — having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication...."

Synagogue," and compare it with the references in ch. XVII of the *Scots Confession* to the "pestilent Synagogue" and the "False-Kirk" etc. Compare even Dante's condemnation of the Papacy, and Holwerda's association of the 'False-Church' with Rome, in his art. *The Whore of Revelation 17 - 19* (in *De Reformatie*, 1949, pp. 13f).

⁷³⁰ Rev. 15:1,7; 16:12-14,17-19; 17:1-5,15-17; & cf. nn. 408 & 611 & 710 & 729.

⁷³¹ Rev. 17:3 cf. n. 408.

⁷³² Rev. 12:4-6,12-17.

⁷³³ Rev. 13:1-3,11-18.

⁷³⁴ Rev. 17:3 *per contra* 12:6,14 & cf. n. 408.

⁷³⁵ Rev. 17:1,3,7,15,18 cf. Dan. 7:7f,20-24 & n. 408.

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"Upon her forehead was a name written: 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'" Indeed, John also perceived that "the Woman [was] drunk with the blood of the saints — and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."⁷³⁶

In strange contrast to the simple attire of the true bride of Christ,⁷³⁷ the Whore or 'Scarlet Woman'⁷³⁶ of John's vision perfectly corresponds to the 'purple-for-papal' and 'scarlet-for-cardinal' gaudiness and wealth of the Vatican.⁷³⁸ Instead of being the 'mystery' or revelation of the true bride of Christ which Rome wrongly claims to be — both the Whore herself and the 1260 day-years' length of time of her hegemony in the World is the mystery or manifestation of her falseness.⁷³⁹

Now the word "mystery" here means a revealed secret or a clear disclosure. It discloses a thoroughly whorish religious movement and a decidedly worldly power claiming to be the very bride of the heavenly Christ Himself.

As the highest synthesis of false ecclesiastical and political and economic syncretism,⁷⁴⁰ Rome is appropriately termed 'Babylon the Great.' For she is the symbol of all apostate World-Empires, from the time of Nimrod the first Babylonian dictator onward.⁷⁴⁰

Indeed, Papal Rome has even continued in those ancient Babylonian iniquities.⁷⁴⁰ She has also reproduced similarly-iniquitous apostate and Pseudo-'Protestant' Daughters.⁷⁴¹ Those apostate Pseudo-'Protestant' Daughters, are Rome's 'Fellow-Harlots.' In fact, even now, she is in the process of trying to become re-united with them.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁶ Rev. 17:3-6 (cf. n. 408 & 581). The description in Rev. 17:4-6 easily enabled leading Bible expositors to identify Rev. ch. 17's "Babylon" with Rome. Cf. our study at n. 728, & esp. at n. 729 on Rev. 17:1-5's Whorish Papacy and all of her re-romanizing Pseudo-'Protestants.' For extensive documentation of all of this, cf. esp. L.E. Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Review & Herald, Washington D.C., 1946f, I-IV). Indeed, even the famous dispensationalist C.I. Scofield (in his *Scofield Reference Bible*) corrected comments on Rev. ch. 17 that "two 'Babylons' are to be distinguished in the Revelation: ecclesiastical Babylon, which is apostate Christendom, headed up under the Papacy; and political Babylon, which is the Beast's confederated Empire, the last form of Gentile World-dominion."

As to Rev. 17:6's statement that the Whore would become "drunk with the blood of the saints," cf. the lauding of Pope Pius V in the *Papal Breviary* for being an Inquisitor — and the 1840 recasting of the papal medallion celebrating the Papistic massacre of French Huguenot Protestants on St. Bartholemew's day. Cf. Wordsworth's *op. cit.*, pp. 56f.

⁷³⁷ Mt. 6:19; I Pet. 3:1-5; 5:1-4; 2:21,25.

⁷³⁸ Rev. 17:4 & 18:10-22 & cf. n. 729.

⁷³⁹ Cf. Eph. 5:22-32 & Rev. 21:2,9f — *per contra* Rev. 17:1,3,5 & II Th. 2:7 & nn. 408 & 736. The 'mystery' or 'revealed secret' as to the length of time of the Whore's hegemony over the World, is apparently also referred to here — Rev. 17:5 & 10:7 & 11:2,15 & 12:6,14 & 13:5; & cf. too Rom. 11:25f & Lk. 21:24 & see also our study on Rev. ch. 10 (for Dec. 10).

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. n. 727-729.

⁷⁴¹ Rev. 17:5's preferred reading, from 046, is *Pornoon*; while *'Aleph & A & P* have *Porneioon*. See too n. 581. Consider the rise of Ritualism, Erastianism, and false Ecumenism in once-Protestant denominations, esp. during the last century or less!

⁷⁴² Cf. the proposal made at the Second Vatican Council, and our n. 710.

Most appropriately, then, Rome has been labelled both 'BABYLON' and 'THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS' by many leading Protestant (and even by some Roman Catholic) Bible commentators.⁷³⁶ And because she has time and again persecuted many of the true children of God⁷⁴³ — she is very fittingly described as "the Woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."⁷³⁶

According to the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham, "Christ Jesus...will take vengeance on this Romish Harlot." Here, the Romish "Antichrist is compared to a Harlot, because [s]he **seduces** the World with vain words, doctrines of lies, and outward appearance." For this "Woman" is "the **new Rome** which is the **Papistry**, whose cruelty and **bloodshedding** is declared by **scarlet**." In one word, "**this Woman is the Antichrist; that is, the Pope.**"⁷²⁰

Mauro comments: "This woman is not only herself a Harlot, but is expressly 'the **Mother** of Harlots and abominations of the Earth' — an **abomination** being an idol, or anything that is worshipped and trusted. This '**Mother Church**' will no doubt gather her **Daughters** to her ample bosom — ere the end comes.... Everything not of God, will be **consolidated** into one opposing system."⁷²⁰

Fourth. John was given an explanation of **the Beast** with the seven Heads and ten Horns which carried the Whore. This **Beast with the seven Heads** or Kings or Kingdoms (alias kinds of government)⁷⁴⁴ — is the successive series of political World-Empires "that was, and is not, and yet is."⁷⁴⁴

That is the same Beast already described in earlier chapters.⁷⁴⁵ That Beast "was" before Calvary. It "is not," ever since it was 'slain' through Christ's resurrection. "And yet [it] is," even thereafter. For its deadly wound was inflicted by Christ's death and resurrection (and further by Constantine's resultant accession). Yet later, it was to be healed (particularly by the Papacy) — so that it would even thereafter continue to live on.⁷⁴⁶

Explained the Angel to John: "The seven Heads are seven Mountains, on which the Woman keeps on sitting. And there are seven Kings [or Kingdoms]. Five are fallen; and one is; and the other has not yet come. And when he [or it] comes, he [or it] must remain for a short age"⁷⁴⁷ — meaning: keep on ruling for a time.

⁷⁴³ Cf. n. 612.

⁷⁴⁴ Rev. 17:8-11 cf. Dan. 7:17,23f & Hos. 3:4 LXX & 10:3 LXX.

⁷⁴⁵ Cf. n. 496.

⁷⁴⁶ Rev. 17:2a,3b,8-11,12-14a,16a & 13:3-14.

⁷⁴⁷ Rev. 17:8-10 & esp. v. 18 cf. nn. 729 & 736. The Greek ends: *kai hotan elthee; oligon auton dei meinai* — where the adjective *oligon* is devoid of yet presupposes an accompanying noun such as 'space' or 'time'; where *auton* refers to one of the *Basileis* (meaning either Kings or Kingdoms); and where *dei menai* means "must remain" or continue or keep on (ruling).

See too C. Vanderwaal's *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Introduction and Translation*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1971, p. 62 —and also the rest of Vanderwaal's works (*in locis*).

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

The seven Heads, then, are seven "**Mountains**."⁷⁴⁶ Ancient **Pagan Roman** authorities (such as Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, Pliny, Silius Italicus, Statius, Martial, Claudian, Prudentius and the A.D. 69 Emperor Vespasian) — all refer to Rome as *Urbs Septicollis* alias the 'City of the Seven Hills' (namely *Capitolinus, Palatinus, Caelius, Esquilinus, Viminalis, Quirinalis, and Aventinus*).⁷⁴⁷

So too do the secular writings of the late first century B.C. Dionysius Halicarnassus — and those of the A.D. 46f Plutarch. So too do the so-called *Sybilline Oracles* (B.C. 200 to A.D. 200). So too does the A.D. 300 Church Father Victorinus. And so also do many Protestant Writers (such as Junius in his 1599 *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, Carroll, and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*).⁷⁴⁷

Now these seven "Mountains" are not just seven so-called 'Mountain-like' Leaders of Ancient Rome from the end of the Roman Republic down to the time of the Apostle John — viz. Pompey, Julius Caesar, Octavian alias Augustus, Tiberius, Caius alias Caligula, Claudius, and Nero.⁴⁹⁶ For in Revelation seventeen, these seven "Mountains" are also identified with seven "Heads" or seven "Kings" alias **Kingdoms**. Thus they are **also** and even especially the seven successive Kingdoms alias **World Empires** since the first apostate World-Empire of Nimrod in Ancient Babylon⁷⁴¹ right down to the last apostate World-Empire of the revived and World-embracing Babylonianism of the great Whore Papal Rome and all her apostate Pseudo-'Protestant' Daughters and Fellow-Harlots.⁷³⁶

Of these World-Empires (explained the Angel to John **in that Apostle's own time**), "five are fallen"⁷⁴⁷ — namely the Ancient Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Neo-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian. "And one is"⁷⁴⁷ — namely the Imperial Roman (thus Matthew Poole and Albert Barnes). That World-Empire was still standing in the first century (A.D.) when John was writing these inspired words. It would finally perish with the deposition of the Emperor Romulus Augustulus — by the Barbarian Invader Odoacer, in A.D. 476.

Noted John in his own day: "The other [or **seventh World-Empire**] has not yet come."⁷⁴⁷ That would be the **Papal-Romish Empire**. Thus Joachim of Floris, Dante, the early Protestant Reformers, and many others.⁷⁴⁷ When it did come, it would mark the A.D. 606f 'rebirth' of 'Babylonianism.' Thus Osiander, Flaccius Illyricus, Bale, Brightman, James the First, Joseph Mede, John Cotton, Holyoake, Cressener, Gerhard, Helwig, Jurieu, Alsted, Phillipot, Cotton Mather, Matthew Henry, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Thos. Newton, Backus, B.H. Carroll, and others.

Furthermore, explained John, **after** the above seven Kings or Kingdoms or World-Empires "the Beast that was, and is not — even he is the **eighth**." This is: the **Imperialist State** (thus Matthew Henry); the **Holy Roman Empire** (thus Adam Clarke); the **Papacy in interaction with the international Empire** (thus the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham); **the Papacy** (thus Albert Barnes and B.H. Carroll); **the Antichrist** (thus the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*).

Now that Papal-Romish-Ecumenical Empire would **surely** come! Since, "**when** it comes — it must remain [or **continue**] a short space"⁷⁴⁷ (meaning: for some length of time).⁷⁴⁸ It arrived when the Bishop of Rome was first called sole 'Pope' alias 'Universal Father' — in A.D. 606.

At that time, the Scarlet Whore started to 'paint scarlet' even the very political Beast itself. Subsequently, she herself was crowned as "Queen" over the then-crownless Beast. Revelation 18:7. For that Whore, the Papacy, would more and more demand universal **political** control **over** the political Beast — and indeed also over **all** the Kings of the Earth. Revelation 17:3 & 17:17.

Now it is precisely in the days of the Papacy as the seventh King(dom), that the fornicating union (but not amalgamation) between the international apostate "Church" and the international political "Beast" takes place. For the successive seven Heads of the bestial series of World-Empires, are not only seven Kingdoms. In addition — with the manifestation of the Imperial Roman Beast alias the sixth Kingdom of John's own day (as the "one" which "is"), and with the later revelation of the Papal-Romish Ecumenical seventh Kingdom (as the other "not yet" come) — "the seven Heads are seven Mountains, on which the Woman **keeps on sitting**" enthroned and **keeps on ruling**.⁷⁴⁷ "The Woman which you saw, is that great city which **keeps on reigning** over the Kings of the Earth."⁷⁴⁹

So Rome, in the opinion of very many commentators⁷⁵⁰ on the *Book of Revelation*, is the city with the seven Mountains.⁷⁵⁰ Thus the city of Rome as the World Centre of **Roman Paganism**,⁷⁵¹ would later syncretize with **Papal Romanism** as its modified **continuation**. Consequently, **the Romish Vatican City** would become the seat or throne of the Beast — and the headquarters or innermost citadel of the new 'Babylon the Great' of the future.

Fifth. Even the **ten Horns** of the (Roman) Beast point to this identification. The Angel referred John back to Nebuchadnezzar's image's ten toes (**after** the time of **Pagan Rome**) — and to Daniel's vision's ten Horns which would only **later** grow out of the Head(s) of the fourth or Roman Beast.⁷⁵² Yet those ten Horns, the Angel told the Apostle, "**have received no kingship as yet**" (meaning in **John's own day**).⁷⁵³ But when those ten Horns or Kingdoms **did** receive their kingship or sovereignty — they would receive that great power as Kings-with-the-Beast, and for an age-long period.⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁸ Rev. 17:10-12f—literally: "for a little he must then continue." This is a better translation than that of the *KJV* at Rev. 17:10 (namely: "he must continue for a short space"). The Greek expression means: "for some length of time."

⁷⁴⁹ Rev. 17:18.

⁷⁵⁰ Nesper's *op. cit.* p. 218, & *cf.* n. 714.

⁷⁵¹ Rev. 13:2 *cf.* n. 729.

⁷⁵² Dan. 2:40-43 & 7:7f.

⁷⁵³ Rev. 17:12 *cf.* Dan. 7:7,20,24 & nn. 408 & 581 & 611 with Rev. 17:12f,17 & vv. 3-7 & nn. 762-764. Note that Rev. 17:12's *mian horan* should not be translated "one hour" (as in the *KJV*), but "for an age-long period." *Cf.* too Dan. 7:20-22,25. On 'Holy Roman Emperors' Pepin and Charlemagne, and Popes Innocent and Boniface, *cf.* nn. 597 & 612f & 729.

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

This receiving of sovereignty by the in-John's-time ten **future** Kingdoms — refers to the **fragmentation** of the Roman Empire **after** the fall of the Imperial Rome of Caesar Romulus Augustulus to Odoacer in A.D. 476, and its subsequent division into the ten Kingdoms later to become the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire.'⁷⁵⁴ This corresponds to the development of those 'Kingdoms' later gaining sovereignty (as ten **crowned** Horns).⁷⁵⁵

So the **ten Horns represent ten Kingdoms**. Thus Irenaeus, Osiander, Bale, Bellarmin, Blasius Viegas, Pareus, Grotius, Hammond, John Cotton, Roger Williams, Holyoake, Increase Mather, Matthew Poole, Samuel Sewall, Cotton Mather, Noyes, Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Timothy Dwight, G.S. Faber, Thomas Scott, Cunninghame, James Begg, Jenks's *Comprehensive Bible*, Louis Gaussen, Albert Barnes, B.H. Carroll, and many others.

More specifically, those ten 'Horn-Kings' are countries specifically in Western Europe. Adam Clarke identifies the Beast's ten Horns with "future Latin Western Europe." So too even the A.D. 400 Jerome, the ninth century Berengaud, the 1560 *Geneva Bible*, the 1639 *Dordt Dutch Bible*, and even the 1650f Roman Catholic commentator Bossuet.

Yet it was only **later** that those thus-crowned Nations would achieve **unification of purpose** — by surrendering some of their sovereignty to (and thus jointly reigning with) the international political Beast as such. Cf. Emperors Pepin and Charlemagne and the mediaeval Popes Innocent and Boniface).⁷⁵³ Only when that had finished happening — would the great Whore of the Babylonian Papacy **mount** the Beast⁷⁵⁶ and steer it (Horns and all), in a papal attempt to dominate the Kings of the whole World.

For the Babylonish Papacy is "the great Whore that keeps on sitting upon many waters." It is also "that great city which **keeps on reigning** over the Kings of the Earth"⁷²⁴ (as even papal coins proclaim). As the Angel with one of the seven last plagues told John: "The waters which you saw where the Whore keeps on sitting, are peoples and multitudes and Nations and tongues."⁷⁵⁷

How **existentially relevant** all this is, in our own time! For today, the Papacy is again making a most determined effort to gain control of the whole World through promoting both religious syncretism (under her leadership) and internationalism (under her influence).⁷⁵⁸ But how comforting it is to know, as Mauro notes, "that **God's** hand will be the active agent in it; that **He** will 'put in their hearts to fulfil **His** will and to agree, and give their Kingdom to the Beast' (the League of Nations or something similar)" such as the United Nations Organization, "**until** the words of God shall be fulfilled!"⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. n. 753 with the list at n. 594.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. the progressive coronation of the ten Kings or Kingdoms — as reflected in the development shown by comparing Rev. 12:3 with 13:1-3 and with 13:11-14 & with 17:1-7 & esp. vv. 12f.[†]

⁷⁵⁶ Rev. 13:3,7 & 17:3,7 cf. Dan. 7:7-25.

⁷⁵⁷ Rev. 15:1,7 & 17:1,5,15.

⁷⁵⁸ Mauro's *op. cit.*, p. 491. Cf. nn. 13 (at its paras. 81-83) & 729.

Sixth. It should be noted that all such Papal efforts will not prevail! For, some time before the Vatican has achieved her objective of ruling the entire World (as Nimrod of old tried to do in Ancient Babylon) — God will pour out the seventh and last vial of His wrath on the Great City and on the cities of the Nations.⁷¹⁴

As a result, the ten [leading] Kingdoms of the international political Beast will rebel against the Papal attempt to dominate them internationally. Thus the Angel said to the Apostle John: "The ten Horns which you saw upon the Beast...shall [start to] hate the Whore; and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."⁷⁵⁹

Perhaps only slowly, but nevertheless very steadily — the international political Leaders will become increasingly disillusioned with the leadership of the Whore of Babylon. First, they will grow to "**hate**" her. Later, they shall "**desolate**" or abandon her. Next, they shall **strip** her of her clothes or authority, and **leave** her naked." Then, they shall "**burn** her with fire."⁷⁵⁹

Let us now hear the classic Protestant statement of these great truths! The following are the words of Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Junius, in his 1599 expanded edition of the 1560 Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and of Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Dr. William Whittingham themselves.

"The Beast signifies **Ancient Rome**; the Woman that sit on it, the new Rome — which is **the Papistry**.... This Woman is **the Antichrist** — that is, **the Pope**." The Beast" is "the Roman Empire [from] which — being fallen into decay — the Whore of Rome usurped authority and proceeded from the Devil, and thither shall return." And the ten Horns of the revived political Beast, are various or "diverse Nations — [such] as the Goths, Vandals, Huns, and other Nations — which were once subject to Rome, [but] **shall** rise against it **and destroy it**."⁷²⁰

This means, comments Matthew Poole, that the Kings shall apostasize from the Papacy. It indicates, suggest Albert Barnes and Apostolos Makrakis, that Western Europe would oppose the Papacy after the French Revolution. It predicts, observes Adam Clarke, the future depapalization of Western Europe.

It also means that **Christians** shall then overcome both the Antichrist and his political allies. Thus Augustine, Jerome, Salvian, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Adam Clarke, and Hengstenberg.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁹ Rev. 17:16.

⁷⁶⁰ Rev. 17:16f cf. 18:1-19 & Dan. 7:11.26. Cf. Augustine's *City of God* XVIII:52 and Jerome's *Ep. 127 to Principia* and Salvian's *On God's Government* B VIII p. 115 (all referred to in Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* II:205 n. 2 and 208 n. 1 & 213 n. 3 cf. too pp. 200 & 210 & 215). See too Makrakis's *op. cit.* pp. 434 cf. 401f & 437 & 479-83 and Rev. 17:14-17 & 16:17-19 & 19:11-21 cf. Dan. 7:14,18,22,26f —and at nn. 412 & 687.

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

Thus Hengstenberg comments:⁷⁶⁰ "**Believers** are expressly represented as **sharers** in the **victory**.... They must also be regarded as sharers in the **conflict**.... The words 'King of kings and Lord of lords' point to the foundation of Christ's victory. The Lamb conquers because He is the Lord of lords. **Believers conquer**, because they are with the Lamb.... Promises of **victory** given to the Christian **Church**..pass into **fulfilment** first when Rome is overthrown by **the ten Kings** [or **Kingdoms**] and then when they **themselves are overcome** by the Lamb and are **received** into the bosom of the **Christian Church**."

Albert Barnes comments in his *Analysis of Revelation* seventeen (and on 17:16 & 17:18): "If the Papacy was 'the eighth [Head], and of the seven' — then it is clear that this must refer to some form of civil administration lying **between** the decline of the **Imperial** and the rise of the **Papal** power.... All this power was concentrated in the Papacy; all that revived or prolonged Roman power had now passed into the Papacy, constituting that mighty dominion which was to be set up for so many centuries over what had been the Roman World....

"The 'ten Horns...are ten Kings'.... Soon they passed into the more permanent forms of administration, which succeeded them in Europe.... With the rising Papal power, they would exercise their authority in connection with that and under its influence.... In history, all these King[dom]s...became Roman Catholic, and were united in the support of the Papacy...until the Reformation in the sixteenth century.... The same powers, represented by the ten Horns that **were** formerly in alliance with the Papacy, shall become its **enemy** and contribute to its final overthrow....

"The ten Kingdoms on the Beast would ultimately hate the Harlot and **destroy** her.... The Nations of Europe embraced within the limits of those ten Kingdoms, shall become hostile to the Papacy..... France...has already struck more than one heavy blow on that power; England has been detached from it; many of the states of Italy are weary of it.... Nothing is more probable than that Spain [and] Portugal...will yet throw off the yoke forever....

"Europe needs but little farther provocation, and the fires of liberty which have been so long pent up — will break forth.... That storm of indignation which has expelled the Jesuits from all the courts of Europe; which has abolished the Inquisition; which has more than once led hostile armies to the very gates of Papal Rome — will again be aroused in a manner which cannot be allayed.... The period will come — and that probably not far in the future — when those powers that have for so many ages sustained the Papacy will become its determined foes, and will rise in their might and bring it forever to an end.... That mighty power, which has controlled so large a part of the Nations of Europe for more than a thousand years of the World's History, will **come to an end**."

Also the independent Greek-Orthodox Scholar Apostolos Makrakis adds:⁷⁶⁰ "The hatred of the Kings for the Woman, dates back to the schism of Luther. As many Kings as espoused the protest, hated the Harlot.... The French Revolution...[which] came into power through the mercy of the people and not that of God or the Pope, also hated the Harlot — depriving her of all her income and consuming the wealth and riches with which she fed her own 'flesh'.... Victor Emmanuel...the King of Italy...relieved the Pope of his entire political power; founded his own throne; and confined the Church Potentate [viz. the Pope] within the Vatican where alone he wielded religious authority — stripped of his former political purple, his power, and his glory."

Seventh. After disposing of Romanism, the allied Kings shall fall into disarray among themselves. Perhaps for some time even after destroying the Babylonian Papacy under whose banner they themselves had previously campaigned as the "eighth" Head of the Beast, the ten Kings will continue to hate and to oppose both Christ and Christians.⁷⁶¹ They will sink their differences and "have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the Beast"⁷⁶² to "make war with the Lamb" — before they themselves go "into perdition."⁷⁶³ For "God has put [it] in their hearts, to fulfil His will and to agree and give their Kingdom to the Beast — **until** the words of God shall be fulfilled."⁷⁶⁴ But when that predestinated time has come to pass, "the Lamb shall overcome them — for He is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."⁷⁶¹

Last. **Christ shall overcome His enemies.**⁷⁶¹ He overcomes them by means of the declaration of **His Word** — and the resulting good works of His **earthly Christians.**⁷⁶¹ And so — though of course solely by the inward and outward grace of God alone — **the earthy Christians themselves shall overcome Christ's enemies.** Thus Augustine, Jerome, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, E.W. Hengstenberg, and Makrakis.

The whole chapter, comments Albert Barnes, "refers to **Papal Rome**...that had its rise...**after** the decline of the Roman civil power.... It was only by the reviving influence of the **Papacy** that Rome was saved from becoming a total waste.... Its first **visible** appearance as a power that was to influence the destiny of the World, was in the time of Gregory the Great, 590-605.... The passage before us refers to the period when the Papal power became...**marked** and **defined**...."

⁷⁶¹ Rev. 17:11,14-17 cf. 16:17-19 & 19:19-21 & 21:9 & Pss. 105:43 & 106:5 & Isa. 65:5,9,15f.

⁷⁶² Rev. 17:13 cf. 19:19f.

⁷⁶³ Rev. 17:11,14a cf. n. 758. On Rev. 17:11's words 'goes into perdition' — Hengstenberg (*op. cit.*) comments that "the meaning is: with the overcoming of the seventh phase of the ungodly power of the World, that power generally goes down.... With that, the ungodly power of the World comes to an end."

⁷⁶⁴ Rev. 17:17 cf. nn. 408 & 581 & 611.

The Lamb and His overcome the Beast, his Servants, and the Whore

"I may refer to...two **Roman Catholic writers**, giving the same view of Rome.... The first is Augustine Steuchus, who thus writes: — 'The Empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the **Pontificate**, Rome...would have...been a most foul habitation.... In the Pontificate, it revived as with a **second birth**.... All nations, from East and from West, **venerate the Pope** not otherwise than they before obeyed the Emperor.' The other, is Flavio Blondas: — 'The Princes of the World now **adore and worship** as **perpetual Dictator**...the **Supreme Pontiff**, the **substitute** of the aforesaid **Emperor**'....

"The inner colour of the cloak of the Pope, is **scarlet**; his carriage, is **scarlet**; the carpet on which he treads, is **scarlet**. A large part of the dress of the bodyguard of the Pope, is **scarlet**; and no one can take up a picture of Rome, without seeing that this colour [**scarlet**] is predominant....

"All covered over with **blasphemous titles and names**. What could more accurately describe Papal Rome than this? ... The image here is that of Papal Rome, represented as an abandoned Woman in gorgeous attire, alluring by her arts the Nations of the Earth, and seducing them into all kinds of pollution and abomination....

"How applicable this is to the Papacy. Let the blood shed in the valleys of Piedmont; the blood shed in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva; the blood shed on St. Bartholomew's Day; and the blood shed in the Inquisition —testify!

"There can be no doubt that this refers to Rome.... It was to be a **revived** power.... This is strictly applicable to Rome when the **Papal** power arose.... If it had not been for the rise of the Papal power, the sovereignty of Rome as such would wholly have been extinct.... It was to be a power emanating from the 'abyss' or that would seem to ascend from the Dark World **beneath**.... This was true in regard to the Papacy..., which the whole history of the Papacy and of its influence in religion confirms.... The Papacy, as an ecclesiastical institution, was sustained by the civil power, with which it was so closely connected....

"The Papacy, in fact, **revived** the almost-extinct **Roman civil power**, and gave it new vitality. The price of that, was that **it** should be in its turn sustained by that revived Roman civil power.... **All this power was concentrated in the Papacy...until the Reformation!**"

O Christian, especially since the Protestant Reformation, not just Christ Himself directly but also indirectly — through His followers — will bring down His enemies. Numbered are the days of the waning Papacy and all her apostate Pseudo-'Protestant' Daughters. Numbered too are the days of all those overtly Non-Christian religions which Rome would syncretistically absorb.

Indeed, even the political governments which both nationally and internationally resist the expansion of Christianity — shall ultimately be **overcome** by the Lamb — **and** by the called and the chosen and **the faithful who are with Him.**⁷⁶¹ For the outcome of this ongoing battle shall ultimately result in the final **christianization of the whole World.**⁷⁶¹

Who, then, is on the Lord's side?
Who will serve the King?
On, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

Babylon falls, losing All her Culture; but the Saints inherit All

Revelation 18

December 25

"Babylon the Great has fallen, has fallen thoroughly — and has become the habitation of Demons.... Come out of her, My People, so that you not be partakers of her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues! ... The voice of harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in you!"⁷⁶⁵

John had described how, as a result of God's outpouring of the last vial of His wrath,⁷¹⁴ the ten Kings would ultimately turn against the religious Whore called 'Babylon.'⁷⁵⁹ This Whore we saw to be the Romish-led modern movement toward inter-religious syncretism.

Yet the ten Kings would ultimately start to hate Rome — and then turn against her, and burn her. Then Rome would fall — also as a result of pressure from the Word of the Lamb, and from those Christians who proclaim Him.

Here in Revelation chapter eighteen, we have yet another partial 'playback.'¹²³ For here, the Apostle proceeds to give us the **inspired details** of the fall of that great 'Babylon.'

At the outpouring of the last vial of God's wrath⁷¹⁴ — John saw "another Angel come down from Heaven, having great power.... The Earth was illuminated with His glory. Then He cried out mightily, with a strong voice."⁷⁶⁶

This Earth-illuminating and mighty-voiced Angel is rather obviously the Messenger of the Covenant, alias the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For the description here recalls the Sun-faced and loud-voiced Angel Who had previously given the 'Little Book' to John.⁷⁶⁷

Now, once again, "He cried out mightily with a strong voice." Yet **this** time, He declares: "Babylon the Great has fallen, has fallen thoroughly — and has become the habitation of Demons and the stronghold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird!"⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁵ Rev. 18:2,4,14,22 —cf. n. 636.

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. n. 765 with Rev. 18:1f & 14:8 & Ps. 102:6 & Isa. 13:19-22 & 21:9 & 34:14 & Jer. 50:38f & 51:36f & Zeph. 2:13f cf. n. 408 & 581 & 603. This is the downfall of the Romish Papal Alliance. So too also the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, Jenks's *Comprehensive Commentary*, the *Cottage Bible*, and the *Afrikaans Bible with Explanatory Notes*.

⁷⁶⁷ Mal. 3:1f & 4:2 & Rev. 10:1-3.

Babylon falls, losing All her Culture; but the Saints inherit All

First. This is not to be construed as a physical descent of Jesus but rather of His announcement from Heaven of the then-arrival of the earlier-intimated⁷⁶⁸ downfall of the modern 'Babylon' alias the Romish Papal Alliance. Thus Calvin, the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Bishop Thomas Newton, Jonathan Edwards, John Brown of Haddington, Apostolos Makrakis and many others.⁷⁶⁶

Comments the independent Greek-Orthodox Scholar Makrakis: "This great and mighty voice proclaims the moral downfall of the Roman Catholic Church.... Foul and hated vultures symbolize Teachers...of the popish doctrine, hierarchical organization, and spiritual government of the Roman Catholic Church."

Yet the divine announcement also predicts the as-yet-still-future and the humanly-uninhabited condition of her ruins **after** her desolation.⁷⁵⁹ Like Babylon of old, also the modern 'Babylon' will yet become a dwelling-place of vultures.⁷⁶⁹ For it is yet to become the locality of "every unclean and hateful bird."⁷⁶⁶

Significantly, the eagle-vulture was the emblem of Rome. As the *Geneva Bible* appropriately comments, in "this description of the overthrow of the great Whore, the Angel Christ describes Rome to be the sink of all abomination and devilishness — and a kind of hell."⁷⁶⁶

Observes Jonathan Edwards in his *History of Redemption* (Period III Part II Section I Application 4): "The kingdom of **Antichrist** shall be utterly overthrown. His kingdom and dominion has been much brought down already by the [fifth] vial poured out on his throne in the **Reformation**. But **then** [at that yet-future time], it shall be destroyed — **utterly**. Then shall be proclaimed, '**Babylon is fallen, is fallen!**' **When the seventh Angel sounds**, 'the time [and two] times and half [a time] shall be out — and [the] time [of further waiting] shall be no longer.'

"Then shall be accomplished concerning Antichrist the things which are written in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation about the spiritual Babylon, that great city **Rome**...that has for so many ages been the great enemy of the Christian Church — first under **Heathenism**, then under **Popery**.... That cruel, bloody city — **shall come down to the ground!**"

States Albert Barnes in his *Analysis and Commentary* on Revelation chapter eighteen: "This chapter may be regarded as...designed to show the **effect** of pouring out the seventh vial...on the formidable Antichristian power so often referred to.... **Papal Rome...will be reduced to a state of utter desolation**, resembling that of the real Babylon.... It is the **Papacy**, represented under the image of the city, and having its seat there. **That** is to be destroyed as utterly as was Babylon of old....

"It refers to Papal Rome, and is designed to describe the final overthrow of that formidable **Antichristian** power.... The **Reformation** was in entire accord with what God would have His People do.... **His People** are expressly commanded to '**come out of her**, so that they might not be partakers of her sin nor of her plagues!'"

⁷⁶⁸ Rev. 14:8; 16:16-21; 17:16.

⁷⁶⁹ Rev. 18:2 *cf.* Mt. 24:1,15,28 & Isa. 14:22f & 34:15 & n. 408.

Barnes continues: "The Church has never performed a duty more manifestly in accordance with the Divine will — and more indispensable for its own purity, prosperity, and safety — than the act of separating entirely and for ever from Papal Rome. The Reformation was a great movement in human affairs. It was the index of great progress already reached, and the pledge of still greater.... Just in proportion as the principles of the Reformation are acted on — the destiny of mankind is **onward!**"

Second. The **reason** is given for the fall of this 'Babylon.' "For all Nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the Kings of the Earth have committed fornication with her — and the merchants of the Earth have gotten rich through the abundance of her delicacies."⁷⁷⁰

Indeed, it is precisely her unfaithfulness toward the heavenly Bridegroom and her syncretistic whoring after false-gods and images — for the sake of riches — that will bring about "Babylon's" downfall. Thus says also Holy Scripture itself.⁷⁶⁷ For, as the *Geneva Bible* elaborates, "the greatest part of the World has been abused and seduced by this spiritual Whoredom."⁷⁷⁰

Third. All Christians organizationally connected with the 'Church' or rather the 'Anti-Church' of 'Babylon' — that is, connected either with Rome as the "Mother of Harlots" **or** with apostate modernistic Pseudo-'Protestant' groups as her whorish Daughters⁷³⁶ — should resolutely **break** with that system of falsehood and confusion, and join with the True Church of Christ's faithful People. For, wrote John, "I heard another voice from Heaven, saying: 'Come out of her, My People — so that you not be partakers of her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues!'"⁷⁷¹

This demonstrates that Christ still has true disciples even within the bosom of Romish 'Babylon' and her apostate Pseudo-'Protestant' Daughters. But it also warns that all who recognize her unfaithfulness, yet still stay there, thereby at least **indirectly** give her their own support — and thus themselves then become actual partakers of her sins and recipients of her plagues.

Therefore, as the *Geneva Bible* insists: "When God threatens the wicked, **He ever comforts and counsels His, [as to] what they ought to do** — that is, that they **do not communicate** with the sins of the wicked!"⁷⁷¹ This means that the moment God's children inside of 'Babylon' recognize her sins to be wicked — they **must not longer remain in communion with** but **come out from her**.

So Barnes comments: "As applicable to papal Rome, in view of her impending ruin, this means (a) that there might be found in her some who were the True People of God; (b) that it was their duty to separate wholly from her — a command that will not only justify the Reformation, but which would have made a longer continuance in communion with the Papacy, when her wickedness was fully seen, an act of guilt before God.... There never was any duty plainer than that of withdrawing from papal Rome; there never has been any act attended with more happy consequences than that by which the Protestant World separated itself for ever from the sins and the plagues of the Papacy."

⁷⁷⁰ Rev. 18:3 cf. Jer. 51:7.

⁷⁷¹ Rev. 18:4.

Babylon falls, losing All her Culture; but the Saints inherit All

For fourth. **Babylon is to be punished double** — according to her evil works. This is why another voice here petitioned the Lord: "Reward her even as she rewarded you!" Reward or pay her back twofold — "according to her works! In the cup which she has filled up — fill it for her, double!"⁷⁷²

Here again, the implication is that modern Babylon is not basically an ignorant heathen entity — but an enlightened Denomination or 'Church' turned Whore. For, as Jesus warned: "That servant who **knew** his Lord's will, but did **not** prepare himself, or did not **do** according to His will — shall be **beaten** with **many** stripes."⁷⁷³ May this never be our own experience!

Fifth. The process of the destruction of Babylon, after the outpouring of the last vial of the wrath of God,⁷⁷⁴ may well **stretch over a considerable period of time**.⁷⁷⁴ It is true we are told that the end of "her plagues comes in one day — death, and mourning, and famine" — and that "she shall be burned utterly, with fire."⁷⁷⁴ Yet we need to remember that "one hour" here, as previously, probably means "one age"⁷⁷⁴ — and that even "one day" is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." Because "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men regard slackness; but is long-suffering toward us — not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."⁷⁷⁵

Again, we have already noticed (after the outpouring of the sixth vial of the wrath of God) that the water of the Euphrates (or the peoples subject to **that** 'Babylon-on-the-Euphrates' better known as 'Rome-on-the-Tiber'), may only **gradually** be "dried up."⁷⁷⁶ And it has also appeared that the ten Kings will destroy the Whore step by step — as their disillusionment grows to hatred and that hatred manifests itself in their increasingly serious actions of first abandoning and then exposing and next robbing and finally burning her.⁷⁷⁹ Thus, we should perhaps expect that even the very **fall** of 'Babylon' will be **gradual** (after the outpouring of the last vial of the wrath of God).

Sixth. It should be noted that this Babylon's former "lovers" — all the Kings of the Earth and those of their citizens who were intoxicated with her fornications⁷²⁴ — shed only 'crocodile tears' after abandoning her and burning her with fire. "The Kings of the Earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her — when they shall see the smoke of her burning."⁷⁷⁷ **They** may very well finally burn **her**. Yet **they** do **not** burn — also **themselves**.

⁷⁷² Rev. 18:6.

⁷⁷³ Lk. 12:47f.

⁷⁷⁴ Rev. 18:8-10. The destruction of 'Babylon' "in one hour" (in Rev. 18:10) probably means "in one age" (as in 17:12).

⁷⁷⁵ II Pet. 3:8f.

⁷⁷⁶ Rev. 16:12 & 17:1,15 & 11:2f cf. nn. 380f.

⁷⁷⁷ Rev. 17:9.

Just like a Whore's "lover" might kill her in disgust and then himself foolishly bewail her death, so too will Babylon's former companions one day bewail her — not for her own sake, but because of the resultant losses to themselves. The "merchants **were** the great men of the Earth."⁷⁷⁸ For, as the *Geneva Bible* insists, "the Romish prelates" were "merchants of souls."⁷⁷⁸ But in that day, "the merchants of the Earth shall weep and mourn" over Babylon — "**for no man buys their merchandise any more.**"⁷⁷⁹

Comments Barnes: "The Kings of Europe have owed much of their influence and power to the support which has been derived from the Papacy.... When **that** power shall fall, there will fall much that has contributed to sustain oppressive and arbitrary governments.... Europe might have been long since free — if it had not been for the support which Despotical Governments have derived from the Papacy...."

"The courts of Europe, under the Papacy, have had the same general character for dissoluteness and licentiousness as Rome itself.... The fall of the Papacy will be the signal for a general overturning of the thrones of Europe.... In the final ruin of Papal Rome, the Kings and Governments that had sustained her and had been sustained by her, would see the source of their power taken away."

Seventh. **This "merchandise itself"** — produced as it was by the liaison between Babylon and her lovers — is **marvellously comprehensive**. It covers every aspect of the World — embracing both nature and culture.

It includes **minerals**, such as gold and silver and precious stones and brass and iron and marble. It also embraces **vegetable products** — such as linen, thyme wood, all kinds of vessels of most precious wood and cinnamon, scents, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, flour, and wheat. It comprehends **animal products** — such as pearls, purple, silk, scarlet, ivory, cattle, sheep and horses. It includes also **human products** — like harps, pipes, candles and chariots (as the *Geneva Bible* observes:⁷⁷⁹ "such as the wantons use at Rome"). Indeed, it further involves **even human beings themselves** — such as slaves, craftsmen, musicians and bridegrooms.⁷⁷⁹

Now all of this "merchandise"⁷⁸⁰ will **not have been produced in vain**. It will indeed soon be "found no more" in '**Babylon**' — at the time of her destruction. But the merchandise as such will not itself be destroyed.⁷⁸⁰ For however unworthy the human motives which produced it may be — the merchandise as such is not itself evil.

To the contrary. As the product ultimately of **God's** enablement, the merchandise is valuable — **very** valuable. As such, it is all destined to be inherited by the children of God. This will come to pass, when the saints take **full** possession of the Kingdom⁷⁸¹ — both here on Earth, after the fall of 'Babylon the Great'⁷⁸² — and even more so hereafter, on the New Earth yet to come.

⁷⁷⁸ Rev. 18:23.

⁷⁷⁹ Rev. 18:11-16.

⁷⁸⁰ Rev. 18:11f,14,17,19,22f. Note esp. the phrases "find them no more at all [in 'Babylon']" in v. 14, and "shall be heard no more at all in you ['Babylon']" in vv. 22f. Cf. too Ezek. 26:21 & 27:32.

⁷⁸¹ Rev. 17:14; 20:3-6; 21:24-26; Dan. 7:18,22,27.

⁷⁸² Rev. 18:21 & 21:9,26 & 21:24,26 cf. nn. 408 & 581 & 611.

Babylon falls, losing All her Culture; but the Saints inherit All

As Rev. Prof. Dr. Klaas Schilder declares in his book *John's Revelation and Social Life* (pp. 207f): "Kings and Nations...have sought their glory and honour. And in Babylon's shining cultural life, they gathered for themselves treasures; brought their luxuries together; and put everything in order with the thoroughness of hands experienced in arranging wealth...."

"Shall culture have blossomed in vain? Must all that wealth disappear without a trace? Is God's day of judgment a furious iconoclasm — a blind and total and unsparing destruction of everything that is?"

"Scripture knows nothing of this! Babylon has not lived in vain, and neither has she garnered and guarded her riches in vain.... That which is **sinful** in Babylon's culture, is to be burned away. But that which is **cultural** in Babylon's sin — **that** God will not reject!"

Last. It is important to understand that although 'Babylon' is to be destroyed — the **Nations** whom she has misled, will **not** be destroyed. To the contrary. They shall be **liberated**.

For **all** Nations will be **tamed** by the healing Word of God. They will be released from deception — for a "thousand years." And they shall be saved — together with all of their cultural glory, honour, and natural splendour. Christ's Great Commission to preach the everlasting Gospel to all peoples, will yet destroy 'Babylon' — and turn **all Nations** into **His disciples**.⁷⁸³

Observe that the **Nations** which 'Babylon' deceived do **not** bewail her fall (as do the Kings and the Merchants who were in league with her). Rather are the Nations then **liberated** from enslavement to 'Babylon'; **converted** by the Word of God; and **sanctified** in their cultures to serve the Lord and fully to enjoy Him forever.⁷⁸³

Concludes Barnes in his comments: "The fall of papal Rome...will remove one of the last obstructions to the final triumph of the Gospel.... In chapter 16:10-16, we saw that **one** great hindrance to the spread of the True Religion would be taken away by the **decline and fall** of the Turkish power [meaning that **of Islam**]. A still more formidable hindrance will be taken away by **the decline and fall of the Papal power**.... When this power shall finally cease, any one can see that perhaps the most mighty obstruction which has ever been on the Earth for a thousand years, to the spread of the Gospel — will have been removed, and the way will be prepared for the introduction of the long hoped-for '**Millennium**.'"

O Christian, blasphemous as 'Babylon' was and is — she shall not have existed in vain! Faithless as she is toward the Lord — some of God's True People are still within her bosom, and **they** must yet be called forth **out** of her and regrouped in authentically-Christian Congregations and Denominations.

⁷⁸³ **Contrast the Nations** in Rev. 13:1,7 & 17:1,5 & 18:3,23 with the **Kings and the Merchants** in Rev. 18:9-11 (cf. n. 408). For the **Nations** are **converted** (Rev. 19:15,21 & 20:1,3 & 22:2 cf. Mt. 28:19) and **sanctified** in their **cultures** forever (Rev. 21:24-26 cf. 22:2 & *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. & A. 1 and J.C. Coetzee's *op. cit.*).

In God's good time, 'Babylon' will come crashing down. "For strong is the Lord God Who judges her."⁷⁸⁴ Then, all her many riches — just like the gold and the frankincense and the myrrh brought to the Saviour at the time of His birth⁷⁸⁵ — shall accrue for the benefit of the saints of Christ's Kingdom. Thus, in the last analysis, 'Babylon' shall be seen to have worked for the ultimate benefit of the Kingdom of God and **her** citizens — and not at all for the ultimate benefit of Satan and his wretched followers.

Not the unbelievers but the **meek** — alias those who submit to God and His Law — shall inherit the Earth. They shall inherit the Earth and **all** its **fullness**. For God will yet give the entire Universe to His children — as it were, as their '**Christ**-mas present' (*sic!*) — for **Christ's** sake.

So on, then, Christian soldiers!
Onward, toward the fall of 'Babylon' and the liberation of its captives!
Onward, to **victory!**

⁷⁸⁴ Rev. 18:8 *cf.* 16:19 & 17:16.

⁷⁸⁵ *Cf.* Mt. 2:1,11.

A Heavenly Multitude of much People hallelujahs the Lord!

Revelation 19:1-10

December 26

"Then, after these things, I heard a great voice of many people in Heaven, saying: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honour and power to the Lord our God!' ... Then I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunderings, saying: 'Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent has started to reign and keeps on reigning.'"⁷⁸⁶

Christ had given John a dramatic description of the actual downfall of Babylon the Great,⁷⁸⁷ after the outpouring of the last vial of the wrath of God.⁷¹⁴ Next, the Apostle went on to record the joyous reaction to that event — the reaction of the **saints in Heaven** who had worked so hard to bring this about, previously, when they were still on Earth before their deaths.⁷⁸⁸

The Angel enjoined the dead saints and the good Angels in Heaven even at the very hour of Babylon's fall: "Rejoice over her, O Heaven, and you holy **Apostles and Prophets!** For God has avenged you upon her."⁷⁸⁹

As then, the World will still not yet have been christianized. For, even after the fall of Babylon, the ten Kings and the international political Beast itself will not yet have been destroyed.⁷⁹⁰ But Babylon (as the international apostate **religious** organization supplying the various Horns or Kingdoms of the Beast with their **spiritual** cohesion), will then have fallen.

Indeed, the **Beast** will then have been left all alone — without any further ideological purpose to live for. Consequently, **also his downfall** will only be a matter of time — after the demise of the Whore.

Thus, there will be every reason to rejoice already at the downfall of 'Babylon' and even **prior** to the destruction of the political Beast and its Kingdoms. This means we too should rejoice even **prior** to the completion of the christianization of the Earth's Nations — which will follow only **after** the destruction of the Beast.

Let it also be noted that it is not the **True Church** that is to be taken out of the World! To the contrary. It is the religious 'Babylon' that is now removed from the World. For **this** World, is **God's** World — not Satan's.

⁷⁸⁶ Rev. 19:1,6 *cf.* n. 408.

⁷⁸⁷ Rev. ch. 18 & *cf.* our study for Dec. 25.

⁷⁸⁸ Rev. 11:1-3,11-15; 12:11; 13:10; 14:6-8; 15:2-4; 16:10,19; 17:14; 18:4,20.

⁷⁸⁹ Rev. 18:20; 6:9-11; 19:1f & n. 408.

⁷⁹⁰ Rev. 17:14-16; 18:9; 19:19-21.

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The *Geneva Bible* correctly comments on this heavenly "Hallelujah" (or 'Let us praise the Lord!'). It explains: "You must praise God — because **the Antichrist...has been removed from the World.**"⁷⁹¹

First. After seeing the vision of the destruction of Babylon,¹²³ then, John "heard a great voice of **many people in Heaven.**"⁷⁸⁶ This is the voice of "the twenty-four Elders" of the international Church Triumphant above.⁷⁹¹ Representatively, they are 'praising the Lord' for the downfall of the earthly 'Babylon' (about which the heavenly Church had just become aware).

This is the voice of those who, apparently before their deaths, had themselves worked for the triumph of the Gospel and the overthrow of 'Babylon.'⁷⁹² It is the voice of "**many people**"⁷⁹¹ — and **not** just of a mere **handful** raptured **away** from the Earth, and from **out** of the human race, before some supposedly-endtime 'Great Tribulation' (*sic*).⁷⁹³

Furthermore, this song of praise at the fall of 'Babylon'⁷⁹⁴ shall hallelujah the song of a liberated **creation**⁷⁹⁵ and 'the power and the glory' of the "Thy Kingdom come" of the Lord's Prayer.⁷⁹⁶ For this song shall then be sung by the living God's "many people" in Heaven.

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honour and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments. For He has judged the great Whore which corrupted the Earth with her fornications; and He has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand."⁷⁹⁷

After a brief pause, "again they said: 'Hallelujah!'"⁷⁹⁷ For the fallen Babylon was now being burned with fire. Indeed, "her smoke [now] rose up for ever and ever!"⁷⁹⁷

As the *Geneva Bible* here very appropriately comments: "The wicked shall be burned in continual fire that shall never be extinguished." For all of God's "judgments are true and just." Consequently, "we ought to praise Him evermore for the destruction of the Pope."⁷⁹⁷

Second. The "twenty-four Elders **and the four living creatures** fell down and worshipped God Who sat on the throne — saying: 'Amen, hallelujah!'"⁷⁹⁸ For, as the *Geneva Bible* observes, "by the four 'beasts' [or *zoa*] are meant **all creatures.**"⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹¹ Rev. 19:1,4. This heavenly multitude is an international crowd. Rev. 15:3f *cf.* 19:1,5-7 and nn. 408 & 783.

⁷⁹² Rev. 12:11; 14:8; 15:2-4; 17:14. It is perhaps possible that Rev. 19:1 is speaking of the earthly Church, in contradistinction to the Church definitely in Heaven referred to in v. 4. For v. 1 does not say that the action witnessed will take place in Heaven, but only that John prophetically heard it there. If v. 1's "many people" are indeed to utter this 'Hallelujah' on Earth rather than in Heaven, it would then obviously refer to the Church Militant's song of gratitude here on Earth right after the collapse of Babylon. *Cf.*, similarly, Rev. 12:1 & 19:11 & our studies for Dec. 15 & 27.

⁷⁹³ *Cf.* Rev. 7:9-14 & our remarks on this passage in our study for Dec. 9.

⁷⁹⁴ Rev. 19:2f *cf.* 14:8 & 16:19 & 17:14-16 & 18:8,21 & n. 408.

⁷⁹⁵ Mt. 6:10,13.

⁷⁹⁶ Rev. 19:1f & n. 408.

⁷⁹⁷ Rev. 19:1f *cf.* 17:16 & nn. 408 & 581 & 611.

⁷⁹⁸ Rev. 19:4.

Accordingly, these *zooa* represent the whole sub-human creation. Those *zooa* too rejoice to see the realization of yet another great step forward in the progressive coming of the Kingdom of God.⁷⁹⁹ For, together with the twenty-four Elders as representatives of the Church of both the Older and the Newer Testament administrations of God's Covenant with mankind, those *zooa* themselves are overjoyed to see the downfall of the Antichristian 'Babylon' for which they too had all waited so long.⁸⁰⁰

Third. "A voice came forth from the throne, saying: 'Praise our God, **all you His servants**, and you both **small and great** who fear Him!'"⁸⁰¹ This unidentified voice was probably that either of an Angel or of one of the four *zooa*. Either way, the voice was representative of the non-human part of God's creation. It apparently spoke on behalf of the **entirety of creation** — both non-human and human, both in Heaven above and on Earth below.⁸⁰¹

For **all** creatures (both "**small and great**") are God's "**servants**."⁸⁰² And the **whole creation** now stands on top-toe — while awaiting its deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and while expecting the manifestation of the sons of God.⁸⁰³

Fourth. The entire Universe — Angels; all of the many different kinds of living creatures here called *zooa*; the Church Triumphant in Heaven; and the Church Militant here on Earth — will reverberate in praise of Jehovah, when Babylon falls. For John "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunderings, saying: 'Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent has started to reign and keeps on reigning. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him!'"⁸⁰⁴

"For the **marriage** of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of [the] saints." And that righteousness has been imputed to them solely as a gracious gift, by and from the Bridegroom Himself.⁸⁰⁴

Fifth. The arrival of this 'marriage feast' does **not indicate that all History is now to be at an end**. Thus Henry More, Matthew Poole, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, E.W. Hengstenberg, William Hendriksen, and B.H. Carroll.⁸⁰⁵ Indeed, only '**Babylon**' will have fallen thus far — and the Church Militant here on Earth will then still have to overcome **the Beast and the Kings of the Earth** (clothed as that bride will then be in clean white linen for that very task).⁸⁰⁵

⁷⁹⁹ Pss. 103:17-22 & 104,1,31-35 & Rom. 8:19-21.

⁸⁰⁰ Rev. 6:9-17; 7:13f; 13:7; 14:3-13; 15:1-7.

⁸⁰¹ Rev. 19:4b-5 *cf.* 4:5-8 & 5:8-13 (which passages suggest that it may have been the voice of a living creature or *zooon*). Yet Rev. 19:5,9f & 21:9f & 22:8f suggest it may well have been the voice of an Angel (*cf.* too Rev. 18:1,4f).

⁸⁰² Ps. 119:89-91 *cf.* Ps. 14 & n. 799.

⁸⁰³ Rom. 8:19-23.

⁸⁰⁴ Rev. 19:6-8 *cf.* Gal. 3:27; Eph. 2:8; Col. 3:10; Isa. 52:1. Note that Rev. 19:6's mistranslated "reigneth" in the *KJV*, is really aorist in the original Greek's *ebasilousen*, and could better be translated: "He has taken up His Kingship (or Sovereign Rule)" over the Earth — and hence: "He has started to reign, and keeps on reigning."

⁸⁰⁵ Rev. 19:7-9,14,17-21, *cf.* too n. 807.

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But the 'marriage feast' of the Lamb will then be **drawing near**, and His wife will have made herself ready.⁸⁰⁵ Most solemnly, she has for a very long time already been 'engaged' to Him.⁸⁰⁶ But now — after the fall of the great 'Babylon' — she will prepare for the 'marriage supper' to be held for all the wedding guests some time **before** the wedding itself.⁸⁰⁷ Only later will the actual marriage union itself be consummated, when the Church herself — adorned like a bride for her Husband — will dwell with the Lamb and He with His bride.⁸⁰⁸

Says Matthew Poole: "The **marriage** is one thing; the **supper** another, and (ordinarily) **consequential** to the marriage itself." Hendriksen, writing about "the wedding-feast including the marriage-supper," observes that "the usual festivities lasted seven or at times twice seven days." Matthew 22:1f cf. Genesis 29:27f & Judges 14:10-17f.

Hengstenberg even more accurately remarks that "we must distinguish between the **arrival** of the marriage and its **celebration**," as "appears from the added clause 'and His wife has made herself ready.' If the wife has first made herself ready, then the wedding cannot yet have begun.... The marriage is come, whenever the wedding-day has **dawned**.... The marriage here, is not the marriage-**feast**.... Compare Matthew 18:20 'I am with you always, even to the end of the World,' which contains...the surpassing display of glory that is to be made to the **Triumphant** Church. It is as if He **then** first brought home His bride.

"In Matthew 9:15, also the time that stretches from the death of Christ to His return appears as a time of **absence** for the Bridegroom. In the parable of the ten virgins, the return of the Bridegroom is in the first instance **expected**" but **not** yet **realized**. "In Ephesians 5:25-27, the Church is represented as a bride **adorned** for a **future** marriage....

"It is only in [Revelation] chapter **21:2**" and **not** already in Revelation **19:1-9** "that the New Jerusalem comes into view, prepared and adorned as a bride for her husband. We are [in Revelation 21 but not yet in chapter 19], therefore, already **beyond** the victory over the ten Kings; **beyond** the thousand years; **beyond** the last victory over Gog and Magog. Those who fail to perceive the **anticipative** character of the song" of Revelation 19:1-9, do not seem to understand that "the **betrothed** was sometimes called the 'wife' of the Bridegroom; compare Deuteronomy 22:24, Genesis 29:21, Matthew 1:20, and here, [Revelation] 21:9, 'Come hither, I will show thee...the Lamb's wife'....

"The things meant are the great and consolatory truth of the coming of the Lord's Kingdom, of the marriage of the Lamb, of the suitable preparation of the bride and her appearance in the bright and pure linen-attire of righteousness. These truths have been communicated in the form of a song of praise by the Church of the just made perfect (Revelation 19:1-9). But this was only the **visionary** form." Thus Hengstenberg.

⁸⁰⁶ Rev. 19:7,9,17,21 & n. 805 with Mt. 1:18-25 & II Cor. 11:2.

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. esp. the word "supper" in Rev. 19:9 with the same word in Rev. 19:17f.

⁸⁰⁸ Contrast Rev. 19:9 & 17f with 21:2,9 & 22:17, & cf. the latter with Gen. 29:23-30 & Ps. 45 & Mt. 25:1-10 & Lk. 12:36. Cf. M. Poole on Rev. 19:9; W. Hendriksen's *More than Conquerors* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1961, pp. 215f); and Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* II:248-52.

Sixth. **After** the downfall of 'Babylon' and **before** the actual consummation of the union between the heavenly Bridegroom and His earthly bride, the 'marriage supper' will first have to take place. And that,⁸⁰⁹ as we shall see, will coincide with the supper of the great God at the time of the overthrow of the Antichristian Beast and the Kings of the Earth.⁸¹⁰

For this reason, the saints will put on their wedding garments and get ready for the marriage supper.⁸¹¹ And those garments are the fine clean and white linen of their Christ-imputed **righteousness** (alias their graciously established **Lawabidingness** and graciously empowered public testimony).⁸¹² Thus adorned with all their good works for their heavenly Bridegroom — they will then triumphantly follow the Word of God unto **victory** over **all** of His earthly **enemies**.⁸¹³

Well does the *Geneva Bible* remark: "Blessed are they who are called to the Lamb's supper!"⁸¹¹ For all of His guests are those "whom God of free mercy calls to be partakers of His heavenly graces — and delivers from the filthy pollutions of Antichrist."⁸¹¹

Seventh. It should now be recognized that a marriage supper in Biblical times could last for quite some considerable time.⁸¹⁴ Accordingly, we are not to think that the marriage **supper** is the actual **consummation** of the marriage itself. For the actual consummation of the marriage will take place only at Christ's Final Coming — **after** the wedding feast.⁸⁰⁵

Indeed, there are some indications even here that a period of **universal triumph** of the Gospel throughout the World will first need to occur (**between** the time of the wedding feast and that of the marriage's consummation).⁸¹⁵ It is very incumbent upon the guests at Christ's wedding feast to **feed festively** on the Word of God, and **patiently** to **sati**ate themselves with "the true sayings of God" before the advent of the prophesied consummation.⁸¹⁶ For they know that "the **testimony** of Jesus, is the spirit of **prophecy**."⁸¹⁷

Moreover, the wedding guests are to act even as "Prophets" as it were — and to invite others also to come to the marriage supper. For, as the *Geneva Bible* observes, Christ here "shows that...God uses to reveal His secrets...to the Prophets — **so that they may declare them to others**."⁸¹⁷

⁸⁰⁹ Rev. 19:8f with vv. 14-17f *cf.* esp. our study for Dec. 27.

⁸¹⁰ Rev. 19:14,17-21 *cf.* Isa. 25:1-10, esp. vv. 5-8.

⁸¹¹ Rev. 19:7-9 *cf.* Isa. 52:1f & 54:5 & Mt. 22:1-12.

⁸¹² Rev. 19:8's "righteousness" = *dikaioomata* = (literally) "righteousnesses," which very clearly involves keeping all the Commandments of God. *Cf.* the meaning of this word exclusively in this sense wherever used elsewhere in Scripture (Rom. 2:36 & 5:18 & 8:4).

⁸¹³ Rev. 19:14-21.

⁸¹⁴ Mt. 25:1-13 *cf.* n. 805.

⁸¹⁵ *Cf.* n. 805 with Rev. 128:8,14-21; 20:3-6; Isa. 52:1f,7,10,15; 53:10f; 54:2-5; chs. 60 to 62 (esp. 62:5-7); 63:3-6 (*cf.* Rev. 19:15-21); 66:18-23; *etc.*

⁸¹⁶ Rev. 19:9, *cf.* vv. 7 & 21.

⁸¹⁷ Rev. 17:10.

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Last. Apparently still referring to the 'voice that came out of the throne in Heaven' —to the unidentified voice coming from either an Angel or from one of the four zōōa —John then wrongfully "fell down at his feet to worship him" whose voice it was. "But he said to me, 'See that you don't do it! I am your **fellow-servant**...."

"Worship **God**! For the testimony of **Jesus** is the spirit of prophecy!"
Worship God; worship Jesus; for Jesus **is** God! But don't worship any other!

Comments Albert Barnes: "This would prohibit the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of any of the saints, and all that homage rendered to a created being which is due to God only.... Nothing is more contrary to the Divine Law, than rendering in any way that homage to a creature which belongs of right to the Creator."

O Christian, may we too longingly await and work for the fall of Babylon! May we look even beyond that happy event! And may we even now, nourished with the "spirit of prophecy" alias the ability to forthtell God's Word, rejoice in the certain advent of the yet-later marriage supper of the Lamb —and of the consummation of His marriage to His bride later still! Let us always fortify ourselves with the Word of God; resist all of God's enemies; and seek wherever possible to win even them for our Saviour's cause!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory**!

Christ and His Armies conquer, destroying their Earthly Enemies

Revelation 19:11-21

December 27

"Then I saw Heaven opened. And behold, a white horse! And He Who sat upon it, was called 'Faithful-and-True' — and He judges and makes war in righteousness.... Then the armies in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean... Out of His mouth goes forth a sharp sword, so that He should smite the Nations with it.... Then the Beast was taken...and cast alive into a lake of fire.... The rest were slain with the sword of Him Who sat upon the horse, which went forth from His mouth."⁸¹⁸

John had just described the preparations for the marriage supper of the Lamb. This will occur after the downfall of Babylon⁸¹⁹ (produced by the outpouring of the last vial of the wrath of God).⁷¹⁴

Next, John went on to record the inspired details of the completion of the conquest of the World by the Word of God Jesus Christ (**after** the outpouring of that same seventh and last vial).⁷¹⁴ For the Apostle wanted to explain that the Saviour yet achieves this victory **precisely through the agency of the Congregations of His Christian Church alias the conquering divisions of the Lord's Army.**

The Puritan James Durham, in his 1657 *Complete Commentary upon the Book of Revelation* (II:605), has rightly commented at "chapter nineteen" that "the Battle of **Armageddon**...is notable from two singular events — the one, in the **conversion of the Jews**.... The other, in the **destruction of the Beast** and his helpers," probably by "**the Turks**.... The Beast, having fled from Rome, is now wholly overturned — **so that the name of 'Pope' ceaseth.**"

First. John declares that he "saw Heaven opened. And behold, a white horse! And He Who sat upon it, was called 'Faithful-and-True' — and He judges, and makes war."⁸²⁰

This hardly means that the activities now to be described, though indeed emanating **from** Heaven — are to be executed only **in** Heaven. For the heavenly "**armies**" which follow Christ, are those of the Church Militant right here on Earth (which **spiritually** is seated right now with Christ in **Heaven**).⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸ Rev. 19:11,14f,17,19-21[†].

⁸¹⁹ Rev. 19:6-10.

⁸²⁰ Rev. 17:11.

⁸²¹ Rev. 12:1,7-12 & 19:1,11-21 & Eph. 2:6-11 *cf.* our studies for Dec. 15 & 26.

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Indeed, we are distinctly told that it is **here on Earth** that the Horseman named 'Faithful-and-True' "judges" and also "makes war."⁸²² Rather obviously, then, our description here — as previously⁸²¹ — is a deeply meaningful **heavenly** symbol of happenings **here on Earth**.

Nor are these happenings **exclusively future**. For we are **not** told that the Horseman **shall** judge and **shall** make war and **shall** tread the winepress, but rather that He **does** judge and **does** make war and **does** tread down the winepress. He does so **here and now**. He keeps on doing so uninterruptedly — until He has victoriously completed the subjugation of all of His earthly enemies.⁸²²

Second. It is clear that this Horseman is our Lord Jesus Christ. For "His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. And He had a Name written which no man knows but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture baptized in blood.

"And His Name is called 'The Word of God'.... Out of His mouth goes forth a sharp sword.... And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, 'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.'"⁸²³

Here again, it is obvious that all of this impressive language is deeply meaningful and rich in symbolism. For our Saviour already wears many crowns from all of His previous victories. Yet He is destined to acquire still more. The sword of His Word has already inflicted many wounds and surgical healings. Indeed, it will continue to do so also throughout the future.⁸²³

As the *Geneva Bible* comments, by these words "is signified that Jesus Christ our Judge shall be **victorious** and shall **triumph** over His enemies."⁸⁸⁰ He rules or judges and fights righteously or in accordance with His Holy Law "so that the wicked shall tremble before His face."⁸⁸⁰ And the reason for the **many** crowns on His head, is "to show that He was [and is and always shall be] **Ruler of all the World**."⁸²³

This passage is obviously **not** referring to Christ's **final** coming on the clouds of Heaven. Indeed, **here** there is **no** mention at all of any **clouds**.

To the contrary. The passage is rather referring to the Lord Jesus' **prior** and **repeated** if not even **continuous**⁸²² **comings** (plural) to conquer this **Earth** — through the wielding of the **Sword of the Lord** which is the **Word of God** alias **Holy Scripture**.⁸²⁴ Thus Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, E.W. Hengstenberg and Benjamin B. Warfield.⁸²²

Indeed, this continuous wielding of the Sword of the Lord, is the continuous **proclamation** of the Word of God which is the Sword of the Spirit. This is done **by** and in the **power** of the Holy Ghost — and **through the agency of Christ's earthly saints**.⁸²⁵ Thus Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, B.B. Warfield, and Apostolos Makrakis.

⁸²² Rev. 14:1,7; 16:1,18; 17:1,14,18; 18:1,8f; 19:6-8,11,14f,19 *cf.* I Cor. 15:24-28.

⁸²³ Rev. 19:12-16,21 *cf.* 1:10-16[♯].

⁸²⁴ Acts 1:9-11 *cf.* Mt. 24:30f.

⁸²⁵ Rev. 19:14f *cf.* v. 8 & Isa. 11:4 & Dan. 7:14,18,22,26f & Eph. 6:17 & Heb. 4:12 & II Th. 2:8,13-15 & 3:1 & nn. 812 & 830.

Here, Christ comes **continuously**. His Church alias His Army follows Him — clothed in fine linen, white and clean.⁸²² As already seen, the "clean white linen" is the **righteousness** of the saints (or the gracious imputation and progressive implantation of Christ's Own **Lawabidingness**).⁸²⁵ Moreover, the Kings of the **Earth** who fight against **Him** — do so precisely by fighting against the **Christ-ians**, as the heavenly Christ's **earthly Army**.⁸²⁶

The sword (deeply symbolically yet very really) proceeds out of the Saviour's **mouth**. Thus it is clear that the very **nature** of the saints' warfare against Christ's enemies, is **not** to be fought belligerently with **many** swords of **steel**. It is rather to be waged **spiritually** — with the **unique** sword of Christ's Spirit — which **sword is the Word of God**.

Nor is the battle to be fought just **once and for all** — whether only at the time of our justification at Calvary; or whether only at Christ's **Final Coming**. No! Instead, the battle is to be fought **repeatedly** and **all the time** — from Christ's glorious ascension and royal enthronement onward, right down to the time of His yet-future advent in Final Judgment.

Third. It is obvious that Christ's Army **wins** its earthly war — against the Kings of the Earth. For the Leader of that Army wears "on His head many crowns" (plural) — as the 'status symbols' of His many victorious conquests (plural).⁸²³ Importantly, under His direction the battles are waged by the **troops** of the One Who Himself wears the blood-baptized garment.⁸²³

By this, comments the *Geneva Bible*, "is signified His **victory** and the **destruction** of His enemies."⁸²³ **Through His Christ-ians' own wielding** of the Word of God or the Sword of His mouth, Christ Himself does indeed "smite the Nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron. And He treads down the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."⁸²³

Now it is certainly true that the war between converted saints and unconverted sinners has indeed raged on ever since the fall of Adam — and especially since Calvary. Yet our text here does seem to indicate that the **complete** victory of Christ's saints over the World — will be realized **after** the fall of 'Babylon' at the final end of the 1260 day-years.⁸²⁷

That phase of the war shall then be fought out against the Beast and the False-Prophet — against the remnants of the Papists and the Moslems, and also against the Pagans as well as against those whom Luther calls "the Red Jews." Thus, in general — Matthew Poole, E.W. Hengstenberg, and Albert Barnes.⁸²⁷ So too, in general, Prof. Dr. Loraine Boettner and Dr. J. Marcellus Kik.

Martin Luther⁸²⁷ has written that here "the Devil's final wrath gets to work. There, in the East — the second woe; Mohammad and the Saracens. Here, in the West, Papacy's Empire — with the third woe. To these is added...the Turk, Gog and Magog — as will follow in chapter twenty.... There comes, in chapter twenty, the stirrip-cup Gog and Magog; the Turks; the Red Jews.... After the Turks, the Last Judgment follows quickly."

⁸²⁶ Rev. 19:19 & 17:14.

⁸²⁷ Rev. 11:2f,7-19; 12:6,14; 13:5; 14:8; 17:3-5,14-18; 18:4,21; 19:2,7f,14-21 *cf.* Dan. 7:25 & 12:7 with Rev. 11:2-5 & n. 825.

Christ and His Armies conquer, destroying their Earthly Enemies

Albert Barnes comments quite emphatically here: "**The religion of Christ would finally prevail....** All persecution and sorrow here, would be followed by joy and triumph." Christ on His horse "is here the symbol of the **final victory** that is to be obtained over the Beast and the False-Prophet...and of the **final triumph of the Church....**

"There can be no doubt that the Messiah is intended, as He goes forth **to the subjugation of the World to Himself....** These hosts of the redeemed on white horses accompany Him to be witnesses of His victory, and **to participate** in the joy of **His triumph....**

"The **sword** seems to be an emblem of **His words or doctrines**, as penetrating the hearts of men.... It is the emblem of a work of destruction wrought on His foes.... 'With it, He would smite the Nations'...that were opposed to Him; to wit, those especially who were represented by the Beast and the False-Prophet....

"The Kings [would still be] under the control of **the Beast and the False-Prophet**, chapter 16:14f & 17:12-14.... There is allusion here to the same assembling of hostile forces which is described in chapter 16:13f.... There can be no doubt that the writer in these passages designed to refer to the same events — the **still-future** scenes that are to occur when **the Roman, the Pagan and the Mahometan powers** shall be aroused to make common cause against the True Religion....

"The 'Beast' here, as all along, refers to the **Papal** power.... The **False-Prophet** had been united with the Beast — in deceiving the Nations.... The whole representation is that of an **alliance** to prevent the spread of the True Religion [of Protestant Christianity] — **as if** the **Papacy** and **Mahometanism** were **combined.**"

However, "**the Beast and the False-Prophet**" alias "**the Papacy and Mahometanism...will be subdued by the Word** of the Son of God.... These great Anti-christian powers which had so long resisted the Gospel and prevented it being spread over the Earth, which shed so much blood in persecution and had so long corrupted and deceived mankind, would be subdued.

"**The True Religion [namely Biblical Christianity]** would be as triumphant as if the Son of God should go forth as a warrior in His own right and secure their [Romish and/or Islamic] **Leaders** for punishment.... This destruction of these great enemies — which the whole course of the interpretation leads us to suppose is still future — prepares the way for the **[post]millennial reign** of the Son of God."

Fourth. It should be noted here that Christ's campaign would be won in three subsequent stages. Let us now consider them in sequence.

Initially, it appears that Christ shall **begin** to smite the Nations with His sword — in order to render them harmless. This will happen particularly at the end of 1290 day-years. And this event will ostensibly occur within 30 day-years after the fall of the abominable 'Babylon' (at the termination of her 1260 day-year hegemony).⁸²⁸

Next, after this, it seems Christ will '**tread down** the winepress' and '**sprinkle** His garments.' Here, He apparently **converts the Kings** (thus Hengstenberg) **and the Moslems** (thus Bede and Makrakis), and **baptizes** the remnants of the Nations into a Christian World-order.⁸²⁹

That will occur after perhaps a further 45 day-years, during a time of great blessing and widespread revival at the **end** of 1335 day-years.⁸³⁰ Thus Bede and Makrakis.

After that, it would appear that Christ shall then rule the Nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron, or by the sword of His Word.⁸²³ And this will apparently last for a long period John would call "a thousand years."⁸³¹

Let the armies of Christ's saints then be **patient!** May they fight under His banner with tenacity! For they shall indeed achieve the conquest of the World — all in God's Own good time.

Fifth. This whole war, after the fall of 'Babylon' and before the real commencement of His "thousand years" reign over the Nations, constitutes the marriage supper of the Lamb or the supper of the great God.⁸³² At the beginning of this supper, the Kings of the Earth alias the various leaders allied with the Beast — are disposed of.⁸³² And at the end of the feast (perhaps 45 day-years later)⁸³⁰ — "the remnant" is "slain."⁸³³ But in both cases, all the birds of the air are filled with the flesh of Christ's enemies at the supper of the great God.⁸³⁵

What a fitting end to that great unclean bird, that great vulture, the international political Beast!⁸³⁴ For how much blood it would by then have shed — by the power of its own cruelty!⁸³⁵

⁸²⁸ Rev. 19:15f cf. Dan. 12:7-11 & n. [†] 827, and Hopkins's *op. cit. (in loco)*. See too esp. Rev. ch. 11, & particularly vv. 2f,7-15,18 and our studies for Dec. 13 & 14.

⁸²⁹ Isa. 63:3 cf. Eph. 1:20-22 & 2:6 & Col. 3:1-5f & Rev. 19:15b & n. [†] 830.

⁸³⁰ Rev. 19:15b,19-21 cf. Dan. 12:12 & perhaps Acts 3:19b,21b & n. 825. Apparently the war mentioned in Rev. 19:19-21 would then last for 45 day-years. At the beginning of those 45 day-years, the Kings of the Earth and their international political Beast would become gathered together "to make war against Him Who sat on the horse and against His army," Rev. 19:19.

During the course of these 45 day-years, the Beast and the False-Prophet (see at n. 840) would be "taken" and "cast into a Lake of Fire," Rev. 19:20. And at the **end** of those 45 day-years, "the remnant" of the Beast's by-then-defeated hordes of Christ's enemies would then be slain by His sword, the Word of God, Rev. 19:21 — possibly (and perhaps even probably) converting all but the most incorrigible (who would thus be destroyed by that sword of the Lord), and hence incorporating the large and then-to-be-converted 'remnant' of the Beast's former hordes into the then-internationally-paramount Christian Church. Cf. Rev. 20:1-6, as immediately succeeding Rev. 19:21. See too nn. [†] 828 & 840.

⁸³¹ Rev. 20:3-6, cf. n. 830.

⁸³² Rev. 19:9,17-19, cf. nn. 805-807.

⁸³³ Rev. 19:21b.

⁸³⁴ Mt. 24:15,28; Rev. 13:1f; 17:1-7,12-17; 19:21 cf. Ezek. chs. 37 to 39 esp. 39:4,11,17-20.

⁸³⁵ Rev. 12:3f,11-15; 17:3-7,15.

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Sixth. The armies of Christ's Church will then, however, obtain a relatively quick victory. Earlier, ere the overthrow of 'Babylon' — that Whore herself gave spiritual purpose and direction to the international political Beast and its ten Kings or Kingdoms.⁸³⁶ But now, after those Kings will have themselves turned against her and helped to destroy her — they have no real purpose other than a purely negative hatred of Christ and of Christians.⁸³⁷

At that stage, their essential lack of internal cohesion becomes quite apparent. For then it shall be as Daniel remarked about the ten toes on the Roman feet (and hence in the very last stage of development) of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the successive World-Empires.

"As the toes of the feet were partly of iron, and partly of clay — so the Kingdom[s] shall be partly strong, and partly broken.... But **they shall not keep on cleaving** to one another — even as iron cannot be [or remain] mixed with clay."⁸³⁸ For when the words of God shall have been fulfilled after the ten Horns' destruction of the Whore — those feeble "ten toes" will apparently no longer be able to "agree" even among themselves.⁸³⁹

Seventh. As a result, the international political Beast and its Leaders — after the destruction of the ecumenical and syncretistic religious Whore of 'Babylon'⁸⁴⁰ — will quickly collapse. "Then the Beast was taken, and with him the False-Prophet [of Islam].... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" or sulphur.⁸⁴⁰

Here, comments the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible*, "the worldly princes that fight against Christ" shall be defeated. That will occur at "the **overthrow** of the Beast" — the international political Beast and all his followers.⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁶ Rev. 13:3,11-15; 17:3-7,15.

⁸³⁷ Rev. 17:12-14 & 19:19.

⁸³⁸ Dan. 2:43f *cf.* 7:7 & Rev. 17:7,12-17.

⁸³⁹ Rev. 17:7,12-17, esp. v. 17.

⁸⁴⁰ Rev. 19:19f *cf.* 16:13. E.W. Hengstenberg (*op. cit.* II:81) comments on Rev. 19:20 that "immediately after the second catastrophe which subsequently to the fall of Rome passes over the new manifestation of worldly power, after the victory of Christ over the ten Kings — the Beast with the False-Prophet is seized and cast into the Lake of Fire." Makrakis considers the False-Prophet to be what is left of Islam in that day. *Cf.* again nn. 408 & 581 & 611.

Notice that this verse (Rev. 19:20) does not identify the False-Prophet with the by-then-already-destroyed Romish Whore (Rev. 13:11-16 & 17:1-6 & 17:16), so that it probably indeed refers to the 'False-Prophet' of Islam and his religion of Mohammedanism (*cf.* Rev. 9:1-9 & 16:13f). Ultimately, Islam seems to join forces with the Romish Whore (*cf.* Rev. 16:13f & 17:5) when, together with other false religions (Rev. 16:13f & 17:5), they both go into the ecumenical 'Babylon' (Rev. 16:12 to 17:5). It is possible that Islam-as-such, unlike Romanism, will outsurvive the destruction of the ecumenical Whore (Rev. 19:2), and that Islam will then give some direction to the international political Beast and its ten Kings at that time in their last war against real Christians as the True People of the Lord (Rev. 19:19f).

On the other hand, Rev. 19:20 does not require one to believe that the False-Prophet was in league with the Beast even at the time of the Beast's destruction, but only that both (and possibly at different times) were ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire. Indeed, the statement that "the False-Prophet wrought 'miracles' before" the international political Beast (in Rev. 19:20), may even refer to his past activity, when he previously wrought (past tense *poiesas* = aorist) enoo pion or "before" (*cf.* Lk. 1:17 & Rev. 13:12) the time at which the Beast was later taken.

Eighth. The political Beast and the False-Prophet shall then indeed be cast into the Lake of Fire. Yet this does **not** mean that all (and perhaps not even that any) of the human **followers** of the Beast and of the False-Prophet — will then **themselves** also be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Probably the **Leaders** of the political Beast's legions in that last battle against Christianity — and perhaps some of their **incorrigible** followers also — **will** then be eliminated. And many of those among the infidel hordes who fought against Christ, will then be fed to the vultures.

Not so, however, the rest of those legions. Not so the rank and file, "slain" with the sword of the Spirit by **the Word of God** in that final great spiritual conflict between Christ's Army and the hordes of the Anti-Christian international political Beast and its Kings. And especially not so — those subsequently "slain" by the Word, in the missionary mopping-up operation of Christ's earthly soldiers.

Those "slain" thus, will not be condemned. To the contrary. They will instead experience World-wide 're-viv-al' — and will then join the Christian Church.⁸⁴¹ Thus Barnes and Hengstenberg. For "the **remnant** were slain with the sword of Him Who sat upon the horse, Whose sword [God's Word] proceeded from His mouth"⁸⁴¹ — **unto victory!**

Thereafter, there shall be a long reign of international Christian peace — for many years. Now Zechariah is one of the great 'source books' of the Apostle John's *Book of Revelation*. And Zechariah had prophesied previously: "It shall come to pass that every one who is **left** of all the Nations which come against Jerusalem [alias the Christian Church] — shall even go up from year to year to **worship** the King."⁸⁴¹

There will even then not yet be a state of completely universal faithfulness or total sinlessness. But there will, until the Final Judgment, be a **long-lasting** and **World-wide Christian civilization** enduring or continuing for a '**Millennium**' alias "a thousand years" (or perhaps yet more) — undisturbed by any further Anti-Christian wars or even rebellion.⁸⁴²

Ninth. As Prof. Dr. Loraine Boettner has remarked on Revelation 19:11f in the 1964 edition of his own great book *The Millennium*: "The best explanation of this passage, we believe, is that given by Dr. Warfield" in his article *The Millennium and the Apocalypse* — as reprinted in his *Biblical Doctrines* (pp. 647f & 662). Extended citations from that article now follow.

Explains Warfield: "The section opens with a vision of the **victory** of the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords over **all** His enemies. We see Him come forth from Heaven, girt for war.... It is a vivid picture of a **complete** victory, an **entire** conquest, that we have here....

⁸⁴¹ Rev. 19:21b cf. n. [‡] 863 (Hengstenberg) & esp. Zech. 14:16.

⁸⁴² Rev. 20:1-6.

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"We are carefully told that the sword by which the victory is won — proceeds 'out of the mouth' of the Conqueror.... We are not to think...of any literal war or manual fighting, therefore. The **conquest is wrought** by the spoken word — in short, **by the preaching of the Gospel**....

"We have before us here a picture of the victorious career of the Gospel of Christ in the World.... It is the period of **advancing** victory of the Son of God over the World.... It is the eleventh chapter of Romans...in symbolical form....

"John teaches that...[not the postmortal-heavenly but precisely our present premortal and] **earthly** History of the Church is...a History of...**conquest** over evil.... John teaches...this conquest will be decisive and complete.... Jesus comes forth not to war merely, but to **victory**....

"Every detail of the picture is laid in, with a view precisely to emphasizing the thoroughness of this victory. The Gospel of Christ is, John being witness, **completely to conquer the World**.... Distinction may be made between a **converted** Earth [at the **start** of the 'Millennium'] and a **sanctified** Earth [**during** the 'Millennium']....

"There is a 'golden age' before the Church — at least an age relatively golden, gradually ripening to higher and higher glories — as the Church more and more fully conquers the World and all the evil of the World.... The possibility of an **extended duration** for the **conquered Earth**, lies open.... A **progressively advancing conquest of the Earth** by Christ's Gospel, implies a **coming age** deserving at least the relative name of '**golden**.'"

According to Martin Selbrede in his 1999 article *Reconstructing Postmillennialism* (p. 31): "The parallelism between Revelation 6 and Revelation 19-20 is remarkably strong and corroborative of Warfield's thesis. Both visions depict Christ on horseback — followed by death-dispensing instrumentalities (paralleling Ezekiel 14:11-21) sent for vengeance, followed by scenes of disembodied souls in a state of peace against which a contrasted *chronon mikron* (little season) is opposed in which the battle of the still-living saints is placed.

"Since these are concurrent in Revelation 6 and 12, eschatological universalists hold they are concurrent in Revelation [19 &] 20 as well.... Oddly, this multi-layered parallel and its clear echo at Revelation 12:12 remain almost totally ignored by the rank and file Preterists of the late 20th century. Perhaps these parallels are resistant to incorporation within that agenda."

O Christian, let us then even now gird on the full armour of God!⁸⁴³ Let us hurry to do battle for the cause of our Saviour everywhere we can! Let us wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God — **expecting** to **triumph!**⁸⁴⁴ And let us, after spiritually eliminating the incorrigible **leaders** of the various Anti-Christian conspiracies, mercifully incorporate the large "remnant"⁸⁴⁵ of converted deserters from their ranks — into the Christian Church, as the Army of the Living God!

So on, then, Christian soldiers, marching as to war; with the cross of
Jesus, going on before!
Onward, to **victory!**

⁸⁴³ Cf. Rev. 19:8,14 *cf.* vv. 13 & 21.

⁸⁴⁴ Eph. 6:10-19, esp. vv. 11 & 17; *cf.* Rev. 12:11 & 17:14 & 19:14-21.

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. Rev. 12:5,17 & *cf.* esp. n. 574 (*q.v.*).

The Saints reign on their Thrones with Christ a Thousand Years

Revelation 20:1-6

December 28

"Then I saw an Angel coming down from Heaven.... He laid hold of...Satan and bound him a thousand years...so that he would deceive the Nations no more.... Then I saw thrones. And they [the Nations] sat upon them. And judgment [or rulership] was given to them. Then [I also saw] the souls of them who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God; and those who had not worshipped the Beast or his image nor had received his mark upon their foreheads or on their hands. Now they [the Nations] lived and reigned with Christ, a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live; not even when the thousand years ended."⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴⁶ Rev. 20:1-4, cf. n. 906. See F.N. Lee: *Always Victorious! The Earliest Church not Pre- but Postmillennial* (Jesus Lives, Wavell Heights, Australia, unpub., 2000).

None of the books of the Bible nor any extant writings of the Earliest Church Fathers—such as the A.D. 97 Didachee or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (9:4 & 10:5 & 14:3); the A.D. 98 Epistle of Barnabas (6:12-19 & ch. 12); the 98 Clement of Rome (*I Clem* chs. 33 & 36f); the 100 Shepherd of Hermas (I:3:4,8 & I:4:2); the 107 Ignatius (Epistles to the Magnesians 1:13f & 2:10-14 and To Polycarp ch. 3); the 120 Quadratus; the 130 Epistle to Diognetus (chs. 5 & 7); the 135 so-called Pseudo-Clement; the 140 Polycarp; or the 145 Papias—are chiliastic. The Epistle of Barnabas (ch. 15), possibly under the influence of Second Enoch 32:2 to 33:1—and clearly under the influence of Holy Scripture (Gen. 2:1-3 & Heb. 4:9-11 & Mal. 4:3-5)—specifically advocates the future advent of a Golden Age after the first coming of the Lord Jesus and toward the end of the World. Papias describes a future time of plentiful earthly activity reminiscent not only of that described in the approx. 170f B.C. Sybilline Oracles (III:744f), and the approx. A.D. 1-40 Second Enoch (10:19), and in the approx. A.D. 73 Second Baruch (29:5 & chs. 50 & 51)—but, more remotely, described from B.C. 800 onward also in the Older Testament (Am. 9:13f & Isa. 20:23-26). Note, however, that there are no extant writings of the A.D. 150 Papias himself. All we know about his teachings, is recorded in the writings of the A.D. 185 Irenaeus (*op. cit.* V:32 & V:33:3f) and in those of the A.D. 320 Eusebius (*Ch. Hist.* III:39:8-12). (The **Postmillennialist** Eusebius disapproves of what he regards as Papias's materialism, but he does not say Papias was a Chiliast who believed in two resurrections widely separated from one another. All those underlined above seem to be postmillennial. With the exception of the Mid-Patristic Justin (150), Irenaeus (185), Tertullian (200) and those who followed them—none of the **later Patristic Fathers** were **Chiliasts**. In fact, all mainline Ante-Nicene Fathers even after Justin—thus the A.D. 155 Tatian (To Greeks VI), the 170 Theophilus (To Autolytus XVIII & XXVI), the 173 Melito, the 175 Apollinarius, the 178 Hegesippus (cf. Eusebius's *Ch. Hist.* IV:22-27 & V:14-29 & VI:20:3 & cf. III:28 & VII:24), the 185 Athenagoras (Plea for the Christians ch. 31); and his The Resurrection of the Dead chs. 12 & 14 & 18 & 23 & 25), the 190 Clement of Alexandria (Miscellanies VI:18), the 210 Caius (Fragments I:1f), the 220 Hippolytus (On Christ and Antichrist 61), the 230 Origen (On the Foundations I:6:1 & II:11:2f & III:6:1), the 225 Dionysius of Alexandria, the 258 Cyprian (Tost. 28 I,44f,76 and see the Premillennialist Kromminga's *op. cit.* pp. 69-71 and Cyprian's Epistle 55 or 58:2,5,8 and his Treatise XII: 1 Test. 20 & 2 Test. 7), the 290 Methodius (On the Resurrection I:8 and his Banquet of the Ten Virgins IX:3 and his Symposium (IX:1-3), the 300 Victorinus (Commentary on Revelation 6:1f & 20:1-5), the writers of the 310 Apostolic Constitutions (VII:25f), and Eusebius (*Ch. Hist.* X:2:1 to X:4:9)—seem to have been Postmillennialists, and certainly opposed Chiliasm and all other forms of Escapism. That they did, in spite of living during times when the Church was often persecuted by the Pagan Roman Empire. For full particulars, see F.N. Lee's *Always Victorious! The Earliest Church Not Pre- But Postmillennial* (Jesus Lives, Wavell Heights, Australia, 2000 release date).

The Saints reign on their Thrones with Christ a Thousand Years

Christ had just showed John a preview of the completion of the mopping-up operation by the armies of His Church apparently some seventy-five day-years after the downfall of 'Babylon.'⁸⁴⁷ This mopping up of the remnants of His former enemies, results in the establishment of a Christian World Order in every land, throughout our great planet Earth.

Thereafter, there were no Premillennialists until the Post-Reformation Anabaptists. For all the leading Post-Nicene Theologians were Postmillennialists. Thus: Athanasius (*On the Incarnation of the Word of God* 40); Ephraim (*Hymn on the Nativity* XVIII:1,6); Basil (*Six Days* V:7); Hilary (*Homilies on the Psalms* I); Cyril (*Catechetical Lectures* 15:1-3); Gregory of Nyssa (*Epistles* 17); Gregory of Nazianze (*Orations* 7:24); Ambrose (*Duties of the Clergy* I:28:132f and his *On the Christian Faith* V:14:181 and his *Enarrations in the Psalms* 43:7); Chrysostom (*Fourth Homily on Second Thessalonians*); Jerome (*Epistles* 53 and his *Commentary on Daniel* 2:40); Augustine (*City of God* 20:9 & 22:24 & 17:50 & 22:1 and his *Fourth Treatise on the Gospel of John* 4 and his *Against Faustus* 13:7). Post-Augustinian Postmillennialists would include: Vincent of Lerinum (*Common Places* 23:547); Gregory the Great (*Epistle* 53), Bede of Yarrow (*Explanation of the Apocalypse*, in A. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* XCIII col. 146f); Alcuin of York (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, in A. Migne's *op. cit.* C cols. 1085 & 1156); Bruno of Segni (*Expositions*, in A. Migne's *op. cit.* CLXV cols. 667f); Anselm of Canterbury (*Dialogues*, in A. Migne's *op. cit.* CLXXXVIII cols. 1149f); Joachim of Floris (*Exposition of the Apocalypse*, 1527 ed., fols. 210r. cf. 84v & 211v cf. 16r); Thomas Aquinas (*Exposition of Daniel* ch. 2 p. 15 & ch. 7 pp. 34-4 in *Opera Omnia* XVIII, & *Summa Theologiae* pp. 105-12 as referred to in Kromminga's *op. cit.* p. 151); Roger Bacon (*Compendium Eludii Philosophiae* (as cited in Kromminga's *op. cit.* p. 158); Pierre d'Olivi (*Postilla on the Apocalypse*, Paris, fol. 18 r. col. 1 line 32 to col. 2 line 15); Ubertino of Casale (*Arbor Vitae* V ch. 12 and his *Tract.* ch. 8 fol. 78 r. cited in Froome's *op. cit.* I pp. 775v & 780n.); John Wycliffe (*Concerning the Truth of Holy Scripture*, Truebner, 1905f ed., III:267f, and his *Concerning the Power of the Pope* ch. II); Matthias of Janow (cited in A. Neander's *General History of the Christian Religion and Church* V:200); Nicholas de Cusa (*Opera Conjectura* pp. 933f); Savanarola (*Predica della Rinnovazione* III and his *Sermon of March 1498* as quoted in Doellinger's *Prophecies and the Prophetic Spirit in the Christian Era*, Rivington's, London, 1873, pp. 149 & 163), and Christopher Columbus (as cited in Harris's *Notes on Columbus* pp. 139f and in Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Harper & Row, New York, 1876, II:159f).

Also the Protestant Reformers and their successors continued the ante-chiliastic and basically postmillennial teaching of the Early Church. Thus: M. Luther: *Writings*, Germany, XXII col. 844, and his *Table Talk* p. 194; J. Calvin (*Commentary on Ps. 47*, Preamble and on vv. 7f, and on Ps. 72:11, and *Preface to King Francis*, para. 10 (in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*); J. Knox: *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (in his *Works*, Edinburgh, 1846-64 Woodrow Society ed., I:273) and as cited in Ridley's *John Knox*, 1968, p. 327 and in the *Scots Confession* 25:2 (co-authored by Knox); *Geneva Bible* on Dan. 2:45 and on Rom. 11:25f; *Heid. Cat.*, Q. & A. 123 & 127; *Belg. Conf.*, ch. XXV & XXXVI; Theodore Beza, William Perkins, Richard Hakluyt, John Foxe, James the First, Thomas Brightman, J.H. Alsted, Richard Sibbes, Gijsbert Voetius, Samuel Rutherford, John Cotton, William Twisse, and the Westminster Assembly of 1643f (see its *Westm. Larg. Cat.*, QQ. 45 & 191f and its *Westm. Conf. of Faith*, 23:1) cf. too the *Savoy Declaration* 26:6—and also Owen, Eliot, Van Riebeeck, Dickson, Charnock, Greenhill, Samuel Lee, Brooks, John Brown of Wamphray, Essenius, Spener, Bunyan, Cocceius, Newton, Howe, Cameron, Durham, Witsius, the Mathers, Koelman, Baxter, Vitringa, Matthew Henry, Brakel, Boston, Lampe, Fleming, Willison, Lowman, Edwards, Whitefield, Bengel, the Wesleys, Doddridge, Gill, John Brown of Haddington, Flavel, Dwight, Fuller, Carey, Hopkins, Clarke, Haldane, Neander, Faber, David Livingstone, J.A. Alexander, David Brown, Hengstenberg, John G. Paton, Albert Barnes, Thornwell, Fairbairn, Spurgeon, the Hodges, Martensen, Dabney, Andrew Murray, Trench, Dorner, John Kennedy, Shedd, Symington, Candlish, Meyer, Girardeau, Schaff, Strong, Warfield, MacFarlane, Snowden, Machen, Schilder, Zwemer, B.H. Carroll, Craig, Boettner, Gerstner, John Murray, Kik, R.B. Kuiper, Latourette, Van Til, and Rushdoony. For full particulars, see F.N. Lee: *Christocratic Postmillennialism, 4000 B.C. to 2000 A.D.*, Wavell Heights, Australia, unpub., 1999.

⁸⁴⁷ Cf. nn. 827-831 & our study for Dec. 27.

For John now saw "an Angel coming down from Heaven." And He bound Satan "for a thousand years."⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁸ We think that the original Greek present continuous participle *katabainonta* is significant here—not "come" (as in the *KJV*), but rather "coming." See too Rev. 1:10-16; 2:2:7f,11, *etc.*; Mt. 16:16-21; Jh. 20:21,23; Acts 2:1-41, esp. vv. 38f; ch. 10, esp. v. 43; 13:38; and our study for Dec. 24.

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As to its fulfilment, this event seems yet future. From both the broader context⁸⁴⁹ and the narrower,⁸⁵⁰ this seems to refer to an event which only **starts** commencing **after**⁸⁴⁹ the termination of the mopping-up operation⁸⁵¹ just mentioned immediately prior to it.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁹ Note that it is after the Armageddon-passage (Rev. 16:16 to 19:21) that our 'Millennium'-passage Rev. 20:1-6 is found —before the passage on the Final Judgment (Rev. 20:7-15) which it introduces. Rev. ch. 20 contains information about the actual binding of Satan; about the subsequent thousand years' reign of peace; about the subsequent unbinding of Satan unto his last and everlasting condemnation; and then about the Final Judgment of all mankind itself. This is clearly one continuous series of events. And this series of events also continues to unfold even further in the next two chapters (Rev. chs. 21 & 22), which also clearly seem to deal chiefly with events to occur only after the termination of those different events described in the previous chapters. For Rev. chs. 16 to 17 describe the Devil-inspired liaison between the Babylonian Whore on the one hand and the international Political Beast and the Kings of the Earth and the False-Prophet on the other hand. Rev. ch. 18 describes the fall of the great Whore Babylon. Rev. ch. 19 describes the Devil who inspired them all—and his consignment into the Lake of Fire where the Beast and the False-Prophet will then have been apparently for a "thousand years." Moreover, Rev. ch. 19 seems to end on the blessed note of an international Christian Conquest (Rev. 19:21 *cf.* 20:2f with Dan. 12:12). The very next verses after Rev. 19:21, namely Rev. 20:1-4, seem to be describing the Worldwide result and thousand-years-long duration of that same blessed conquest.

For all of these reasons, then, it seems that Rev. ch. 20 is describing events in sequence—which, generally speaking, precede the different events-in-sequence described in the subsequent passages Rev. chs. 21 & 22; and which, generally speaking, succeed the events-in-sequence described in Rev. chs. 17 to 19.

⁸⁵⁰ Note that the expression "And I saw" (*kai eidon*), throughout the *Book of Revelation*, generally introduces a section with a different time-setting (and usually a subsequent time-setting) to the immediately-previous section. Throughout the *Book of Revelation*, two phrases are used to link up the various parts of that document into one coherent whole. Those phrases are "And I saw" (*kai eidon*)—and "And after these things" (*kai meta tauta*). Now the second phrase ("And after these things") is generally used to introduce a completely-new and different vision than the one just immediately-previously referred to. That new vision is then usually that of a different place or age, as regards its fulfilment. *Cf.* Rev. 4:1f with 3:22; 7:1f with 6:12-17; 7:9f with 7:1-8; 15:5f with 15:2-4; 18:1f with 17:1-6; and 19:1f with 18:1; *etc.*

The first phrase, "And I saw," introduces only the next stage of the fulfilment of the same vision just immediately-previously referred to. This indicates a basic continuity (in time and/or in place) between what is described immediately before and what is described immediately after this phrase. Thus: Rev. 1:12f *cf.* vv. 1-5; 5:1f *cf.* vv. 6-10; 6:1f *cf.* 5:11-14; 6:2f *cf.* v. 1; 5:9f *cf.* vv. 2-8; 6:12f *cf.* vv. 9-11; 7:2f *cf.* 1; 8:2f *cf.* v. 1; 8:13f *cf.* v. 2; 13:11f *cf.* vv. 2-10; 14:1f *cf.* 13:11-18; 14:6f *cf.* vv. 1-5; 14:14f *cf.* vv. 6-13; 15:1f *cf.* 14:14-20; 14:2f *cf.* v. 1; 16:13f *cf.* v. 12; 17:3f *cf.* vv. 1f; 17:6f *cf.* vv. 11-16; 19:19f *cf.* vv. 17f; 20:1f *cf.* 19:19-21; 20:4a *et seqq.* *cf.* vv. 1-3; 20:4c *et seqq.* *cf.* v. 4a *et seqq.*; 20:11f *cf.* vv. 4-10; 20:12f *cf.* v. 11; 21:1f *cf.* 20:12-14; 21:2f *cf.* v. 1; 21:22f *cf.* vv. 2-21; and 22:8f *cf.* 21:22 to 22:7.

The "And I saw" phrases of Rev. chs. 19 to 21, thus link the events described in all three of these consecutive chapters as one extended unfolding series of further events recorded in the very chronological order of their fulfilment. *Cf.* again Rev. 19:11,19; 20:1,4a,4c,11f; 21:1f,22.

Again, according to the Non-Lutheran and Non-Calvinist Evangelical M.J. Erickson's *Contemporary Options in Eschatology* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 61): "The *Augsburg* and *Westminster Confession(s)* are basically postmillennial. Lutheran, Presbyterian and Reformed groups have tended to follow this position." This is certainly true of the *Westminster Standards* (*cf.* the *West. Conf.* 8:8 and the *Westminster Larg. Cat.* QQ. & AA. 45 & 52-54 & 190 & 191 & 195 and the *West. Short. Cat.* QQ. & AA. 26 & 66 & 102). "Certainly Postmillennialism gives a very effective impetus to spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom" (thus the Premillennialist Erickson in his *op. cit.* p. 71). And "that progress will accelerate," he declares (quoting the Postmillennialist Boettner), "like a snowball" (*ib.* p. 68). See too n. 863.

⁸⁵¹ Rev. 19:2 *cf.* Dan. 12:12.

⁸⁵² Read again nn. 849f.

First. Most Theologians place these "thousand years" **not in Heaven** but right here on **Earth** — and **before** the time of Christ's Final Coming visibly and **simultaneously** to **resurrect** the **whole** of **mankind** unto **judgment** at the very **end of the World**. Thus: Barnabas, Papias, Caius, Origen, Ambrose, Tichonius, Augustine, Jerome, Primasius, Gregory the Great, Bede, Aquinas, Dante, Purvey, Luther, Calvin, Knox, the *Geneva Bible*, Chytraeus, Bullinger, Junius, Foxe, Napier, James the First, Grotius, Hammond, Dowling, Brightman, Pareus, John Cotton, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Goodwin, Parker, Gerhard, Poole, Vitringa, Cocceius, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, Wesley, Bengel, Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Priestley, Hopkins, Dwight, Horne, Faber, Scott, Fuller, Cunninghame, Adam Clarke, David Brown, Barnes, Fairbairn, Hengstenberg, the Hodges, Shedd, Warfield, Kik, Carroll, Boettner, Rushdoony, and many others.⁸⁴⁶

The above view — **Postmillennialism** — has been mercilessly attacked by the Post-Apostolic and indeed very modern heresy of **Pretribulationism**. Many modern Pretribulationists and other Dispensationalists (such as John Walvoord and Hal Lindsay) boldly claim that **most** (if not **all**) of the first Early Church Fathers were **Rapturists**. Such believe Jesus could return "**at any moment**" to **resurrect dead Christians**, and then secretly "rapture" His dwindling though still-living Church "up into the air" **before** first "the great tribulation" and then the destruction of ungodly worldlings. Soon thereafter, Pretribulationists insist, the Church would then return with Christ visibly from Heaven and rule with Him visibly here on Earth for a thousand years — until God would **resurrect the wicked dead** for their Final Judgment.

The above notion — called "Chiliasm" — is false. Neither the Church of the Older Testament (even when under foreign domination) nor the always-struggling and often-persecuted Church of the Newer Testament (even till the fourth century) ever expected to dwindle or to be whisked away; but only **to conquer this great planet Earth** under her **victorious Messiah**. That Church expected God **not** to the **rapture** her — but **to keep on using her message and mission**, in order to **heal** the World His Son had come to **save**. John 3:16!

From the end of the third century, the Church's expectations and efforts were partially realized — at the nominal **christianization** of the Pagan Roman Empire. For the **victory-orientated** Church of the first four centuries was overwhelmingly anti-chilastic, and totally anti-pretribulationistic.

Quite false, then, is the chilastic claim of John Walvoord and other modern Dispensationalists (such as Hal Lindsay etc.) that the Early Church was solidly Premillennialist. Quite the contrary is the case.

The chilastic "two resurrections" theory is neither Older-Testamentical, Ancient-Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphical, Newer-Testamentical, Apostolic, Early-Patristic, nor Neo-Apocryphal. Instead, it is a Mid-Patristic aberration by only a minority — and derived from Babel, via Zoroastrian Paganism.⁸⁴⁶

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Second. As regards the true interpretation of **Revelation 20:2-6** and its "thousand years" — it is important to note that Calvin, the greatest of all Reformers, located the 'Millennium' not in Heaven (as do many modern 'Amillennialists') — but here on **Earth**. He located it not in the past or in the present (as do some 'Preterists' and as do most 'Amillennialists') — but in the **future**. Indeed, he located it (unlike all 'Premillennialists') **before** the visible return of Christ. Thus, Calvin was a 'Postmillennialist.'

For in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III:25:5), the genius of Geneva rejected the '**heavenly** Millennium' theory (held by many modern 'Amillennialists'). There, he rejected also the views of "the Chiliasts" or Premillennialists "who **limited** the **reign** of Christ to [but] a **thousand** years."

These chiliastic or premillennialistic "**fictions**" — Calvin claims — "are too **puerile** to need or to deserve refutation." Nor do they "receive any countenance from the *Apocalypse* (Revelation 20:4), from which it is known that they extracted a gloss for their error — since the thousand years **there** mentioned, refer **not to the eternal blessedness of the Church**, but only to" those events "which await the Church Militant in this World."⁸⁴⁶

Note here especially Calvin's word "await." He says, also against some 'Preterists' and many modern 'Amillennialists' — that the aforesaid events of "the thousand years" still "await" Christ's Church; and indeed not His Church Triumphant in glory but His "**Church Militant in this World**." Thus the clear Postmillennialism of the genius of Geneva.

Third. In **Holy Scripture**, it was after seeing the subjugation of the "remnant" of Christ's former enemies since the destruction of the international political Beast and the False-Prophet⁸⁵³ — that John "**saw** an Angel coming down from Heaven, **having the key of the bottomless pit** and a great chain in His hand. **Then He laid hold of the Dragon**, that old Serpent which is the Devil and Satan, **and bound him a thousand years**."⁸⁴⁸

Now it is perfectly true that the juridical **basis** of this thousand years' binding of Satan was **already** laid down when Christ bound the Devil's power at Calvary. Yet this binding at Calvary may not for a moment be divorced from its necessary consequences at Christ's subsequent resurrection, ascension and especially at His heavenly session when His **universal rule** was launched.⁸⁵⁴

As a result of Christ's rule and reign, it is also true especially after Pentecost Sunday that the Holy Spirit binds the power of Satan in the lives of Christians when they are translated from the kingdom of darkness into Christ's Kingdom at the time of their regeneration. An ongoing and tighter binding continues also thereafter — as the Holy Spirit progressively binds Satan more and more in their lives throughout the period of their sanctification.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵³ Rev. 19:19-21, & cf. our study at nn. 840-845.

⁸⁵⁴ Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:1-7; 53:12; 61:1-6f; Mt. 12:25-29; Lk. 11:21f; Jh. 12:23-32; 16:11; Acts 3:24-29; I Cor. 15:25,27; Col. 2:14f; Heb. 2:14f I Jh. 3:8.

⁸⁵⁵ Mt. 11:28-30; 19:28; Mk. 10:20; Lk. 8:31-33; Jh. 3:1-8; 12:32,35f,46; Rom. 6:1-14; 16:20; Gal. 5:1f; Eph. 2:1-6; Heb. 12:22f; Rev. 12:11; 14:12; 20:4,6.

It is also certainly true that Christ through His Spirit is even now restraining Satan more and more throughout the World. That occurs **as the Church expands** extensively and intensively, and as Satan is more and more being bound in the lives of individuals **and of Nations** — down **through the centuries**.

This is not at all easy to square with any kind of modern Premillennialism in general — and Dispensationalism in particular. Yet it is very easily reconcilable with the viewpoint of the Early Church of the first and second centuries. See, for example: the A.D. 98 *Didachee* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 16; the A.D. 98 *Epistle of Barnabas* 15; the A.D. 130 *Epistle to Diognetus* 12; the A.D. 135 *Second Clement*; the A.D. 173 Melito (*PP* 102); the A.D. 175 Claudius Apollinarius (in Eusebius's *Preface to the Paschal Chronicle*); the *Gospel of Nicodemus*; the anti-dispensationalistic 'Covenantal Premillennialist' Irenaeus; the A.D. 220 Hippolytus (apparently a Postmillennialist); and the clearly-postmillennialistic A.D. 300 Victorinus in his (the first extant) commentary on the *Book of Revelation* (especially at 6:1-2 and 20:1-5).

Thus, the *circa* A.D. 135 *Second Clement* (20:4) stated that "Divine judgment surprised a spirit that was not righteous — and loaded it with chains." *Cf.* Revelation 20:1-2.

Even more dramatically, the antipremillennialistic *circa* A.D. 180 *Gospel of Nicodemus* (22) triumphantly declares that "the King of glory seized the chief satrap Satan by the head, and delivered him to His Angels and said: 'With iron chains, bind his hands and his feet and his mouth!' Then He delivered him to hades [*cf.* the bottomless pit], and said: 'Take him, and **keep** [or **guard**] him securely — till My Second Coming!'" *Cf.* Revelation 20:1-15.

More amazingly yet, the A.D. 185 Irenaeus (practically the first extant **non**-postmillennialistic Theologian) insisted that "the Son of man...fought **and conquered**" and **bound** the strong man" Satan. For Christ did "bind the strong man, **and despoiled his goods**."

Indeed, continued Irenaeus, Christ did "tread upon the enemy's head" — and **shall trample down**...the dragon." For He "would bind the dragon" — and He "bound [Satan] with...chains...in order that man, being set free, might return to his Lord.... For **when Satan is bound, man is set free**." Revelation 20:2-3. Thus Christ "the Word **bound** him **securely**...and **made** spoil of his goods.... 'Blessed and holy is he who **has** part in the **first** resurrection!" Revelation 20:6.

This is the view also of the famous postmillennialistic Presbyterian and Reformed Theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge. Thus, in his renowned *Systematic Theology* (II:637f), he insisted: "Having been committed to Him for a special purpose, this universal dominion as Mediator will be relinquished when that purpose is accomplished. He will reign until all His enemies are [= have been] put under His feet. And when that last enemy [death] is subdued, He will deliver up this Kingdom to the Father and [then] reign forever as King over the redeemed" — as the Central Person of the Triune God.

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Hence the elect are sealed **baptismally** on their foreheads precisely unto their later **resurrection**. First Corinthians 15:22-29 *cf.* Revelation 7:2-17 & 20:2-15 (*q.v.*).

Also the renowned Amillennialist Rev. Prof. Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema understands it thus. For he too rightly observes: "Because of the binding of Satan during this present age, the Nations cannot conquer the Church; but **the Church is conquering the Nations**."⁸⁵⁶ Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Revelation 7:2-9 & 15:4 & 20:3 & 22:2-4 & 22:10f.

Nevertheless, in **this** present context of Revelation chapter twenty, for a number of reasons⁸⁵⁷ — the "**thousand years**" does indeed seem to refer to a period the principal aspect of which is **as yet still future**.⁸⁵⁷ Thus: John Calvin, John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Bishop Thomas Newton, John Brown of Haddington, Samuel Hopkins, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, David Brown, Patrick Fairbairn, Hengstenberg, B.H. Carroll, Loraine Boettner, and very many others.⁸⁵⁰

Fourth. The "Angel coming down from Heaven"⁸⁴⁸ — seems to be our Lord Jesus Christ. He keeps on coming down from Heaven — in the Person of His Holy Spirit — ever since Christ's heavenly session.

As the *Geneva Bible* of John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham claims: "This Angel represents the order of the Apostles, whose vocation and office was from Heaven — or may signify Christ, Who would tread down the Serpent's head" through the work of His Apostles and other later representatives.⁸⁴⁸ Thus too the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* (1599 Junius edition), Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Carroll, and Kik.

Christ Himself came down from Heaven at the time of His incarnation,⁸⁵⁸ in order to bind Satan⁸⁵⁹ and to destroy the works of the Devil.⁸⁶⁰ He came down from Heaven later again (in the Person of **His Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday**)⁸⁶¹ into His Church. And through His still-expanding earthly body, His Word-preaching Church (as already seen in the previous chapter) — Christ is constantly coming down from Heaven '**invisibly**' in the **ongoing and everlasting procession of His Spirit** (from the Father and the Son). He is thus, now, progressively binding the Devil more and more.⁸⁶² Thus John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, J. Marcellus Kik, and Loraine Boettner.

⁸⁵⁶ Isa. 11:1-12; 42:1-7; 58:6; 61:1-11; Lk. 4:16-21; 10:17f; Jh. 8:32,36; Rom. 16:20; I Cor. 3:21f; Eph. 2:7; II Th. 3:1; Rev. 2:1f; 12:9-11; 14:12; 17:14; 19:15,21; 20:4 *cf.* 14:12. See too A.A. Hoekema's essay *Amillennialism* in ed. R.H. Clouse's *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove Ill., 1977, p. 164).

⁸⁵⁷ *Cf.* nn. 6538-41 & 6583. In the sense described in Rev. 20:1-8, Satan had not yet as then been bound at the time (several decades after Calvary) that John was writing the *Book of Revelation*. For Satan was still causing much suffering at that time. *Cf.*: Acts 5:3 & 14:22; I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 2:11 & 11:14 & 12:7; II Th. 2:3,9; and I Tim. 1:20 & 5:15. And even in respect of upsetting believers, Satan would continue to walk about like a roaring lion here on Earth—both at that time, and thereafter (I Pet. 5:8). See too Vanderwaal's *Revelation (etc.)*, p. 121 & n.

⁸⁵⁸ I Tim. 3:16 & Jh. 3:13-16.

⁸⁵⁹ Mt. 12:25-29 & Jh. 12:23-32 *cf.* n. 854.

⁸⁶⁰ Heb. 2:14f & I Jh. 3:8.

⁸⁶¹ Acts 1:1f & 2:1-4 *cf.* Jh. 14:3-26 & 16:7-28.

⁸⁶² Rom. 16:20 & Isa. 58:6 *cf.* n. 856.

But furthermore, according to our present text⁸⁴⁸ Christ will **again** keep on coming down from Heaven **invisibly** (through the mighty **Spirit-filled preaching of His "Angels" or Preacher-Messengers**), to bind the Devil for "a thousand years."⁸⁴⁸ This He will do especially **during** and **after** the destruction of the international political Beast and its godless Horns or "the Kings of the Earth" and all their incorrigible followers.⁸⁶³

The result will then be the large-scale conversion of the "remnant" of the Anti-Christian hordes — and the arrival of a time of speedy expansion of Christianity and, at length, of World-wide blessings. Such will then endure 'millennially' — last right down to the time of Jesus' Final Coming (visibly, in power, and with great glory).⁸⁶⁴

Declared John:⁸⁴⁸ "I saw an Angel come down from Heaven, Who had the key of the abyss, and a great chain.... And He seized...Satan, and bound him a thousand years."

Comments Professor Dr. Hengstenberg:⁸⁶³ "What is here undertaken against Satan, stands in the closest connection with what has been said before — in Revelation 19:18-20 — respecting the ten Kings and the Beast.... The...God-opposing principle was broken in **the ten Kings** — partly through severe judgments of God (19:11-21); partly through the peaceful mission of the Church (in 17:17)." Compare 19:20f & 20:10.

Hengstenberg continues: "They have **renounced their enmity against God** and Christ and the Church. And by reason of **their having taken on them the yoke of Christ — the Beast too has retired** from the stage.... "'Resist the Devil — and he will flee from you' (James 4:7), etc. If the Earth were to watch and pray for a thousand years — Satan would have nothing on it!"

Fifth. The still-future 'millennial' and **Spirit-ual coming** of Christ from Heaven to bind the Devil here on Earth — is **not** to be regarded as a **visible** coming. After all, it is not yet His later and Final Coming at the Last Judgment (which shall, of course, be seen by every eye).⁸⁶⁵

For we are implicitly told in this very chapter that Christ's **Final Coming** will occur only **after** the end of the "thousand years."⁸⁶⁶ And inasmuch as this chapter is a continuous extension from the previous one⁸⁶⁷ — the coming of Christ referred to in our present passage will probably be just as invisible (yet just as Spirit-ually real) as the other "coming" referred to in the previous chapter.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶³ Rev. 19:20f. See too Hengstenberg's *op. cit.* II on Rev. 20:1.

⁸⁶⁴ Rev. 20:1-4,6 *cf.* 19:21[†].

⁸⁶⁵ Rev. 1:7; 14:14; Mt. 24:30.

⁸⁶⁶ Rev. 20:7-12 *cf.* Mt. 25:31f & Acts 17:21.

⁸⁶⁷ Rev. 19:11-14f.

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At the beginning of Revelation chapter twenty, then, Christ will indeed come from Heaven. Yet He will then come invisibly; will then keep on coming in the power of His Holy Spirit; will then increasingly be manifested World-wide to all the Nations; will then be manifested through the mighty Spirit-filled preaching and sin-binding application of His Word by His faithful Ministers or "Angels" or Messengers; and will then be manifested here on Earth — in the lives of all of His Commandment-keeping and Christ-loving People.⁸⁴⁸ Thus: John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, Marcellus Kik, Loraine Boettner, and many others.⁸⁴⁸

Sixth. The essentially **Spirit-ual** nature of this coming of Christ described in our present passage, is evident from the very description itself. For Satan is an invisible and a non-material spirit who could hardly be bound by a visible and a material chain!

Only a **Spirit-ual** "chain" — only the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God — has ever bound Satan in any sense in the past.⁸⁶⁸ Thus the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Kik, Boettner, and others. And only this same Spirit-ual chain — one day to stretch right around the World⁸⁶⁹ — will ever bind Satan in the future too.

For, as the *Geneva Bible* insists, the 'key of the bottomless pit' here means "the Gospel — whereby Hell is shut up to the faithful, and Satan is chained so that he cannot hurt them.... The Ministers [or 'Preaching Angels'] hereby open it ['Hell'] to the infidels...through their [own] impiety and stubbornness."⁸⁴⁸

Seventh. Now this Spirit-ual chain — even today progressively being imposed by Christ in His Spirit-ual work through His Word-wielding Church⁸⁶² — will one day embrace the whole **World**. Then will that "chain" **liberate** all Nations from the deceits of Satan — while **imprisoning** the latter within its grip, like a dog on a leash.⁸⁷⁰

During the times of the Older Testament, it was only the Nation of Israel which had the liberating weapon of God's Word with which to protect itself from the wiles of the deceitful Devil. **All** of the other Nations in the World were then deceived by Satan.⁸⁷¹ But with the incarnation of Christ in the times of the Newer Testament, His 'Great Commission' bids us to go into all the World and to liberate **all** of the previously-deceived Nations from their imprisonment to the Devil and his fetters of sin and ignorance and disease and poverty. For we are to give the Nations the protective chain of the Word of God with which to bind the Devil in their personal and national lives and their international relationships, so that he should no longer deceive them.

⁸⁶⁸ Lk. 4:4-10f; 8:30-33; 10:17f; Rev. 12:11; 14:12 *cf.* II Pet. 2:4 & Jude 6 & Isa. 14:12f. See too n. 898.

⁸⁶⁹ Rev. 20:1-3,7f.

⁸⁷⁰ Satan will not be powerless totally, when bound; but (as we have said) he will be as restrained as is a dog on a chain. *Cf.* Rev. 20:1-4 with Mt. 8:28-52 & esp. v. 29b & 16:19 & 18:18; Lk. 8:30-33; Jh. 12:31f; Col. 1:15.

⁸⁷¹ Dt. 7:1-8; Ps. 115:2-9; Am. 2:17-24; 3:1f; 9:3-5. *Per contra*, Isa. 14:15f & Rev. 20:3,7f. Even since Christ's heavenly session at the right hand of God the Father, the not-yet-christianized Nations as well as those only in part christianized — are still being deceived by Satan, though now to different and generally to reduced degrees (*cf.* Rev. 9:1-4 & 16:13f).

Obviously, even today, many Nations are still being deceived by Satan and have not yet been liberated by this Christian missionary outreach with the liberating Gospel.⁸⁷¹ But one day, this still-expanding process will be completed — at the yet-future time of the binding of Satan **World-wide**. Then, **all Nations-as-such** —including even the Jews as apparently the last Nation to be christianized⁸⁷² —will serve the Lord Jehovah-Jesus.

In that day, **the Nations (as such)** — as distinguished from the many present minority groups of Christians **within** each Nation⁸⁷³ —will then, by the Church's own spreading abroad of Christ's Gospel, be brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And in that day, Satan will be "bound" (though not totally be harmless) throughout the World and all its Nations for "a thousand years."⁸⁴⁸ Thus Jonathan Edwards, David Brown, B.B. Warfield, J.M. Kik, Loraine Boettner, and Rousas John Rushdoony.

Eighth. This blessed time of a "thousand years" (or perhaps even thousands of years)⁸⁷⁴ represents the cube of ten (as the number of plenitude). Thus it symbolizes a thrice-multiplied condition and duration of fullness, and probably also an indefinitely **long** period.⁸⁷⁴ For the Devil will much be restrained by this triple "**seal**" in the bottomless pit⁸⁷⁵ — while all "**the Nations**" he previously deceived will then be marked World-wide with **Baptism** as the **triple seal** of the Triune God.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² Rom. 11:12-15,25-32; II Cor. 3:3-18.

⁸⁷³ Cf. Mt. 13:30; Rom. 3:3; 9:6b; II Th. 3:2b; Rev. 20:3,8. See too our remarks in our studies on these vv. (*in locis*).

⁸⁷⁴ Rev. 20:2-7. 1000 = 10 x 10 x 10 = ten cubed. Throughout (Rev. 20:2-4,6f) —the expression could be understood as referring to the plural "thousands" rather than to the singular "thousand." One could accordingly translate the Greek expression *ta chilia etee* in vv. 2 & 4, either as "a thousand years" or as "thousands of years." No doubt the number is —at least chiefly so —indeed symbolically rather than literalistically or exactly intended. Cf. also Pss. 50:10 & 90:4 & 91:7 & II Pet. 3:8f —where few Bible readers would take the word "thousand" literalistically! Cf. too our remarks in our studies on Rev. 2:10; 4:5b; 4:8; 4:10; 5:11; 7:4; 9:14; 14:20; and 21:16f.

The idea of precisely and literalistically or exactly "1000 years' reign of blessedness" here on Earth, is essentially neither an Older-Testamentical nor an Old-Apocryphal nor a Pseudepigraphical nor a Newer-Testamentical nor an Apostolic nor a Patristic nor even a Neo-Apocryphal but rather a Post-Christian and Non-Christian Judaistic idea apparently first borrowed during the Exile from Zoroastrian Paganism while in Persia. In comparing the Old-Apocryphal or Pseudepigraphical *Book of Enoch* chs. 33 & 91:12-19 & 93 and *Baruch* 40:3 *etc.*, note that *IV Ezra* 7:28f has 400 rather than 1000 years. See too *Barn.* 15:4 & Irenaeus's *On Heresies* V:28:3.

Note further that Christians reign with Christ here and now (*cf.* Col. 3:1-4) —rather than any notion that Christ shall reign visibly here on Earth with Christians for exactly 1000 years. And note finally that Christians reign with Christ now, during his present Mediatorial Reign (I Cor. 15:24-28 & Eph. 2:6) —rather than any notion that they will only start reigning with God eternally, hereafter. Of course, after the Final Judgment, Christians will indeed still keep on reigning also with the Triune God —and indeed for ever (Rev. 22:5). But our present text (Rev. 20:4) is rather describing their prior reign with Christ; and indeed before the Final Judgment.

⁸⁷⁵ Cf. Mt. 28:19's baptismal seal "in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" and its concomitant and resultant obligation to "teach all Nations" —with Rev. 20:3's "set a seal upon him [Satan], so that he should deceive the Nations no more"; and with Rom. 4:11's "sign" and "seal"; and with Col. 2:11f & Rev. 7:1-4 & 14:1 & 22:4 & 21:24-26.

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The "thousand years" thus represents — or such thousands of years thus represent — a golden age or a long and blessed era of the **inter-national** triumph of True Christianity **throughout the Earth**. Then, Satan will be restrained by the power of the Gospel from deceiving **all the Nations**.⁸⁷⁶ Thus Jonathan Edwards, David Brown, B.B. Warfield, Marcellus Kik, Loraine Boettner, and R.J. Rushdoony.

It will be: a period of unchallenged and universal hegemony for Christianity.⁸⁷⁷ It will be a time of True Religion and undefiled⁸⁷⁸ — when international peace shall flow like a river.⁸⁷⁹ It will be a very long season of immense spiritual blessings⁸⁸⁰ — resulting in great public righteousness.⁸⁸¹ And it will be an age of tremendous material prosperity⁸⁸² and of vastly-increased longevity.⁸⁸³

Exactly **how long** will the 'Millennium' last? Perhaps precisely 1000 years — suggest the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, and Bishop Thomas Newton. For a very long time — suggest Joachim of Floris, John Calvin, Matthew Poole, Albert Barnes, and E.W. Hengstenberg. For a long symbolic period — suggest Matthew Henry, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke, Warfield, Kuyper, Kik, B.H. Carroll, and Herman Hoeksema. For 365,000 years — one year for every day of our present years, for a thousand years — suggest Bishop Thomas Newton, Joshua Wilson, Robert Scott, Charles Hodge, H.E. Gravemeijer, Loraine Boettner (and a whole host of others such as W.C. Davis, W.C. Brownlee, A.H. Burdick, Joseph Emerson, Charles Buck, Alexander Campbell, & Isaac Hinton).

⁸⁷⁶ Rev. 20:3 *cf.* our text at n. 874. Note too that the Johannine *ezeesan* in the Greek of Rev. 20:4f seems to be understood best, in the light of the equally-Johannine *zeesousin* in Jh. 5:25-29. That Satan will be restrained throughout the 'Millennium' from "deceiving the Nations" — is the view of all Classic Premillennialists and Classic Amillennialists and Classic Postmillennialists. *Cf.* too esp. the views of Jonathan Edwards, Moses Stuart, David Brown, Albert Barnes, Warfield, Kik, Boettner and Rushdoony at n. 942. For the proof that the 'Millennium' will be here on Earth, see at n. 898.

⁸⁷⁷ Pss. 2:7; 22:27-29; 72:8-11; Isa. chs. 2 & 11 & 65 & 66 & 25:7; Dan. 2:35,44; 7:14,27; 12:12; Zech. 9:9,10,14; Mt. 13:31; 28:19; Rev. 11:15; 20:3-6. On conditions in general during this 'millennial' blessed reign of the saints here on Earth, *cf.*: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:3f,15; Pss. 2:7-12; 8:3-8; ch. 67; 72:2-19; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:3-12; 30:23-29; 35:1-10; 40:1-5; 60:1-22; 62:1-13; 65:17-25; 66:18-24; Ezek. 34:23-41; 36:29-38; Dan. 2:35,44; 7:14,22,25-27; 12:12; Mic. 4:1-5; Mt. 6:10,13,33; 13:21f; I Cor. 3:21f; 15:24-128; I Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 1:11; & Rev. 20:3-6. Indeed, this future period is just like those areas of our present earthly life wherever there is joyful subjection to the Kingship of Christ in the Kingdom of God — except that this future period will be an intensification of all this. *Cf.* n. 898.

⁸⁷⁸ Jas. 1:26f *cf.* Acts 15:13-21.

⁸⁷⁹ Pss. 46:4-9; 119:165; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:6-9; 48:18; Mic. 4:1-8; Phil. 4:7f *cf.* n. 880.

⁸⁸⁰ Isa. 2:4 & 11:6-9,16 & 49:23 & 60:22 & 66:18 & Mic. 4:3 *etc.* These spiritual blessings, on account of the finished atonement of Christ, naturally preclude the re-institution of the Levitical ceremonies *etc.* Compare R. Woodrow: *His Truth Is Marching On!* (Woodrow, Riverside Ca., 1977, pp. 94-107). See too n. 879.

⁸⁸¹ Pss. 22:12,27,29; 45:12,16; 72:11,17; Dan. 7:14,27; Isa. 60:12; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 20:4.

⁸⁸² Ps. 67:6; Isa. 30:23f; 65:21-24; Jer. 31:12; Ezek. 26f; 36:29-38; Am. 9:11-13; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 8:12; Mt. 6:33; I Tim. 4:8.

⁸⁸³ Isa. 65:18-20 *cf.* Gen. 5:22-24 & 6:9 & 9:21.

The 'Millennium' then, will occur **here on Earth** — between the First Advent and the Final Coming of Christ. Thus Augustine, Primasius, Andreas, Walafrid Strabo, Bede, Haymo, Berengaud, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, the Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, John Brown of Haddington, Adam Clarke, the *D'Oyly & Mant Bible*, David Brown, Albert Barnes, Patrick Fairbairn, B.H. Carroll, Kik, Boettner, and Rushdoony.⁸⁷⁶ It is **not** an oxymoronic 'amillennial Millennium'(!)— **only in Heaven** ('a la Lenski).

As John remarked: "Satan...would deceive **the Nations** no more.... And I saw thrones. And they [the Nations] sat upon them [the thrones]. And judgment [or rulership]⁸⁸⁴ was given to them [the earthly Nations].... Blessed and holy..., they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."⁸⁸⁵

Ninth. The following remarks of Philip Mauro are very instructive. "At last," he explains, "an era of life and blessing comes to the World — over which sin and death have held sway for six thousand years. And the first guarantee of this [and the first necessary condition to secure it] is that the earthly enemies of God are destroyed...for a thousand years....

"We must remember that the things John saw and which he describes as [if] already past — ('they **lived** and **reigned**') — were in fact many centuries in the future at the time he saw and described them.... As regards the period here given as 'a thousand years' — we should seek the spiritual and symbolical meaning of the term. What chiefly impresses me, is that it conveys the idea of fullness and completeness.

"That coming period of blessing will be **full measure**. It will not be broken or curtailed.... But nevertheless, the 'Millennium' is not the eternal state of perfection and blessedness. Hence it will come to an end. It is to be observed that the phrase '**a thousand years**' occurs **six times** in these few verses.... The **six** is itself significant. It very definitely signifies that the 'Millennium' with all its blessings nevertheless **comes short of perfection**. It does not reach...to **seven**....

"During **the 'Millennium'**...we shall have not only the opportunity, but also the ability, to inquire fully into these matters.... The 'Millennium' is a period during which the **natural** creation is restored virtually to the state in which it subsisted before the entrance of sin into the World.... Moreover, God's plan for the natural World will then be carried out — in that man will '**have dominion over all the Earth**' and over all living creatures."⁸⁸⁵

Tenth. The still-future "thousand years" reign of subsequent generations of Christians here on **Earth**, will be akin to our present **earthly life** (yet much improved), and an improved foretaste of the **heavenly life after death** (yet before the Final Judgment). Thus John applies the term "thousand years" — to embrace **also** the period of the Christians' postmortal sojourn in **Heaven** (until the Final Judgment).⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸⁴ Rev. 12:3f cf. I Cor. 6:3.

⁸⁸⁵ Rev. 20:6b cf. Mauro's *op. cit.* pp. 517-22.

⁸⁸⁶ Rev. 20:4b.

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This is very appropriate. For **all** earthly Christians — whether martyred in the past; suffering in the present; or triumphant in the future — did reign, reign now, or shall reign, with Christ. They did so, do so, or shall do so —right here on **Earth**.

Moreover, they will **continue** their present reign-with-Christ also after their deaths even in **Heaven** — until Christ Himself hands over His Mediatorial reign to the Father,⁸⁸⁷ on His Own Final Coming at the end of the "thousand years."⁸⁸⁸ And after that time, when the Triune God will be all things and in all people, all of His triumphantly-baptized children will **still keep on reigning** under Him (and with Him) —unto all eternity.⁸⁸⁹

Now all Christians **have**, at least incipiently, "lived and **reigned** with Christ" ever since their "**first** resurrection."⁸⁹⁰ This "first resurrection" is that of their **souls**⁸⁹¹ — when they were **regenerated** and thus "lived" again and "reigned" (while here on Earth prior to their deaths).⁸⁹² Thus: Calvin, the *Geneva Bible*, Kuyper, Kik, Boettner, and many others. Indeed, this is especially true of those imbued with the spirit of the martyrs. Thus: John Cotton, David Brown, and Albert Barnes.

Even **those** future earthly saints who will die at a ripe old age⁸⁸³ during the **future** era of blessedness — will start to reign precisely **from** the time of their regeneration onward (and then continue to reign **also during** the time of their postmortal life in Heaven and **right down till** the Final Judgment). Indeed, they will continue to reign **even thereafter** — right here, back again on our renewed planet (as the New Earth), and for ever.⁶⁹¹

Eleventh. John also saw how the **Christian Nations**, under the direction of Christ's Spirit, would **reign** and **rule** here on **Earth** — internationally, during the 'Millennium.' He explains: "Satan...would deceive **the Nations** no more.... I saw **thrones**. And they [the de-Satanized and then-Christianized **Nations**] sat upon them [the thrones]. And judgment [or **rulership**] was given to them [the Nations]."

Here, John was enabled to look ahead at Christian Nations, right **here on Earth**. He foresaw especially the **yet-future** generations of Christian **Nations** which will live and reign **here on Earth** during **more-Christianized** times.⁸⁹³

Twelfth. John **also** saw, however, the Christian dead in **Heaven**. In particular, he saw "the **souls** of them who had been **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God" here in the World — **before** the commencement of the 'Millennium' here on our great planet Earth.

⁸⁸⁷ I Cor. 15:24-28 *cf.* Rev. 20:3-11f.

⁸⁸⁸ Rev. 20:7-12 *cf.* n. 861.

⁸⁸⁹ Mt. 28:19 & Rev. 22:4f *cf.* I Cor. 15:28 & Col. 3:11.

⁸⁹⁰ Rev. 20:4f *cf.* Jh. 5:24-29; Eph. 2:1-6; nn. 855-875.

⁸⁹¹ Rev. 20:4; Jh. 5:24f *cf.* Mt. 10:28; Gal. 2:20; II Tim. 2:11f.

⁸⁹² *Cf.* nn. 890f.

⁸⁹³ Rev. 20:4a's "and they" seems to be referring esp. to v. 2b's "the Nations" as its immediate antecedent, grammatically. *Cf.* Rev. 20:4abc with vv. 3f & 6 and with Isa. 14:15,22 & Lk. 10:17f & I Cor. 6:3 (*cf.* Rev. 20:3f) & Rev. 20:1-3,7 (*per contra* Rev. 9:1-4!).

Here, John was looking first of all at the 'martyred' "**souls in Heaven** of those Christians who had been killed (and who are being killed and who yet shall be killed) — **killed for their Christian Faith** — killed while previously here on Earth.⁸⁹⁴ For, as the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* comments, here we see "the glory and authority of them that suffer for Christ's sake" — namely suffered "**while** they...remained in **this** life."⁸⁹⁴

The *American Revised Version* translates: "I saw thrones, and they [that] sat on them; and judgment was given unto them. **And** I saw the **souls** of them that had **been** beheaded for the testimony of Jesus.... And they [**all**] lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

J. Marcellus Kik well paraphrases his understanding of John's words as follows: "I beheld the [**living**] **saints** seated upon thrones — **ruling over** the flesh and **the World** and the Devil. Yes, I beheld too the [**postmortal**] victorious **lives** of those who had **been beheaded** — and also of those who [**had**] **suffered** because they [had] refused to worship the Beast. As a matter of fact, **all** saints lived and reigned with Christ — for a thousand years."

Thirteenth. As already indicated by Kik, in addition to the souls of the **martyrs** — John **also** saw in Heaven such Christians who got there after **dying from natural causes**. These are "those"⁸⁹⁵ of the blessed dead who had not been "beheaded" or 'slaughtered' for their Christian Faith — yet who likewise "had not worshipped the Beast or his image nor had received his mark upon their own foreheads" while they were previously alive here on Earth.

Here John was looking at the souls **in Heaven** of those **other** dead Christians who had commendably stayed loyal to their Christian Faith until the time of their earthly death (and of course also thereafter). These were they who had died 'naturally' — and who had not suffered a so-called "martyr's" death (such as by being "beheaded" for refusing to recant, in front of ungodly persecutors, their profession of faith in Christ).⁸⁹⁶

Fourteenth. **All** of these Christian "dead-in-Christ," however — both the 'martyred'⁸⁹⁴ and the 'unmartyred'⁸⁹⁵ — "lived and reigned with Christ a 'thousand years.'" This is in marked contrast with "the **rest** of the dead" — alias the **un-believers** who had died **outside-of-Christ**.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁴ Rev. 20:4cde — "having been beheaded" (*pepelikismenoon*, perfect participle), means "having been put to death" especially (though of course not exclusively) by the pagan Romans (*cf.* Rev. 6:9-11). For "beheading" was peculiarly a Pagan-Roman means of inflicting the death penalty in the Ancient World (*cf.* too Rev. 6:11).

⁸⁹⁵ Rev. 20:4f. The group mentioned after the "which" (*hoitines*), is a different group to that mentioned immediately before the "which" (thus Bousset's *op. cit.* p. 502). Consequently, the first group suffered by being killed for their Christian Faith (especially though perhaps not exclusively under Pagan Rome); whereas the second or later group apparently lived and died differently (by suffering under Papal Rome *etc.*). *Cf.* too n. 896.

⁸⁹⁶ Papal Rome required people to pay homage to the image of the Pagan Roman Empire resurrected as the so-called Holy Roman Empire. Rev. 13:11-17 & 17:1-7 *cf.* n. 895.

⁸⁹⁷ Rev. 20:4 *cf.* (*per contra*) 20:5a,12,15.

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For **all** of those who died **in** Christ, had priorly started to live and to reign with the Saviour — **from** the time of the (prebaptismal) regeneration of their soul; **through** to the time of the postmortal life of their soul in Heaven; and **even until** the Final Judgment⁸⁹⁸ — and **beyond**, for evermore. They already **started** to live and to reign when they were '**born again**'; thereafter, they had **refused to receive the mark of the Beast but had instead received the mark of Triune Baptism** for life. "**This** is the first resurrection."

Exulted the Apostle John: "Blessed and holy is he who partakes of the first resurrection! On such, the second death⁸⁹⁹ has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall keep on reigning with Him a thousand years."⁹⁰⁰

Here, "the second death" means the continuing existence of the ungodly in everlasting misery — without Christ, and separated from the blessed presence of God. That "second death" commences at man's conception, during this present earthly life. It intensifies postmortally in 'Hell' — as the place of spiritual torment which the wicked enter immediately after death. Indeed, it worsens further still — after the Final Judgment, when death and 'Hell' are both yet to be cast into the everlasting Lake of Fire for all eternity.⁸²⁰ Subsequently, the wicked continue to exist with their soul then reunited to their (resurrected) body — in the fires and torments of Hell for ever.

Those who partake of "the first resurrection" — do so during this present earthly life, even from the very moment of their regeneration onward.

Such instantly become priests of God and of Christ; serve Him increasing ever since; and then and thereafter keep on reigning with Him for a thousand years. They do the latter — first here on Earth; and then, after death, in Heaven⁹⁰⁰ — until the 'second resurrection' (*viz.* that of the body on the Day of Judgment). Subsequently, they continue to exist with their souls then reunited to their (resurrected) bodies — in Heaven, upon the New Earth, and in **ever-lasting** bliss.

⁸⁹⁸ Rev. 20:4. Its *ezeesan kai ebasileusan* (see too Rev. 11:17) contains two ingressive aorists — meaning "they **started** to live and they **started** to reign" (without ceasing) — and **not**: "they **used** to live and they **used** to reign." The teaching here is that they started to live and to reign at their **regeneration** (alias the **resurrection** of their **souls**). *Cf.*: Ps. 85:6; Isa. 26:18f; Ezek. 37:1-11f; Hos. 6:2f; Zech. 10:1; Rom. 11:15. *Cf.* too Jh. 5:24f; I Cor. 4:8; 15:51; Eph. 2:1-6; 4:13; Col. 1:13-20; 3:1f. Note that the *KJV*'s Rev. 20:5abc ("But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were ended") — is not found in certain important manuscripts (*Aleph 82 al sy*). **Nor** is the *KJV*'s word "**again**" found in the **Greek** manuscripts. The text Rev. 20:5abc is, however, satisfactorily attested — and the idea is definitely Scriptural — inasmuch as the unregenerate are "dead" in their sins even before their physical deaths (Eph. 2:1f & I Tim. 5:6), and "doubly dead" in the second death of hellish punishment thereafter, *cf.* nn. 899 & 905.

⁸⁹⁹ To partake of the "first resurrection," means to be spiritually risen with Christ or to be born again (Jh. 3:3-8 & Eph. 2:1-6 & Col. 3:1f), and hence never able to be lost in Hell (Jh. 5:24 & 5:21-29). *Cf.* too Rev. 20:6,14; 21:8; Jude 12. *Cf.* too Calvin's *Psychopannychia* (in his *Tracts & Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, Torrance ed., III:446).

⁹⁰⁰ Rev. 20:4,5c,6 *cf.* nn.898 & 911 & 955f.

Fifteenth. It was **Victorinus** the Austrian Overseer of Pettau who, right **after the fiercest-ever persecution of Christians**, in A.D. 300 wrote the **first extant commentary** on the *Book of Revelation*. Penned **before** the rule of Constantine as the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, the commentary of Victorinus is clearly **anti-chiliastic** — and **postmillennialistic**.

Says Victorinus on Revelation 6:1f: "The first seal being opened, he [the Apostle John]...saw a white horse, and a crowned Horseman having a bow.... After the Lord ascended into Heaven and opened all things, He sent the Holy Spirit Whose words the Preachers sent forth like arrows, reaching to the human heart — so that they might **overcome unbelief**.... For [in Matthew 24:14] the Lord says: 'This Gospel shall be preached **throughout the whole World** — for a testimony **to all Nations!**'"

Victorinus further added on Revelation 20: "Those years in which Satan is bound, are at the **first** advent of Christ even **to the end** of the **age**. And they are called a **thousand**, according to that mode of speaking in which a part is signified by the whole — just as is that passage 'the Word which He commanded for a thousand generations' (although they are not a thousand).... He says that **he** [Satan] is bound and shut up so that he **may not keep on seducing the Nations**. 'The **Nations**' signifies the **Church**, seeing that **it** is itself **being formed from them**." Thus, **the Nations** are being brought into the Church!

"The '**first resurrection**' is **now**, of the **souls** who are by the Faith which does not permit men to pass over to 'the second death.' Of **this** resurrection, the Apostle says: 'If you **have** risen with Christ — **keep on** seeking the things which are above!'"

Sixteenth. Augustine of Hippo-Regius declares in his A.D. 413-426 work *City of God* (18:47f & 20:7 & 22:1) that "the Church of Christ has everywhere **increased**. This House of God is **more** glorious than the first one which was constructed of wood and stone...and other precious things. Therefore the prophecy of Haggai [2:9f] was not fulfilled in the rebuilding of **that** temple.... **Before** His advent, He [Christ] had **not yet** been desired by **all Nations**.... The glory of **this** House is not so apparent now as it **shall** be — when **everyone** who is there, shall be there **always**....

"[In Mark 3:27,] the Lord Jesus Christ Himself says: 'No man can enter into a strong man's house and despoil his goods, except He first **binds** the strong man — meaning by 'the strong man' the Devil.... It was for **the binding** of this strong one that the Apostle saw in the Apocalypse 'an Angel coming down from Heaven — having the key of the abyss, and a chain in His hand. And He laid hold,' he says, 'of the Dragon, that old Serpent which is called the Devil and Satan, and **bound him a thousand years**...so that he should **deceive the Nations no more**'....

"He would by His grace collect, as now He does, a **people so numerous** that He thus fills up and repairs the blank made by the fallen Angels.... That beloved and heavenly city is not defrauded of the **full number** of its citizens, but perhaps may even rejoice in a **still more** overflowing population!"

The Saints reign on their Thrones with Christ a Thousand Years

Seventeenth. Rightly does that even later and greater Augustinian Dr. John Calvin therefore insist against the crackpot brands of Chiliasm or Premillennialism in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III:25:5): "Those who assign **only** a thousand years to the children of God to enjoy..., observe not how great an insult they offer to Christ and His Kingdom.... If their blessedness is to have an end, the Kingdom of Christ...is temporary. In short, they are either most ignorant of all divine things — or they maliciously aim at subverting the whole grace of God and power of Christ which can-not have their **full** effect unless sin is obliterated; death swallowed up; and **eternal** life **fully** renewed."

Calvin remarks also in his *Psychopannychia*: "John has described a twofold resurrection, as well as a twofold death; namely one [resurrection] of the **soul**, **before** judgment — and another when **the body will be raised up** and when the soul also will be raised up to glory. 'Blessed,' says he, 'are those who have part in the first resurrection; on them the second death takes **no effect**' (Revelation 20:6).... That **first resurrection**...is the only **entrance** — to **beatific glory**."⁸⁹⁹

So too Junius in his 1599 edition of the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of Knox and Whittingham. He comments that 'the first resurrection' is "to receive Jesus Christ in true faith — and to rise from sin in newness of life."⁸⁹⁹

Eighteenth. The stronger Christianity becomes here and now on our present Earth, both extensively and intensively — the stronger will our own present blessed reign with Christ be felt. For the more the Christian Faith expands here and now on this present Earth — the more will we truly **live**; both **here and now** on this present Earth, and also after our death, in Heaven and before our final and bodily resurrection. Indeed, the stronger Christianity becomes in our **present** World — the easier it will be for our **children and grandchildren and their descendants** to live to the glory of Christ here and now in this present World.⁹⁰¹

Yet the **un**-believers, dead in their trespasses and sins throughout their earthly lives⁹⁰² and twice dead in Hell after their physical deaths⁹⁰³ — shall only continue to 'exist' (but not to "live").⁹⁰⁴ For even the resurrection of their bodies on Judgment Day will for **them** not be a resurrection unto **life** — but rather a resurrection unto the damnation of the second **death**.⁹⁰⁴

So the unbelievers, "the **rest** of the dead, **did not live**."⁹⁰⁵ Also **previously** they had only existed but **never** truly "**lived**." Nor would they **ever** live — even **after** the time⁹⁰⁶ "the thousand years were ended."⁹⁰⁷ For Jesus shall reign **not just till** He crushes all His enemies, but **thereafter too!**⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰¹ Mt. 11:25-30 & Acts 2:34f,38-42,47 & Eph. 2:1-6 & 4:13f & Rev. 20:4,6 & 14:13.

⁹⁰² Mt. 8:22 *cf.* Eph. 2:1 & I Tim. 5:6.

⁹⁰³ Jude 12 & Rev. 20:6,14 & 21:8.

⁹⁰⁴ Jh. 5:29 *cf.* Rev. 20:5f (both written by the same Johannine author). Unbelievers **only exist**; but **never live!**

⁹⁰⁵ Rev. 20:5. Note that the *KJV*'s word "again" does **not** occur in **any** Greek manuscript. Note further that the words *achri telesthee ta chilia etee* or "**until** the thousand years **be** ended" do **not** imply that "the **rest** of the dead" **will** again start to "live" **after** the thousand years are finished — or that Christ will **thereafter cease** to **reign** (I Cor. 15:25)! They imply only that "the rest of the dead" would not live at all **during** the thousand years. **After** the thousand years, "the rest of the dead" (though **now existing** and though indeed **then** to be

As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* rightly comments, by 'the **rest** of the dead' John here "means them which are spiritually dead. For in whom Satan 'lives' — **he** is dead to God." And he shall suffer 'the second death' or "the death of the **soul**, which is eternal damnation."

Nineteenth. The great Puritan John Cotton made some striking observations about the 'Millennium' way back in 1642. That was one year before the Westminster Assembly, which he was invited to attend as a Commissioner.

The pouring out of the seventh vial of Revelation chapter sixteen, held John Cotton, inaugurates the thousand years' reign of Christ here on Earth — as soon as the power of the preached Word of God finally defeats Antichrist. That would then in turn activate a wide-scale international **social regeneration**, which Cotton called the 'first resurrection.' That 'first resurrection' would be spiritual, not bodily. It would commence at the fall of the Antichrist. And it would be characterized by the regeneration of individuals as well as by the 'resurrection' of whole Congregations of the Church.⁹⁰⁸

"**These thousand years**," explains Cotton in his work *The Church's Resurrection* (pp. 5f), "therefore do most properly **begin** from the throwing down of **Antichrist** and destruction of **Rome**. The Lord will then send such powerful Ministers [alias 'Angels'] into the Church that, by the power of the **keys**, they shall take hold of Satan — that is to say, convict him and his instruments of all Popish and Paganish Religion; and bind him by...the strong **chain** of God's ordinances, Word and Sacraments, and Censures.... The Lord in His Word shall take hold of them and abandon them; and if they be Church Members, will bind them in chains [away] from the Ordinances of God as [by way of] Admonition and Excommunication...and partly also by punishment from Civil Magistrates as need shall be."⁹⁰⁸ Cf. the *Westminster Larger Catechism* 191f.

'resurrected'), will still be "dead" —in fact, twice dead (cf. Rev. 20:6b). Actually, ever since the fall, the unbelievers have never lived, but only existed (unannihilably). But only the living saints (or those who partake in the first or spiritual resurrection) have their names written in the **Book of Life** (Rev. 20:4c,6,12; *per contra* Rev. 20:3a,15). Cf. too I Sam 15:35; I Chr. 28:20; Job 27:5; Isa. 6:11-13; 22:14; Rom. 5:13. Cf. too Mt. 5:18 & 18:22v,34f & 22:44 with nn. 898 & 904.

⁹⁰⁶ Rev. 20:5b,6. Our own rendition of Rev. 20:5f —"neither before nor after the time" —perhaps better explains the true meaning of the original Greek than does the *KJV*'s "until." Because in the Biblical languages the word "until" not necessarily implies —as our modern word "until" in the English language usually does — that the subject will change its previous state thereafter. Cf. I Sam. 15:35 & Isa. 22:14 and esp. I Cor. 15:25. Accordingly, "unto" might here in Rev. 20:5 be a better translation of the original Greek's *achri* than is the *KJV*'s "until." Similarly, those who die unregenerate, will never "live" at all. Even after death, they maintain only their own indestructible continued "existence" —a continued "existence" of everlasting suffering in their souls, intensified by everlasting suffering in their bodies too after their later bodily resurrection unto damnation. Cf. again n. 905.

⁹⁰⁷ Rev. 20:5abc.

⁹⁰⁸ Isa. 11:9 cf. Hab. 2:14. Cf. J. Cotton's *Pouring Out of the Seven Vials* (as at n. 698), as well as his *The Church's Resurrection* (pp. 5f).

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Twentieth. The 1657 Scottish Puritan James Durham comments on Revelation 20:1f: "We conceive this place to hold out **a flourishing and good condition for some time** of the **Church Militant**...going [al]together opposite to things wherein the [present] **low condition** of the saints consisteth.... It consisteth in the plurality and **abundance** of professors...**embracing** this Gospel, **many Nations**...**joining them[selves] to the Lord**.... It consisteth...in outward freedom...[viz.] when heathen **persecution is stopped**...and **Kings become nursing-fathers to the Church**....

"The length of **time it continueth**...is a **long time**.... Good conditions **come** not instantly...but **by degrees**.... The Lamb, [together] with the chosen and faithful that are with Him, shall make war with the enemy and **overcome**.... The period of this vision, the Devil's final overthrow, is the same with the period of the vials. For the sixth overturneth the Beast, and the seventh vial bringeth it the next more **universal overthrow** to the **Devil**.... The **World** will be **lengthened long**....

"Consider John's way in this same vision.... Some things, yea **many**, are not to be **applied** according to the letter but **in a spiritual way**.... The first resurrection...is a resurrection opposed to the sinful dead world which continues dead.... It is such a resurrection as upon which freedom from the second death doth flow....

"That is not a bodily resurrection, but a spiritual.... It is questioned whether our Lord Jesus shall come personally [alias physically] to reign with the saints on Earth. We answer negatively.... Enoch walked with God three hundred years.... To reign with Christ will imply a **spiritual** presence of Christ with them....**before**...His judgment." *Op. cit.*, pp. 749-56.

Twenty-first. Jonathan Edwards states in his 1739 *History of Redemption* (Period III Part II Section I Application Secondly & I), that there will be a "great **spiritual** resurrection...of the Church of God.... This **spiritual** resurrection, is the resurrection spoken of as attended with judgment. Revelation 20:4....

"I would describe the **prosperous** state the Church shall be in.... It is most properly the time of the Kingdom of Heaven **upon Earth**.... Now is the principal fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of the glorious times of the Gospel...**in the latter days**....

"Then, **all Countries and Nations** — even those which are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and **knowledge**.... Then, many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines.... Excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Tartary....

"It shall be a time of **great holiness** (Isaiah 65:20).... Everything shall then be done to the glory of God (Isaiah 23:18).... It shall be a time wherein religion shall in every respect be uppermost in the World.... The Kingdoms shall be given into the hands of the saints of the 'Most High God,' Daniel 7:27.... 'They shall live and reign with Christ, a thousand years.' Revelation 20:4....

"Those who are in **highest advancement** — shall be **holy men**. Isaiah 49:23.... **Kings** shall employ all their power and glory and riches, for the advancement of the honour and glory of Christ and the good of His Church. Isaiah 60:16.

"Those will be times of **great peace and love** (Isaiah 2:4 & 32:18; Psalm 66:9; Zechariah 9:10 & 8:10f).... It will be a time of **excellent order in the Church of Christ** (Psalm 122:3).... The Church of God shall then be **beautiful and glorious** (Isaiah 60:1 & 61:10)....

"That will be a time of the **greatest temporal prosperity** (Zechariah 7:4 & 8:5 & 8:12; Isaiah 65:21; Micah 4:4; Jeremiah 31:12f & 33:9; Amos 9:13).... It will be a time of **great rejoicing** (Isaiah 35:10 & 60:12 & 66:11 & 12:3 and Revelation 19:7-9)."

What, then, will be "the duration of this state of the Church's prosperity?" Edwards answers: "The Scriptures everywhere represent it to be of **long continuance**.... Revelation 20:4."

Twenty-second. We close with an extended citation from Albert Barnes's 1851 *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. In his *Analysis* of chapter twenty, Dr. Barnes explains: "This chapter...pertains to the **future**, and discloses things which are **yet to occur**.... Satan is to be arrested and bound for a thousand years.... This is properly the 'Millennium' — the **long** period when the principles of True Religion will have the ascendancy on the Earth....

"There may be long intervening periods between the events thus thrown together into the final grouping. We are not to suppose necessarily that these events will succeed each other immediately, or that they will be of short duration. Between these events thus hastily sketched, there may be long intervals that are not described....

"Hills in the distant view, may seem to lie near each other. One may seem to rise just back of another, and to the eye they may seem to constitute parts of the same mountain. And yet, **between** them there may be deep and fertile vales.... So it is in the prophecies....

"Time is marked in the prophetic description until the fall of [Romanism as] the great enemy of the Church. Beyond that, it does not seem to have been regarded as necessary to determine the actual duration of the events referred to.... The grand purpose was to show **that Christianity would finally triumph**.... The **end** is triumphant and glorious. We are assured that every enemy of the Church will be slain, and that there will be a long period of happiness, prosperity, and peace.... The number of the redeemed will be augmented beyond all computation; and the promise made from the beginning — that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head' [Genesis 3:15] — will be fulfilled in all its extent, and with a divine plenitude of meaning."

In his *Commentary* itself, Dr. Barnes insists: "The scene that is recorded here [in Revelation 20:1f], occurs **after** the destruction of the Beast and the False-Prophet (chapter 19:18-21), and...**after** the final destruction of the Papal and Mahometan powers.... There are elsewhere in the Scriptures abundant promises that the Gospel will ultimately spread over the World.... The World shall enjoy a reign of peace and righteousness during the long period....

The Saints reign on their Thrones with Christ a Thousand Years

"**The Earth** would continue under a reign of righteousness, **through a vastly long period in the future**.... During that period, there will be a state of things upon the Earth **as if** Satan should be withdrawn from the World."

As to the "**condition** of the World in the period referred to," Barnes suggests the following.

- "(1) This will be **subsequent** to the downfall of the Papacy and the termination of the Mahometan power in the World....
- (2) It will be a condition of the World **as if** Satan were bound.... All that occurs [today] under the direct influence of Satan in causing or perpetuating slavery, war, intemperance, lust, avarice, disorder, scepticism, atheism — will be checked and stayed.... This passage does **not** require us to suppose that there will be a **total cessation** of Satanic influence in the Earth during that period...though there will be a general prevalence of righteousness....
- (3) It will be a period of long duration....
- "(4) What...will be the state of things during that...thousand years?
 - (a) There will be a great increase in population....
 - (b) There will be a general diffusion of intelligence upon the Earth....
 - (c) There will be great progress in all that tends to promote the welfare of man....
 - (d) It will be marked by unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ....
 - (e) There will be great progress in all that tends to promote the welfare of man....
 - (g) It will be a period of the universal reign of peace....
 - (h) There will be a **general** prevalence of evangelical religion....
 - (i) it will be a time when the Hebrew people — the Jews — will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and will embrace the Messiah whom their fathers crucified....

"The doctrine which has been held, and is held, by those [viz. the Premillennialists] who maintain that there will be a **literal resurrection** of the saints to reign **with Christ** [and indeed] **during** a thousand years, can receive no support from this passage.... It may signify...the raising up of an increased Christian zeal and holiness; the revival of the Christian Church.... Christian principles shall be displayed in action throughout the World in an infinitely greater degree than ever before....

"Satan will be bound.... The True Religion will have the ascendancy in the Earth.... Holy principles will then reign.... Religion will no longer be trampled underfoot, but will triumph. In all parts of the Earth, it will have the ascendancy.... The ruling influence in the World will be the Religion of the Son of God."

O Christian, let us rightly be **very perturbed** about the terrible plight of those today still outside of Christ! But let us also rejoice that we believers, sealed by God in Triune Baptism, **already** reign with Christ — having done so ever since we were regenerated before Baptism!

Let us work toward the steady expansion of Christianity throughout the Earth — so that, in God's good time, the Devil will no more be able to deceive the Nations for "a thousand years"! And until that comes to pass — let us live and die for Jesus, reigning with Him here and now on Earth in a heavenly way — and after our death even in Heaven "for a thousand years," until the time of the Final Judgment!

For we know that this very World of ours shall yet become filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.⁹⁰⁸ We also know that after the Final Judgment,⁹⁰⁹ we ourselves will come back to the (renewed) Earth — and then enjoy that inheritance in full, for ever and ever.⁹¹⁰

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to **victory!**

⁹⁰⁹ Rev. 20:11-15.

⁹¹⁰ Rev. 21:1-7, esp. v. 7; *cf.* Mt. 5:5.

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

Revelation 20:7-15

December 29

"And I saw an Angel.... He laid hold of...the Devil...and bound him a thousand years...so that he should deceive the Nations not even when the thousand years were completed. After that, he must be unchained for just a little time.... Then the Devil who had deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone [or Sulphur] — where the Beast and the False-Prophet are. Then they shall be tormented day and night —for ever and ever."⁹¹¹

How will the 'Millennium' **end**? All the Nations of the World will indeed get converted — whether premillennially, amillennially, or postmillennially. But after that — will they then 'apostasize' from the truth, right before the Final Judgment at the great white throne? If so — what becomes of the perseverance of the saints?

We ourselves (together with many others) believe Scripture teaches there will at the end of the yet-future postmillennial 'Millennium' be **absolutely no final falling away**. Below, we shall give detailed reasons for our opinion. Yet now, we **outline** the seven events we expect **after** the 'Millennium.' For these seven events become clear, once we carefully compare First Corinthians 15:51-54 and First Thessalonians 4:14-17 with Revelation 20:3-12.

First. This is **the order of the seven last events**.

- (1) The raising of the bodies of the dead-in-Christ and their meeting the Lord in the air — First Thessalonians 4:14-16.
- (2) The simultaneous raising of the bodies of the dead-in-Satan and their remaining here on Earth, while surrounding the camp of the saints — Revelation 20:5 & 20:8 *cf.* Matthew 24:37-41.
- (3) The immortalizing in a moment of the living saints, and their meeting the Lord in the air; thus vacating the camp of the saints here on Earth — First Corinthians 15:51-54 *cf.* First Thessalonians 4:15-17 & Revelation 20:5-9.

⁹¹¹ Rev. 20:1-10, *cf.* 2:1,8,12,18f & 10:11 & 14:6f & 15:4 with Mt. 28:19. The *KJV* misunderstands the meaning of the word *achri* and renders Rev. 20:2-3: "The Devil...should deceive the Nations no more **till** the thousand years should be fulfilled" *etc.*, missuggesting that after the 'Millennium' the Devil will again deceive the Nations afresh. This is not so. For, after the visible return of Christ for His saved Nations at the end of the 'Millennium' —all the then-unchained Devil will be enabled to do —is to keep on deceiving the resurrected dead Nations he had previously been deceiving until the start of the 'Millennium' some thousand years earlier. Accordingly, we have better rendered Rev. 20:2-3: "The Devil...should deceive the Nations **not even when the thousand years were completed**" *etc.* See our remarks at n. 905f.

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

That will then immediately be followed by the remaining events. *Viz.*:

- (4) The changing momentarily of the physically-undead and then-premortal wicked, who will then remain on the Earth — First Corinthians 15:51f & Revelation 20:8f.
- (5) The final judgment here on Earth, involving the punishment of **all** the wicked in (2) and (4) above — Revelation 20:9-14.
- (6) the thrusting of the condemned wicked from off of the Earth and into the hellish Lake of Fire and Brimstone for ever — Revelation 20:15. And
- (7) the descent of the Christians through the air, together with Heaven, down onto the then-renewed Earth for ever — Revelation 21:1f,10f,24-26 & 22:1-5.

Second. The still-future earthly '**Millennium**' seems to be **distinct** from and **subsequent to** (and a result of) **the present reign of the ascended Jesus** from His heavenly throne. Right now, the glorious Gospel of the now-reigning Jesus still needs to be brought to — and to christianize — all the Nations dwelling upon our now-great and then-straight planet Earth.

Now the '**Millennium**' only **begins** when an 'Angel' from Heaven **preaching** the Word of God to **all** the **Nations**, really and truly **binds** Satan **internationally**. This Angel seems to be Christ the heavenly Messenger, working through His earthly Ministers of the Word and Sacraments who preach His message in terms of His Great Commission. As a result, ultimately — as John heard the heavenly choir sing to the Lord — "all Nations shall come and worship before You." Revelation 15:4.

Then, Satan will no longer be able to deceive any Nation in the way he did deceive **all** Nations (except the Nation of Ancient Israel) — before Christ commanded His Gospel message to be taken to every Nation. Accordingly, this '**Millennium**' seems to commence at that future time when the Christian Gospel becomes the most powerful influence on Earth, among all Nations, everywhere.

However, John's inspired vision of the "thousand years" foresees not only the **commencement** of that period. It predicts also its long **duration** — when Satan shall be bound; when the previously-deceived Nations shall all be sealed (with the mark of Christian Baptism); and when they shall reign with the Lord Jesus for "a thousand years" (alias the perfect period of 'ten cubed').⁹¹²

⁹¹² Rev. 7:3f 20:2-6 *cf.* our study for Dec. 28 at n. 874 & n. 913.

Third. John's prophecy **also** infallibly describes the **termination**⁹¹³ of the 'Millennium' — in a **rapid** series of events. Those rapid events follow one another in swift succession. They are: Christ's Final Coming at the post-millennial end of World History; the simultaneous bodily resurrection of both the believers and the unbelieving "rest of the dead"; the parading of all of the ungodly, here on Earth, before the eyes of the Church Triumphant (then to be with Jesus "in the air"); the Last Judgment of all humanity and of Satan and his Demons;⁹¹⁴ and, immediately after that, man's entry into his everlasting final state.⁹¹⁵

The Nations as such will have been converted and baptized by, and at, the beginning of the 'Millennium.' Subsequently, throughout the last "thousand years" of our Earth's still-future World History, there will everywhere be peace among the dominant and reigning Christians (both in Heaven among the blessed dead, and also here on Earth among the living saints). Throughout that blissful time, Satan will be shut up and sealed in the bottomless pit.⁹¹⁶ Then, at the end of that period, the doomed Devil will be hauled out of his prison and led off to his final condemnation — together with all who have ever followed him.⁹¹⁷

Fourth. It should be noted that Satan does not as it were 'of his own free will' **escape** from prison, at the end of the 'Millennium.' Quite to the contrary. He is then intentionally loosened only by the power and wisdom of the sovereign God.⁹¹⁸

"A thousand years" previously — but apparently still subsequent to the beginning of our own twenty-first century — the Lord Jesus Christ will have christianized the Nations and have thrown Satan into chains.⁹¹⁹ This Christ will then have effected — through the agency of the **Church's** progressive wielding of the Sword of the Lord (which is the Word of God).⁹²⁰ But then, immediately⁹²¹ **after** the "thousand years" — after the last Member of God's elect Church has been regenerated, and after that great crowd of believers which no man can number has been brought to faith in Jesus⁹²² — God will once again unleash the Devil from his chains.

⁹¹³ Rev. 20:3b,7-10f cf. Dt. 32:39 & I Sam. 2:6-10.

⁹¹⁴ Rev. 20:5a,11-15 cf. Lk. 11:31f & Jn. 5:22-29 & Acts 24:15 & I Th. 4:14-17.

⁹¹⁵ Rev. 21:1 to 22:5,11-15,18-19.

⁹¹⁶ Rev. 20:3-8.

⁹¹⁷ Rev. 20:5,7-15.

⁹¹⁸ Rev. 20:1f,7 & 3:7 cf. Dt. 32:29 & I Sam. 2:6-10.

⁹¹⁹ Rev. 20:1-7.

⁹²⁰ Rev. 20:3-6f; cf. too our main text and footnotes at nn. 871-877.

⁹²¹ Observe that Rev. 20:7 does not state that Satan will be loosened **some time after** the 1000 years — as in Heb. 12:17's use of the word *metepeita*; or as in Mt. 4:2's & 25:11's *husteran* — but rather that he will be loosened **at the time when** (or **whenever**) the 1000 years expire (*hotan*). Cf. I Cor. 15:23f. I take the reading "whenever" at Rev. 20:7 from my friend Rev. Dr. J.C. Morecraft III's rendition. Cf. too nn. 923 & 930. The '1000 years' is symbolic: the perfect number 10 (= 7 + 3) cubed (cf. the Sabbath plus the Trinity).

⁹²² Rev. 6:9-11 & 7:9f cf. 20:3-6.

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

Why? Not to terrorize the (then globally christianized) Nations anew; but solely to drag Satan and his squalid squad off to their Final Judgment — and speedily so! This is **why** Satan is unchained — and indeed for just "a little time."⁹²³ Quickly, he is forced to collect his wretched followers — so that all of them can rapidly be condemned and then be thrust into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone forever, by the sovereign will of Almighty God.⁹²⁴

Fifth. While God is dragging the Devil forth to judgment, the latter's miserable **servants** follow him. These include not only his wicked Angels,⁹²⁵ but also all of his human followers too — the then-to-be-resurrected **dead "Nations** which are in the four quarters of the Earth, **Gog and Magog**."⁹²⁶

Those dead Nations had **previously** 'lived' (or rather **existed**) — but **then died**. That occurred **long before** the advent of the "thousand years." And that '**Millennium**' would **expire** only after a thousand years — at a **later** time.

Yet **even** by **then**, a **few** of Satan's followers would **never yet** have 'died.' **They** will thus still be 'alive' (or rather only **exist**) on the Earth — even at the **end** of the 'Millennium.' They will then exist **very weakly** — and only on the **fringes** of an overwhelmingly-christianized but not-yet-sinless international World Order.⁹²⁷ Only **then** will **they too die** — and be **judged!**

The events described in Revelation 20:8, are similar but not identical to the events described in **Ezekiel** chapters 38 to 39. In Ezekiel's passage, **Gog** is a **leader** who comes **only** from the north. See Ezekiel 38:2-15 & 39:11, and *cf.* Genesis 10:2-5. In **Revelation** 20:8, however, Gog is a **Nation** which — together with the Nation(s) of **Magog** — comes from the **four** points of the compass, and from the **extreme** fringes of the Earth.

Yet the "Gog and Magog" of Revelation 20:8 may **also** (and perhaps even exclusively) be referring to the **resurrected** Pagan-Roman legions with their Non-Roman foreign mercenaries in the Pagan-Roman armies of the first century B.C., down to the middle or toward the end of the first century A.D. When **previously alive**, such hailed from the time of Pompey's invasion of Jerusalem in B.C. 63, down to Titus's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (as apparently adumbrated also in Ezekiel 38:2-16f and 39:1-11 & 39:29 *cf.* Acts 2:1-32).

Sixth. Note that in Revelation 20:8-11f, the "two" Satanically-deceived entities Gog and Magog do **not** occupy the **whole World**; nor even the length and breadth of the World; but only "the breadth of the **land**" or "gees." Note further, they do not overwhelm but merely "compass" or "surround" the **camp** of the saints — **not** the **saints** themselves (who will right then have left their camp to meet Christ in the air). **Not one** of the **saints** will then be harmed!

⁹²³ Rev. 20:3efg.

⁹²⁴ II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:7,10-15 *cf.* 7:9 & n. 921.

⁹²⁵ Rev. 12:7; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6.

⁹²⁶ Rev. 20:5ab,7-9ab,10,15.

⁹²⁷ Mt. 13:30; II Thess. 3:2; Rev. 20:6-8.

Compare this with the "compassing" or "**surrounding**" of Jerusalem by the **Roman armies (with their Gog-Magog mercenaries)** around A.D. 70. In that military operation — **not a single saint was harmed**, because **all** of the saints had by then already left the "**land**" (or "gee"). Matthew 24:15-28 & 25:15-22 (especially verses 20-22); Luke 21:20f; and Revelation 20:5-8.

The 1637 *Geneva Bible* comments at Revelation 20:8 on '**Gog and Magog**' (at the **end** of the '**Millennium**'): "By them are meant divers and strange enemies of the Church of God.... Read Ezekiel 38:2."

In 1748, the great Baptist and Hypercalvinist Theologian Dr. John Gill held "that all the wicked shall be brought out of Hell, for the purpose of going up on the length of the Earth to fight [the] battle referred to in Revelation (20:5,8)." And even Arminian Seventh-day Adventists stated in 1957 — that at Revelation 20:8 "Gog and Magog are **revived** by means of, or **resulting** from, the second **resurrection**."

So the Devil will then collect his plentiful and replete "dead-in-Satan" — probably before he collects his penurious and scanty "alive-in-Satan."⁹²⁸ For the "dead-in-Satan" are "the rest of the dead"⁹²⁹ who will be resurrected apparently just a moment after the resurrection of the "dead-in-Christ" — at the end of World History, when "the thousand years are finished."⁹²⁹

Seventh. The **order** of events when the "wheat" and the "tares" are to be gathered, seems to have been given already in Revelation 14:14-20. We are also in agreement with the footnote in the *Scofield Reference Bible* at Matthew 13:30: "The **gathering** of the tares to bundles for burning — does not imply **immediate** judgment. At the end of this age (Matthew 14:40), the tares are **set apart** for burning. But **first**, the **wheat** is **gathered** into the **barn** (John 14:3 & First Thessalonians 4:15-17)."

This apparently means that at end of the World, Christ through His Angels **first** "reaps" or resurrects or touches **all** men — taking the reaped wheat alias the **believers** up in the air, while leaving the reaped tares alias the **unbelievers** on the Earth. **Second**, His Angels collect (*sullexate*) the tares and **bind** them into bundles "in the four quarters of the Earth." Thus Revelation 20:7-9. **Next**, the wheat He thrusts together (*sunagagete*) into His "**heavenly**" barn. John 14:3 & First Thessalonians 4:14-17. And **last** — He **only then** seizes the **already-bound** tares, in order "to **burn** them." Matthew 13:30.

The **dead-in-Christ** shall then rise first, and triumphantly meet the triumphantly returning Lord "**in the air**" — when He consummates World History. At that same time, the **dead-in-Satan** shall rise — but **they** stay on the Earth unto their judgment (thus Adam Clarke). For they shall rise unto their final condemnation — and their everlasting punishment.

Next, the alive-in-Christ (who will not yet have died) — shall be overclothed with immortality, in the twinkling of an eye. They will then be snatched up into the clouds, together with the dead-in-Christ (who will have arrived there immediately before their just-overclothed brethren).

⁹²⁸ Cf. I Th. 4:14-16 & John 5:29. See too nn. 929 & 946-952.

⁹²⁹ Rev. 20:5ab & 14:14-20 cf. esp. nn. 945 & 914 & 923. †

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

Then those who are 'in Satan' who had not yet died physically, will join the just-resurrected (but never-to-ascend) dead-in-Satan — and stand together on the surface of the Earth. From the air above, the Church Triumphant will then look down at those left behind on the Earth below.

Both the many resurrected wicked who had died **previously**, and the few wicked who had died but **recently** — together with the handful of wicked who would never yet have died at all — shall then be dragged across the face of the Earth to their Final Judgment. They will be a public spectacle; in disgrace; and then removed to their everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

So then — at the very time of Christ's final coming, Satan will be unchained (but only to be destroyed). Foolishly, he will summon his handful of then-still-living followers from the lunatic fringes of an otherwise christianized World. That mere handful — the "alive-in-Satan" — will then join the ranks of the wicked Angels (or Demons). They will also join the numerous human dead-in-Satan (whom God will just then have raised up unto their own Final Judgment).

Eighth. The Lord will then parade all of those wicked persons — before the eyes of His elect. The latter will then be "in the air" above the Earth. They will thus be "forever with the Lord" — both then and also when they subsequently descend from the air, after the destruction of the wicked. After that, the righteous will re-inhabit the then-cleansed Earth forever. But right before that happens — God will first march both Satan and all of his followers, in disgrace, throughout the Earth. For that will be their very last earthly journey — as they are forced to trudge along, unto their doom!

There is **no** question of **Satan deceiving** the **Christian majority** of all the World's many inhabitants — in **that** day!⁹³⁰ **Nor** is there then **any apostasy** from the World-dominating latter-day Church. Thus: Hippolytus, Jonathan Edwards, John Gill, Moses Stuart, Warfield, Stonehouse, Kik, Boettner, Vonk, Rissi, and Rushdoony. Nor is there even a short period of successful renewed Satanic activity to deceive even a portion of any Nation then extant. No! At that time, powerless Satan will **need** to be **enabled**, however feebly, to crawl out of his prison. Only Almighty God can and will **unlock** the door — and then **turf out** the Devil, unto his **Final Judgment**.

Still, the Devil will then indeed make a feeble and desperate attempt "to deceive" his **previous** dupes once more. Yet in doing this, he thus deceives not God's elect — but **only Satan's own servants**.

⁹³⁰ Throughout the entire passage Rev. 20:3-8, it is not God's Church but only the (then-to-be-resurrected) previously-ungodly "Nations" such as "Gog and Magog" which are deceived. Indeed, God's elect are not even deceivable! Mt. 24:24 & II Th. 2:9-13f and Rev. 13:8-14.

Such will include the never-dead alias the few 'living' unbelievers. But the bulk of Satan's deceived human followers, will consist of the **dead Nations** which will just then have been resurrected unto condemnation at the **marginalized four corners** of the Earth — where most of them had flourished only before their deaths more than a thousand years earlier.⁹³¹

Ninth. Satan **re**-deceives the long-since-dead pagan Nations of Gog and Magog (thus both the Hypercalvinistic Baptist John Gill as well as Arminian Seventh-day Adventists) and/or the Demons (thus the Calvinist Vonk).⁹³² Gog and Magog are Satan's dupes — who will only-just-then have been resurrected from the dead, unto everlasting damnation.⁹³³ Yet Satan's followers, such as they are, will apparently then once more constitute a considerable number — "like the sand of the sea."⁹³⁴ Thus the Devil "shall go out to deceive [the previously dead and only-then-resurrected] **Nations** in the four quarters of the Earth." Those then-just-resurrected pagan Nations — Gog and Magog — will then be gathered together to battle. Then, hopelessly against all odds, they will be certain to suffer speedy and decisive defeat.⁹³⁵

Even this final deceit of the Devil in again (as formerly) deceiving the (resurrected) pagan Nations, shall be eminently unsuccessful; especially when measured against both the whole course and the final outcome of World History.⁹³⁶ It is true that Satan and his Demons and his few then-still-living human followers will then get re-inforced by the Devil-serving hordes of the "rest of the dead" (just resurrected by God to face their Final Judgment). But, even then — just before they are together hurled into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone forever — they will (both qualitatively and quantitatively) be vastly inferior to the **innumerable** Christian armies.⁹³⁷

In His sovereignty, God will then **visibly shunt and parade** both the human followers as well as the Demons of the Devil — before the Christian onlookers then "in the air" above. Thus will the latter then know that the Final Judgment of all their enemies will have arrived.

⁹³¹ Rev. 20:8 has *ta Ethnee ta en tais tessarsin gooniais tees gees*. This means "those Nations which are in the four extremities of the Earth." It does not read *panta ta en tooi holooi Kosmooi katoikounta Ethnee* — as if it were to mean 'all the Nations which [then] dwell in the entire inhabited World.' Cf. too Dan. 7:27 & 12:2f & 12:13. Rev. 20:8's *en tais gooniais* means "in the four corners" (or in the margins or 'way-out angles') of the Earth. Cf. Ezek. 38:6's *y^erikathiym* (meaning "extremities"). Rev. 20:8 does not read *en tois tessarsi klimasi, nor en tais merais* — as if the meaning were supposed to be: 'in the four parts [of the World].' Accordingly, the rendition of the *KJV* — 'in the four quarters [of the Earth]' — is hardly the best possible translation. Cf. too Rev. 20:6f & 20:12-14 & n. 930.

⁹³² Rev. 20:8c, cf. n. 930. See too: J. Gill's 1746-48 *Exposition of the New Testament* III on Rev. 20:7f; *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, Review & Herald, Washington D.C., 1957, p. 504; and C. Vonk's 1963 *The Aforementioned Doctrine* (Barendrecht, p. 756, points G & H).

⁹³³ Rev. 20:3-9 cf. Ezek. chs. 38 & 39 and our studies on Ezek. 37 to 39.

⁹³⁴ Rev. 20:8e cf. Josh 11:1-4 & Judg. 7:12 to 8:12 & I Sam. 13:5.

⁹³⁵ Rev. 20:8e cf. n. 934.

⁹³⁶ Rev. 20:8f.

⁹³⁷ Rev. 7:2-9,15; 15:2-4; 20:3f cf. n. 877.

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Satan will never again deceive the Nations the way he did before the beginning of the execution of Christ's Own 'Great Commission' had commenced converting them. The resurrected Pagan Nations, Gog and Magog, will not at all gain control of the World. They shall merely be shunted across the breadth of the Earth — unto the judgment of their damnation. The much stronger Christian Nations of that still-future day, shall never be in any real danger — least of all then. For they shall then all be "in the air" — forever with the Lord Jesus Christ.⁹³⁸

Tenth. John predictively foresaw that the 'lunatic fringe' of the **marginalized** Nations, Gog and Magog — shall only "go up" across "the breadth of the Earth." Then they shall surround "the **camp** of the saints" or the **then-empty** "beloved city"⁹³⁹ — alias the various **vacated** church buildings. Those buildings will then be altogether empty. For, as right before the siege of Jerusalem (in A.D. 66-70) — the real Church alias the saints themselves will just then have left their earthly abode, in order to meet the Lord "in the air" and to witness the utter destruction of Gog and Magog on the Earth below. First Thessalonians 4:15-17.

In Scripture, "the camp" **always** refers only to the visible "buildings" of the Church **Militant**. Thus Eldad and Medad prophesied **outside** the **camp**. The **camp** is **always** that of the Church **Militant**, and **never** that of the Church **Triumphant**. The purpose of unleashing the wicked is not to attack God's troops who **had till then** been **in their camp** — but only to drag the ungodly across the Earth, past the **now-empty** camp, unto judgment. Thus Dr. Adam Clarke.

Eleventh. With **all of the saints then together in the air** with the Lord — fire shall then come "down from God out of Heaven" to devour the wicked. For He will then have come back on the clouds at that very time — to cleanse His Earth forever. Indeed, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with all His mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that do not know God and that do not obey the Gospel." Those ignorant and disobedient unbelievers "shall be punished with everlasting destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." For "on that Day — He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."⁹⁴⁰

This rapid succession of events will take place in just "a **little time**" after the end of the as-yet-still-future blessed "thousand years" of millennial earthly peace. Almighty God Himself then raises the Pagan Nations from the dead (and also stirs up the few living unbelievers who will by then never yet have died) — unto their final judgment and condemnation. All Satan's deceptions, including his deceiving the 'living-dead' and the then-resurrected way-out Fringe-Nations Gog and Magog — will then be exposed forever.⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁸ Rev. 20:9-11f cf. I Cor. 6:1-3 & n. 929f.

⁹³⁹ Rev. 20:9.

⁹⁴⁰ II Thess. 1:7-10.

⁹⁴¹ Rev. 20:3,7-9.

Twelfth. Already the A.D. 170-235 Hippolytus wrote about Revelation 20:7f — in his eschatological *Fragments* about the loosening or unbinding of Satan at the very **end** of the 'Millennium.' "This unbinding of Satan," says Hippolytus, "does **not** mean that he will then enjoy a time of renewed activity — but that he and his followers will then be thrown into the fire."⁹⁴²

A far more extended treatment is given by Augustine of Hippo-Regius. Formerly, while and after being an Anti-Christian Manichaean, he himself had toyed with chiliastic Premillenarianism. But after his conversion to Christ, in his A.D. 413-426 masterpiece *The City of God* (XX:6-13) he wrote *inter alia* the following about Revelation 20:1-9.

"There are also two resurrections.... The first and spiritual resurrection...takes place in **this** life, and preserves us from coming into the second death. The second does not occur now but at the end of the World and...is of the body not of the soul.... The Last Judgment shall dismiss some into the second death; others into that life which has no death....

"Those who, on the strength of this passage, have suspected that 'the first resurrection' is **future** and **bodily**, ...surpass the measure of credulity itself. Such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them, are called by the spiritual: 'Chiliasts' — which we may literally reproduce by the name '[Pre-]Millenarians.' It were a tedious process to refute these opinions point by point. We prefer proceeding to show how that passage of Scripture **should** be understood....

"By the 'chain'...the Devil is...**restrained** from seducing those **Nations** which **belong to Christ**.... It is **not** said that he [the Devil] would not seduce **anybody**, but 'that he would not seduce the **Nations**' — meaning, no doubt, those among which **the Church** exists — 'till the thousand years would be fulfilled'.... The words 'that he would not seduce the **Nations**'...are **not** to be understood as indicating that **afterwards** he **is** to **seduce**.... He is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on **this** account — that he may **no more** deceive the **Nations**.... **God forbid that such should be the case!**"

⁹⁴² Here, cf.: the A.D. 170-235 Hippolytus's *Fragments* as cited by Stonehouse (see below); Jonathan Edwards's 1739 *The History of Redemption* (on Revelation 20:8), Sovereign Grace Book Club, Evansville, 1959 ed., Period III Part II Section I Application Secondly II, p. 326; the 1748 eschatological views of Rev. Dr. John Gill at the end of his 1746-48 *Exposition of the New Testament* III (on Rev. 20:7f); Moses Stuart's 1845 *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Albert Barnes's 1851 *Revelation*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1949 ed., on Rev. 20:7f & 20:9f; the 1851-1921 Warfield's *The Bible and the Apocalypse* and his *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*, reprinted in *Biblical Doctrines*, 1929, pp. 645, 649-51 & 662; N.B. Stonehouse's 1929 *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*, Goes, Netherlands, 1929, pp. 106f. ; J.M. Kik's 1955 *Revelation Twenty* pp. 61-66 (esp. p. 62) & p. 69, rep. as *An Eschatology of Victory* by Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1971, pp. 235-38); L. Boettner's 1957 *The Millennium* (pp. 73-75), & esp. the additional chapter in his 1984 revision thereof; R.J. Rushdoony's 1970 *Thy Kingdom Come! Studies in Daniel and Revelation*, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1970, p. 213 (on Rev. 20:8), & his *Systematic Theology*, Ross House Books, Vallecito Ca., 1994, II:880; and M. Rissi's 1972 *The Future of the World* (sub-titled *An Exegetical Study of Revelation 19:11 - 22:15*), Zwingli Press, Zuerich, 1972, pp. 35f & 99. See too: Prof. Dr. Norman Shepard's 1981 communication to M. Selbrede; *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* editor Dr. Douglas F. Kelly's willingness to accept articles favourable to Warfield from 1982 onward, and M. Selbrede's 1999 *Reconstructing Postmillennialism*, Chatsworth Ca., pp. 1-18 & 28 & 31. Cf. too n. 931.

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

Augustine explains that the loosening of Satan **after** the thousand years will be "occurring while the **Final Judgment** is **imminent**.... These Nations which he [John] names 'Gog' and 'Magog' are not to be understood of some barbarous Nations in some part of the World.... They are therefore the Nations in which we found that the Devil **was** shut up as in an **abyss** — and **the Devil himself** coming out **from them**.... The reign of the saints with Christ shall last **longer** than the bonds and imprisonment of the Devil.... The thousand years of the reign of the saints **does not terminate**, though the imprisonment of the Devil does" — but only unto his everlasting **condemnation!**

Thirteenth. Also Jonathan Edwards comments — in his 1739 *History of Redemption* — on the activity of the then-resurrected ancient Nations of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8. He remarks: "There is **nothing** in the prophecy which seems to hold forth as though the **Church** actually **falls into their hands** — as the Church **had** fallen [**previously** and quite **before** the earlier **commencement** of the '**Millennium**'] into the hands of Antichrist, to whom it was given to make war with the saints.... God will **never** suffer this to be **again** — **after** the fall of Antichrist! For **then** — the day of her mourning shall be **ended**." ⁹⁴²

In his 1845 *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Rev. Professor Dr. Moses Stuart comments: "The eye of hope is directed forward, and sees the **thousand years** of **uninterrupted prosperity**.... I cannot therefore doubt that **the setting sun of the Church on Earth is to be as a Heaven** of **unclouded splendour. Peaceful and triumphant will be her latest age**." This was cited approvingly also by Dr. Barnes, in his own *Analysis* of chapter twenty of the *Book of Revelation*.

On the whole period of the 'Millennium' itself, Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes himself comments at Revelation 20:9f in 1851f: "The great glory of the World will be the millennial period; when religion shall have the ascendancy and the [human] race shall have reached its highest point of progress on Earth — and the blessings of liberty, intelligence, peace and piety shall have during that period been spread over the globe. In that long duration, who can estimate the numbers that shall be redeemed and saved? That period [having] passed, the great purpose contemplated by the creation of the Earth — the glory of God in the redemption of a fallen race, and in setting up a Kingdom of righteousness in a World of apostasy — will have been accomplished.... There will be no reason why the Final Judgment should not then occur." ⁹⁴²

At the same place, Barnes comments also on the way in which the 'Millennium' will **end**. Referring to Revelation 20:7f, he explains: "**This** overthrow of the enemies of God and of the Church, will be **final**. Satan will be 'cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever.' The Beast and the False-Prophet are already there (chapter 19:20). That is, they will have ceased long since, even **before** the beginning of the millennial period.... Satan now, the last enemy, will be doomed to the same hopeless woe. And **all** the enemies that have ever opposed the Church — in all forms of Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, and delusion — will be destroyed for ever. The World then will have peace; the Church will have rest; the great triumph will have been achieved." ⁹⁴²

Fourteenth. Also the 1851-1921 Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield writes about Revelation 20:7f in his work *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*: "The picture that is brought before us here, is...the thousand years.... In the **preceding** vision (19:11-21), Christ's Gospel is **to conquer the Earth**. He is to overcome all His enemies.... The '**binding of Satan**' is therefore in reality **not for a season, but with reference to a sphere; and his 'loosing' again is...in another sphere....** The saints described, are removed from the sphere of Satan's assaults.... He is **bound** with respect to **them**."⁹⁴²

In 1929, Rev. Professor Dr. Ned Stonehouse — of Westminster Theological Seminary — published his book *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*. There, he quoted approvingly the previously-mentioned words from Hippolytus we ourselves have cited. Then Stonehouse himself stated: "In truth, this loosening of Satan signifies not that he enters upon a period of renewed activity, but that he with his followers are to be cast into the burning and judged."⁹⁴²

In his 1955 book *Revelation Twenty*, Rev. Dr. J. Marcellus Kik, a former Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, stated: "Satan's loosening will be that period just before the Second Coming of the Lord.... Before the loosening of Satan, all Nations will become predominantly Christian.... Notice that Satan does not break out of the prison by his own power.... He is loosed by the Lord.... Nothing more is written in this prophecy concerning an intervening period between the destruction of Gog and Magog and **the resurrection of the dead**. **This must be the final destructive blow**."⁹⁴²

Fifteenth. In the 1957 edition of his great book *The Millennium*, Prof. Dr. Loraine Boettner stated: "Warfield believed there will be no resurgence of evil at all at the end, but rather that at the return of Christ, the present Kingdom — then perfected with the conquering of the last enemy, death — will be merged into the eternal Kingdom...."

"We do believe that the views of such a distinguished Theologian must be given consideration in any comprehensive treatment of this subject. And we agree that Revelation 20:1-10 affords no real basis for believing that there is to be a final apostasy in the sense that a large proportion of Earth's inhabitants turn against God or that the safety of the saints is seriously threatened."⁹⁴²

Sixteenth. Rev. Dr. R.J. Rushdoony states in his 1970 *Thy Kingdom Come!* that in Revelation twenty, "verses 7-10, **we see the release of Satan, [so] that he might be destroyed** in all that he presumes to be. This means that **the Gospel age sees the False-Prophet and Beast destroyed** in their Babylonian dream (in the explicit revolt of Satan against Christ's Kingdom)...."

"**Some see a defeat of the saints and a victory for Satan in the end times — but only by importing other Bible passages into this text, all with doubtful reference.**" Rushdoony himself then insists: "**We are here told only of an attempt.... It fails**, and God destroys forever the power of Satan."⁹⁴²

Indeed, in his 1994 *Systematic Theology*, Rushdoony explains: "**The Second Coming...shall be preceded...by the destruction of all His enemies — except death (First Corinthians 15:24-26). However, there can be a very long time-span between the World-triumph — and His coming again.**"⁹⁴²

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Seventeenth. To Mathis Rissi in his 1972 book *The Future of the World: An Exegetical Study of Revelation 19:11 to 22:15*,⁹⁴² the sphere of Revelation 20:3 and 20:7 "deals with the kingdom of demonic powers and of the dead as the prison in the underworld.... Satan entices the ghostly **Nations of the dead** and the Demons, 'innumerable as the sands of the sea' — from the four corners of the Earth where the underworld manifests itself....

"Thus, at the end there comes the manifestation of the unredeemed.... But the **Church is indestructible.... No fresh battle takes place**. But rather a fire from Heaven consumes the whole ghostly array, and Satan is delivered over to the Lake of Fire where the Antichrist and his helpers already are" — and have been ever since the onset of the 'Millennium' many years previously.

The assumption that John could here have thought of the inhabitants of the underworld, is made too by W. Metzger in his book *The In-Between Kingdom*. He rightly points to Ezekiel 32:17f, where many Nations appear in the kingdom of the dead (at Revelation 20:5-13) — among them even the Nations of Gog, Meshech and Tubal (Ezekiel 38:2).

Explains Rissi: "Terms like 'Kings' and 'Armies' can also refer to men or Demons, and John [in Revelation 1:18 & 6:8f cf. 20:3-9] thinks here first of all of 'the dead' in the underworld. Their appearance, at the last 'attempt' to 'conquer' the people of God, reveals their **powerlessness** — and their appearance at the Last Judgment (10:11f), their guilt."⁹⁴²

Eighteenth. In 1972, this writer (Dr. Francis Nigel Lee) told Dr. R.J. Rushdoony that he (Lee) denied a final apostasy at the end of a postmillennial 'Millennium.' Rushdoony replied that he too had for some years himself begun to doubt the 'final apostasy' view.

Dr. Lee visited Dr. Boettner in 1975 and expounded to him his own reasons for rejecting a final apostasy at the end of the postmillennial 'Millennium.' Boettner then told Lee the latter's thesis was striking and very plausible, and that he wanted to agree. See his *Commendation* at the front of this book.

Unfortunately, some of the preteristic and revisionistic faction among modern Postmillennialists have lapsed back to what Rushdoony has called an "amillennial hangover" in their pessimistic understanding of Revelation 20:3 and 20:7f. Such persons — according to Martin Selbrede's 1999 monograph *Reconstructing Postmillennialism* — would include especially Gary North and Ken Gentry.

In the March 1982 edition of *The Counsel of Chalcedon*, published by the Atlanta Congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States, Rev. Dr. Ken Gentry wrote a fine article in favour of *Postmillennialism*. Yet there, he nevertheless made several misstatements (here emphasized by Dr. F.N. Lee).

"After an extensive era of righteousness and peace," wrote Gentry, "Satan will be loosened and will incite a brief **rebellion**.... The rebellion will be repressed by the glorious Second Coming of Christ.... Representative proponents of this view, [have] included John Calvin..., Warfield, Lorraine Boettner..., Rushdoony, Nigel Lee," etc. Thus Gentry (underlinings by Lee).

In the September-October 1982 issue of *The Counsel of Chalcedon*, Dr. Lee questioned the accuracy of the names he himself underlined above — pointing out that Warfield, Stonehouse, Loraine Boettner, R.J. Rushdoony and Francis Nigel Lee all deny a final apostasy among the humans then still living; as too do Hippolytus, Gill and Vonk. Professor Lee further claimed that only this view is thoroughly consistent with all of the various 17th-century Westminster Assembly documents. See: *Westminster Confession of Faith* 8:8^u and *Westminster Larger Catechism* QQ. & AA. 45^{f-r} & 52^b & 53^g & 54^{pqr} & 191^{c-m} & 195^{w-a}.

In that same issue, Gentry responded — indicating he had known Lee himself denied the 'final apostasy' view. Gentry then cited from Rushdoony's above-mentioned book *Thy Kingdom Come!* on Rev. 20:8 but omitted a most important sentence of his there — thus making it appear as if Rushdoony were an advocate of Gentry's own 'final apostasy' view (which Rushdoony is not). With the exception of Gill (whom Gentry discredited because of what he calls Gill's known Non-Postmillennialism), Gentry left undiscussed all of the authorities Lee had cited — but implored Lee "soon" to publish what Gentry called Lee's "good" and "massive work on Postmillennialism."

On December 22nd 1983, New York's well-known Hebrew-Christian Rev. Steve M. Schlissel of *Messiah's Mandate* wrote to Dr. Lee: "I had lunch with Dr. Van Til yesterday, and he gave me your address.... In listening to one of your tapes on Postmillennialism (which I thought was excellent) — you alluded to your belief that the millennial period would not end in a falling away. I am most interested in your reasoning and proofs. I am not committed to a position on that particular point. You mentioned having shared your view with Boettner. Has he since adopted it? I have found that a positive future orientation is essential to a virile Church. The main criticisms of Postmillennialism that I've seen, have been marred by blatant newspaper exegesis. The Church of Christ must raise her sights considerably, if she is to be found faithful to her Commission!"

Nineteenth. On September 7th 1984, Dr. Boettner wrote to Dr. Lee: "I remember with real appreciation your visit here at my home about nine years ago.... I am writing primarily to say that in the recent [revised 1984] edition of *The Millennium*, I have added a chapter, 'The Millennium of Revelation 20.' This presents a new interpretation of chapter 19:11-21, which carries over into the 20th chapter — and, I believe, gives a truly logical basis for the postmillennial position.

"I have never been fully satisfied with the view that there is to be a fearful apostasy just before the end of the Church Age, in which the saints would be all but annihilated just before Christ returns.... I believe that this [my **new**] interpretation solves that problem; that it firmly establishes the postmillennial system. I am sending you a copy of this book....

I shall be glad to have your reaction to this...interpretation. I highly respect your position as a Reformed Theologian and a Postmillennialist, and I shall await with interest your evaluation."

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

Twentieth. On September 15th 1984, Dr. Lee responded to Dr. Boettner: "Thank you for your gracious airmail letter September 7th 1984, just received. I too remember with the fondest memories your fine hospitality during my visit to your home some nine years ago, and our agreements then about 'no final apostasy' at Revelation 20:8...."

"I find myself in total agreement with your recent edition of your great book *The Millennium* in its new chapter 'The Millennium of Revelation 20'" and "which...you...state...'presents a new interpretation'.... I myself would regard...Rev. 20:5-12ff [as being descriptive of]...Christ's postmillennial no-final-apostasy Second Coming.... I do not know that I myself would call that interpretation 'new' — for many of us have held it, consciously, for getting on to two decades."

Twenty-first. Unbeknown to and independently of Dr. Lee, also Martin Selbrede had reached similar conclusions, which he communicated to Boettner from 1982 onward. Boettner himself acknowledged this in his own 1984 tract *The Millennium — Will There Be A Final Apostasy?* So too did Martin Selbrede, in his own later-publicized study *Reconstructing Postmillennialism* (1999).

In that study, according to Martin Selbrede, Delitzsch holds that "Isaiah 24:21f is the definitive verse for a final apostasy.... The verses in question read: 'And it cometh to pass in that day, Jehovah will visit the army of the high place in the high place, and the Kings of the Earth on the Earth. And they are imprisoned, as one imprisons captives in the pit, and shut up in prison; and in the course of many days they are visited. And the moon blushes and the sun turns pale: for Jehovah of hosts reigns royally upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His Elders in glory.'

"The 'escape clause' for eschatological universalists, is twofold in this instance. First, Delitzsch, speaking of these three verses in Isaiah, admits that 'the Prophet does not arrange what belongs to the end of all things in a 'chronotactic' manner.... This alerts us to guard against dogmatic assertions regarding the chronological relationships among the narrated events. Second, the subsequent 'visitation' which Delitzsch equates with the little season of Revelation 20:7-9 could just as easily be applied to the Final Judgment.

"This, too, Delitzsch touches on when observing that 'what the apocalypticist of the New Testament describes in detail in Rev. xx.4, xx.11 sqq. and xxi, the apocalypticist of the Old Testament sees here condensed into one fact'.... The collapse of separated events into a single prediction by Isaiah, suggests that eschatological universalists are unlikely to come under any serious or immediate pressure from expositors intent on resurrecting the views of this learned 19th century expositor.

"On the matter of intra-Apocalyptic parallels to Revelation 20 (Revelation 6:9-11 and Revelation 12:12), it should be noted...that a text-critical issue arises with the former parallel. Hengstenberg (*Revelation* 1:271-2) shows...the...variants to *plerososi* ['they **have** filled'] at Revelation 6:11 have no parallel passage support; whereas *plerososi* provides a meaning loaded with...parallels (Acts 20:22-24, Second Timothy 4:6-8, Romans 15:19, Luke 9:31, Acts 8:35 & 12:25 & 14:26, and Hebrews 9:39-40)... *Plerothosi* ['they have **been** filled' cf. IV Ezra 4:36f] is numerically dominant.... These are concurrent in Revelation 6 and 12.... They are concurrent **in Revelation 20** as well, thereby nullifying an 'end-time apostasy....

"Dr. Francis Nigel Lee reportedly **does not hold to a final apostasy at the end of history**.... Revelation 20.... All serious students of eschatology would do well to include consideration of this learned Postmillennialist's exposition of Revelation 20, if any pretence of completeness is to be made good." Thus Selbrede.⁹⁴²

Twenty-second. John foresaw these still-future events — as clearly as if they had already occurred in the past. Thus, using the 'historic future' tense, he declares that "fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them. And the Devil that deceived them, was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone where the Beast and the False-Prophet are. And they shall be tormented day and night — for ever and ever."⁹⁴³

This presupposes a **Final Judgment** also of **humanity**. So God will then immediately proceed to the condemnation and banishment of the wicked; and the acquittal and vindication of His own elect. Indeed, the resurrection of the dead in Christ — and of "the rest of the dead" when "the thousand years are finished"⁹⁴⁴ — takes place precisely for this purpose.

So too does the ultrarapid change of "the living" — when they too will be clothed with physical indestructibility. The faithful "alive-in-Christ" and the wicked "alive-in-Satan" are both to be transformed at the same time. For, at Christ's Visible and Final Coming in power and great glory, all of their bodies will be raised to unannihilatable and unchangeable everlasting continued existence. And those bodies will thenceforth spend all future eternity — either on the heavenly New Earth yet-to-come — or else in the everlasting Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

All of this will start occurring in the "little time" of "the twinkling of an eye."⁹⁴⁵ The living saints shall then put on immortality, and meet the Lord "in the air."⁹⁴⁶ This will occur just after the dead-in-Christ shall themselves have been resurrected — and ascended from the Earth to meet Christ descending from the Heavens. But the simultaneously-resurrected dead-in-Satan — together with the living unbelievers — shall then huddle in terror in the four corners of the World — before being dragged by God across the breadth of the Earth, unto their Final Judgment.⁹⁴⁷

⁹⁴³ Rev. 20:9f cf. nn. 338 & 879 & 611.

⁹⁴⁴ Rev. 20:3 & 30:5 with Jn. 5:29 & I Th. 4:14-17. See too n. 929.

⁹⁴⁵ I Cor. 15:51-54 cf. Rev. 20:3f, 5ab, 12 & esp. n. 930.

⁹⁴⁶ I Cor. 5:51bc, 52e, 53; I Th. 4:15abc, 17abc; Heb. 11:5 cf. Gen. 5:22-24 & Jude 14 & Rev. 11:4-12 & II Kgs. 2:11.

⁹⁴⁷ I Th. 4:15-17 cf. n. 934.

Satan unbound only to be dragged off to Final Judgment

The saved, then with Jesus in the air, shall be judged and vindicated from the Lamb's *Book of Life*.⁹⁴⁸ So shall they be forever with the Lord.⁹⁴⁹ But the lost, now all alone on the Earth, shall be condemned from God's *Book of Works*. "And fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them" — at the Final Judgment of the wicked dead bodily resurrected from their graves, whether they had formerly been buried in the ground or even at sea.⁹⁵⁰

Twenty-third. As John predicted: "I saw a great white throne — and Him Who sat on it from Whose face the Earth and the Heavens fled away. Then, no place was found for them" — in which to hide. "I saw the dead — small and great — standing before God.

"Then, the books were opened." Firstly, the *Book of Works*. Then another book was opened — which is the *Book of Life*. Then the dead were judged according to their works — from those things which had been written in the books. Also the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them.... They were judged — every man according to their works."⁹⁵¹

Note that the **emphasis** throughout is here on the salvation of the elect — rather than on the damnation of the wicked. The latter is, of course, the very real alternative to the former. For death alias the grave, and even for Hell — all of their inhabitants will be destroyed (though never annihilated). "Then death and the grave [and even Hell] were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the *Book of Life* — was cast into the Lake of Fire."⁹⁵²

Yet life and Heaven are indestructible! Those who had not merely unannihilable existence (like the wicked), but who by God's grace had been given everlasting life before they died — will then be even further enriched, on the new Earth yet to come.

Observe that the wicked, after the Final Judgment, are removed from the Earth forever — and henceforth hurled with the grave and even with Hell itself into the Lake of Fire, where they will thenceforth be kept incarcerated for all eternity. Yet the present Earth itself is to be cleansed, and to become the everlasting abode of the righteous — when, after the Final Judgment, Heaven comes down and is merged with earthly life forever.

⁹⁴⁸ Rev. 20:12cd; 21:27; 22:19.

⁹⁴⁹ I Th. 4:17.

⁹⁵⁰ Rev. 20:8f cf. vv. 12f.

⁹⁵¹ Rev. 20:11-13.

⁹⁵² Rev. 20:14f.

Last. As the next (and final) two chapters of the *Book of Revelation* make clear — even the Lake of Fire is but a tiny ghetto within this huge Universe. The inhabitants of that Lake, are of two kinds. First, they include but a small fragment of all the hosts of Angels. Second, they also embrace an off-scoured minority of mankind. As to the rest — the majority or all of the many millions of the human race — they, having been purified by the blood of Christ, will not die forever but instead **live** in bliss with the Lord **forever**.

There shall be a re-new-ed Cosmos in its totality — a re-new-ed Heaven and a re-new-ed Earth fused together, in which **righteousness** (alias **respect for God's Moral Law**) shall dwell. This righteous Cosmos will then probably be centred in the Father's House with the many mansions, alias the Holy City called 'New Jerusalem' — which will then come down from God out of Heaven, and settle onto the re-new-ed Earth forever.

But the Lake of Fire will be God's own garbage dump. Its contents are pure trash. And that *Gehenna* will be located — and will always remain — **outside** of New Jerusalem's 'city limits.'⁹⁵³

O Christian, Satan and his hordes shall sovereignly be loosened by Almighty God Himself — right after the expiry of the "thousand years" of international Christian 'millennial' bliss! But they shall then forthwith be dragged off to their Final Judgment.

Never for a moment will they then be able to threaten the Lord's saints — who will at that very time just have been caught up into the air forever to be with their returning Saviour. For, only "a little time" after the loosening of Satan and his goons, there shall follow — the Final Judgment.

This then is the purpose for which the Devil and his hellish followers shall be loosened. For after their judgment and damnation, Satan and all his followers shall be punished with everlasting death — in the Hell of God's maximum security prison: the Lake of Fire from which no escape will ever be possible.

On the other hand, **God's vindicated children** will freely enter into the City of God. For **they**, in all of their uncountable numbers, shall inherit the re-new-ed Earth — and continue to rule as Prophets and Priests and Kings, with God their Father, forever.⁹⁵⁴

So on, then, Christian soldiers!
Onward, against the Devil and all of his followers!
Onward, to **victory!**

⁹⁵³ Rev. 21:7f,27; 22:11,14f II Pet. 3:10-13.

⁹⁵⁴ Rev. 21:4,24-26; 22:5.

Overcomers inherit All Things in the City of New Jerusalem

Revelation 21

December 30

"Then I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth. For the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no more Sea. Then I, John, saw the Holy City New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven.... Then there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things have passed away.... Then the Nations shall walk in the light of it [the City of God]. And the Kings of the Earth bring their glory and honour into it..., and they shall keep on bringing the glory and honour of the Nations into it."⁹⁵⁵

John had just described the Final Judgment, with its doom of the wicked and its vindication of the children of God.⁹⁵⁶ Next, the Apostle focussed his attention on the New Heavens — and especially on the New Earth as the everlasting abode of the righteous.⁹⁵⁷

John now once again recorded what Christ's Angel showed him: " I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth. For the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no more Sea."⁹⁵⁸

First. Some see in this description a picture of the **Church Militant**. Thus Tichonius, Augustine, Vitringa, and Rushdoony.

Others see it as symbolizing the **Present Church Triumphant in Heaven**. Thus Irenaeus, Tertullian, Bede, Joachim of Floris, Poole, Matthew Henry, Hengstenberg, Lange, Thomas Scott, Mauro, and Hoeksema.

Even more Theologians regard it as a description of the **Ultimate Church Triumphant** on the **New Earth** yet-to-come. Thus Hippolytus, Lactantius, Martin Luther, Junius's edition of the *Geneva Bible* of John Knox & Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law William Whittingham, Brightman, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Bishop Thomas Newton, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, B.H. Carroll (*etc.*); together with all of its **renewed culture** (thus Calvin, Vitringa, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, Abraham Kuyper Sr. & Jr., H.H. Kuyper, Bavinck and Schilder).

⁹⁵⁵ Rev. 21:1f,4,7,9f,24,26. See too at n. 1002 (*q.v.*).

⁹⁵⁶ Rev. 20:7-15, *cf.* our study for Dec. 29.

⁹⁵⁷ Rev. ch. 21 *cf.* II Pet. 3:7-13.

⁹⁵⁸ Seas always "threatened" the harmony of the World, so it is appropriate they should be abolished on the New Earth. Gen. 1:2-9; 7:19-24; Pss. 89:9f & 104:6-9; Isa. 27:1; 51:9f; 58:20f; Dan.7:2; Rom. 8:19-22; Rev. 13:2; 17:1,15; 21:1.

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As Adam Clarke comments on Revelation 21:1f: "The Ancient Jews believed that God would renew the Heavens and the Earth.... This general supposition they founded on Isaiah 65:17" — which predicts 'Behold, I create New Heavens and a New Earth!'"

Revelation 21 is not just one or more but **all of the above**. As the 1560 Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of John Knox & Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Dr. William Whittingham rightly comments: "**All** things shall be **renewed** and **restored** into a most excellent and perfect estate, and therefore the day of the resurrection is called 'The day of restoration of all things.' Acts 3:21."

However, "the Holy City New Jerusalem" is also "the holy company of the elect" — and "the bride [or] the Lamb's wife" is "the Church which is married to Christ by faith." These comments on the *Book of Revelation* in all of the editions of the *Geneva Bible* from 1599 onward, appear to have been written by the strict Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Junius (1545-1602).

Again, the "city 'Holy Jerusalem'" is "said to come down from Heaven.... Because [of] all the benefits that the Church has, they acknowledge it to come from God through Christ." Furthermore, the phrases 'the Nations...shall walk in the light' of the City of New Jerusalem, and '**the Kings of the Earth shall bring their glory and honour into it**' — shows that "**Kings and Princes (contrary to that wicked opinion of the Anabaptists) are partakers of the heavenly glory**, if they rule in the fear of the Lord."⁹⁵⁵

Second. The intimation that there will be "no more Sea"⁹⁵⁸ — certainly seems to indicate that there will then indeed be Land⁹⁵⁹ and Air⁹⁶⁰ and even River-water⁹⁶¹ on the New Earth. Consequently, it will **not** be a **brand-new** and essentially different Earth, but rather our same Earth — **re-new-ed** and **per-fect-ed**.⁹⁶²

The material resurrection-bodies within which we shall then live on that equally material and renewed Earth will be **re-new-ed** (yet **not** be **brand-new**). They will not be essentially different bodies from those we now possess — but the same bodies as it were '**re-tread-ed**.' They shall, says the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (32:2), be "these selfsame bodies and none other."⁹⁶³

On the other hand, though the New Earth to come after the Final Judgment will be essentially the same as this present Earth — it will indeed have a **rather different appearance**. Negatively, the New Earth will be without our Sea — and **without man's sin** or any of its **consequences**. And positively, the New Earth will then be this present Earth — **developed to perfection**.

⁹⁵⁹ Rev. 21:10 & 22:2.

⁹⁶⁰ Rev. 21:23 & 22:5.

⁹⁶¹ Rev. 21:6 & 22:1f.

⁹⁶² Rev. 21:1's usage of *kainon* in the original Greek, meaning 're-new-ed' (rather than *neon*, meaning 'brand-new'), supports our contention. See too II Pet. 3:4-14; Heb. 1:12; Eph. 3:21; Isa. 45:6f,12,14,17f.

⁹⁶³ See *Westminster Confession of Faith* 32:2, and cf. Job 19:25-27 & Phil. 3:20f & I Jh. 3:2.

For at that time "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things [shall] have passed away."⁹⁶⁴

Third. The knowledge that **our present World will not at all be annihilated but rather perfected** — should encourage us to live consistent Christian lives here and now in all that we do. Paul insisted that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we are to do everything to the glory of God.⁹⁶⁵ And he also insisted precisely in respect of the Final Coming of our Saviour, that we are to keep reminding ourselves that all of our present labours for God and His Christ shall not be in vain.⁹⁶⁶

Similarly, Peter too remarked: "What manner of persons **you** ought to be in all holy behaviour and godliness, looking out for and hastening to the coming of the Day of God, in which...**we**, according to His promise, look out for New Heavens and a New Earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, seeing that you **are looking out** for such things — **be diligent**, so that you may be found by Him [to be] in peace; without spot; and blameless!"⁹⁶⁷

Peter taught that our present Earth will not be annihilated at Christ's Final Coming. For he compared the New World to come with the Old World at the time of the Flood; and he tells us that the works done here on Earth are to be "**found**" or "**retrieved**" — also **after** the final holocaust.⁹⁶⁸ He also knew and taught that all the useful arts and crafts from the time **before** the Flood, were preserved **beyond** it — and, as recorded by Moses, were further developed by Noah and his children on the Post-Flood 'New Earth' thereafter.⁹⁶⁹

It is only to be expected then, that John too would teach the same patriarchal doctrine as had both Noah and Moses — and the same apostolic doctrine as had both Paul and Peter. So John himself insisted in his *Book of Revelation* that even the works of our earthly labours (as the **Church Militant**), do follow us into glory; and shall be preserved and enjoyed on the New Earth for ever.⁹⁷⁰ Indeed, even the saved Kings and the saved Nations — bring their royal glory and national honours into New Jerusalem City.⁹⁷⁰

Fourth. The above information enables us to understand the **true nature** of the everlasting future dwelling-place of the saints on the New Earth yet to come. For we read: "I, John, saw the Holy City New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven — prepared like a bride adorned for her husband."⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁴ Rev. 21:4.

⁹⁶⁵ I Cor. 10:31.

⁹⁶⁶ I Cor. 15:42-58 *cf.* Rom. 8:19-22.

⁹⁶⁷ II Pet. 3:11-14.

⁹⁶⁸ II Pet. 3:5-7,10. In v. 10, the preferred reading is *Gee kai ta en autee; erga heuretheesetai* (and not *katakaeesetai* or *ekpurootheesetai*) — "also the Earth and the works on it shall be found" or retrieved (and not "burned up" or "fired out").

⁹⁶⁹ I Pet. 3:20 & II Pet. 2:5 *cf.* Gen. 1:28; 2:15; 3:17-19; 4:7,12,17,20-26; 6:1-22; 9:1-7,20,27.

⁹⁷⁰ Rev. 14:13 *cf.* 21:24-26.

⁹⁷¹ Rev. 21:2.

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This "Holy City" indeed represents the Members of the Christian Church as such (both the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant).⁹⁷² However, one can hardly divorce the saints from their everlasting **abode**.⁹⁷³ Hence, it seems transparently clear that the "Holy City" of the future — includes **both** the saints **and** the place where they shall dwell.

For the Holy City is not itself the bride, but is prepared **like** a bride adorned for her husband. And a bride's adornments, even though they surround the bride, are not the bride herself.⁹⁷¹

"The bride, the Lamb's wife,"⁹⁷⁴ is not **just** "that great city" alias "the Holy Jerusalem" **itself**. The **bride** herself consists of the saved "**Nations**" and the "**Kings**" who bring their honour and glory **into** the Holy City.⁹⁷⁵

Fifth. The Holy City and its inhabitants in John's last vision is perhaps **primarily** a picture of the **future** Church and her dwelling in glory on the New Earth yet to come. Yet it is certainly true that all who are regenerate, are **already** new creatures — and in that sense new creations.⁹⁷⁶

It is true that the saved Kings and Nations "**bring** the glory and honour of the Nations" into the Kingdom of God — here on Earth, and even **now**.⁹⁷⁶ It is also true that they "**shall continue**" to do so in the future, even **prior** to Christ's Final Coming⁹⁷⁷ — as well as **thereafter**.

Sixth. It is also true that the Church Militant here on this present Earth — is founded on the 'Canon' alias the Measuring-Rod of God's Holy Word. This means the Older Testament's teachings of the 'twelve' Patriarchal Tribes of the children of Israel, **and** the Newer Testament's teachings of the 'twelve' Apostles of the Lamb — as **all** reflected in the **twenty-four** heavenly Elders.

This is so — even though the Tribes and Apostles are not **exactly** twelve each. It is again so — even though they themselves are not **literalistically** the gates and the foundations of that heavenly city.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷² Rev. 21:9-12,23-27.

⁹⁷³ Jh. 14:2; Rev. 7:15-17; chs. 21 to 22.

⁹⁷⁴ Rev. 21:9.

⁹⁷⁵ Rev. 21:24-26 & 22:3-5 *cf.* Ps. 45 — *per contra* Ps.48 and Isa. chs. 54 & 60 & 62; like Rev. 21:1-22 — all see the bride as being closely associated with the city, and thus combine elements of both Pss. 45 & 48.

⁹⁷⁶ Rev. 21:24's "**bring** their glory and honour into it." *Per contra*, Rev. 21:26. *Cf.* n. [†] 1000. See too C. Vitringa's *Apocalypsis* pp. 1215f (on Rev. 21:24-26). See too *Christ's Kingship Over the Nations*, Westminster Standard, Gisborne (New Zealand), n.d. pp. 10f.

⁹⁷⁷ Pss. 102:1-5,22 & 138:4; Isa. chs. 54 to 66; Zech. ch. 14; Rev. 20:3-6.

⁹⁷⁸ Rev. 21:12-14 & 4:10 *cf.* Lk.24:27,44,47f; Eph. 2:13-22, esp. vv. 19-21. Notice that Rev. 21:12-14 does not state that the Tribes are the gates or that the Apostles are the foundations of the city, but only that their names are written thereon. *Cf.* Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 14:1; 22:4. On the idea of the 'Canon' — a 'measuring rod' calibrated into the teachings of the Older Testament's Tribes of Israel and the Newer Testament's Apostles of Christ — *cf.* Rev. 12-17 with 11:1f & 10:9-11 & Eph. 2:20 & II Cor. 10:1-4,13,15 & Gal. 6:16 & Phil. 3:16 & with nn. 368 & 370 & 374-376.

Seventh. It is **not** true, however, that the Church has or will come down from Heaven **before** the Final Judgment.⁹⁷¹ It is not **yet** true that there is even now "no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."⁹⁷⁴ **And** it is not **yet** true that there is "no temple" or "no need of the sun neither of the moon."⁹⁷⁹

One day, all of this **shall** indeed be true! One day, it shall be true of God's present People and of their future environment. Even **now** the People of God have these precious **promises**; even **now** they have a **foretaste** of that ultimate enjoyment. But only **after** the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven onto the renewed Earth, will all of these promises **fully** be realized.⁹⁸⁰

This ultimate realization will take place only **after** the Final Judgment — and **long** after the still-future "thousand years" earthly reign of Christ's saints, which itself **follows** the still-future destruction of the Beast and its Kings **subsequent** to the yet-future Fall of Babylon the Great. (On this, see some of the various eschatological works of Rev. Prof. Dr. A. Kuyper Sr., Rev. Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, Rev. Dr. O. Jager, and Rev. Prof. Dr. F.N. Lee.)⁹⁸⁰

Eighth. At the end of World History, there will apparently be **confederation** and covenantal co-operation (though not complete **unification** and amalgamation) between the renewed Heaven and the renewed Earth. The re-created or rather the re-made Heaven shall apparently come down — together with the City of New Jerusalem onto the re-created or rather the re-made Earth.

For "the city had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God did illuminate it, and the Lamb is its light... And there shall be no night there. And they need no candle, neither sunlight. For the Lord Himself gives them light."⁹⁸¹

At that time the Kingdom of Heaven⁹⁸² will be co-extensive with the whole Earth.⁹⁸³ Jesus in the *Lord's Prayer* taught us to plead that this should come to pass, when He commanded we pray to our heavenly Father: "Thy will be done on Earth — as it is being done in Heaven!"⁹⁸⁴

Ninth. In that everlasting Day, the righteous themselves shall always shine like stars in the firmament.⁹⁸⁵ Then our present and ever-increasing heavenly reign with Christ⁹⁸⁶ shall be consummated in our inheriting of this Earth itself⁹⁸⁷ — indeed, in our inheriting this Earth as then **renewed**.

⁹⁷⁹ Rev. 21:22f; 22:1,5 *cf.* Isa. 30:23-33, esp. v. 26.

⁹⁸⁰ Rev. 17:16; 18:4; 19:19-21; 20:1-15; 21:1-8. Compare: A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Common Grace (Gemeene Gratie, Kok, Kampen, I-III, 1927)* and his last great work *The End (Van de Voleinding, Kok, Kampen, 1931, I-IV)*; K. Schilder's *Christ and Culture* (Wever, Franeker, 1952) and *The Revelation of Jesus Christ and Social Life* (Meinema, Delft, n.d.) and *What Is Heaven?* (Kok, Kampen, 1935); O. Jager's *Everlasting Life Especially with Reference to the Relationship Between Time and Eternity* (Kok, Kampen, 1952); and F.N. Lee's *The Central Significance of Culture* (Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1976) and *The Origin and Destiny of Man* (Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1974).

⁹⁸¹ Rev. 21:23 & 22:5.

⁹⁸² Mt. 13:24-20; 13:31-33; 13:47f; Lk. 17:20-22; Col. 1:13-20.

⁹⁸³ Pss. 2 & 22 & 72; Isa. 2 & 11 & 66; and esp. Dan. 2:35,44 & 7:15,22,25-27 & Hab. 2:14.

⁹⁸⁴ Mt. 6:10 *cf.* v. 13.

⁹⁸⁵ Dan. 12:3.

⁹⁸⁶ Eph. 2:6.

⁹⁸⁷ Mt. 5:5.

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For "he who overcomes, shall inherit all things."⁹⁸⁸ Indeed, that means "all things" in the created (and to-be-re-created) "Heaven **and** Earth."⁹⁸⁹

Tenth. Our inheritance of "all things" will include all the treasures of our present **World of Nature**. That which is natural, will then be glorified for ever. For God's children will behold the "great and high **Mountain**" on which the heavenly Jerusalem will come to rest here on Earth.⁹⁹⁰

They will enjoy the jasper-coloured **light** which will illuminate it.⁹⁹¹ They will walk on the **golden** street and stand on the **bejewelled** foundations of the City of God.⁹⁹² They will drink of the **crystal-clear river** proceeding out of or flowing forth from the throne of the Lamb.⁹⁹³ And they will partake each month of the delicious **fruit** of the groves of the **tree** of life.⁹⁹⁴

Eleventh. However **symbolical** these descriptions may indeed be — they do symbolize **material** objects. These material objects will be located in a **material** World to be inhabited by **material** people with **material** bodies. For New Jerusalem City is no 'ghost town' inhabited only by disembodied spirits!

A major part of the "all things" we will inherit, will be constituted by the riches of **human culture**. Originally, the Lord God had given His Great Commission to man — to develop culture to His glory. Said the Triune God: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Earth and subdue it! Also **dominate** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every living creature that moves on the Earth!" Too, God commanded man to **cultivate** the ground.⁹⁹⁵

This was again substantially repeated after the Fall.⁹⁹⁶ Jesus the Second Adam fulfilled it in His earthly life, and is consummating it through His earthly children especially since His heavenly session.⁹⁹⁷ Consequently, the Church is still to promote it today.⁹⁹⁸ Indeed, Christians will still be reaping its fruits at its consummation in glory — for all eternity.⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁸⁸ Rev. 21:7.

⁹⁸⁹ Gen. 1:1 *cf.* Rev. 4:11 & 5:10,13.

⁹⁹⁰ Rev. 21:10 *cf.* Isa. 66:1,22.

⁹⁹¹ Rev. 21:11.

⁹⁹² Rev. 21:10-21.

⁹⁹³ Rev. 21:6 & 22:1.

⁹⁹⁴ Rev. 22:1 *cf.* Ezek. 47:12.

⁹⁹⁵ Gen. 1:28 & 2:15.

⁹⁹⁶ Gen. 9:1-7 & Ps. 8.

⁹⁹⁷ Heb. 2:5-14.

⁹⁹⁸ Mt. 28:19; I Cor. 10:31; 15:58; Heb. 2:15-18; 4:11; 6:7.

⁹⁹⁹ Rev. 14:13; 21:24-26.

This is why, even in the City of God after the Final Judgment — "the Nations shall keep on walking in the light of it, and the Kings of the Earth bring their glory and honour into it.... And they shall keep on bringing the glory and honour of the Nations into it" — the then-cleansed cultural treasures and glorious honours of 'all Peoples that on Earth do dwell.'¹⁰⁰⁰ For New Jerusalem City's walls and gates and foundations, with all of their sacred inscriptions, will then be enjoyed by the People of God for ever and ever.¹⁰⁰¹

Twelfth. It is, however, important to note that all of this glory of the **Church Triumphant** has already been realized **in principle** — even in our present earthly **Church Militant**. Not only is it so that "the Nations **shall** walk in the light" and the Earth's Kings "**shall** bring the glory and honour of the Nations" into New Jerusalem City alias **the Church Triumphant**.¹⁰⁰⁰ In addition, it is also true that "the Kings of the Earth **do bring** their glory and honour into it (as the **Church Militant**) here and now."⁹⁷⁶

As Kings and Political Leaders become Christians, they glorify and honour the Church and God's Kingdom with their national treasures **now**. And as **more** Kings and Political Leaders become Christians in the future, they **shall** glorify and honour the Church and God's Kingdom with their national treasures in the **future** — even on our **present** Earth **before** Christ's Final Return.

Thirteenth. During the 'latter-day glory' of the Church here on Earth **before** the end of History — the Christian **State** will co-operate with the Christian **Church** and with a christianized **Society**. Together, all three will triunely promote — a really-and-truly and full-orbed Christian **culture**.

The great Rev. Professor Dr. Campegius Vitringa has commented aright: "Princes, Kings [and] Emperors shall serve Christ and His Church, [and] shall bring their glory, majesty and power into it." For such Political Leaders "shall convert" their glory, majesty and power to the "use and advantage" of Christ and His Church. These Political Leaders "shall publically celebrate the True Religion; honour its Ministers; and by their authority and power" they shall "maintain and defend" the True Religion and True Ministers of the Christian Faith. Now this, "the Church has **already** experienced **in part** from the time of **Constantine**; and lately from the period of the **Reformation**."

On the other hand, even Vitringa admits that the **complete** fulfilment of the last two chapters of the Bible — is to be realized **only in the future**. For it is "**partly** as yet **to look for**." It is, however, largely to be expected even **before** the **end** of World History. For "there is a reference here to Isaiah 60:10-11 and 49:22,25." Indeed, "it appears very clearly from **this** place, that this vision [of Revelation 21:24-26] refers to the state of the Church **on Earth**."

¹⁰⁰⁰ Rev. 21:24-26[†]. Note that although v. 24 is couched in the present tense ("**bring**"), v. 26 is couched in the future tense ("**shall bring**"). Hence this activity happens **both** here and now on Earth **as well as** hereafter on the New Earth yet to come. Cf. nn. 976 to 1006.

¹⁰⁰¹ Rev. 21:12-14 cf. 2:17 & 3:12 and Rev. 21:25 & 22:5.

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Accordingly, "the meaning is that whatever is eminent, beautiful, splendid or praiseworthy among the Nations — shall be consecrated to the use of the Church of Christ. The command of wealth and of earthly prerogatives; the gifts of erudition, prudence, eloquence; the dignity of nobles; the majesty of Kings and Princes — **shall promote** the interests of the Church."⁹⁷⁶

This means the interest of the **Church Militant** in its **budding** latter-day glory, right **here on Earth** — as a **preview** of the even **greater** glory of the **Church Triumphant** yet to **flower** on the **New-Earth-yet-to-come**. Thus the great Rev. Professor Dr. Campegius Vitringa.

Fourteenth. It is not so, as all Premillennialists and most pessimillennial modern 'Amillennialists' wrongly believe, that only a few persons from several or even from many Nations will get be saved. According to the text-critical **innovation** of the Roman Catholic Humanist Desiderius Erasmus at Revelation 21:24 in the 1516f edition of his own *Greek New Testament*, it is only 'the Nations **of them which are saved** [who] shall walk in the light" of the Holy City New Jerusalem. Indeed, many subsequent Bible 'translations' — all deriving from this 'text' of Erasmus — have repeated this error.¹⁰⁰²

¹⁰⁰² Rev. 7:9 & 15:4 & 21:24-26. Observe in Rev. 21:24 that after the God-inspired words *peripateesousin ta Ethnee* or "the Nations shall walk" —the great Roman Catholic Humanist Desiderius Erasmus in his 1516 critical edition of the Greek N.T. (based on earlier Greek manuscript copies) wrongly inserted the uninspired words *toon soozomenoon* or "of them which are being saved" —before the God-inspired words *dia tou photoot autees* or "in the light thereof" (namely "the light" of the City of God). Erasmus got and inserted these **extra-biblical** words from an uninspired comment on the Biblical text, made by Andreas of Caesarea —who died in A.D. 614 at the beginning of the 'Dark Ages' and after the Early Church had lost its initially-postmillennial expectation that the Bible predicts a 'latter-day glory' when all of our Earth's Nations as such would themselves embrace Christianity. For his own edition of the Greek New Testament, Erasmus used but three Greek manuscripts (which dated only from the twelfth century onward) —all of which lacked the last book of the Bible. So, hurrying to get his own book published as quickly as possible, Erasmus frantically borrowed from the 1455-1522 Humanist Reuchlin a manuscript containing the Commentary on the *Book of Revelation* written by Andreas. In that commentary, subsequently to the words "and the Nations" (at Rev. 21:24 in the inspired Greek text of the New Testament), Andreas had inserted the words 'of those who are saved' (as his own explanation of the Biblical text itself). Erasmus wrongly regarded that explanation as part of the Greek New Testament itself — and published it accordingly.

Unfortunately, this addition by Erasmus to the infallible Word of God, has done inestimable damage —and misled both Premillennialists and pessimillennial 'Amillennialists' to promote their appalling doctrine that not the Nations as such but only some from the Nations (alias an alleged minority-party from within each or most of the various Nations) are "being saved" and ever will be "saved." That is one of the "doctrines...of men" which Christ condemned (cf. Mt. 15:8), and is quite contrary to the Revelation of Christ and "the Faith of Jesus" in Rev. 1:1 & 14:12 & 15:4 (which teaches that "all Nations shall come and worship" the "Lord God Almighty"). Erasmus's additional words are uninspired and indeed lacking even in any extant Greek manuscript copies ever made prior to the *Commentary* of the seventh-century Andreas of Caesarea (if not also lacking in any Greek manuscript copy of the New Testament made before the twelfth century).

Note too that Erasmus's grave error here, has been perpetuated in *Martin Luthers Uebersetzung* (alias Luther's translation of the Bible into German) —even though Luther's fortunate punctuation of the unpunctuated Greek phrase minimized the damage ("*und die Heiden, die da selig werden, wandeln in demselbigen Licht*" alias "and the Nations, who are saved there, walk in its self-same light"). Less happily punctuated and even more closely following Erasmus are the versions of this verse to be found in the *Geneva Bible*, Beza's *Latin New Testament*, the *Authorized Version* (alias the *King James' Version*), the *Gaelic Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible* (alias the *Staten-Vertaling* or *SV*), the 1933 George Lamsa's *Syriac Peshitta Bible*, the *King James II Version*, the *New King James Version*, and even the *Afrikaans Revised Version* (1933 *Hersiene Uitgawe*). Mercifully, these

uninspired words of Andreas and Erasmus have rightly been omitted in the English *Revised Version*, *Moffatt*, Lloyd's (*Corrected*) *New Testament*, the *American Revised Standard Version*, the *New English Bible*, the *Modern Language Bible (New Berkeley Version)*, the *Revised Luther Translation (Revidierte Uebersetzung Luthers)*, Beck's *American Translation*, the *New American Standard Version (NAS)*, the *Good News Bible (GNB)*, *Good News for Modern Man (Today's English Version or TEV)*, *News for Today (New Testament in Contemporary English or CEV)*, the *New Dutch Bible* (alias the *Nieuwe Nederlandse Vertaling*), the *New International Version* (or the *NIV*), the *New Afrikaans Bible (Die Bybel Nuwe Vertaling)*, *Good News Australia* (or *GNA*)—and even in Kenneth Taylor's *The Living Bible* (or *TLB*)!

As the highly-conservative J.A. Bengel noted in his famous *Gnomen* (1773 Ed. III at 1395): "If Erasmus could live today—he would in my opinion have deleted the explanatory remark of Andreas which he [Erasmus] regarded as [belonging to] the text." On this whole very important matter, see too C. Vanderwaal's *Revelation of Jesus Christ—Introduction and Translation*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1971, p. 236 n. 24.

It should be noted that none of the third-century **Greek Chester-Beatty Papyri P45-P48 & P52** contain any part of the *Book of Revelation* from 17:3 onward. Eusebius (265-340) was equivocal about the place of the Apocalypse in the N.T. Canon—and even after his death, it was omitted in the **Codex Vaticanus**. Yet it is indeed in the **Codex Sinaiticus** from early in the fourth and in the **Codex Alexandrinus** from early in the fifth and in the **Codex Ephraemi** from later in the fifth centuries. See W.F. Howard's chapter *The Greek Bible* in ed. H.W. Robinson's *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1940, pp. 69 & 72.

It is important also to note that though Aramaic was indeed the language spoken by our Lord—there is no direct connection between His Aramaic teaching and the later **Syriac Gospels**. Syriac Christianity was headquartered in Edessa, east of the Euphrates. Christianity came there in Greek, apparently from Antioch (*cf.* Acts 13:1f)—so that doubtless the Syrian Scriptures were translated from Greek. Indeed, even the **Old Syriac Old Testament** was completed only in the 1st or 2nd century **A.D.**, being produced as a translation from a conflation of the **Hebrew O.T.** and the **Greek O.T. Septuagint**. The later **Old Syriac Version** (of the **New Testament**) comprises the **Gospels alone**.

Very sensitive to influences from the Greek, the **Peshitta** dates from the beginning of the fifth century. In attempting to establish the original text, it has little value; even though it was the parent of both the Armenian and the Georgian Versions. See T.H. Robinson's chapter *The Syriac Bible* in ed. H.W. Robinson's *op. cit.*, pp. 87 & 90-95. The Syriac **Peshitta**—used by both the Monophysite and the Nestorian Churches—was the version which eventually became the official Bible of the Syriac Church (but apparently did not even exist before the fifth century). Rabbula, the Syrian Bishop of Edessa from 411 to 435, is recorded by his biographer to have translated the *New Testament* from Greek into Syriac. Yet the Peshitta in its original form added the O.T. *Apocrypha*, but did not include John 8:1-11 nor I Jh. 5:7 nor the so-called '*Catholic Epistles*' nor the *Apocalypse*, which were not accepted as canonical by the Syrian Church.

It is true that the Assyrian (and Nestorian?) George M. Lamsa (B.A.), does include the extra words in his 1933 rendition of Rev. 21:24-26 as given in his Syriac New Testament. He renders it (our own underlining): "And the people who have been saved shall walk by that very light. And the Kings of the Earth...shall bring the glory and the honours of the peoples into it."

In his own Introduction, although he himself claims the Epistles were translated into Greek from the Syrian—Lamsa does not claim that the *Apocalypse* alias the book of *Revelation* was! And even his Publishers concede on the very first page of their Preface (our own underlining): "Modern scholarship believes that, as happened in other parts of the Church, the earliest copies of the sacred books in Syriac were revised again and again—to bring them closer to the standard of the Hebrew and Greek texts from which they were drawn." They state Lamsa's translation of the New Testament derives from the "Mortimer-McCawley manuscript," which "has been variously identified as sixth or seventh century A.D." (and thus only from the late time of the A.D. 614 Andreas of Caesarea! See G.M. Lamsa: *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text. George M. Lamsa's Translations from the Aramaic of the Peshitta*, Harper, San Francisco, 1968 edition, pp. 1 & ii & viii & 1242.

About a century later than the *Peshitta*, in 508 a fresh translation was made by order of Philoxenus—the Jacobite Bishop of Hierapolis in eastern Syria. It was from this **Philoxenus's Version** that even the four minor *Catholic Epistles* were first added to the Syriac Bible. The *Apocalypse* does not seem to have been detected in this version prior to the late discovery of a **twelfth**-Century manuscript copy of it. Indeed, this raises the whole question as to whether the uninspired and inserted words at Rev. 21:24 even in this twelfth-century manuscript—had not found their way into it from carelessness in recopying the seventh-century *Commentary on*

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Revelation by Andreas of Caesarea himself (similar to the later similar carelessness in that very same matter even by Erasmus himself).

The **Coptic Versions**, whether the earlier Sahidic or the later Boharic, are too fragmentary to throw light on the text of Rev. 21:24. The **Armenian Version** was translated only about 400, and presumably from Syriac. Into the **Georgian Version**, the *Apocalypse* was first translated only around 978; yet never fully accepted. The **Arabic Version** and the **Persian Version** have no importance for the main textual problems of the New Testament. And the **Ethiopic Version** as well as the **Gothic Version** were made directly from a **Greek** text like that then current late in fourth-century Constantinople—and hence again suggest the originality of the shorter form of Rev. 21:24.

In the **Old Latin Versions**, those parts considered most valuable would have been translated first—the *Gospels* before the *Apocalypse*. The **manuscript copies** of the *Old-Latin Version* are very obscure. They do not until Primasius in the 6th century give an almost-complete text of the *Apocalypse*. See here H.F.D. Sparks's chapter *The Latin Bible* in ed. H.W. Robinson's *op. cit.*, pp. 104 & 114. In Jerome's **Vulgate**, some regard his *Apocalypse* as Pre-Hieronymian and associate its origin with Novatian. If this is correct, Jerome's rendition of Rev. 21:24 ("the **Nations** shall walk in the light" of the Holy City), not only agrees with all of the fourth and fifth century uncials thereon—but also with the Old-Latin of the A.D. 250f Novatian. Significantly, Jerome's A.D. 382-404 *Vulgate*, based on the *Old Latin Version* and Origen's *Hexapla*, does not have the uninspired words of Andreas which confused Erasmus—but simply states: "*Et ambulabunt gentes in lumine*" etc. (meaning: "and **Nations** shall walk in the light" etc.). See F.G. Kenyon's *The Text of the Greek Bible*, Duckworth, London, 1953 ed., pp. 72-75, 105, 112, 122-28, 130-141, 155f & 188f.

We must conclude, then, that the original and inspired words of Rev. 21:24 are —*Kai peripateesousin ta Ethnee dia tou phootos autees*, and that those words should be translated: "And the Nations shall walk in the light of it" (namely of the Holy City).

We thus conclude from:

- (a) **all** extant **Greek Papyri** and **all Greek Uncials** from the fourth and fifth century;
- (b) **all** of the extant Italic manuscripts, whether **Old-Latin** or **Jerome's Vulgate**;
- (c) the limitation of the **Old Syriac Version** to the *Gospels* alone;
- (d) the non-existence of the **Syriac Peshitta New Testament** until the fifth century A.D., and its oversensitivity to extraneous influences;
- (e) the **non-existence** in the original *Peshitta* of the *Apocalypse*, which was not then regarded as canonical in Syria;
- (f) the **lack of any claim** even by the 1933 Assyrian Lamsa himself that the **Book of Revelation** was translated from Syriac into Greek;
- (g) the **concession even by his Publishers** that modern scholars conclude the earliest copies of the Bible in Syriac were revised repeatedly in order to bring them closer to the admitted final criterion of the **Hebrew** (O.T.) and the **Greek** (N.T.) texts from which they were drawn;
- (h) the **non-existence** of the *Apocalypse* in the sixth-century **Philoxenus's Syriac New Testament**, until the addition to a copy thereof apparently only in the twelfth century, and perhaps even then only by way of being borrowed from the seventh-century *Commentary on Revelation* by Andreas of Caesarea with all of its limitations;
- (i) the translation from the Syriac of the still-never-fully-accepted *Apocalypse* into the **Georgian Version** only around 978;
- (j) the gross fragmentation of all of the **Coptic Versions**;
- (k) the only **Greek**-manuscript ancestry of the **Ethiopic Version** as well as the **Gothic Version**; and
- (l) the construction of the **non-original Old Syriac Old Testament** as a translation of a conflation of the original **Heb. O.T.** with the **Greek Septuagint Version** thereof.

All of these factors, especially cumulatively, again strongly suggest the originality of the shorter form of **Rev. 21:24**.

However, according to God's Holy Spirit Who inspired the Apostle John's *Book of Revelation* at **its** chapter 21:24 — we are **not** told that **only some** from the Nations are being saved or are to be saved. To the contrary. **Holy Scripture** there states that "**the Nations** shall walk in the light of the Holy City" — so that the very **Nations themselves as such** will one day be saved.

Far be it that just a few from each Nation get to glory! For with his God-given insight into glory, the Apostle John there "beheld...**a great multitude** which no man could number **from all Nations** and kindreds and people and tongues." He specifically tells us that "**all Nations**" and indeed "**all Nations** shall **come and worship**" the "Lord God Almighty." Indeed, he even insists that "**the Nations** shall walk in the light" of the Holy City New Jerusalem — and that "they shall bring the **glory and honour of the Nations** into it."

For it is **not just** 'the Nations **of** them which are **saved**' who 'shall walk in the light' of the New Jerusalem — as if **only** a saved **portion** of the Nations, but not the Nations themselves, will finally come to the Lord and to His Church! Nor is it only 'those who are saved **out** of the Nations.' And still less is it: 'those who are saved **from** the Nations' — as if, Manichaeistically, '**Nations**' themselves were **incurably evil!** To the contrary. It is indeed "**the Nations**" (namely **the very Nations themselves**) that one day "shall walk" in the "light" of the Holy City of Christ's Church. Moreover, those saved Nations then "**bring the glory and honour of the Nations**" **as such** — the then-**sanctified** culture of **the Nations** — into the Holy City.¹⁰⁰²

Hengstenberg rightly comments: "That we are to think here only of **converted** Gentiles [or **Nations**], is clear as day.... The Gentiles [alias **the Nations**]...**shall** be brought...into the Holy Jerusalem.... So is it [too] with other natural and worldly distinctions — such as wisdom, skill, strength, accomplishments, ability, and the like.

"Whosoever consecrates what he has...to God and Christ, instead of desecrating it like others by the love of self and worldliness — will thereby be ennobled in the Holy City.... What is really glorious among the Kings of the Earth and is sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ, will be regarded as an acceptable present and a becoming **addition** to the **fullness** of the Holy City."

Fifteenth. The New Jerusalem will be huge. Whether portrayed either as a pyramid or as a cube,¹⁰⁰³ its length and breadth and height are described as being 12 000 furlongs (or some 1500 miles or almost eight million feet).¹⁰⁰⁴ Even if these numbers are symbolical (as seems probable) and not precisely exact — they are in no way less sizable. Still less do they symbolize a non-material or unsubstantial entity.

¹⁰⁰³ Either of these geometric forms answers to the Scriptural specifications, Rev. 21:16. If the mountain on which the city rests is flat, the city may well be **cubic**; but if the mountain is conical, the city will probably be **pyramidal** or **tiered** (as were the early cities, cf. Gen. 11:4's *ziggurath* with Rev. 18:2,10-18,21-23 & 21:24-26).

¹⁰⁰⁴ See J.M. Kik's *Eschatology of Victory*, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1971, pp. 244f.

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So vast is this Holy City, then — compared to the tiny future confines of the wicked¹⁰⁰⁵ — that, being 1500 miles long, it is quite large enough to contain by far the majority of all people who have ever lived, who are now alive, or who ever shall live until the end of World History.¹⁰⁰⁶ In fact, all of the estimated six billion people presently alive on our great planet Earth — could comfortably be placed inside a box with the dimensions of not just 1500 cubic miles, but even into one of just one cubic mile in size!¹⁰⁰⁷

Sixteenth. Leading expositors have thrown striking light on the deep teachings of Revelation 21:24-26. Comments Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes: "All the saved [are] considered **as** Nations.... All that they consider as constituting their glory — treasures, crowns, sceptres, robes...will be devoted to God in the future days of the Church in its glory.... **That** blessed World shall be made up of all that was truly valuable and pure on the [**present**] Earth."

Holland's leading Theologian, the former Prime Minister Rev. Prof. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr., stated in the fourth edition of his impressive work on *Common Grace* (I:464): "These achievements do not simply disappear and get destroyed during the general conflagration of the World [Second Peter 3:10f]. But the achievements have a permanent significance also for the New Jerusalem — that is, for the New Earth."

Also the Rev. Prof. Dr. Klaas Schilder (who rejects *Common Grace*) has insisted in his famous book *John's Revelation and Social Life* (29, 210 & 238f): "It will not be without fruit even for eternity. Do the Kings of the Earth not bring the glory and the honour of the Nations to the New Jerusalem? ..."

"In contrast to a generation which plunders the gold of the temple and which melts it down for the crown of the Antichrist, stands God's wisdom and grace. He will one day take all the gold of the World and with it pave the streets of His heavenly City (Revelation 21:18-21).... All precious stones, all the gems of the World, will become the foundation of God's Jerusalem. The **ornaments** of the **worldly** city become the **foundation** of the **heavenly** City...."

¹⁰⁰⁵ Rev. 20:3,7 *cf.* ch. 14 & 21:8.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Generously assuming that as many as twenty billion people have lived down throughout History from the time of Adam until A.D. 2000 — which is a much more liberal estimate than that of most demographers (who assess that our Earth has on the average been doubling its population every 150 years till A.D. 1900 and every 25 years since then) — a cube of only 10 miles in length and breadth and height would be altogether adequate to house them all (even if their resurrection-bodies were to be as large as are our adult bodies here and now). Moreover, assuming that the population of the World goes on doubling itself every 150 years (which in the light of famines and modern birth control methods looks highly unlikely), and assuming further that our World continues for another 1000 years, the extra 2550 billion people who would then thus be added (together with the 20 billion who according to our estimate have already lived) — could all quite comfortably be housed within the spacious dimensions of New Jerusalem City, even if the whole of humanity were to be saved (which of course will not be the case). *Cf.* n. 977.

¹⁰⁰⁷ According to Hendrik Van Loon (*cf.* too ed. C. Ray's *The World of Wonder*, Amalgamated Press, London, n.d., pp. 1106f). Note too that the entire present population of the World could comfortably be housed just on Manhattan Island alone.

"When God's New Jerusalem, His city of peace, comes down from God out of Heaven — culture, then divested of its sinful stains, shall surrender its fruits to God's Kingdom. The glory and the honour not only of the Kings but also of the Nations — yet not only of the masses but also of that in which the individual brilliance of the style-formers and the pace-setters is to be seen — will all be brought into God's 'New Paradise' of the future....

"Thus it is precisely the Calvinistic life and world view which accepts a life's task; which arouses the highest attention of the soul — in the knowledge that there is a vocation in respect of the entire Cosmos which rests on that man who hears creation sigh...and who hears God's voice calling him to enter into the Sabbath of God. For God's Sabbath arrives when the Cosmos is renewed and the Universe is regenerated [Matthew 19:28].... Our building up the house of the Universe is in vain [Psalm 127] — unless God Himself is put first in that construction..., **to undertake the conquest of the World!**"

Last. It should be noted that the wicked breakers of God's Covenant and His Commandments shall never disturb the peace of the City of New Jerusalem in the Church Triumphant. They will, of course, even then continue to exist — and probably even then continue to break **God's Commandments**.¹⁰⁰⁸ But that existence, as miserable as it will be everlasting, will never even be **seen** from the New Earth and its heavenly City of God.

For "there shall in no way enter into it anything that defiles, neither whosoever performs an abomination, or tells a lie¹⁰⁰⁹ — but [only] they who are written in the Lamb's book of life.... For **outside** [of the City of God] are dogs [or sodomites], sorcerers, and whoremongers, murderers, idolators, and whosoever loves and tells lies."¹⁰⁰⁸

O Christian — let us then **long** for the advent of "that city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!"¹⁰¹⁰ Meantime, let us thank Him for the wonderful foretaste of that city which we enjoy here and now in the Christian Church and in our Christian work in all fields of endeavour!

Let us eat and drink and do all things here and now to the glory of God, knowing that our labours for the Lord are not in vain — and that our works follow us into glory! Let us firmly trust that we will indeed yet inherit the renewed Earth — and all its fullness!

¹⁰⁰⁸ Rev. 21:8 & 21:27 & 22:15. That "dogs" here means sodomites, seems clear from Dt. 23:18 *cf.* I Cor. 6:9f & I Tim. 1:9f.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Rev. 21:8.

¹⁰¹⁰ Heb. 11:10,16.

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Too, let us **even now** bring all the natural resources of the Universe as well as all the cultural honour and glory of every Nation — into God's Kingdom. Thus shall we then to be able to enjoy it all not only today — but also both tomorrow on this present Earth, and for ever in the hereafter too!

So on then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

God's Servants reign for Ever — So onward, Christian Soldiers!

Revelation 22

December 31

"His servants shall keep on serving Him. Then they shall see His face, and His Name shall keep on being upon their foreheads. Then there shall be no night, and they shall need no candle nor sunlight. For the Lord God keeps giving them light; and they shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!"¹⁰¹¹

We have now come to the last study in our book — just as John had come to the last chapter of the Bible. In our very first study, we considered **the Triune God** from Whom all things proceed and from Whom all blessings flow.¹⁰¹² Since that first study, we have step by step unfolded God's Eternal Counsel and **Everlasting Covenant** down through all the centuries — from the very **creation** of the World, and even up until its **re-creation**.¹⁰¹³ And now, with this last study, we find ourselves yet one more step nearer to the **New Earth** — as the place of our final and **everlasting rest**.¹⁰¹⁴

First. Let us note that **Paradise Lost** will yet become **Paradise Regained**.

Before the Fall, faithful man started off from the garden of Eden.¹⁰¹⁵ And now he will yet end up — *via* the garden of Gethsemane and the door at Calvary into Paradise¹⁰¹⁶ — into the garden of New Jerusalem City.¹⁰¹⁷

Already at the very beginning of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, there is the promise of *Paradise Regained*. That greatest of all Calvinistic poets there sang: "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the World and all our woe with loss of Eden — till one greater Man restore us and **regain** the blissful seat."

¹⁰¹¹ Rev. 22:3-5.

¹⁰¹² Rom. 11:36 & Mt. 28:19[†].

¹⁰¹³ Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 21:27[†].

¹⁰¹⁴ Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 14:13; 21:22; *cf.* Isa. 65:1,22f.

¹⁰¹⁵ Gen. 1:28; 2:8,15; 3:23.

¹⁰¹⁶ Jh. 18:1 *cf.* Mt. 26:36 & Lk. 23:43.

¹⁰¹⁷ Rev. 2:7 & 22:2 *cf.* Eccl. 2:5.

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Second. Here is no mere return to Eden. Here is rather the consummation of Paradise. Not **just** *Paradise Regained* — but indeed, **also** *Paradise Perfected*! Here is the natural and cultural **perfection** of what Eden should and would ultimately have become under the care of sinless man.¹⁰¹⁸ Here is what **would** have resulted, if man had never sinned at all (but had instead obediently subdued the entire Earth and the Sea and the Sky and all of their contents to the glory of the Triune God).¹⁰¹⁹

For in Eden, the 'River of World History' (as it were) was only **starting** to flow.¹⁰²⁰ Having gone **out** of Eden, it went forth ever deeper into all the World — and from **Jesus the Second Adam** as the true Temple of the Lord.¹⁰²¹ At the very end of History, it shall irrigate the entire New Earth — because of the work of the reigning Jesus. As John wrote about one of the Angels:¹⁰²² "Then He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."¹⁰²³

Third. The **history** of mankind — from Eden in *Paradise Lost*, to the New Earth's *Paradise Perfected* — **is for real**. As Rev. Prof. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. insists in his important work *Concerning the Consummation of the Ages* (in his work *Dictations on Dogmatics* V:322): "Revelation 22:1f...also completely agrees with the prophecy of the **Old Covenant**, which teaches that **human relationships** and the existence of the **Cosmos** are indeed idealized — but **never destroyed**!

"So, even from the description of the New Jerusalem...it appears that the **elements** continue to exist. As regards the **vegetable kingdom** — just think, for example, of 'the tree of life' which bears twelvefold fruit from month to month!"

Kuyper also declared at the end of his life in his last great work *The End* (IV:384f): "There is nothing puzzling or strange in the fact that at the end of the prophecies of the *Book of Revelation*, mention is made of a **city**, in contradistinction to **the country** surrounding that city.... It can mean nothing less than that the all-embracing difference between **agricultural** life and centralized **urban** life, will continue **even in the hereafter**."

As also Rev. Prof. Dr. Klaas Schilder wrote in his article *Jesus Christ and Cultural Life* (within Buffinga's 1932 book *Jesus Christ and Human Life* pp. 250-57): "Paradise was the **beginning**.... Everything was already there in principle...in order for it to develop into a **consummated** World. But a historical **process** of many centuries is needed for it to come to its **full-grown state**....

"**Christ conquers the World** for His God. He unites the beginnings of the World with its final end; its earliest history with its ultimate history; its *alpha* with its *omega*; the 'abc' of God's legislative speech in the **beginning**, with the composition of the fugue of the faithful culture of the last days ripe in all its points and counterpoints....

¹⁰¹⁸ Rev. 21:24-26 & 22:1-3 cf. Gen. 1:28 & 2:15 & Ps. 8 & Heb. ch. 2.

¹⁰¹⁹ Cf. Ezek. 28:13f; 26:25f; 47:12.

¹⁰²⁰ Gen. 1:28f; 2:24; Acts 17:24-27.

¹⁰²¹ Ezek. 47:1-9 cf. Jh. 2:19-21 & Rev. 21:22.

¹⁰²² Rev. 21:9.

¹⁰²³ Rev. 22:1f.

"Every labourer God created should, in the history of the created World, so use all the 'talents' issued by God to His workmen in the **morning** of creation that, by making them productive, **everything inherent in the World would finally be extracted from it**. All the talents which the Lord of the servants gave to the servants, were finally to have achieved just as much at **dusk**, as they were distributed at **dawn** to do [Romans 2:14f]....

"It was to make this **service** of God again possible for man — to give God His World and His workmen back again — that Christ came.... He again makes 'men of God'.... He again erects specimens of the **pure** human race. They are not yet perfect, but in principle they **do** exist. They exist from the very moment Adam bowed in faith under the first promise of the Gospel. And they are coming, and increasing, and becoming the great multitude which no man can number — the multitude of those sanctified by God in Christ."

Fourth. There is **progress**. As a result of the 'River of History' and all of the works of both the first Adam and the Second Adam and all of their descendants, Eden's lonely tree of life is now multiplied. It is multiplied — via the other "tree of life" on Calvary — into a **whole grove** of trees.

Well did Ezekiel of old foresee that "by the river, upon this side and on that side of its banks, shall grow all [kinds of] trees for food. Their leaf shall not fade, neither shall their fruit be consumed [or totally destroyed]. These shall bring forth new fruit according to their months, because of the water gushing forth from the sanctuary. And their fruits shall be for food, and their leaves for health."¹⁰²⁴

Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck has observed in his famous *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion* and in his *Reformed Dogmatics* (IV:701f): "The **whole creation...is liberated...and the vegetable and plant world** will also participate therein.... The New Jerusalem which is now above and indicates the city where God dwells with His People, then descends to the Earth. Revelation 21:2f and 22:2f."

Schilder observes in his 1935 book *What is Heaven?* (pp. 247 & 96): "In Revelation 22:2, there is in the first place mention of the consummation of the **Covenant of Works** [cf. Hosea 6:7]. After all, the Prophet [namely the Apostle John] is speaking about the **City** of New Jerusalem — to show us that this **city** also has a **garden** in it....

"All of the images reach back to *Paradise Lost*. The 'garden' in Revelation twenty-two reminds one...of Genesis. And in Genesis, the garden is not a poetic device, but a reality concerning which the **Historian** gives **information**." Similarly, also in **glory** — "there will also be a **History** of all of the unceasing developments on the New Earth."

Indeed, in his work *John's Revelation and Social Life* (p. 58), Schilder adds: "Does one not with strong desire look forward to the 'tree of life' — which will one day restore the loss of the 'tree of life' from *Paradise Lost*?" But **now** — it is *Paradise Regained*. Nay more, *Paradise Perfected*!

¹⁰²⁴ Ezek. 47:12.

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Fifth. At the end of World History — and at the beginning of its everlasting perfection — John sees those predictions being fulfilled. For thus does he see the "pure river of the water of life" — and "the tree of life" with all of its monthly "fruits" and its health-giving "leaves."¹⁰²³

The Apostle John predicted about the Holy City and its throne: "In its midst...and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life, bearing twelve[fold] fruits, and yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the health of **the Nations**."¹⁰²⁵

Indeed, even today — on our Earth in its twenty-first century (**A.D.** or *Anno Domini*) — the Lord feeds and restores His People — both spiritually **and** materially. But on the New Earth to come He will do this still more lavishly. For then — He will even still further promote the health of then-perfected **Nations**. He will feed them from His tree of life not just once a year, but every month. Everything will then be seasonable — **all** the time.

Sixth. **Time itself** will then have deepened at its consummation. This does not mean that time will thereafter no longer exist.¹⁰²⁶ To the contrary, man is **essentially** non-eternal and **time-bound**. He **is always under time**.¹⁰²⁷ But time will never again be wasted — and boredom will be unknown.¹⁰²⁸

Moreover, created time will then be **perfected**. Formation-week time with its solar demarcation, will have become consummated in post-solar time.¹⁰²⁹ For "the tree of life" will then keep on "yielding its fruit every **month**"¹⁰²⁵ — twelve **times** per 'year.' Then "there shall be no night...nor sunlight."¹⁰³⁰ And "His servants shall serve Him" **all the time**,¹⁰²⁸ while "they keep on reigning for ever and ever!"¹⁰³⁰ For time — that first and most mysterious of all of God's many creatures¹⁰²⁷ — will then, wonderfully, have been perfected.

Seventh. "There shall be **no more curse**."¹⁰³¹ Subsequently to Adam's sin of breaking God's Ten Commandments, mankind was driven outside the Paradise of Eden — after the curse was laid on his whole environment.¹⁰³² But when the curse has ultimately run its course (through the work of the Second Adam on Calvary), elect mankind **transcends** the curse. For "**blessed** are they who do His Commandments, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city."¹⁰³³

¹⁰²⁵ Rev. 22:1f *cf.* 21:6. Moffatt & Strack-Billerbeck (III:856) entertain the idea of the tree bearing twelve kinds of fruit, but the reference rather seems to imply bearing fruit during each of the twelve months of the 'year.'

¹⁰²⁶ In Rev. 10:6, *cf.* v. 7 & 11:15 — and *cf.* our remarks hereon in our studies for Dec. 13 & 14.

¹⁰²⁷ Gen. 1:1,28; 2:17; 8:21. *Per contra*, I Tim. 1:17 & 6:15f.

¹⁰²⁸ Rev. 22:3-5 *cf.* 4:8-11 & 7:15-17.

¹⁰²⁹ Gen. 1:1,14 *cf.* Rev. 6:9-12.

¹⁰³⁰ Rev. 22:5 *cf.* 21:23.

¹⁰³¹ Rev. 22:3a.

¹⁰³² Gen. 3:14-17f; 4:11; Rom. 8:19-22.

¹⁰³³ Rev. 22:14. '*Aleph* & *A* have "who wash their garments." But *046* and other manuscripts all have "who keep His Commandments" (*cf.* Rev. 2:5-7 & 12:17 & 14:12 & esp. 22:11-14).

Indeed, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death; neither sorrow; nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things have passed away."¹⁰³⁴ It is via that cursed¹⁰³⁵ tree on Calvary,¹⁰³⁶ that we now have **blessed access** to the tree of life.¹⁰²⁵

Eighth. There is deep significance in Revelation 22:14's eschatological beatitude. We mean the solemn statement: '**Blessed are they who keep His Commandments** —so that they may have the right to the tree of life.'¹⁰³³

Mauro rightly comments that "**there can be no real happiness apart from the doing of God's Commandments**, and it is ever in the doing of them that the very highest blessedness is enjoyed.... This, the last beatitude of the Bible —also brings forcibly to mind that the curse with all its attendant miseries was brought upon the World [precisely] through **disobedience to His Commandment[s]**."¹⁰³³ Genesis 2:17; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Hosea 6:7-11; Romans 1:18-21 & 2:14f. Consequently, on the New Earth, **God's blessed elect will keep His Ten Commandments for all eternity**. For "he who is righteous —let him keep on becoming **still more righteous!**"¹⁰³³

This means that the godly **inside** the New Jerusalem, **in keeping the Ten Commandments**, will always abhor breaches thereof. "There shall **no way** enter into it anything that defiles, nor whoever keeps on committing abominations, or who keeps on telling a lie.... For **outside** are dogs [or **sodomites**], and **sorcerers**, and **whoremongers**, and **murderers**, and **idolaters**, and whosoever **loves and tells lies**." Revelation 21:27 & 22:15 *cf.* Deuteronomy 23:18 *cf.* First Corinthians 6:9f & First Timothy 1:9f. Indeed, "the fearful and unbelievers and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars — shall have their part in the lake which keeps on burning with fire and brimstone —which is the second death. Revelation 21:8.

Hengstenberg comments at Revelation 22:1-14f: "**Only** in the **future** state of being, will the germ of life fully develop itself.... When **the meek** [alias the '**Law-abiding**'] shall possess the Earth, the Kingdom of the elect shall reach its highest elevation.... There shall be nothing more to withstand the **full** establishment of its dominion.... When **Adam broke the Command[ments]**, the way to the tree of life was barred; but they who do the **Commandments**, shall have power over the tree of life.... **Whoremongers** are here associated with **murderers**; as too are **adulterers** —**in the Law!**"

Schilder wrote in his article *Jesus Christ and Cultural Life*: "The '**abc**' of **God's Law** dominates all spheres of life. And in all this, Christ consummates everything in the World.... He went back to the beginning of God's creation. There, from the **Tables of the Law** [Ecclesiastes 7:29 *cf.* Romans 2:14f], He read out the rules for work laid down at the beginning by God for the 'man-of-God' who was God's creature **in** and **with** the World. And **this** is the **pure rule for labour** — which He read out from the **Tables of the Law**." Revelation 22:14.

¹⁰³⁴ Rev. 21:4.

¹⁰³⁵ Gal. 3:13.

¹⁰³⁶ *Cf.* I Pet. 2:24.

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Ninth. "The **throne of God and of the Lamb**" shall be in the New Jerusalem. "And His servants shall keep on serving Him."¹⁰³⁷ Equipped with their resurrection bodies,¹⁰³⁸ the saints will then eat and drink and do absolutely everything to the glory of God.¹⁰³⁹

They will sing and praise His Name.¹⁰⁴⁰ There they will **reign** with Him — far more so than we too reign with Him here and now — in all that they will ever do.¹⁰⁴¹ Then they will continue to subdue the Earth — and indeed also the whole Universe and all its contents —unto all eternity.¹⁰⁴²

As Rev. Professor Dr. Klaas Schilder remarks on page 213 of in his famous book *John's Revelation and Social Life*: "The **kingship** comes over **everything**, as a rich blessing.... It moves **upward**, so that — while preserving that which is individual —**everyone** achieves kingship!"

This internationalization and personalization of the whole of culture — is the resultant outcome when precisely **all** of saved mankind, by God's grace, consistently keeps His Ten Commandments. See Revelation 21:24-26 *cf.* 22:1-5 & 22:10-15. Needless to say, this is signified precisely by the **seal** of Christian Baptism. Rev. 22:4 & 22:10 & 22:14.

Tenth. The saved will do this, **because they will always keep on belonging to the Triune God**. They will always be reminded of this — because "His Name shall keep on being upon their foreheads."¹⁰⁴³

They were already marked with the Name of the Triune God in Holy Baptism —when they were previously engrafted into the Visible Church, while still living imperfectly on our present great straight planet Earth.¹⁰⁴⁴ However, in glory —they will keep on bearing that Name unto all eternity. There, they **shall** live in the way all baptized people **should** — by eating and drinking and doing everything else solely to the glory of God (Whose Triune Name they wear upon their baptized foreheads).

Earlier, God had sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads with the seal of the living God — while they were still in their **present** earthly life. Throughout the rest of their present earthly lives, they had then displayed the Father's Name written upon their foreheads — and therefore even scorned the mark of the Beast!

¹⁰³⁷ Rev. 21:3bcd[†].

¹⁰³⁸ Jh. 5:29; I Cor. 15:51f; I Th. 4:14f.

¹⁰³⁹ I Cor. 10:31 *cf.* Rev. 22:2 & 21:6. This is not in conflict with I Cor. 6:13, which teaches that only our bellies (as distinct from and as opposed to the rest of our to-be-resurrected bodies) and our meats (as opposed to food-as-such) will be destroyed. This no more conflicts with Rev. 21:6 & 22:2, than I Cor. 15:50 conflicts with 15:37-43 & Job. 19:25-27.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Cf.* Rev. 4:8-11; 5:9f; 7:12f; 14:3f; 15:3f.

¹⁰⁴¹ Rev. 22:5 & 11:15f & 4:10 & 19:6 & I Cor. 4:8 & 6:2f.[†]

¹⁰⁴² Rev. 22:3 *cf.* 20:3-6 & 14:13 & Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8; I Cor. 15:24-28; Heb. chs. 2 to 4 (& esp. 4:9-11); *etc.*

¹⁰⁴³ Rev. 22:4b.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Rev. 7:1-4 & 14:1f *cf.* Mt. 28:19.

For God's children had trusted the One in Whose Name they had been baptized, and Who had promised: "I will make him who overcomes, a pillar in the temple of My God. And he shall not go away from it any more! And I will write upon him the Name of My God — and the name of the city of My God, which is the 'New Jerusalem' coming down out of Heaven from My God. And I will write My new Name upon him!"¹⁰⁴⁵

So then, even on the New Earth, **all** Christians who had previously been **baptized** in the Name of the Triune God — will **always** be conscious of Him, in **all** that they even **think**. For then, "His Name shall **keep on being** upon their **foreheads**."¹⁰⁴³

Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. refers to this in his famous work *From the Decrees of Dordt* (II:440-43f). The Apostle John wrote: 'I heard the number of those who had been **sealed**.' Revelation 7:4 [cf. 22:4]. Kuyper explains: "This idea of understanding the Sacraments as a **seal**, is taken from Scripture itself. In Romans 4:11, we read the following of the Patriarch Abraham: 'He received the sign of Circumcision as a **seal** of the righteousness of faith...."

"In the Sacrament of **Holy Baptism** [cf. Colossians 2:11-13], we are dealing with a sign that **seals**.... Whenever one **thinks** about this deeply, one then also realizes how it can be said in **Revelation 7:2** that even God the King has such a **seal**.... And **Revelation [22:4 and also] 22:10** mentions **sealing**."

Also in his *On the Sacraments* [within his *Dictations on Dogmatics* IV:127f & 134f], Kuyper argues: "The chief aspect of **Baptism**, is that it is the **seal of the living God** unto incorporation in the **Covenant of Grace**.... God indeed has just such a seal. **Revelation 7:2 [cf. 22:4 & 22:10]**.... This **seal** is **stamped** upon the elect.... **Revelation 7:2" cf. 22:4 & 22:10.**

Now in Revelation 7:2-9, **not just adults** but indeed **every** Member of **all** of the **Church** alias the **Tribes** of the **New Israel** are **sealed** upon their **foreheads** — and hence **also the infant children of God's Covenant**. In Revelation 19:13 (cf. Isaiah 52:15 & 63:2f), Jesus Christ is portrayed as clothed with a vesture **baptized** or **sprinkled** with blood. And at the very end of the Holy Bible, in Revelation 22:3f & 22:10, one reads that **all of whatever age** who get to glory, have **on their foreheads** the **seal** "of God and of the Lamb" — namely **the Name of the Triune God**. Cf. too Matthew 28:19-20 and Ephesians 4:4-6.

Last. The greatest of all the future blessings of Christ's saints, will be that "they shall **see His face**."¹⁰⁴⁶ God is Spirit, and therefore does not have a material face. So Christ's saints will never see the Triune God from face to face. For they are creatures, and He is the Creator.¹⁰⁴⁷ But they will, at least from time to time, indeed see the creaturely face of the fully-divine Lord Jesus Christ (according to His created human nature).¹⁰⁴⁸ For "we know that, when He shall appear — **we shall be like Him**. For **we shall see Him** as He is."¹⁰⁴⁹

¹⁰⁴⁵ Rev. 7:1-3 & 13:16 & 14:1,9-13 & 3:12 cf. 22:4.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Rev. 22:4a.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ex. 33:20; Jh. 1:18; I Tim. 6:16.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Jh. 20:16,27.

¹⁰⁴⁹ I Jh. 3:2.

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Moreover, in Christ "all of the fullness of the Godhead keeps on dwelling **bodily**."¹⁰⁵⁰ "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has [also] shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹⁰⁵¹

When the saints inherit the city of New Jerusalem — "the Lord God gives them light. And they shall keep on reigning for ever and ever."¹⁰⁵² For the Light by which they shall then keep on reigning, is Jesus Christ 'the Bright and Morning Star.'¹⁰⁵² The Lamb Himself is the Light of New Jerusalem City.¹⁰⁵² And, as Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Junius appropriately comments in his note at Revelation 22:16 in the *Geneva Bible* of the great Reformers John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Dr. William Whittingham: "Christ is the Light Who gives light to **every** one that comes into this World!"¹⁰⁵²

O Christian, let us then praise God for His promised river of the water of life; for His throne, and our reigning together with Him; for His Ten Commandments for all mankind; for the tree of life; and for the blessed face of Jesus Christ the Light of the World! Let us invite all who will, to listen; and all who are athirst, to come to Him!¹⁰⁵³

Let us command all Nations to receive the Name of the Triune God on their foreheads in Christian Baptism, and to honour Him in their deeds and in their hearts and in their thoughts — even now!¹⁰⁵⁴ "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life — freely!"¹⁰⁵⁵ Indeed, let us serve Him night and day, and reign with Him both here and now — and hereafter, for ever and ever!

For after all, we ourselves are Christ-ians — those who belong to Jesus! We are the baptized followers of the Triune God, from Whom and through Whom and to Whom are all things — as explained even in our very first study in this book. We are they who have been redeemed by the Triune God.

We are they whom God has justified — through imputating Christ's Own righteousness to us — so as to make it our very own. We are they whom He is still sanctifying.¹⁰³³ Hence we **keep His Commandments** — out of gratitude to Him Who has given us the **right** to the tree of life.¹⁰³³

¹⁰⁵⁰ Col. 2:9.

¹⁰⁵¹ II Cor. 4:6.

¹⁰⁵² Rev. 21:23f *cf.* 22:16.

¹⁰⁵³ Rev. 21:6 & 22:17cd.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Cf.* n. 1043f.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Rev. 22:17def.

Indeed, we are those who have the "Father's **Name written upon our foreheads**;¹⁰⁵⁶ who serve the **Lamb** alias God the Son;¹⁰⁵⁷ and to whom the **Spirit** and the bride keep on saying 'Come!'¹⁰⁵⁸ For we are they whom our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ enjoins: "You must therefore keep on going and keep on making **all Nations** into disciples — baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost — teaching them to observe **all** things **whatsoever** I have commanded you. And look, I am with you **always** — even till the **end** of the **age**!"¹⁰⁵⁹

It is Jesus Who has given us **all** of the precious promises in the Bible — by now translated into more than a thousand languages, and still continuing to carry its victorious message throughout the World.¹⁰⁶⁰ It is Jesus Who warns us never to add to (or to subtract from) the words of His prophecy.¹⁰⁶⁰ And it is Jesus Who keeps on testifying about "these things — saying: 'Yes, I am coming quickly!'"¹⁰⁶¹

When Christ **ultimately** comes again at His Final Return — He will **indeed** then come quickly. That means swiftly — which is quite distinct from "soon" and especially distinct from "imminently" alias "at any second."¹⁰⁶¹

Christ assures us He **will** come again. Indeed, when He does, He will do so quickly. Meantime, may we for our part always enjoy His blessings (as we study and believe and obey His Word)!¹⁰³³ May we, every day, always praise His Holy Name! And may we ourselves always gladly pray to Him: "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!"¹⁰⁶²

Until He comes — may we also always encourage one another.
There is no better way to do so, than to urge all of our many brethren:
'Onward, Christian soldiers!
Onward, to victory!'

¹⁰⁵⁶ Rev. 14:1 & 22:6.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Rev. 22:3f,16.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Rev. 22:17ab.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Mt. 28:19f.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Rev. 1:9-19; 10:2,8-11; 11:2-15; 19:10; 22:16,18f. Cf. too our argument at nn. 347 & 391-405 in our study for Dec. 12.

¹⁰⁶¹ Rev. 22:20ab cf. n. 30. See too, on the word "quickly" (as distinct from "soon" and especially as distinct from "imminently"): Dt. 32:35; Isa.40:10; 47:11; 48:3; 49:8; 60:22; Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 7:7,12; Dan. 7:22; Zech. 2:10; Mal.3:1; Rev. 1:1; 2:5,16; 3:11; 11:14,18 & 22:7,10-12,17,20.

¹⁰⁶² Rev. 22:20c cf. v. 17b & n. 30.