

THE REVELATION AT A GLANCE



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This booklet is a brief introductory explanation of the historical aspects, both past and future, of The Revelation prophecy. It fixes the progressive time periods of the prophecy, provides the interpretation of the major symbols and discusses the significance of numerous events revealed in the prophecy.

It is particularly suited as an introductory guide for new Bible readers, young people, the inexperienced and the curious. The text deliberately avoids complicated explanations, evades exposition of detail which is not of prime importance and does not debate controversial questions. Some sections of The Revelation do not need special treatment to place them in historical context (i.e. chapters 1 to 5, 10, 14 and 15). Their significance is not at all complicated and they are not expounded here. The special aim of this publication is to restrict its length to a brief volume while providing a general understanding of the more difficult sections of the prophecy.

It is absolutely necessary to read this booklet with The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John open beside it. Lengthy Revelation passages are referred to but not quoted in full. Fourteen Revelation chapters in full occupy a great deal of printed space. The Revelation chapter numbers are placed in the margin for quick reference.

The basic symbolism in The Revelation has its roots in the prophecy of Daniel. It can be said that The Revelation continues where Daniel left off. Some of Daniel's beasts appear again in the Revelation. Both prophecies employ the same principles of interpretation. Daniel and The Revelation together provide a fascinating account of past, present and future world history. The Revelation affords confirmation of the return of Jesus Christ to the earth which is amply in evidence in plain language in the rest of the Bible. Additionally, a wealth of detail is provided about the significance of political events of our own time in Europe and the Middle East; and a stern warning for our generation.

The Revelation leaves us in no doubt about Jesus' last message "SURELY, I COME QUICKLY".

GRAHAM BACON

Sydney, April 1984.

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A cursory reading of The Revelation reveals a series of fearsome events, some grouped in special sequences, endured by men and women on the earth which end in a world directly ruled by God, who is praised and adored by the remaining inhabitants. The dominant themes are (a) human suffering, torment and death inflicted by either human or supernatural agencies and (b) regular assurances that the end result will be peace and glory.

A primary function of the Bible is to provide a history of the human race from its first parents in Eden to the times beyond its last writer. The Bible is the only source of recorded world history for the first 2500 years of this period. From then on, Israel is the centre of Bible-recorded history as the people from whom the world's saviour should come. Remarkably, the history of Israel and nations who should come in contact with her was in many cases told in advance — as well as Israel, prophecy foretold the destinies of Assyria, Babylon, Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt, Rome. These prophecies may be checked in detail as accurate. These nations had one fact in common — they imposed themselves upon Israel, who had the task of being God's special witnesses to the world (Isaiah 43:10).

Each nation in turn had to bear the judgements of God upon it for its enmity to Israel and none of those judgements was pretty to watch. In The Revelation, two of the criteria are changed slightly (1) it is Christianity (spiritual Israel) that is being traced and (2) it is done exclusively in prophecy which had proved itself reliable. The path of Christianity was to be equally as rocky as was Israel's and God's judgements were similarly not pretty to watch. Any comprehension of this prophecy must take into account the overwhelming flavour of violence, judgement, fire, plague, destruction, pain, dead bodies, wrath and bloodshed. The reader must be prepared for a very unpleasant unfolding of events, tempered by the realisation that the ultimate end is a triumph over all evil.

WHEN? WHO? WHERE?

Any study of The Revelation requires a framework of time, identity and place to which the symbols may be referenced. Rev. 1:1 tells us that Jesus Christ is the revelator, the apostle John records these revelations and they concern "things which must shortly come to pass". The span of time is from the latter part of the first century AD until "the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them" (Rev. 21:3), a time still future to our own and a span of 2000 years. This enables the Bible to cover the 6000 years of human history on the earth, predominantly a tale of turmoil and misery. Furthermore, The Revelation briefly touches on events after Christ's return to the Earth, a thousand year establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and a total of 7000 years of history.

The identity of the peoples involved may be determined by reference to Bible prophecy principles already established in the Old Testament. The classic identity profile of Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image of consecutive world empires is of paramount importance here. To miss this fundamental detail is to be ignorant of the key that unlocks the significance of The Revelation, especially when the characteristics of Daniel's beasts are added to the identification. Daniel chapter 2 makes it easy to determine that the brass and iron representing the empires of Greece and Rome followed those of Babylon and Medo-Persia, the four beasts of Daniel chapter 7 repeating the order. The absolutely vital facts are that the Roman iron continued to the coming of Christ (albeit mixed with clay) and the fourth beast, the equivalent of the Roman iron, also continued "until the ancient of days came" and "the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:22). That 10 horned beast of Daniel 7 makes its reappearance in The Revelation, illustrating the common subject matter of Daniel and Revelation. We are therefore twice compelled to recognise that the Roman influence continues separately identifiable up to and beyond our own times. In view of these plain links between Daniel and The Revelation, there can be no quibble with locking the applicability of The Revelation with the various phases of Roman influence from imperial times to beyond today. Any interpretation that embraces a completely future fulfillment of the Revelation prophecies must firstly submit to this continuous historical concept.

Rome has a continuing but variable history from the late 1st. century until our own times which premier historians such as Gibbon define as the imperial Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church. Today, we could add the European Economic Community or the Common Market, based on the Treaty of Rome (1957). Rome, at various times, wielded a mixture of imperial, religious and economic powers which waxed and waned. This is illustrated in the metallic image of Daniel 2 as iron mixed with clay "partly strong and partly broken" but with some presence of iron throughout. The purpose of the "terrible" beast of Daniel 7 is to give a clue about the terrorising character of the various phases of the Roman power which "shall wear out the saints of the most High" (Daniel 7:25). The Revelation launches into a detailed account of this persecution plus the judgements of God upon the perpetrators.

The question, Where? resolves itself around the location in which this Roman influence operated down through the ages — the Middle East, north Africa and Europe.

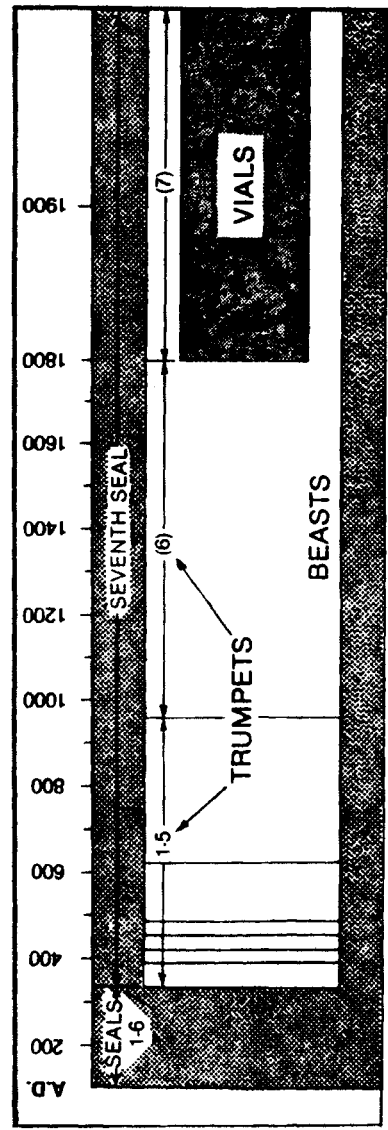
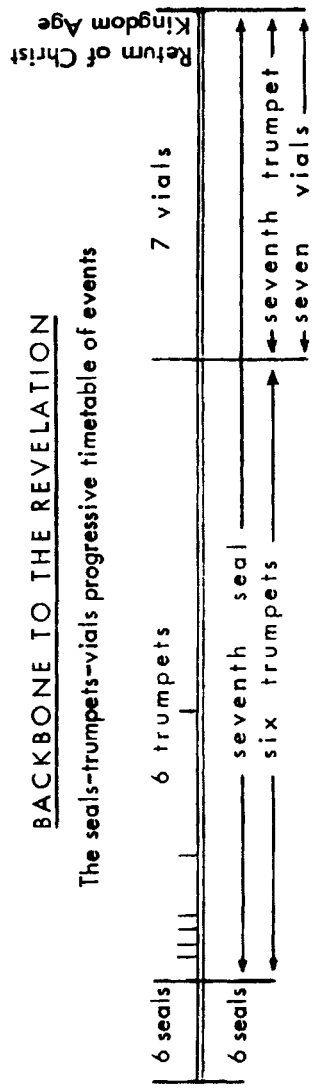
Now let us prepare ourselves for the horrors which tumble out of John's prophecy.

PRECURSORS OF DIFFICULTY

It is not easy to reconcile that the gospel of life and peace should be the focal point of so much death and violence. Yet there are plenty of Scriptural indications of the coming storm. Jesus said, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Luke 12:5). Paul, "... I hear that there be divisions among you and I partly believe it. For there must be heresies among you . . ." (1 Cor. 1:18-19). John reported a division in his church "... even now are there many antichrists . . . they went out from us" (1 John 2:18-19). What were at first philosophical differences, resulting in separation, in later centuries became political battles settled by violence and bloodshed. Timothy, speaking of charity, good conscience and faith unfeigned, adds, "... from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm" (1 Timothy 1:6-7). A distraught Peter, having been given a vision of what lay ahead of the Christian church (2 Peter 1:14)

BACKBONE TO THE REVELATION

The seals-trumpets-vials progressive timetable of events



forecasts in ch.2:1 "there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring damnable heresies" and notably "even denying the Lord that bought them". Peter demonstrates his distress about the future of the Christian church by using language about church members that would not be tolerated from today's platforms and pulpits. The church quickly fell into error. Both church and empire employed methods of violence and bloodshed to enforce their ways upon those who tried to uphold the truth. No wonder Peter was distressed to see it coming and The Revelation used such lurid phrases to describe it.

But we will also note the frequent intervention of angels as God's agents pouring terrifying judgements upon the arena of The Revelation. The purpose is not just punishment upon evil doers but "neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (ch.9:21), a lesson not learned.

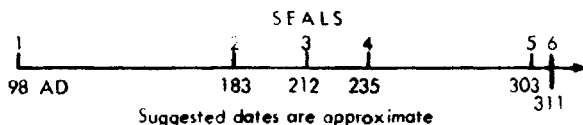
HISTORICAL BACKBONE

The historical run of events in the Christian church was depicted by 3 sets of 7 happenings (John saw but did not record a 4th. set). These 3 sets of events were called seals, trumpets and vials or bowls. They depict the 3 eras into which the Christian times were divided — the pagan Roman Empire to Constantine (the seals) the Holy Roman Empire rule of church and state (the trumpets); and the reformation period from the French revolution to the re-establishment of Israel (the vials). The seventh segment of each of the 3 sets projects forward to the kingdom age and incorporates the intervening period. This is best understood diagrammatically.

Together, these three sets of events stand alone in The Revelation as the time scale backbone to provide a complete and continuous historical forecast. Into this framework, additional information is provided at intervals by other symbols. Some of these symbols are two witnesses; several beasts; women, one with child; cities, one called Babylon. None of these alter this basic 3 part time scale. However, from chapter 17 onwards, this basic time scale is extended from Israel's re-establishment to the end of the millennial age by announcing the reign of Christ and attempted rebellions against that reign.

Ch.6 SIX SEALS

The purpose of the 6 seals was to show the stages through which the church would pass in the pagan Roman Empire. The seals were broken in sequence, giving programmed access to historical events. The white horse (v.2) ridden by the conquering, crowned rider with bow represented the early spread of the gospel. The rider of the red horse (v.4) had a sword and took away peace and killed, prefiguring the early persecutions of Christians by emperors. The third black horse's rider (v.5) taxed and rationed food, while the fourth deathly pale horse (v.8) brought famine and death. This prefigured a chaotic period in the Roman empire from about 200 AD to 265 AD, firstly by gross maladministration which led to a leadership crisis — in 50 years there were 19 emperors most of whom died violently — and then plague which swept the empire. At one stage 5000 people per day were dying in Rome alone.



The fifth seal (v.9) moves to more complicated symbolism of organised and sustained persecution under rulers like Diocletian, the endurance of the saints, and the assurance of eventual reward for those who died for their beliefs. This last message must have been of great comfort for those early victims of the established system.

The sixth seal heralds an obvious fundamental change for the whole empire. Here, "the kings of the earth, the great men and the rich men" are terrified along with the plain folk. When Constantine was proclaimed emperor, a civil war broke out which divided the empire and vitally involved everyone from high to low estate. It was Christianity versus paganism and Constantine won a bitter and confusing battle for the Christian side. Verses 16 and 17 tell us that it was the "wrath of the Lamb" in retribution on a pagan empire for maltreating Christians. The Lamb is a figure for Jesus Christ "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8).

From now on, Christianity was to occupy a vastly different situation from that of hitherto — hence the change in chapter 8 from seals to trumpets. From underdog, Christianity slowly but steadily moved into the rarified atmosphere of privilege, power and wealth.

Ch.7 The relative tranquility of Constantine's reign is shown in the early part of this chapter to be God-directed so that the church, spiritual Israel, may consolidate itself. The four angels guarded the four divisions of the empire. From verse 9, a rapid transposition occurs to the kingdom age of our future, a recurrent theme of The Revelation.

Ch.8 SIX TRUMPETS

The seventh seal has little significance of its own, being the means by which the trumpets are ushered in. A trumpet sound was an alarm or war call and thus it proved to be for the empire. Now begins the process by which a fierce state was done away with and a church-state partnership was eventually formed. The wild tribes were descending on the Roman Empire and the western portion soon gave way. Hence the "voices, thunders, lightnings and earthquake" — a great tumult.

The first trumpet sounded with hail, fire and blood, and the third part of trees and all green grass were burnt up. Why a third when previously the empire was in four parts? In 312 AD, Maxentius, a ruler of one of the fourths, made war on Constantine and Maxentius was defeated at Milvian Bridge, near Rome. Now the empire was divided threefold — a landmark in history picked up by Scripture to fix our interpretative progress. It was on the western third of the Roman empire that the first 4 trumpets blasted.

The first trumpet (v.7) was the Visigoths who attacked from the north of the empire, sacking Rome in a foray south.

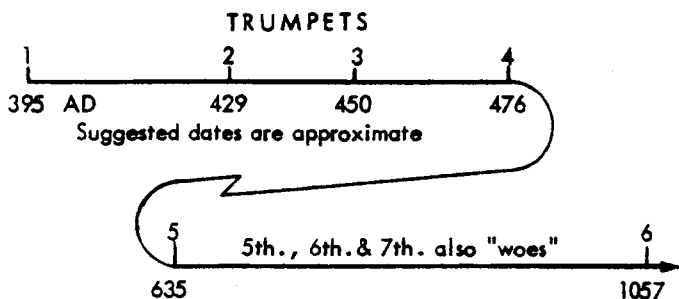
The second trumpet (v.8) was a burning mountain cast into the sea, destroying a third of creatures in it. This foretold of the maritime exploits of the Vandals against the fleet of the empire which particularly featured fireships. Sea communications were greatly disrupted.

The third trumpet (v.10) was a burning star falling on a third of rivers and their sources in which many men died. Attila the Hun wreaked havoc, not down near Rome, but in the lakes

area and the alps country, ruthless and swift.

The fourth trumpet (v.12) was an eclipse of a third of the sun, moon and stars — a replacement of imperial Roman rule in the west by Gothic kings who nevertheless retained the basic Roman administrative structure.

By this stage, the western empire had succumbed to barbarian onslaughts but the eastern and southern empires were still intact. The trumpets are now additionally called "woes" to mark a change of target and purpose. The trumpets now sound against the east and south sections of the Roman empire rather than the west, and now the Moslem hordes from the desert burst upon the European scene.



Ch.9 The fifth trumpet or first woe (v.1) notes a star fall from heaven to earth and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. Out of this pit swarmed "locusts" like scorpions who should torment men for 5 months and hurt men for 5 months. With such language the Saracens were foreseen who swarmed over the Middle East and half Europe, led by their star prophet Mahomet. They were skilled men, learned in maths and science, respectful of fruit trees, women and children — hence the detail noted in Scripture. The time period of 5 months + 5 months equals 300 days which translates into 300 years on principles applied in Daniel's prophecy. This principle is evident in, for example, the 70 weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24) which brought high expectation of the coming of Messiah 490 years later and which actually occurred. This demonstrates the principle of a day standing for a year because 70 weeks equals

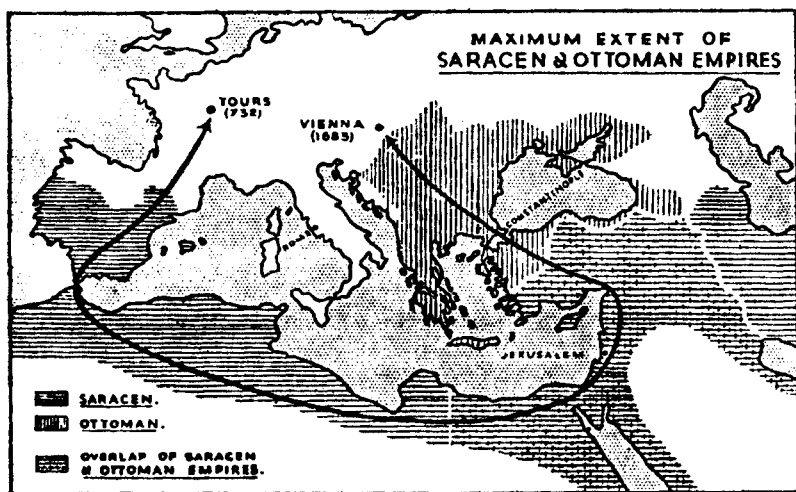
490 days representing 490 years. The fifth trumpet incursion of the Saracens was a 10 month period equalling 300 days standing for 300 years from about 635 AD to 935 AD. By this incursion, the Christian religion was overturned in the east and south and the Holy Land began its long "rest". When the Caliph entered Jerusalem at the head of his horde, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius muttered in the words of Daniel, "the abomination of desolation is in the Holy Place". The subsequent construction of the Mosque of Omar on the Temple Mount certainly confirmed this view. The Saracen armies crossed north Africa to Morocco, thus overcoming the southern third of the Roman Empire, then struck north through Spain and France and harried the west of Europe as far as Tours (732 AD). But in the east, they got no further than Syria, and the Roman eastern third survived. Hence the next woe.

The sixth trumpet (v. 13) or second woe loosed the 4 angels of the Euphrates. This language describes 4 waves of a more primitive and ruthless force, killing indiscriminantly. Crossing the Euphrates into the northeastern Roman third based in Byzantium (or Constantinople), the Tartars had few scruples and little respect for nature. Verse 15 records a time period for preparation or establishment as distinct from total length of rule. This was "an hour, a day, a month and a year for to slay the third part of men". This translates into 396 years and 121 days or from January, 1057 when Togrul Beg left Bagdad to begin his conquests to 29th May, 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Turks (Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticae*, Vol. 1, pp 524-529). According to Gibbon (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 57) 136,000 Christians were offered in sacrifice to the Arabian prophet. A total of 276,000 Arabian horsemen are recorded in 5 major battles and gunpowder was introduced into European warfare with horrific consequences for later generations. They penetrated as far as Vienna (1683 AD), caused the eclipse of the east third of the Roman Empire and stayed until the sixth vial, poured out on the River Euphrates (say 1917, the end of the Turkish Empire).

The close of this chapter introduces a principle which God had been applying for some time. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and of wood,

which neither can see nor hear nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries nor of their fornication nor of their thefts" Rev. 9:20-21.

This shows firstly that God controls the major events of international history occurring over hundreds of years, as Daniel also revealed "that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Daniel 4:17). Secondly, it shows that there were moral objectives behind these major international happenings — God intended that they be proddings to the civilised world's conscience. The Roman empire had become Christian but that religious influence had corrupted rather than elevated the moral tone of the empire. God says in these Revelation verses that He would bring these Moslem armies upon Europe that established Christianity might repent of their evil ways. God adds that European Christianity wouldn't repent. This passage is an insight to God's principles of international activity which are just as relevant today.



The 2 woes were intended to be Divine warnings and corrective influences on wayward Middle Ages Christianity, but they were ignored. Hence followed, by God's direction, the third woe or seventh trumpet containing the 7 vials.

DEVELOPMENTS ON THE SIDE

We must mark here that, while the 2 woes subdued the east and the south for something like 1260 years, the western third of the Roman empire, having early been overrun by barbarians, sustained a resurrection in another guise. This is not accounted for in the seals-trumpets-vials progression because a more or less continuous historical record is being put together without any backtracking by following these 3 sets of 7 events. The vital information about the astounding progress of church and state in the Middle Ages is depicted in chapters 11 to 13 in the symbols of women, beasts, horns and heads which progressed parallel with the fifth and sixth trumpets. We will investigate their proper place in the scheme of things when we have completed our examination of the seals-trumpets-vials backbone of the prophecy. We should note however that we have temporarily left to one side the material in chapters 11 to 13 in order to continue an unbroken historical progression of seals-trumpets-vials. The target of our continuous historical backbone study, having briefly moved to the east, now reverts to Europe upon which the vial judgements are poured out. Chapters 11 to 13 tell us why God finds this necessary and that is because, in parallel with developments in the east during the two "woes", enormous but corrupt developments were to take place in the west.

By the Middle Ages, a number of doctrinal errors had become established in the creed of the official church. These errors were sustainable only by forbidding people to read the Word of God, by denying the right of free Bible discussion and open debate and by forcibly preventing any preaching other than that authorised. By exclusive control of all religious teaching, the official church kept the ordinary folk ignorant of anything other than what the official church wanted them to know and denied the means of any counter argument.

When the church also controlled the power of the state, it was able to imprison, torture and murder those who refused to conform to its error and starve or drive out to wild places the masses of disaffected peoples. Europe was traversed by bands of people who had nowhere to go, simple because they had a more accurate understanding of God's word and will and refused to bow to pressure to accept error.

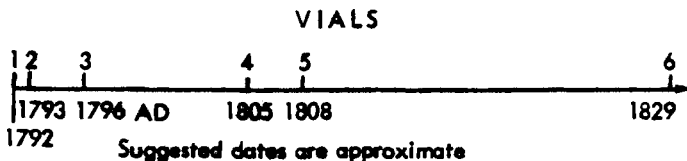
Furthermore, the established church had fallen to profiteering by confiscating lands and property of others, by demanding extortionate rates in the marketplace and by selling for money the pardon of sins. It was this last act of indecency that prompted Luther to make his challenge to the Roman Catholic church. We will examine later the symbolic Revelation language forecasting these events.

This was the kind of edifice being erected in the western third of the old Roman empire while the east and south were experiencing their 1260 years of "woes" at the hands of the Moslems. Twice, as we have seen, the Moslems had penetrated into this corrupt western domain (Tours 732 AD and Vienna 1683 AD) as God's warnings to repent but to no avail. So here comes the biggest "woe" of all, the seventh trumpet containing 7 vials, poured out upon this evil church-state system.

THE VIALS

The French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon brought to an end the power of the church in the west to be a partner in empire government, which privilege it had enjoyed for a thousand years. Socialist principles arising out of the revolution ended the effective power of kings to rule, established republics, parliamentary rule and restricted the Pope to spiritual things. 1792 AD was the beginning of a new order.

Ch.16 The first vial was poured out on the earth and verse 2 describes the characteristics of the happenings in France during and after the revolution.



The second vial poured out on the sea represented the defeat of the French naval power at the hands of Nelson and others (v.3).

The third vial (v.4) concerned rivers and fountains of waters and marked the progress of the French army (before

Napoleon's rise to supreme commander) across the alps to Spain, Switzerland, Italy and Austria. The chaotic conditions of violence, bloodshed, summary execution, revolt and rebellion put terror into Europe. Verses 5, 6 and 7 provide God's comments about the situation "... thou hast judged thus for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets ...".

The fourth vial (v.8) introduces a sun with power to scorch men, signalling the arrival of Napoleon as the dominant figure in Europe — from around 1800 to Waterloo (1815). In this short time, he won and lost an empire, marching to such farflung places as Moscow and Egypt. His armies were the scourge of the civilised world.

The fifth vial's effects (v.10) were on the seat of the beast and refer to a much more lasting effect of Napoleon. He insisted absolutely on separation of church and state, abolished the title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1806), removed the Papal States from the government of the church and temporarily imprisoned the Pope when he resisted (1810). The church has never regained such temporal power and influence.

Verse 11 adds a grim note in view of what we have already learned. Ch. 9:20-21 revealed that God designed these historical events as warnings and corrective measures. Now in ch. 16:11 John writes that they "blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores that they repented not of their deeds". In spite of the lessons Napoleon forced upon ecclesiastical leaders in his time, the Spanish inquisition continued into the 1900's, the infallibility of the Pope in certain circumstances was proclaimed in 1870 and Mary worship reached ridiculous proportions in the 20th century.

The sixth vial reverts to the east. This is not surprising since the sixth trumpet had left that area in the hands of the Turks. The wording is very interesting for us as we, in this century, have seen it fulfilled. Verse 12 "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared". The empire of Turkey, the sick man of Europe, based in the headwaters of the Euphrates River, gradually evaporated. The lands of the former empire became the domain of the eastern men, the Arabs, who the western world cannot ignore because of their control of oil supplies. The Holy

Land, however, now no longer rests, being in the hands of a different sort of kings of the east — the Israelis while on the horizon is the prospect of the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem as supreme king on earth together with his saints.

SUMMARY

One can say that the seals, trumpets and vials provide a near continuous historical sequence of the development of imperial Rome from barbarian times to our own day, its relationship with an increasingly evil official church and the hardships of the true believers. Several pieces of evidence indicate that the struggle is not yet over and, in different symbols, The Revelation from the 17th chapter onwards shows that the iron of Nebuchadnezzar's image and Daniel's fourth terrible beast continues into the initial phase of Christ's kingdom and is defeated by him. These details are revealed by symbols of women, beasts, horns and heads to which we now turn.

- Ch.11 The first of these visions concerns measurements of a temple, a holy city trodden underfoot for 42 months; and 2 witnesses prophesying for 1260 days. 42 Jewish months of 30 days equals 1260 days, so these two periods are the same length. We will strike more periods of this same length, sometimes expressed as $3\frac{1}{2}$ years or time, times and $\frac{1}{2}$ time (equalling $3\frac{1}{2}$ times). On the principle already explained, 1260 days stands for 1260 years and different methods of expressing the same time period mean that, although the total time is the same length, the starting and finishing times are not the same. This means that one 1260 year period will not start at the same time as another 1260 year period although most of both periods will overlap. This also means that, in God's design, a 1260 period is highly symbolic — Jesus' ministry was for a literal $3\frac{1}{2}$ years or 1260 days and it is fitting that those who endured like he did for the gospel should have some direct relationship of the length of their testimony with his.

WITNESSES

In Old Testament times, Israel was the medium through which God witnessed to the world (Isaiah 43:10). Israel, dispersed to the four corners of the globe, could not continue an active witness like they did formerly. In Rev. 11:3, God

indicates that, despite the suppression of all things holy for 1260 years (trampling the holy city), 2 forms of true witness will survive the times.

If we look at the seals-trumpets-vials period of nearly 2000 years, a period of around 600 AD to 1800 AD on, corresponds to the details of the vision. From the time when the barbarian Franks became Christianised and the Pope found advantage in working closely with the emperors, to the time of the French revolution, periods of 1260 years can be seen to correspond with both the suppression of true believers and with the testimony of witnesses. The passage of time has dulled a sharp perception of just 2 outstanding witnesses — some would say Jews and Gentiles, others would choose civic and religious leaders of freedom movements. It is sufficient to say that, in the darkest of ages, God was not without His effective witnesses. In verses 7-12, the witnesses are killed, their bodies displayed, they revive to fill the onlookers with fear and then rise to heaven. These events at the end of the long witness period answer to the stirrings of the revolution. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day temporarily put an end to protestant activities (1572, just 1260 years after the accession of Constantine, 312 AD) but the Edict of Nantes restored some of their rights. The revocation of this edict in 1685 was a critical stage on the way to the French revolution. By foreshadowing these events and the end of this evil system, The Revelation reassured those overburdened with the repressions of the times that there was a worthwhile prize at the end for true believers.

OTHER SYMBOLS

The church in The Revelation is represented by a woman — Christianity in gross error by a harlot woman, the true believers by a woman accompanied by healthy symbols. Seeing that the arena of The Revelation is Europe and the Middle East, the political power of nations in this area working together, such as in empires, is pictured as animals — dragons and beasts — and individual nations in such a federation as heads and horns. A dragon represents pagan empires, other beasts are figures for Christianised groupings. A series of beasts, such as we have in The Revelation, represents a series of developments of the same Roman/European grouping.

If we should now put these symbols of women and beasts together, a wider significance emerges. A 10 horned beast ridden by a harlot woman represents a 10 nation empire under the influence of an apostate church system.

We need to note the gradually developing features of the beast which we first see in Daniel chapter 7. Daniel tells us about the activities of 10 horns but in Revelation chapter 13 we are additionally told about the seven heads and in chapter 17 we are further told about its scarlet colour. Obviously, we have an expanding understanding of the physical characteristics of developing European imperialism. In the same Bible references we are made aware of the other moral and mental characteristics of this developing monolith. Along the way, we meet other beasts such as the 2 horned lamb-like one which are partial, temporary phases of the basic continuous 7 headed, 10 horned scarlet beast of Europe.

Ch.12 We meet a woman with healthy symbols giving birth to a man child which was caught up into heaven because of a 7 headed, 10 horned dragon. Here is symbolised that the pagan Roman Empire was unable to stamp out official Christendom because it was elevated to adoption by the highest official — the emperor. Paganism, the dragon, was thrown out of heaven (the ruling class) when Constantine defeated his non-Christian



Woman with bow placing coronal wreath of victory on Constantine

rivals. The woman existed in the wilderness section of the earth for 1260 days, representing the true believers who hid among the ordinary folk (the earth) and battled against atheism for 1260 years.

By this vision, the early believers were alerted to the change

of character of the Roman Empire from pagan to perverted Christianity in the rulers (man child caught up to heaven) whilst true Christians would be scattered among the ordinary people (woman hid in the wilderness).

Ch.13 Early in this chapter we still have a 7 headed, 10 horned animal but it has changed from a dragon to a beast — a natural development if pagan imperial Europe was to become Christian imperial Europe. Verse 2 further describes this change "... the dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority". Not only this but verse 4 records that the people approved this change "... they worshipped the dragon which gave power to the beast and (then) they worshipped the beast". Chapter 12 had revealed that there would be a great gap between true Christianity and the official church. Now verse 7 of chapter 13 disclosed that the official church of distorted Christianity would "make war with the saints" hid among the people and 42 months meant 1260 years as in the previous chapter. The pagan dragon which had been the enemy of the early Christian church had turned into an equally antagonistic beastly set of Christian rulers who were just as bad in persecuting the true believers and readers of The Revelation during this long and miserable period were to expect that it would last 1260 years.

However, another beast is seen later in chapter 13 which has no specific lifetime and causes an image or likeness of the first beast to be set up and to speak. We are now being informed about various phases of the 1260 year period because this second beast and the likeness that it sets up takes over the role of the first beast. If we now put together several more pieces of information, we can assemble a sequence of events which are being forecasted for this 1260 year period and immediately before it.

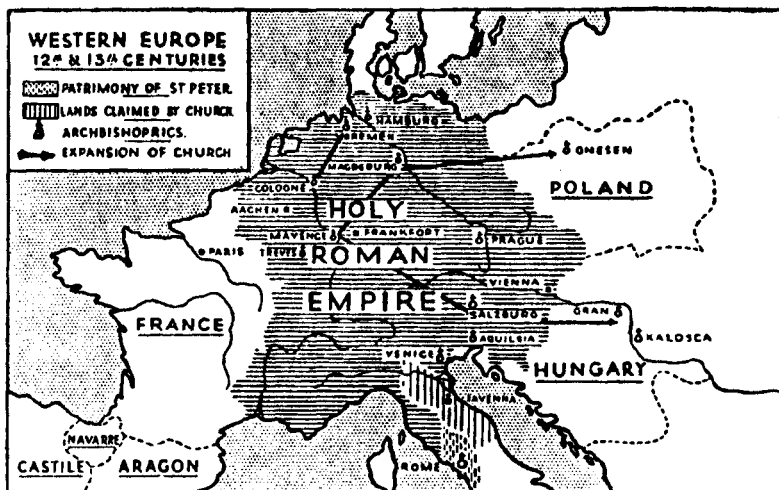
Here in chapter 13, three times we are told that the 7 headed beast had one of its heads wounded to death but made alive again. In chapter 17, John is given another look at this 7 headed beast and told that 5 kings are fallen, one is current and one is yet to come for a short while. These 7 kings will be followed by an eighth who will be a reincarnation of an earlier one (v.10-11 and end of 8). Using this information in chapter 13, we conclude that 5 phases of the Roman empire had passed when John wrote. The sixth phase, the imperial phase ruled

by emperors, was current in John's time but would be wounded to death to allow the seventh phase, the Gothic, to rise for a short time (60 years). When that phase passed, the imperial phase would be revived and be characteristic for 1260 years. Scripture is emphatic about the importance of the re-establishment of the old imperial system because it was the re-emergence of the old emperor-as-deity which caused so much damage. When a chapter refers to it 3 times, we must take notice. The Pope is to become like Caesar.

LAMB WITH 2 HORNS

The full imperial power of the Christian religion wasn't assumed over night. It went through several developmental stages and the 2 horned lamb speaking like a dragon is one stage (v.11). In The Revelation, the symbol of the lamb ("slain from the foundation of the world" v.8) represents Jesus Christ. A lamb speaking like a dragon, then, is Christianity behaving like paganism. Verse 12 forecasts a time after the establishment of Christianity in the western Roman empire when the Pope, having gained enough power to act like an old pagan emperor, would want an empire to go with it. Thus he encourages the setting up of an image (v.14) or replica of the old Roman institutions of government. While setting up the replica, the lamb-dragon was seen with 2 horns. Church and state paired together (2 horns) from Pope Leo the third and Charlemagne (AD 800) to Pope Gregory and Henry the fourth (AD 1077), the two horns. However, Gregory and Henry bitterly vied to be master of the other, a conflict eventually resulting in dominance by the church in the exercise of power and wealth. Thus the two-horned lamb of indefinite tenure faded from the scene which became dominated by the image or likeness of the old 7 headed, 10 horned imperial beast, the new Holy Roman Empire. By this series of word pictures, the early readers of The Revelation were informed of the changing face of the Roman Empire and its relationships with true and false Christianity — the iron mixed with clay of Nebuchadnezzar's man image.

We need to keep in mind that, all through this period, the earlier word pictures were still equally applicable. The woman of chapter 12 was being persecuted by the dragon and the saints of chapter 13 were being warred on by the beast



Map 7. Western Europe, 12th and 13th Centuries.

signifying that, despite all the twists and turns of popes and emperors, the false church in whatever state was continually trampling on the true believers hidden among the ordinary population. European history of these times is replete with accounts of Huguenots being hunted in France, of Walenses being chased through alpine passes, of Luther's protest, of the burning of printers of the Bible.

The pouring out of the vials, the French revolution, Napoleon and his merry men, put an end to most of that. The testimony of the two witnesses came to an end, the trampling of the believers of the holy city finished and 1260 years of the Dark Ages came to an end. The 19th and 20th centuries were, by comparison, oases of religious freedom, of study, speech, worship and preaching. But not without a rising shadow — there is one beast to go.

Ch.17 THE WOMAN ON THE SCARLET BEAST

Once again this same 7 headed, 10 horned beast is seen but this time its scarlet colour is noted. This redness denotes either its sinfulness or its connections with socialist forces — perhaps for both reasons. It is certain that latterday European socialist tendencies contrast sharply with the imperial character of past centuries.

Upon this beast a harlot woman sits (v.3). Conforming with principles already discussed, this signifies a corrupt and errant church quietly dominant over political Europe. There is no suggestion of actual killing — that is not a possible course of action for a 20th century church system — just drunk on the blood of the saints as if the blood was preserved from times past like wine.

There are 2 further pointers to the significance of the woman. Verse 18 says that the woman “is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth”. Verse 9 tells us that “the seven heads are seven mountains (or hills) on which the woman sitteth”. Putting these 2 facts together, the famous 7 hills of Rome are highlighted. In past centuries, kings and emperors have been beholden to the Popes of Rome. Europe today is centred in Rome in a different but equally effective way — the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the European Economic Community or the Common Market. Together with the Church of Rome, the city of 7 hills is well connected with the centre of western civilisation and is to play a critical role in the future climax of the ages. Clearly the modern equivalent of the name Babylon is Rome.

Verses 8 to 12 explain further significance of the beast's heads and horns. As well as hills of Rome, the 7 heads also represent “seven kings” referenced to John's time of writing. Five have passed, one is current, one is future to John's time. This refers to the various phases of government developed in the Roman empire which evolved to the sixth system of imperialism in John's time. It was later replaced by the seventh, Gothic system when the Goths invaded but Europe reverted to a form of the old sixth imperial system which explains the reference to “the eighth and is of the seven”.

This resurgence of the sixth form of government is the same circumstance referred to in chapter 13:3 when a head given

a "deadly wound was healed".

The 10 horns are shown to represent 10 kings who fight the Lord Jesus Christ and his saints. This leads to the defeat of the 10 kings who turn upon the harlot woman and in chapter 18 burn the city with fire. The timing of these events is subsequent to the return of Jesus to the earth and the resurrection of the saints when Jesus proclaims God's kingdom from Jerusalem. This means that chapter 17 begins by reinforcing the origins of the beast in old imperial Rome and then rapidly takes the readers forward to times future to our own.

It is not surprising that the 7 headed, 10 horned beast figure should span so long a period. Daniel has already alerted us to this fact in that the Roman iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image in chapter 2 endured from its unadulterated imperial state to an iron-clay mix right through until the stone-Christ power smashed up the lot.

For centuries now, European imperial power, both political and religious, has been fractured and diluted "partly strong and partly broken". Furthermore, European powers such as France, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Britain concentrated on empire building in every corner of the world in bitter rivalry fulfilling these words "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay" Daniel 2:42-43. The Revelation discloses that the period of separate empire building would cease and that Europe would amalgamate again. We have lived to see that come true since World War 2.

It is Revelation chapter 17 that additionally tells us that, in the time leading up to the establishment of Christ's kingdom in Jerusalem, the old imperial beast has a brief new life in slightly different form which ends in a disastrous clash with Jesus and his saints. The remarkable fact of our times is the almost simultaneous re-emergence of the Rome based European political system in the Common Market alongside the astounding activities of Pope John Paul the second in his unprecedented world travels. The refocussing of influence on Rome of these 2 old traditional corridors of power, up till now dispersed for 2 centuries, positions us as observers of the seating of the woman on the beast. We live in historic times.

If we should ask the question, How could nations which call

DANIEL 2

DANIEL 7

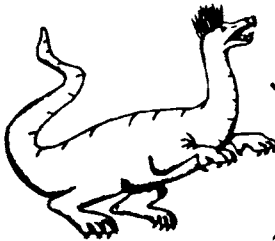
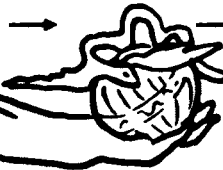
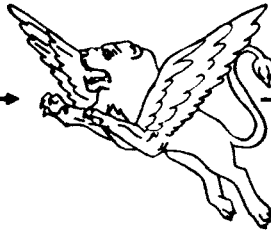
BABYLON

MEDO-PERSIA

GREECE

ROME

DIVIDED KINGDOMS



REVELATION 12



REVELATION 13:11-18



REVELATION 13:1-10



REVELATION 17

themselves Christian be found to be fighting against Christ?, consider the following. It is widely held that a person who is Antichrist will establish himself in Jerusalem and proclaim himself king of the world. This person, being Antichrist, is to be resisted. Such views are taught in the popular religious press, for example, "The Late Great Planet Earth" by Hal Lindsey (p.98), Plain Truth Magazine (October 1979, p. 15) and the Catholic Church. The Bible information about Antichrist is that there are many antichrists, that it was in operation in the first century and that the basis of Antichrist is the denial of the humanity of Christ. In fact, the next person to come to Jerusalem and proclaim himself king of the world will be the real Jesus Christ himself. It seems certain that the Christian

world is being deceived by the popular religious press to the point that they will be prepared to fight the real Jesus in Jerusalem believing him to be Antichrist (see "Antichrist and the Great Deception" by this author). So not only do we now have the political and religious movements in place for the gathering of the antichrist forces but we also now have the rousing call to arms being wrongly preached.

We could further suggest the rationale behind verses 16 and 17 where the 10 kings of political Europe turn on the woman (signifying the corrupt and errant church) and destroy her. If the course of events laid out in the previous paragraph turns out to be substantially correct, it will become obvious to the political leaders of Europe that they have been misled by the established Christian church "that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Note that Rev. 17:14 says that "the Lamb shall overcome them" — they are defeated but not destroyed. It is then both possible and logical for the then-awakened political forces of Europe to take their revenge upon a religious system that deluded them. This revenge is the subject of Chapter 18.

Ch.18 The subject matter continues to be the woman called Babylon whom we saw sitting on the beast in chapter 17. In chapter 18 verse 7, her self-description is "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow". How wrong she is! The first 10 verses further impress upon the reader the wickedness and deceit of this religious system. The evil woman and beast are now clearly separate in identity and have diverse developments in contrast to earlier sections of The Revelation where these political and religious elements were so interwoven as to be merely, for example, 2 horns on the same beast.

TRADE AND THE E.E.C.

Verse 11 begins, "And the merchants of the earth . . ." introducing the strong element of trading as the outstanding activity of the latter days in contrast to violence and bloodshed of earlier times. Here are the compelling links to the Common Market of our day. The next verse begins a list of 28 commodities of world trade, the most comprehensive in all the Bible. We are directed to look to trade and commerce to anticipate the latter day development of forces that will oppose Jesus Christ, directed by a Roman based ideology. From this we are able to surmise that world trade will not completely collapse but that it will become tightly controlled by the EEC. Already many countries have been affected by the restrictive Common Market trading policies and technology exists to ensure that "no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:17). Religion and trade are the big partners of the future.

END OF THE EVIL WOMAN

It needs to be emphasised that, although the development of this system is continuing today, the confrontation with Jesus Christ and the subsequent destruction of this trading city system occurs well after Jesus proclaims his kingdom from Jerusalem. It is then that world commerce collapses. "For in one hour, so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by the sea, stood afar off and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city. And they cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness. For in one hour is she made desolate . . . for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived" (verses 17 to 20 & 23). Thus Rome loses forever her influence over the nations of the world. But, while the woman is consumed, the beast continues.

Ch.19 To this point, The Revelation has been almost exclusively concerned with the battle of truth versus error in the arena of the old and new Roman empires. This chapter makes it clear

that truth triumphs and the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (v.9) can now be celebrated. Furthermore, the nations of the whole world now become the attention of a rider on a white horse followed by the saints (v.11-15).

This rider is called Faithful and True, the Word of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, obviously the Lord Jesus Christ. Incredible as it sounds, verse 19 tells us that "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him". The beast, political Europe, does not learn from its previous futile escapade in company with the woman. One by one, each individual group has to learn its own lesson. In turn God has to deal with (a) the Arabs in our own time (Ezekiel ch. 28), (b) atheistic Communist forces (Ezekiel ch. 38), (c) apostate Christianity (Revelation ch. 17), and now (d) the political forces of the whole world (ch. 19). Verse 20 indicates that although the trading city system had been earlier destroyed, the final punishment of the complete European political beast occurs with those other forces opposing the establishment of the rule of Christ.

Ch.20 The traumatic events of chapters 17, 18 and 19 occur because the proclamation of the returned Jesus Christ introducing the Kingdom of God on earth challenges the established rule of corrupt human empires. The challenge of Jesus is successful and some of the major events of his thousand year reign on earth are the subject matter of chapter 20.

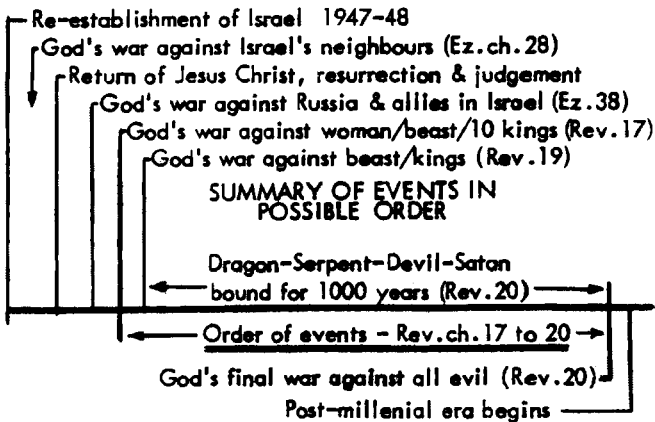
JESUS' THOUSAND YEAR REIGN

Firstly, we are told (v.2) that the activities of "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan" is restricted for the thousand years. Such a string of descriptive nouns emphasises that all forms of godless behaviour and character are suppressed; while virtuous and beneficial characteristics are promoted for general public acceptance during this kingdom age. The world population is not automatically stamped with or forced to accept these Divine principles because verses 3 and 7-10 tell us of an outbreak of rebellion against "the camp of the saints" at the end of the thousand years which results in the final destruction of all wicked and evil forces.

Psalm 2 is an Old Testament foretelling of this happening.

The psalm opens with the world's political leaders vowing to break apart the "bands" or requirements that God and Jesus Christ have placed upon the nations. The Lord derisively laughs (v.4), breaks them with a rod of iron and dashes them to bits like smashed pottery (v.9). Zechariah defines one of God's millennial requirements "all the nations . . . shall go up (to Jerusalem) from year to year to worship . . . and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (14:16). This is the sort of thing that proves irksome as does the restriction of evil practices to which Revelation 20:2 refers.

At the end of this thousand year period, the restrictive grip is relaxed and the corrupting forces in the world lose no time in going "out to deceive the nations". Verse 9 is graphic and to the point, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them".



The other feature of this chapter is two resurrections, one at each extremity of the thousand years. Several times in Scripture we find Jesus accompanied by his faithful in the process of subduing and cleansing the earth. One purpose of this first resurrection is to assemble this throng from those living and dead at the time of Jesus' second advent. The resurrection at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ is the final accounting after the last rebellion and the last death.

Ch.21 & 22 These two chapters deal with the final transition stage from the end of the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ to the endless glory of a completely redeemed world. The new heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem of 21:1-2 is that of a completely new age. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (v.4). This is that time of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15:28, "And when all these things shall be subdued unto him then shall the son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all". In the millennial age, the world is dominated by the presence and power of Jesus but, after that, the dominating emphasis will shift to God Himself with Jesus subject to Him — no trinitarian godhead here. There is no night nor need of sun or moon for the glory of God and Jesus will light the world (v.24). There is a highly symbolic description of living conditions — brightness, cleanliness, glory, honour, worship.

The Revelation concludes with the kind of concept that guarantees a wholesome final destiny for the world. This world has a positive continuity, a hope for every person to cling to, a destiny to aim for. Despite the intervening problems, the world is not hopeless but hopeful. Every person who looks for peace, who seeks a decent and meaningful life, who hopes for a continuing destiny for the world, can take heart in the final message of The Revelation. God has already guaranteed that, through Him and His son Jesus Christ, the world and decent people in it have a bright hope for the future.