

A Review of Revelation

The Book of Revelation is Christ's last message to his people—a book of exaltation, comfort and enlightenment. It is an outline of history from God's point of view from John's day until the end of the millennium—the development of God's purpose. And it is important that we endeavor to keep these things before our minds.

Chapter 1 is an introduction, stating it to be a message from God through Christ to Christ's Brethren, revealing in sign, "things which must shortly come to pass."

Verse 3 – "Blessed is he that readeth," that is, who values the message and applies himself to it, heareth, pays attention, and accepts what it says, and keepeth—bears it in mind and puts it into practice in his life. To say that such are blessed is to say in effect that such as do not do so are not blessed. Herein is the vital importance of constant study of the word. Only such are blessed and will be blessed.

The Revelation portrays the age-old struggle between the Truth and the apostasy, which began in the Garden of Eden—the enmity, the true bride, and the false woman—Jerusalem and Rome. And the more we know about it and understand its true meaning, the more firmly we can keep separate and keep on the right side of the enmity—the very narrow way. This is a Roman world and all nations are drunk with the wine of her fornication. Let us not be among them. We particularly notice this at the time of the year, and the line of demarcation is clear.

The latter part of chapter 1, from verse 10 forward introduces the symbolic Son of Man—the multitudinous Christ and the messages to the seven representative ecclesias of Asia Minor.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain these messages. They are a cross section of ecclesial life as viewed by Christ. The key thought with which each begins is "I know thy works." And we notice the emphasis upon "works," so belittled in Protestantism. All is known, noted and permanently recorded. Mainly they are urgent warnings. To five of the seven, he has to say "repent, or else." Things were not good in the ecclesias. They never have been. Only a very few will be saved. We must take both warning and encouragement from this, and we must constantly compare ourselves, not with each other, but with the perfect standard of the Word.

Chapter 4 is a vision of the end. God manifested in Christ on the glorious throne of David, surrounded by his immortalized brethren who are portrayed by the Israelitish symbols of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. Before the throne is a sea of glass—the pacified and purified nations of the peoples of the world to whom Christ has said, "Peace, be still,"—no longer a troubled sea casting up mire and dirt. And circling the throne is the rainbow of the everlasting covenant—the emerald green of everlasting life.

Chapter 5 introduces the seven-sealed scroll, which contains the historic revelation. It is written inside and out—that is, the things to do with the people of God on the inside and the things of the nations on the outside.

The call is made (verse 2) for someone worthy to open the scroll. No one can be found, and John weeps (verse 4). To open the scroll is to put in motion the events recorded. The Divine plan—the working out of the development of a people, the abolishing of sin and death and the filling of the earth with God's glory—cannot be fulfilled until someone is found worthy to do so.

John next sees (verse 6) a lamb that had been slain but now lives. It stands in the midst of the throne, identifying it with the occupant of the throne, but representing a different aspect of Christ's work. The lamb takes the scroll (verse 7), and all creation (verses 8 to the end of the chapter) give praise and honor to him and proclaim his worthiness.

Chapter 6 begins the historical outline. It records the opening of the first six seals. It covers 228 years, from 96 AD (John's day) to 325 AD, the establishment of Constantine as sole emperor—the first, so-called, "Christian emperor."

The first seal (verse 1) opens with thunder—the assassination of the Emperor Domitian, who had banished John to Patmos. This seal covers 87 years, from 96 to 183 AD, described by the historians as the

happiest years of human history—a period of peace and prosperity under five strong, capable, intelligent emperors devoted to public service and well being.

John saw (verse 2) a horse representing the Roman Empire. It was white, symbolizing peace and well-being. It was ridden by a bowman who was given a crown of victory and went forth conquering. This peaceful conqueror was the Ecclesia of Christ overcoming paganism. In a sense, this bowman continues all through the book. His conquering is really the theme of the book—it's eventual conquering the destruction of all paganism—the flesh.

Verse 3 – The second seal—a red horse, and the rider with a great sword to take peace from the earth, to kill one another. From 180 to 211 AD there was a complete and sudden and dramatic change in the Empire. Commodus, son of the previous emperor and a vile incompetent youth, inherited the throne of the world. Because of debauchery and tyranny, an attempt was made by one of the senate to assassinate him. Aroused, he began a wholesale destruction of senators and influential men. He was killed and the army seized control. The senate appointed an emperor, and the army killed him, because he cut their allowance. The army sold the throne to another senator, and after two months they killed him. Two more claimants were killed within a year or so. These conditions led to the events of the next seal.

Verse 5 – The third seal—a black horse and a rider with balances—wheat and barley at famine prices. The balances indicate taxation and scarcity. The period from 211 to 235, 24 years—5 emperors; all were killed. Some were dissolute monsters, imposing heavy taxes, incompetent administration, squandering the treasury on the army to hold its support. Taxation and oppression were such that vast areas went out of cultivation. It didn't pay to farm. The final emperor of the period cut taxes to 1/30 of what they had been and began to restore order and prosperity. The army killed him and anarchy reigned.

Verse 7 – The fourth seal—a pale horse and the rider was death and hell (the grave) followed. Power was given to them to kill the fourth part of the earth with sword, hunger, pestilence and wild beasts. In the period from 235 to 284 AD, 49 years, there were 39 emperors or claimants, and they all died violently except one. There was constant strife and bloodshed. The army murdered any emperor who tried to do good and restore order. Industry and agriculture collapsed. A plague due to food scarcity raged for 15 years, and nearly half of the population of the Empire died. We can see that the Roman Empire destroyed itself long before the barbarians came.

Verse 9 – The fifth seal—an entirely different picture. This concerns events within the household—the inside of the scroll. The souls under the altar that were slain for the Word of God, crying for vengeance against the oppressor. History records ten persecutions of the Christians by the pagan Roman emperors from Nero to Diocletian. And this was the tenth, the worst and the last, from 303 to 313—10 years. All who held religious meetings or were found in possession of the Scriptures were to be put to death. All who refused to worship the Roman gods could not hold office or have the protection of the law.

Verse 12 – The sixth seal—a great earthquake. There are four earthquakes in the Revelation. All involve a complete change of government—both political and religious—a complete sweeping of one order out of power and the rise of another. They are: 1st, this earthquake, which cast out the pagans and elevated the so-called Christians. 2nd, the Julian earthquake, about 40 years later, which reversed this briefly and put the pagans back in power. 3rd, the French Revolution that ended the Holy Roman Empire after 1000 years of rule and began modern history. And finally, the 4th and last, the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

We are considering the first earthquake. “The sun became black”—the pagan emperorship was extinguished. “The moon became as blood”—the priesthood was slain, the pagan priesthood. “The stars of heaven fell”—all the subordinate officials. Heaven itself was rolled up as a scroll—the whole government apparatus rolled up and swept away as finished.

Chapter 7 – The sealing of the servants of God—going back to the inside of the scroll. Verse 1 – The angels hold back the four winds. These are the wind trumpets of chapter 8 – the barbarian invasions that were to destroy the Western Roman Empire centered in Rome. The barbarians were now providentially held back for a period of about 50 years, from 325 to 375 AD, so that God's servants could be sealed under these entirely new circumstances. The establishment of Christianity, so-called, and the rise to political power about 315 AD by the victory of Constantine was a tremendous change for the true people of God. There had to be a new sorting out and a new line up—a new feeling. Up to this point, Christians, real or pretended, were all one body in the eyes of the government, whether they joined the world and took the

sword and entered politics or remained faithful to the Truth. But now there is a complete open and public cleavage. The worldly and nominal—the overwhelming majority—rise to power. The faithful brethren disassociate themselves from these and call upon all others to stand with them against the new imperial apostasy—to come out and be separate. The true brethren are the angel from the east (verse 2) who are to seal a symbolic 144,000 out of the tribes of Israel. This is spiritual Israel, which is now apostate—now raised to political power under Constantine. The faithful must be taken out of that formerly faithful, but now corrupt, body—the Laodecean state.

The latter part of chapter 7, verses 9-17, show the final result of the sealing—not only just of this 50-year period of sealing, but the end of the whole process down through the centuries—the great multitude glorified with the lamb.

Chapter 8 – The seventh seal is opened. “There is silence in heaven (verse 1) about half an hour.” This was the last peaceful 14 years of Constantine’s reign from 324 to his death in 337 AD, after he had completely obliterated the pagan power and defeated all his opponents. The symbolic hour here being 30 years, and this is half hour about.

The seventh seal is revealed (verse 2) as composed of seven trumpets of judgment, and these are in answer to the prayers of the saints of verses 3-4. As soon as the Catholics come to power under Constantine, they persecuted the true believers, who testified against them and would not conform to them and condemned them as apostate. The angel with the incense censor of the saint’s prayers (verse 5) cast fire upon the earth, causing thunder, lightening and an earthquake. This is the 25-year civil war that broke out from 337 to 361 AD at Constantine’s death among his sons, culminating in the Julian earthquake. Julian, 361 to 363, the last ruler of Constantine’s line, briefly restored paganism and cast out the Catholics from power with great persecutions. He testified truly that Christians had no part in war or politics, and so he threw them out, according to their own original teachings, which they had abandoned. When he died, Catholicism came back permanently to power in the Empire.

Verse 6 of chapter 8 – The seven angels with the trumpets prepare to sound. There is a period of preparation first before they sound. The Goths from the north, the barbarians, were on the Danube border north of the Empire. They had been converted to the so-called Christianity, and they were relatively peaceful and friendly. They were awed by the ancient grandeur and civilization of Rome. Beyond them, the fiercer Huns were pressing in upon them. The Goths asked to be allowed to cross the Danube into the safety of the Empire and to settle along the border. This appealed to the Romans, and they let them in and trained and armed them as a border defense against the Huns. But the Goths soon awoke to their own strength and to the Empire’s weakness. They became more and more demanding for pay and privileges. This was the preparing to sound. In 376, war broke out between the Goths and the Romans. The Romans were defeated and the Emperor slain. This was the sounding of the first trumpet. “Hail and fire mingled with blood” cast upon the Roman earth and a third of the trees—the outstanding men—and all of the grass—the people—was burned. On and off during the next 35 years, 376 to 410, the Goths ravaged a large part of the Empire, culminating in the capturing and pillaging of Rome itself in 410 AD, which had never before been conquered ever since its founding 1100 years before.

Verse 8 – The second trumpet—“a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became as blood.” In 429, the Vandals, who had occupied Spain moved into Africa and within 10 years, by 439, had conquered much of North Africa, taking it away from Rome. Then they took to the sea, building a huge fleet, which totally dominated the western Mediterranean and pillaged all its coasts. Rome built a large fleet to try to stop them, but the Vandals completely destroyed it. Rome built another fleet, but the Vandals defeated them again. And in 455 they came by sea and captured Rome, reeking such destruction upon it—such senseless, wanton destruction, that their name ever since has stood for such kind of mindless destruction—vandalism. This was the burning mountain that made the sea blood.

Verse 10 – The third trumpet—a great burning star or meteorite fell upon the rivers and fountains of waters. We have seen pictures of what happens to the earth and the trees when a large meteorite strikes the earth. This was the brief but terrible career of Attila the Hun—ruthless, barbaric, cruel in warfare. With a vast horde from central Asia, he ravaged Northern Italy, right down to the gates of Rome and forced Rome to pay tribute.

Verse 12 – The fourth trumpet—“the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars.” Here the sun being smitten brings us back to the pattern of the government being changed—the head rulership. The western part of the Roman Empire with Rome as its head, now fell to the barbarians. In 476, the Goths under Odoacer deposed the last emperor, and Italy became a barbarian kingdom. The divine judicial work of the four wind trumpets was completed. The Western Roman Empire was ended.

God’s judgments now turn to the Eastern Roman Empire, whose government is centered at Constantinople. The fifth and sixth trumpets of chapter 9 describe the judgments against this area. There is a 150-year gap between the end of chapter 8—the fall of Rome in 476 AD—and the beginning of chapter 9 in the early 600’s, when we come into the time of the Arabs. From some points of view, chapter 9 is the most interesting chapter in the book, because of how vivid the imagery is. The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets are spoken of as the Woe Trumpets, as the first four are referred to as the Wind Trumpets, because of the language used in connection with them.

Verse 1 - The fifth angel sounded; a star—Mohammed—fell from heaven unto the earth, and he was given a key with which (verse 2) he opened the pit of the abyss, out of which came smoke, and (verse 3) out of the smoke came locusts, which were given power to torment but not to kill. They were told in scriptural language (verse 4) to hurt only the men of the apostasy. They had hair like women; they were in shape like horses. They were given tormenting power for two periods of five months each. According to the simplest day-for-a-year symbol, this is two periods of 150 years each, or 300 years total for their rise and fall.

There are many striking items in the Revelations that seem to shout out their own interpretation, and of them this chapter is perhaps the most striking. It deals with the two great foreign powers that came against the Eastern Roman Empire—the first to torment and the second to destroy. There were two, and only two, in history, and they stand out very vividly—the Arabs, from about 630-930, and the Turks, from about 1060-1453—the year of the final obliteration of the Eastern Roman power. These two powers are unmistakably portrayed in this chapter. Every detail fits perfectly.

The bottomless pit (verses 1 & 2) is called in the Revised Version the pit of the abyss—a more literal translation. The abyss, or unmeasured, is the whole area outside the Roman world. Abyss means bottomless, unmeasured, or unmeasurable. The pit, or low place, of the abyss is shown by the history of the case to be the long valley up from Arabia through the Dead Sea area—the pit, or lowest place, on the face of the earth. The Dead Sea is the lowest place on the earth, fitly spoken of as the pit, out of which these locusts poured.

Once they had the key to this, that is control of it, they issued like a cloud of smoke that on closer appearance became a cloud of destructive locusts, and closer still became fierce-faced, long haired, yellow turbaned, horsemen warriors. It is a very dramatic picture. The identification that we have is irresistible. Never before and never since have the Arabs done anything like it. For 150 years, they spread invincibly over all the Mid-East possessions of Eastern Rome, and all North Africa, and all of Spain. Then for another 150 years, they gradually declined in power and importance. The similarity to a sudden destructive swarming of locust is remarkable. And the principle target of their fanatic religious zeal was the idolatrous, Trinitarian, Catholic clergy. “Cleave only the shaven skulls,” one of their early leaders instructed them. This was a religious war. We notice that that is almost a direct quotation of verse 4.

The sixth trumpet is even more striking and unmistakable, if possible. Verse 14 – “Loose the four angels bound in the great River Euphrates.” There were four separate successive waves of Turks—four separate nationalities, separated quite widely in time—the Seljuks, the Moguls, the Tartars, and the Ottomans—each with its own separate period. Of the leader of the first wave, Gibbon says, “He passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry and entered Cappadocia.” Of another leader a little later, Gibbon says, “He passed the Euphrates and his flying cavalry laid waste the country as far as the Hellespont.” Notice that the Euphrates is the barrier crossed. The four angels bound by the great river Euphrates were to be loosed. And notice that cavalry were the striking feature all through the Turkish picture. The Arabs were horsemen, and were so shown in the symbol. The Turks, even more so, as to multitude, all were mounted—armies of 100,000, or 200,000, even 300,000 horsemen are mentioned in history. This was their terrible power and mobility. Never before, or since, in history, has the horse been such a decisive factor in war. Nothing could resist them, and they could cover tremendous distances. It was the original Blitzkrieg.

Verse 15 – Their period was an hour, day, month, and year. At a-day-for-a-year this is 391 years, if we take a year as 360 days as it usually is in Scripture; or 396 years, if we take a year as the exact 365 days. It's only a five year difference. Either way, it fits perfectly. The first leader who attacked the Eastern Roman Empire captured Baghdad in 1055 and became supreme beyond the Euphrates, that is, he ruled up to the Euphrates. He died in 1063. Figured either way, the time period measured back from the fall of Constantinople—a very specific date—starts within his short reign.

Verse 16 – Two hundred million horsemen—nothing like it in history ever before or since. But for the whole period of the Turkish scourge (nearly 400 years), this figure is reasonable and probable. Repeatedly, Gibbon mentioned the myriads of Turkish cavalry.

Verse 17 – “Out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.” Constantinople was captured in 1453 with, and could not have been captured without, giant cannons—an entirely new development in warfare, and brimstone (sulphur) was the basis of the gunpowder used—certainly unknown when the Revelation was written. Its massive fortifications had withstood sieges for 1000 years. (Actually the Eastern Roman Empire had had been very weak for hundreds of years, but Constantinople's invincible position kept it alive.) The Turkish cannon broke down the walls of Constantinople and finally obliterated the Eastern Roman Empire. The Arabs were commissioned to torment the Empire but not to kill. The Turks were to completely destroy it.

Verse 18 – “By these three (fire, smoke, and brimstone—the cannon) was the third part of men killed.”

Chapter 10 – This is the mighty rainbowed angel clothed with the clouds, (verse 2) puts his feet on both sea and land, holding an open book of thunder judgments, and crying (verse 6) “that there should be time no longer.” John (verse 4) is not to reveal the contents of the little open book, but (verse 9) to himself eat the scroll. This is Christ and the saints subduing the world. This chapter is one of the things of the inside of the scroll. (You notice we go back and forth—inside and out.)

The Revelation is not just an outline of human history. It is a loving message of inspiration and hope for Christ's brethren. Its aspect as history is incidental. Its aspect for Christ's brethren is fundamental. That is why we have interspersed such glorious chapters as 7 and 10. These are the real living things; human history is the dead outer shell—utterly without meaning apart from God's purpose. That is why so much of it that man thinks is important is not even mentioned.

Chapters 11, 12, and 13 deal with special subjects: 11 – the two witnesses; 12 – the woman and the dragon; 13 – the two beasts. Chapter 11 is still part of the sixth trumpet, for the seventh does not sound until the close of this chapter 11.

Verse 1, of chapter 11 – (We go back now to the West.) John is given a reed like a rod to measure the temple of God. The rod is clearly a measurement of affliction, as verse 2 shows, “They shall tread the holy city under foot 42 months,” which is 1260 day-years.

Verse 3 – Two witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth, which represents affliction and mourning, for 1260 days: A downtrodden temple, sackcloth witnesses, and a period of 1260 years. Verse 7 – At the end of that period the beast kills the witnesses. Verses 8 and 9 – They lie dead but unburied in the street, or broad place, of the great city, rejoiced over (verse 10) by the followers of the beast. Verses 11 and 12 – After 3 ½ days they rise and ascend to heaven. Great fear falls on those who see them. Verse 13 – There was a great earthquake, and the tenth of the great city fell; seven thousand names of men are slain, the remnant gave glory to God.

Again, history fits perfectly. The Catholic Church came to imperial power under Constantine in 312 AD. Immediately, the false brethren, now in political power, began to persecute the faithful who kept separate from the apostasy, and tried to force them into line. This began a 1260-year sackcloth witnessing against the Man of Sin—the god of the earth.

1260 years from 312, when Constantine came to power, is 1572—the Saint Bartholomew Day Massacre of the Huguenots—the opening gun of a concerted war to stamp out parsonism in the Papal dominion. The Pope commanded a great jubilee and had medals made to commemorate the bloody victory of Catholicism over the Huguenots. France was the central scene of this war. France is the street, or broad place, of the great city. Rome being the great city (verse 8) and there was also the tenth of that city, that is the outstanding tenth, out of the ten divisions of the Roman Empire—the primary tenth. Ever since

Charlemagne, king of the Franks in the ninth century, defended the Pope and reestablished his authority in Europe, France was considered the eldest son of the church—the chief or principle tenth of the great city. And in this period France fell; that is, fell as far as Catholic power is concerned.

History is not, of course, always clear-cut in sharp breaks from one period to another. But certain dates are typical, significant, and major turning points. In 1685, the Edict of Nance, which had given certain rights to the French Protestants, was revoked. This marked the death of the witnesses. In 1687, just two years later, a Huguenot, a Bible student, Peter Jurieu, writing on the Revelation, identified this as the death of the witnesses, and predicted that France, as the tenth of the great Papal city Rome, would break away from the Pope, and lead the period when the king of the earth would turn against the Papacy and greatly torment it. This is exactly what happened as we see in the vial. This is another very powerful confirmation of the basic soundness of the historical interpretation of the Revelation, because this man foresaw from the Revelation the general outline of what was to come.

There were two witnesses. This indicates a distinction—two classes. They were the true woman and the earth, which helped the woman. The Brethren of Christ, who held the Truth and kept separate from the world, on the one hand, and on the other all in the world, who for various reasons—social, political, or religious—opposed the Papacy and sought liberty. It is the latter class—the outer shell, which appears in history. The Huguenots were of the outer witness. They entered politics and war.

The witnesses were to lie dead three and one half days (verse 9). Peter Jurieu thought this would be 3 ½ years, which is a natural assumption. But history reveals it to be 3 ½ months of years. 3 ½ months is 105 days, and the period of their death turned out to be 105 years, until 1790—the French Revolution, the greatest turning point of European history. The ministry of the Papacy and Rome, the great enemy in the Revelation, before and after the French Revolution are two completely different worlds. Again within three years of the French Revolution, in 1793 an English Bible student named Bicheno had the clue, and identified the 105 years from 1685 to 1790 as the death period of the witnesses. This is another very strong evidence of the soundness of the basic framework.

Verses 11, 12, and 13 – The witnesses were given life, stood up, and a great voice called them up to heaven; fear fell on all that saw them, and there was a great earthquake, and seven thousand names of men (note the middle margin) were slain, and the tenth of the city fell.

Since 1685, the revocation of the Edit of Nance, the Catholic monarchy, clergy, and nobility had ruled France with an iron hand, but increasing disorder and bankruptcy cause Louis XVI in desperation to summon the national assembly. This was the ascension of the witnesses to heaven. The time was right, and events soon snowballed into the execution of the king, the abolition of the nobility, or names of men, confiscation of all church property, and end of all church power, and the terrible blood bath, known as the Reign of Terror. Out of this came Napoleon, with the vials of God’s wrath against the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire that we shall see later in chapter 16.

Chapter 12 – War in heaven – A woman brings forth a child; he is caught up to heaven. She flies into the wilderness into the wings of the great eagle, where she is fed 1260 days. Michael casts the dragon out of heaven. The dragon persecutes the woman; the others help and protect the woman. Henceforth, there are two women—the false one in heaven and the true one in the wilderness.

This chapter takes us back to Constantine, the woman’s son who was caught up to imperial power in the Roman heaven. The pagan dragon is cast out of heaven. And, henceforth, Catholicism ruled the Empire. The false woman, the apostate church, ascends to heaven with Constantine. The true woman flees into the wilderness, the outlying wings of the Empire for her 1260-year sackcloth witnessing.

At Constantine’s ascension the Donatists protested against corruption in the church and bishops in political power in the imperial court. The cry then was, “What have Christians to do with kings? What have bishops to do at court?” Constantine naturally sided with the established church and persecuted the defenders. There was no freedom for Christ’s brethren, just a change of persecuting dragons—from the pagan dragon to the papal dragon.

Chapter 13 – A beast rises out of the sea with seven heads and ten crowned horns. One head had been killed but comes back to life. On his head is the name of blasphemy. The dragon gives to this beast a place, power and authority. The whole world worships the dragon and the beast. The beast is given a mouth,

speaking great things, blaspheming God. He is given power to make war against the saints for 42 months, which is 1260 days.

This is a perfect representation of the situation in Rome, following the fall of the Western Empire in 476. The Goths ruled Rome and Italy until 535 AD. Between 530 and 550, the Eastern emperor, Justinian reconquered all North Africa and Italy. This was the beginning of the healing, or rebirth, of the sixth imperial head of Rome. It came to its completion under Charlemagne—the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 535, Justinian proclaimed the bishop of Rome as the primary bishop of the church, settling the controversy between the bishops of Constantinople and of Rome. This was at the time that he was beginning to reconquer Italy and Africa. This is the official beginning of the Papacy—the beginning of the dragon, the imperial power, now moved to Constantinople—of giving power to the new Roman beast that is arising from the old fallen Western Empire. Justinian represents the continuity of the dragon, which has moved to the east to Constantinople, and he, as the dragon, is beginning to build up or give power to the beast, the new Roman beast (which is not exactly new, because it is the rebirth of the old, but its new historically at this time.)

In 610, 75 years later, the famous decree of the Emperor Phocas made the Pope the supreme head of the church. The dragon had now given the beast full spiritual power in the Empire. The Papacy, as we know it, had now begun. His 42 months, or 1260 years, of persecuting power, which began at this time (610), ended in 1870, when the new kingdom of Italy took away all his lands around Rome and shut him up in the Vatican. There was a 75-year rise at the beginning and a 75-year decline at the end, as we shall see as we examine the history in detail.

Verse 8 – “And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.” Here is the great lesson for us. This is a Roman and a Catholic world, far more than the blind world realizes. The world is permeated with the corruption of Catholicism. Many of its customs and most of its festivals have Catholic roots. Those who are written in the book of life will eschew them like a deadly plague.

Verse 11 – “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.” The previous beast (verse 1) had arisen out of the sea. When used in contrast, the sea represents the Mediterranean area and the earth the inland portions of north Europe. Soon after Phocas, around the year 600, the Arabian invasions began, and the Eastern Empire lost Africa and the Mid-East. (Africa had been reconquered by Justinian.) Thus weakened, the Eastern Empire could not hold Italy against the new invader—the Lombards, who were anti-trinitarian and anti-papal Arians. But in the early 700’s, a new champion of the Papacy arose in north Europe—the Franks. (Here is the beginning of the earth beast.) Between 750 and 800, the Franks conquered Italy and most of Europe. On Christmas day in Rome in the year 800, the Pope crowned the Frankish king Charlemagne as Roman Emperor. The deadly wound was now healed. The two-horned beast—Pope and Emperor—now began. This was thereafter the basic constitution of Europe for exactly 1000 years, until Napoleon by the vials of the 16th chapter destroyed the Holy Roman Empire in 1800 AD.

Verse 14 – The earth beast creates the image of the beast and commands all the earth to worship it upon pain of death. The Franks gave the Pope the papal state, a little kingdom of his own—all central Italy, and the Papacy became the image of an empire with all imperial pomp and pretension, claiming absolute spiritual dominion of the whole world. This chapter ends with the mark and the number of that beast for identification—666.

Chapter 14 is a complete change. Verse 1 – A lamb on Mt. Zion with 144,000 redeemed—Christ and the glorified saints. (We are going back briefly to the inside of the scroll, although we are now coming to a point where the inside and the outside converge.) This chapter deals with the final judgments of the earth—that which was hidden in the seven thunders which John saw—after the overthrow of Gog and the establishment of Christ in Jerusalem.

There is much exhortation in verses 4 and 5. The 144,000 are a very exalted and select multitude—those who in this life have overcome the flesh and given themselves wholly to God. They are, we are told, virgins—that is, no defilement with any thing to do with the apostate woman. That is their important identification. They follow the Lamb in everything they do. They have no guile; they are perfectly pure in

heart. They are all without fault before the throne of God, because they have remained in Christ and are completely covered by his righteousness and repeatedly purified by prayer and repentance, so that they continually stand before God perfect, as they must if they are to be accepted. How dimly we realize the tremendous height of our calling!

Verses 6 and 7 give the proclamation to all the earth of the everlasting Gospel. "Fear God...the hour of his judgment is come." Before pouring out worldwide destruction, Christ and the saints call on all the earth to submit. The besotted earth is today so drunken with the Babylonian wine that a considerable time will be needed for all to awake out of their stupor and find out what is happening and decide what side they are on.

There is much in Scripture to study. We shall never know a fraction of it, but we are required to learn as much as we can in the opportunity given us. We shall be judged for what we could have done with our time and opportunity. We shall be called to account, and we shall be rejected if we have not tried our best to do what is required. "Blessed is he that readeth." We have no time to waste on worldly things. Only the faithful stewards of time and goods will be accepted. And let us make sure we are among that very, very few.

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