

A decorative border consisting of a scroll and a laurel wreath. The scroll is unrolled in the center, with the ends curling upwards and downwards. The laurel wreath is composed of two branches of leaves, one on each side of the scroll, framing the central text.

**The
Book of
Revelation
Explained**

Volume Five

Earl R. Borders

**The Book
of
Revelation Explained**

**Volume 5
Chapters 15-19**

Earl R. Borders

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FOREWORD

Following this *Foreword* lies *Volume 5 of The Book of Revelation Explained*. This is the fifth volume of what has become a series of six volumes. This particular volume covers Chapters 15 through 19 of the Book of Revelation. Of all of the volumes, this volume is the most unique in the sense that all of the prior works began with a description of the morning-time portion of the Gospel Day and then proceeded sequentially throughout the entirety of this Christian dispensation. However, the chapters that comprise this volume deal only with the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day. Each of these chapters begins with the prophetic time setting of the sixth-seal period and closes describing events in this seventh-and-final period of time.

In actuality, these chapters are a part of Series Number Five, which begins with Revelation 12:1. So, again, another unique quality to this volume is that it is the only volume which begins in the midst of a series. We concluded Volume 4 with a consideration of Revelation 14:18-20 because we desired that Volume 4 cover the entirety of the Gospel Day. That volume began with Revelation 12:1 depicting the commencement of the Gospel Day and ended with a seventh-seal portrayal at the conclusion of Chapter 14.

It is evident that the Lord lays great stress upon us having a clear and extensive understanding of the evening-time portion of this Gospel Day. This is very evident in that He dedicates six chapters (Chapters 14-19) of the Revelation to exclusively deal with the evening time. This does not include the portions of the other series in the Revelation that deal with this segment of the Gospel Day as well. These chapters alone reveal that over one-fourth of the Revelation is given to deal with the truths and realities of this evening time. I believe that indicates the great importance the Lord attaches to us having an extensive understanding of this segment of the Gospel Day.

Due to the nature of these chapters, there is much divinely-intended repetition. We learn through repetition, and the Lord in His infinite wisdom speaks of the same truths many times throughout these chapters. In regards to the repetitive nature of these chapters, we say as the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:1b, "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

Since these chapters depict events in this seventh-seal period of time, there are some aspects that are yet prophetic and lie before us. This has caused this writer great trepidation. I have approached the prophetic sections with "fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). It is imminently easier to look back historically with clarity and to speak with certainty concerning what "has occurred." Needless to say, to look forward and write concerning "that which shall be" is more challenging. I can only say that I lay no claim to the office of being a prophet. I can only set the understanding forth that I feel the Lord has given me. I have prayed and sought the Lord much over the passages that are yet prophetic and have written what I feel He has revealed to me. I can only say as the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:40, ". . . I think also that I have the Spirit of God." Any errors or lack of understanding is on my part and should not reflect upon the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of this great book of our sacred canon.

I want to thank Pastor Roger L. Decker for his unwavering support of this voluminous effort. Without his support and the workers of The Church of God, God's Acres, Newark, Ohio, tasked with this venture, it would never have been possible. Psalm 68:11 says, "The LORD gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." I want to recognize and thank the "great company" that has made this work possible: the transcriber, editors, typist, proofreaders, printers, and any others who labored on this publication. ". . . know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

It is with great humility that I present to you *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 5*. May God use it for His glory and may it instruct and edify the church.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Earl R. Borders
Newark, Ohio
June 2017

PREFACE

You will notice that *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 5*, begins with Chapter 15, not Chapter 1, and ends at the conclusion of Chapter 19. This is to correspond with the chapters in the Revelation. Chapters 1-3 cover the introduction to the Revelation and the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 1*. Chapters 4-8 cover the truths preceding the seal series and the opening of the seven seals and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 2*. Chapters 8-11 cover predominantly the sounding of the seven trumpets and the witness series and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 3*. *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 4*, begins with Revelation 12:1 and deals with the beast series. It concludes with Revelation 14:20. This volume (*Volume 5*) encompasses Revelation, Chapters 15-19, which is a very unique portion of the Revelation. Each of these chapters describes events and conditions exclusively in the evening time portion of the Gospel Day.

The chapters of these volumes are designated in this manner for ready reference sake. The writing style of these volumes intentionally includes much repetition. This is due to the repetitive nature of the Revelation. In the seven series contained in the Revelation, though each series presents or accents another perspective of the Gospel Day, there is somewhat of a repetition of the basic truths in each series. Unlike conventional books, which are only meant to be read from beginning to end, these volumes were especially created for the purpose of not only being read but also serving as reference material. Thus, when studying a particular chapter in the Book of Revelation, you will be able to turn to the same numerical chapter in the corresponding volume of *The Book of Revelation Explained*. We trust this format will aid and facilitate your study.

The Time Delineation of the Revelation

There are seven series in the Revelation. They carry us from the morning-time portion of the Gospel Day to the evening time or the seventh-seal period of time. The Revelation retraces the Gospel Day seven times. It does this by taking us (through the vehicle of these series) through the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day. It portrays the Spirit of God working through the seven periods of the Gospel Day, carrying the truth into all the earth (Revelation 5:6; 1:20).

	A.D. 33	A.D. 270	A.D. 530	A.D. 1530	A.D. 1730	A.D. 1880	A.D. 1930	
Prophetic Age	Seven Series	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
	1	C. 2 <small>(Chapter 1 is an introduction to Series One)</small>				C. 3		
	2	C. 6 <small>(Chapters 4 & 5 are an introduction to Series Two)</small>				C. 9	C. 7	C. 8:1-2
	3	C. 8:2-13						C. 10
	4		C. 11				C. 14	
	5	C. 12	C. 13				C. 15 C. 16 C. 17 C. 18 C. 19	
	6	C. 20					C. 21:9-16	
7	C. 21:1-8					C. 22		

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN—PART ONE

An Introduction to the Seven Vial Angels

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Series Five in the Revelation Is Unique

As we begin this particular study of the New Testament Apocalyptic Book, which John entitled in Revelation 1:1 as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," we will find that this segment has some very unique features. In our prior studies, we have found that the Book of Revelation is broken down into seven distinct series, and each of these commences at approximately the beginning of the Gospel Day and then goes through to the end of time, or the consummation of all things.

Each of the prior series we have studied went somewhat sequentially through the Gospel Day. For instance, Series 1 (the seven letters) begins with the first letter to the Ephesian congregation, representing the first portion of this Gospel Day, which began on the Day of Pentecost (A.D. 33). Then we find the balance of the letters takes us in chronological sequence right down through the entirety of this Christian dispensation. So it is in Revelation, Chapter 6, which is Series 2 (the seven seals). Through the vehicle of those seals, Christ takes us again, somewhat sequentially, through the various portions that comprise this Gospel Day. So does Series 3, which begins in Revelation, Chapter 8 (the trumpet series), and Series 4, which is in Chapter 11.

When we get to Chapter 12 and begin a new series, Series 5, it occupies a very unique position in the Revelation. This series, as every other series, starts at the beginning of this Gospel Day. In Revelation 12:1-2 we find a picture of the church in her pristine glory when she was instituted in the morning time of this Gospel Day. This series proceeds on through the various portions of the Christian dispensation. When Revelation 12:3 tells us, "And there appeared another wonder," we are introduced to the great red dragon, which represents the pagan Roman Empire, the first opposing force that the morning-time church faced. Perhaps this fifth series is one of the most detailed in its chronological sequence. In Chapter 13 we read of the rise of the first beast, denoting papalism. Next, there was another beast that arose (Revelation 13:11), the subsequent beast denoting Protestantism. We are coming through sequentially.

Then Revelation 14:1 says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion," a picture of the restoration of truth in the evening time (1880) when the brethren began to herald the message, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). So, Chapter 14 brings us right up to the evening of time. It speaks in great detail of what occurred in that sixth-seal time period. Revelation 14:18 introduces us to another angel, which brings us prophetically to the seventh-seal time period. In verses 18-20 we see a portrayal of what is occurring in this seventh-seal period of time. This is the period of time in which you and I are privileged to live.

Commonly in the previous series (Series 1-4), once each series came up to the end of the seventh seal, that would conclude that series. Then another series would begin by taking us back to the inception of the Gospel Day. However, this does not occur in Series 5. This series stands alone as being very unique because Chapters 15-19 begin speaking in a manner that has not been used previously in the Revelation. Each of these chapters begins by having its prophetic time setting in the sixth seal, and then they each end with the prophetic time setting in the seventh seal.

Another characteristic which makes Series 5 very unique is that it is the longest of all the series in the Revelation. It begins with Revelation 12:1 and concludes with Revelation 19:21, incorporating eight chapters. Because of its uniqueness, this study will be vastly different than our previous studies. In each of our previous studies, we went

chronologically through the Gospel Day. However, in this particular segment, we are picking up in the midst of Series 5, and we are beginning with **Revelation 15:1**, which has its time setting here in the evening time. Although these chapters refer back to previous time periods, they are predominantly dealing with the prophetic time setting of the Gospel Day, from 1880 to the Consummation, or the end of human history.

The Lord Desires We Intimately Understand the Evening Time

One truth notably apparent in this series is the stress and the importance the Lord places on the evening time. He desires that we understand it intimately. In Zechariah 14:7 the prophet penned these words: ". . . that at evening time it shall be light." We are living in that precious period of time prophetically known as the "evening time." It is a time of light, and the light is to get brighter and brighter. More understanding is to be given throughout these periods of time as they progress. In the sixth-seal period of time, God's people had come out of the dark and cloudy day. They had great light for the period of time in which they were in, considering the cloudy condition that they had come out of. Now, in this seventh-seal period of time, we are in a time when God is working in a great way to bring us back, not only to the light of the morning, but as Isaiah 30:26 says, "Moreover the light of the moon [the Old Testament] shall be as the light of the sun [the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days . . ." God is working to bring forth understanding in such a way that truth will be crystal clear and light will be dazzling and brilliant. When we begin to give consideration to Chapters 15-19, we will learn that they place great emphasis on the Lord's desire for His people to have greater understanding in this segment of prophetic history known as the evening time.

In this first segment, we will begin with an introduction to the seven vial angels, mainly focusing on **verse 1** of our text. In this verse we are introduced to the "**seven angels having the seven last plagues.**" Verse 7 speaks of the seven angels that were given "seven golden vials." Thus, they are commonly referred to as "the vial angels." These vial angels are the predominant characters throughout Chapters 15-16. They also play a crucial role in other portions of this series. For instance, in Revelation 17:1 it was one of these vial angels that began to give understanding of the eighth beast. Also, in Revelation 21:9 it was one of these vial angels that was instrumental in John receiving a vision of the church in this evening time of the Gospel Day.

The Language of the Vision Is Symbolic

In **verse 1** the Revelator penned, "**And I saw another sign in heaven . . .**" We must be reminded that John was receiving a vision. In Revelation 9:17 he related to us, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision . . ." John had been banished to the "isle that is called Patmos" (Revelation 1:9), and there God used the panorama of the skies to give John a vision. Prophetically it is referred to as "the vision of all" (Isaiah 29:11). This vision incorporates the entirety of the Gospel Day. In this portion we found that we are down to the evening-time segment of it, but we must recognize that John was receiving a vision. In Revelation 1:11 he was told, "What thou seest, write in a book." He saw a vision, and he was commanded to write what he saw.

Revelation 1:3 says, "Blessed is he that readeth . . ." We are instructed to read what John wrote down. Habakkuk's prophecy tells us in Habakkuk 2:2, "And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." This is letting us know that when we read it, we are to write it on tables, or on pictorial charts, such as is found in the front of this book. He was receiving a vision, and God wants us to see the same vision that John saw. That is why John was commanded to write what he saw, and we are commanded to read what he wrote. Then, when we read what he wrote, we are commanded to make up tables so we can see it as he saw it.

The Lord wants us to see not only the vision, but the truth behind the vision. Notice how John began to describe this vision. Again, **verse 1** says, "**And I saw another sign in heaven . . .**" The Greek word for "**sign**" is the same Greek word that is used for the word *wonder* in Revelation 12:1 and 3. It is the Greek word *semeion*, and it is derived from the root word *semaino*, which is the word used in Revelation 1:1 where it says that "he sent and *signified* [or revealed by signs]." Webster defines *signs* in his *New World Dictionary* as "a symbol."

It is necessary to be reminded that the nature of the language in the Revelation is symbolic. We not only need to see the Revelation, or see the vision that John saw, but we need to understand it in order to rightly divide it, as 2 Timothy 2:15 instructs us. We need to understand that these are symbolic expressions. It was signified, or revealed

by signs or symbols. The Lord uses symbols as a vehicle to convey spiritual messages to His people. Certainly, that is not unique to the Book of Revelation; it is done throughout the Scripture. For example, Psalm 23:1 tells us, "The LORD is my shepherd." Now, the Lord is not literally a shepherd, but it brings an image to mind and conveys a truth to us. Frequently, the Scriptures speak in symbolic expressions.

As we begin to give consideration to our text, we need to understand that we are dealing in symbolism. We are introduced to the very first symbol here in **Revelation 15:1**, which states, "**And I saw another sign [or symbol] in heaven . . .**" The "**heaven**" spoken of here is not the celestial Heaven in which God dwells. The Bible speaks of three heavens. The very first heaven mentioned is the firmamental heaven (Genesis 1:7-8), or the aerial heavens where the sun, the moon, and the stars reside. Next, the wise man wrote in Ecclesiastes 5:2 of the celestial Heaven in which God dwells. Then the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:1-2 of a "third heaven," which gives us insight to know what the nature of this "**heaven**" is spoken of in our text.

What type of heaven is this "third heaven" of which Paul wrote? It is a spiritual place. Second Corinthians 12:1 tells us it is a position where you "come to visions and revelations of the Lord." It is an ecclesiastical heaven. To put it in the language of Ephesians 2:6, it is "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," an exalted spiritual position. It is a place where we can receive visions, revelations, and understanding of spiritual truths. That is the "**heaven**" in which the Revelation occurs.

There are many Scriptures that validate the fact that this "third heaven" is certainly not God's Heaven. Our text speaks of "**plagues**" and "**the wrath of God**" being in this "**heaven**." Are there going to be "**plagues**" in God's Heaven? What about the "**wrath of God**"? When we go back in this same series to Revelation 12:1, we read about "a woman clothed with the sun," and she was in heaven. Verse 2 tells us she was "with child," but Jesus let us know there is no marrying or giving in marriage in God's Heaven (Matthew 22:29). Now if she is with child without the benefit of marriage, she is a fornicator. The Bible lets us know that no fornicator will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9). So this cannot be God's Heaven; this is a spiritual position. We are dealing symbolically in symbolic tones. Again, this is an ecclesiastical heaven, a spiritual position that the church occupies, an exalted position where we can come to visions, revelations, and gain understanding of precious truth.

The Seven Last Plagues Were "Great and Marvellous"

Let us look specifically at what John saw. When he envisioned these "**seven angels having the seven last plagues . . . filled up with the wrath of God,**" he gave a description of them as being "**great and marvellous.**" To us that may initially seem to be mystifying. We do not think of "**plagues**" and "**wrath**" as "**great and marvellous,**" but that is the way John described it. Why? Because of what they produced. In **verse 3** the Revelator envisioned and heard the saints saying, "**Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty . . .**" What produced this praise? **Verse 4** says that "**all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**" These things are regarded as "**great and marvellous**" because of what they produced. It is similar to correcting a child. The act of correction is not necessarily pleasant, but the results are.

Hebrews 12:9-11, dealing with chastisement, states: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Although the action of correction, many times, is grievous, the fruit of correction is what is desirable.

In Revelation 16:2 we find that the pouring out of these vials of judgment was "grievous" to those who were receiving it, just as correcting a child is grievous; but it is also "great and marvellous" because Hebrews 12:11 tells us that "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." There is a fruit to be yielded by correction. One of the aspects the Word of God is to be utilized for is correction. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Who is to be given this Scripture to handle so that there can be reproof, correction, and instruction? Second Timothy 3:17 says, "That the man of God may be perfect [that word means *complete*], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The man of God is furnished with all Scripture, and one reason for it is to bring correction. We are seeing in **Revelation, Chapter 15**, a portrayal in symbolic expressions of a ministry that was entrusted with the Word of God

to bring forth correction on conditions that were contrary to God's eternal Word. When the vial was poured out, it was grievous, but the end result was glorious.

In **verse 1** of our text, we are introduced to "**seven angels having the seven last plagues.**" This is the first time these particular "**seven angels**" appear in the Revelation. Although it is the first time they appear, it certainly is not the last. They figure predominantly in Chapters 15 and 16, and as we have already read, they fill a vital role in Chapters 17 and 21. First we must recognize that these "**angels,**" as with all of the angels referred to in the Revelation, are not referring to celestial beings; but rather it is a symbolic expression. The Greek word for *angels* is the word *aggelos*, and in short it means "a messenger." It is a symbolic expression for the ministry. We see this in Galatians 1:8-9, where the Apostle penned: "But though we, or an *angel* from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you . . ." What was Paul talking about when he spoke of "an *angel* from heaven"? It was a messenger, a *man*; again, the Greek word is *aggelos*. The same Greek word is used in Galatians 4:14 when Paul wrote that they "received me as an angel of God." What did he do? Verse 13 tells us, "I preached the gospel unto you." These angels are not celestial beings, but divine messengers, a ministry.

Revelation 22:8-9 says: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." He was one of the brethren; he was not a celestial being. Our human minds are so prone to tend toward literalism that we must continually be reminded that the Revelation is symbolic. It is a spiritual book conveying spiritual truths. It does not lend itself to literal interpretation. So when we see these "**angels**" portrayed throughout the Revelation, they are representative of a ministry.

Let us look closer at these particular "**seven angels**" mentioned in our text. Why "**seven**"? The number "**seven**" denotes completeness or entirety. When these seven vials are poured out, a complete message in its fullness will have been completely sent forth upon mankind. These "**seven angels**" must not to be confused with the "seven trumpet angels" found in Revelation, Chapter 8. The trumpet angels are very distinct from the vial angels. Revelation 8:2, which commences the Trumpet Series (Series 3), says, "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

Revelation 8:5 shows a symbolic portrayal of the Day of Pentecost. The angel, in this instance, is a reference to Christ, because verse 3 tells us He had the "golden censer" and "unto him much incense" was given so that He performed functions before the golden altar. All of these were fulfilled (or practiced) by the High Priest, which is Christ according to Hebrews 3:1. So Christ is the "another angel" spoken of in these introductory verses of Chapter 8. Then verse 7 says, "The first angel sounded." In immediate succession to Pentecost, the first angel, or the morning-time ministry, went forth with their message. After that, we see the succeeding trumpet angels take us right down through the various portions of the Gospel Day.

Seven Vial Angels Are Introduced in the Evening Time

The trumpet angels are separate from these vial angels. The trumpet angels started immediately succeeding Pentecost, but the vial angels are not even introduced until the evening time. The setting for all seven vial angels is in this evening time of the Gospel Day. Furthermore, we need to recognize another way these vial angels are distinguished from those in Chapter 14. These "**seven angels**" have "**the seven last plagues.**" They are distinct from the previous representations of angels because there are no more angels after them. How do we know these vial angels exclusively have an evening-time setting? Revelation 16:1-2 states: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first [the very first vial angel] went, and poured out his vial upon the earth [denoting the religious system of Protestantism; Revelation 13:11]; there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." For the first angel to pour out his vial on those that had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image, this first vial had to be in a time period subsequent to the Protestant era. For truth to be poured out upon people who worshiped in the system of Protestantism and those who had the indoctrination of Protestant teachings in their minds, then the very first vial had to have its time setting in the evening time, following the Protestant era.

We can also see this is true for our text speaks of these "**angels**" during the time when people in **verse 2** had

"victory over the beast [papalism], and over his image [Protestantism], and over his mark [indoctrination]." This lets us know that these ones who were on this **"sea of glass"** had to be in a period that was past the Protestant era. So the prophetic time setting for these **"angels"** is in the evening time, which began in A.D. 1880.

How do we know that these **"seven angels,"** or this evening-time ministry, incorporate both the sixth seal and the seventh seal? We have already firmly established that this ministry did not commence until the evening time, because the very first one poured out his vial on those who were engaged in sectism. That is what called people out of Protestantism. Yet, how do we know that it takes in the seventh seal as well? Revelation 16:8 says, "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire." We were introduced to the sun in the beginning of this series in Revelation 12:1, which reads, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun." Then verse 2 describes her as "being with child." This woman depicts a parental phase of the church. She is portrayed as a mother, "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Galatians 4:26 tells us who this mother is: "But Jerusalem which is above [or heavenly Jerusalem] is free, which is the mother of us all." This "heavenly Jerusalem," according to Hebrews 12:22-23, is "the city of the living God," or the "church." So, this woman clothed with the sun is heavenly Jerusalem, or the church in the morning time. Revelation 16:8 tells us that "the fourth angel [or this ministry] poured out his vial [judgment] upon the sun [those who represented themselves to be the church]." We know this is true because the rest of that verse says that "power was given unto him to scorch men." Again, this sun was men who purported to be the church.

Verse 9 says, "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God." They had been a people who adhered to the name of God, the Church of God, and had been a representation of the church in the evening time. However, there came a point at the end of the sixth seal and the beginning of the seventh seal when they no longer walked in the light as they ought to walk in the light. Because of this, when judgment was poured out, it began to scorch them, and they blasphemed the name of God. This happened in the proximity of A.D. 1930. That lets us know that these vial angels not only have their prophetic setting in the sixth seal, but a portion of them have their prophetic setting in the seventh seal as well. The first three angels poured out their vials in the sixth-seal period of time, and the last four poured out their judgment in this seventh-seal period of time.

What Were the "Seven Angels" Entrusted With?

Let us begin to examine what these **"seven angels,"** or this ministry, were actually entrusted with. In our text, as with much of the Revelation, the imagery is being drawn from the Old Testament. When we think of plagues, immediately our minds run back to the Exodus account where God's people were in Egyptian bondage. They were under severe bondage, and they cried to God. They were praying (just like the souls under the altar in Revelation, Chapter 6), and God raised up a leader, Moses, with a message. That message was, "Let my people go" (Exodus 8:1), and in order for the people of God to be loosed, the Lord sent judgment in the form of plagues. Afterwards God's people were turned loose.

We read in Exodus 7:4 that God was going to bring "the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments." These judgments are described in Exodus 9:14 as "plagues." The Apostle Paul, when relating the Exodus account, penned in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples." The Greek word for "ensamples" is the word *typos*. It means "example, form, or pattern." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says, "In a doctrinal sense, a type." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *type* as "a person, thing, or event that represents or symbolizes another, especially another that is to come." That is the imagery we are drawing from when we begin to give consideration to these **"seven last plagues."**

We have found that God's people were in Egyptian bondage; so it was with the Gospel Day. Revelation, Chapter 11, refers to spiritual Babylon, or the conditions that the people of God had to endure through the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day. Revelation 11:8 says, "And their dead bodies [speaking of the two witnesses] shall lie in the street of the great city [Babylon; Revelation 16:19], which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." Sodom represents wickedness; Egypt represents bondage. That is what you find in the realms of spiritual Babylon: wickedness and bondage during the dark and cloudy day. God's people were being held in bondage, just as they were back under the old covenant in Egypt.

Revelation 6:9-10 states: "And when he had opened the fifth seal [the second segment of the Protestant era, 1730-1880], I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our

blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here we see people crying out for judgment, just as the ones who prayed in the Exodus account. These "souls under the altar" were not disembodied spirits. The altar is Christ (Hebrews 13:8 and 10), and these souls were a holiness people, a people who were sold out, and they longed to be out of Babylonian bondage. They longed to see the sectarian walls come down so they could come and worship in unity with all of the rest of the saints. They were crying under the bondage; that was Egyptian bondage in their day just as much as in the Old Testament time. They were crying and begging, so God raised up a leader, D. S. Warner, in the proximity of 1880. He came out with a message very similar to Moses' message, which was, "Let my people go." The brethren in 1880 had the message of Revelation 18:4, which was, "Come out of her, my people." (For a more detailed explanation of Revelation 6:9-11, see *The Revelation Explained, Volume 2.*)

These **"seven angels having the seven last plagues" (Revelation 15:1)** began to appear and pour out their vials in the proximity of A.D. 1880. Just as the Lord vested Moses with the power to bring His judgment and plagues on those who were holding God's people in bondage, so He vested a ministry with the power to bring His judgment on the systems and spirits that hold His people in spiritual bondage yet today. God does not want His people held in bondage; He wants them free to serve Him. The only way that they can serve Him is in truth. In order to worship in spirit and in truth, they must be loosed from all of the Babylonian hindrances that hold them in positions and places where they cannot truly worship God aright. **Revelation 15:1** and 7 show both the **"plagues"** and the **"vials"** were full of **"the wrath of God."** The **"wrath of God"** is stirred against any system, spirit, or individual that works to hinder God's people from being able to worship God as He intended. He will pour out **"wrath"** on that.

Verse 4 of our text says, **"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations [denominations] shall come and worship before thee."** In other words, when this truth is poured out on the honest hearts who are in all of the various man-made sects and denominations, it will set them free, just as it did in the Exodus. It will set people loose so they will not have to stay in that position, in that servitude and in that bondage.

When God's people were in Egyptian bondage, they were constantly being exposed to all of the falsities of Egyptian idolatry. False religion yet today is full of all types of spiritual idolatry. This **"image" (Revelation 15:2)** is the various religious organizations of Protestantism and all of the individual idols that each denomination concocts. Each one of them is designed to try to woo and win the hearts of men and to secure their allegiance. Then that will take them to damnation because they are not worshipping the True and Living God.

In Lamentations 3:23 Jeremiah wrote of God's faithfulness, stating, "great is thy faithfulness." God is faithful to the souls of men, and He has a ministry that is faithful to the souls of men. They will pour out the truth, these vials, which will put judgment on everything that hinders individuals from being able to worship God aright. In some cases it is a system, in some it is a spirit, in some it may even be an individual, but God in His faithfulness will pour out judgment to secure the freedom of every soul to be able to serve Him aright.

In this evening time God has a ministry who will pour out the **"plagues"** to free His people so they can come home to Him. That is what these **"seven angels having the seven last plagues"** represent. False religion would advocate that this is some sort of a literal event that will transpire out here at some point in the future, that God is going to send celestial beings to come and pour out some sort of literal plagues, but that is not so. These are spiritual realities that have been working since the inception of the evening time in A.D. 1880. Three of these vials were already poured out in the sixth seal, and four are being poured out right now in the seventh seal, the day and time in which we live.

As we proceed further in our study, we will see specifically what these **"plagues"** consist of and the results that they have brought and will bring. Thank God, they will produce results as they did literally back in Egypt! God, speaking through the prophet, said in Isaiah 55:10-11: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God's Word does not return unto Him void. It will accomplish what God pleases, and it will prosper in the thing for which He sent it.

As we study these vial angels and the pouring out of these vials, what we see portrayed and depicted as transpiring in these sixth and seventh seals has been effective. It was effective in the sixth seal, it has been effective in the seventh seal, and it will continue to be effective. As this ministry continues to sound forth and pour out these vials, they will still accomplish what God sent them to accomplish. God still has a people down in the realms of spiritual Babylon, down as it were in Egyptian bondage, and He wants to set them free so they can serve Him. He

will, in this seventh seal, continue to have these vials (these truths, these strong judgments) poured out in such a way that it will still set a people loose to where they can come leaping and shouting home to Zion.

Thank God for the truth! He can give us a knowledge and an understanding of His precious truth so we do not have to be in confusion. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Whenever confusion arises, there is another source or spirit working other than God. He desires that we have an understanding; He desires that for all people. The Apostle Paul told the young minister, Timothy, what God's desire is. First Timothy 2:4 says, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

God's will is two-fold. He wants "all men to be saved." He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He is not only willing that all be saved, but He also wants them to be able to maintain that experience by coming "unto the knowledge of the truth." He wants them to come out of sectarian religion, come out of the bondage of man-made organizations, so they can come to where the truth is. John 17:17 tells us "thy word is truth." He wants people to come where His unadulterated Word is held forth and poured out in such a plain and clear manner that people can maintain the experience they obtain. Then they can go from victory unto victory, grace unto grace, glory unto glory, and be a people who have a victorious and consistent experience.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN—PART TWO

The Sea of Glass and Them Who Had Gotten the Victory

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

The Message Produced a Victorious People

In the previous section, we were introduced to the **"seven angels, having the seven last plagues"** (verse 1), and we learned that this was portraying a ministry which began to "pour out the vials of the wrath of God" (Revelation 16:1). This is the evening-time ministry, and it encompasses both the sixth-seal and seventh-seal periods of time. **Verses 2-3** of our text reveal what the pouring out of these vials actually produced. **Verse 2** speaks of a people who had **"gotten the victory."** When this ministry poured out the **"wrath [or the judgment] of God"** in the beginning portion of this evening time (commencing in 1880), it began to produce a victorious people. God's ministry preaching the unadulterated truth yet today will continue to produce a victorious people; it will still do an effective work.

As we begin to study our text, let us consider a question that often arises. If indeed Revelation 16:2 begins to describe the pouring out of these vials, then how does Revelation 15:2 portray a victorious people, a people who it would appear were victorious prior to the pouring out of the vials? That would seem almost contradictory at initial consideration. We must recognize the biblical style of narration that is commonly employed. Throughout the Scriptures it is common to be given a summation, or a summary of events, and then follow it with a more descriptive and detailed account.

In the Book of Beginnings (Genesis), there is an excellent example of this Scriptural style of narration. Genesis 1:27 records the creative account, but it is very noticeably deficient in detail. Unless we "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), we could begin to engender all types of falsities. Genesis 1:27 tells us that "male and female created he them." That is a summary. When you read Genesis 2:7 you will find that it gives more descriptive detail as to how man was created. Then in Genesis 2:21-23 we read a very detailed description of how woman was formed.

We can also see this in the Gospel of John. John 11:1-2 tells us: "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)" Notice that verse 2 is in parentheses. It gives us an understanding of which Mary: the one who wiped Jesus' feet. This had not even occurred yet; it did not occur until John 12:3. There we read a very detailed description. So it is in our text. **Verse 4** says, **"... for thy judgments are made manifest."** This is a summation of the fact that God's judgments were poured out; that is how they were made manifest. Yet, the description of this pouring out does not occur until Chapter 16.

In **verse 1** of our text we found that the **"seven angels having the seven last plagues"** were an allusion to Old Testament imagery. It draws our mind to the plagues unleashed on Egypt when God's people were held in bondage. God raised up a man (Moses) with a message, and that message was, "Let my people go" (Exodus 8:1). God reinforced that message by sending forth His judgment in the form of plagues. His people were ultimately let go as a result of the plagues. Then they had a miraculous crossing at the Red Sea. After they crossed, Exodus 15:1 tells us, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD . . ." It was a song of deliverance and victory. It is the same song that is alluded to in **verse 3**.

Just as the children of Israel were delivered from bondage, people in this evening time were delivered from sectarian bondage. While held in bondage under the yokes of Babel's lords, God heard their groanings; He heard their cries. He heard those souls under the altar, praying for judgment to be turned loose (Revelation 6:9-10). God gave

D. S. Warner and other brethren this message: "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). They began to pour out the "**plagues**," and people were miraculously delivered. They were liberated, set free, and enabled to "**sing the song of Moses**" and "**the song of the Lamb**." These were songs of deliverance and victory!

In our text we clearly see that God had a ministry. Certainly, He does yet today, but at this juncture we are studying the sixth-seal ministry. This ministry had a message that produced results. **Verse 2** says, "**And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass . . .**" This is a message that people could "**stand on**," that would support them, uphold them, and give them "**the victory**." Every one of them who stood on the "**sea of glass**" had "**victory**."

The "Sea of Glass" Imagery

Let us begin to examine the imagery in **verse 2** of our text. Remember, when we read the words "**I saw**," John was receiving a vision. He saw "**a sea of glass mingled with fire**." This is not the first time we are introduced to this symbol in the Revelation. We were first introduced to it in Revelation 4:6, which says, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." There are some very notable distinctions between "the sea of glass" in Chapter 4 and "**the sea of glass**" in **Chapter 15**. In Revelation 4:2-3 John began to envision the original source from which the redemptive plan emanated. He was envisioning a figurative expression of God and showing us that there "was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald." These pictures that we see portrayed are imagery. When we think of the bow, Genesis, Chapter 9, tells us that when God made a covenant with Noah, He set a bow in the sky, which designated the covenant (Genesis 9:13). That bow was a rainbow.

Thus, a rainbow symbolically designates a covenant. But this rainbow has a totally different hue; it is "in sight like unto an emerald" (Revelation 4:3). This lets us know that it is a new type of a rainbow; it represents a new covenant. This covenant originated, or came forth, from the throne of God, and then it emanated out from there. John was envisioning and relaying the origination and institution of the redemptive plan, which originated in the mind's eye of God. Furthermore, in Revelation 4:6 when John saw "a sea of glass," it is notable that there was no one standing on it. At this point in the vision, the Lord was revealing the formulation of the plan, but as yet it had not produced a people. It is also noteworthy that Revelation 4:6 does not speak of the "sea of glass" being "**mingled with fire**," as it does in our text.

As we study what the "**sea of glass**" represents, we must bear in mind that we are being taken back, as it were, into the mind's eye of God into eternity past and shown how the plan of God was formulated. It had its ultimate conception and origination with God, the One who "sat on the throne" (Revelation 4:2). The covenant came forth out of His mind and out of His divine design. A prior study revealed that the "four and twenty elders" (Revelation 4:4) were a picture of a ministry. Revelation 4:6 talks about the "sea of glass," which lets us know that all of these were necessary and essential elements of the redemptive plan of God. In this evening time, the Scripture under consideration ("**a sea of glass**"; **verse 2**) is again associated with a ministry: "**seven angels having the seven last plagues**" (**verse 1**).

To better understand the "**sea of glass**" figure, which is drawn from Hebrew imagery, it is necessary to go back to the Old Testament. Second Kings, Chapter 25, describes the king of Babylon pillaging the temple and carrying the people of Judah away into captivity. In verse 13 we read a notable statement. It speaks of "the brasen sea." First Chronicles 18:8 tells us that the "sea" was made of brass. So what was it? It was an article in the Old Testament tabernacle made of brass, which is more commonly referred to as "the laver," or in some places "the laver of brass." When the Lord gave Moses instructions for constructing the tabernacle in the wilderness, He told him in Exodus 30:18 to "make a laver of brass." What was Moses specifically told to use to construct this brass laver? Exodus 38:8 says, "And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling . . ." They made it out of "lookingglasses," or the Hebrew actually says "mirrors." This brass was so highly polished that it acted as a mirror.

Exodus 40:7 states, "And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation [the tabernacle] and the altar [the brasen altar], and shalt put water therein." Let us consider how the laver functioned under the old economy in the tabernacle in the wilderness. When people approached the brasen sea (the laver of brass full of water), they could see their image reflected there. They saw themselves, and they could not enter the tabernacle until they came

by way of the laver, or the brasen sea. In other words, when they came by way of the brasen sea, they saw themselves. When they approached that brasen sea and saw themselves, they were instructed to wash. This is very typical. This is a prophetic type that had a literal fulfillment in the day of the Exodus and that which followed; but it also serves as a prophetic type of the realities of our day. Exodus 30:18-20 tells us: "Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons [Aaron's sons were the priests] shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water"

"The Sea of Glass" Is the Word of God

Let us bring it up to the New Testament. Ephesians 5:26, speaking of the church, says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The laver, or the brasen sea comprised of mirrors, is a type of the Word of God. As we approach it, our reflection shines back at us, and we see ourselves as we are. Then we are able to have the "washing of water by the Word." That is what produces the victory. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 the Apostle penned, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'mirror'] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." These lookingglasses, or mirrors, represent the Word of God. That is where we can look in and see the image of God, the glory of God, and see how we compare or measure up to that image. When we see any deficiency, by the Spirit of God, we begin to conform to that image through the washing of water by the Word.

We come, just as the Levitical priests came, "with open faces." Just as they looked into the laver and saw their reflection, we, as "kings and priests" (Revelation 1:6), look into that "glass," or mirror, and see "the glory of the Lord." To understand what "the glory of the Lord" is, look at Hebrews 1:2-3. These verses tell us that God's Son is "the brightness of his glory." John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14 goes on to say, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Then John 1:17 tells us that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So this glory is found in Jesus Christ; it is found in the Word. We are looking into the Word, and when we see a deficiency, the Spirit of God helps us to change into that glory, into that image held forth to us by the Word.

The employment of the "**sea of glass**" in **verse 2** lets us know that people must see themselves and the spiritual position they are in before they can get any help or come to the truth. Before those Levitical priests could ever go into the tabernacle, they had to come by way of the laver, the brasen sea, and see themselves and wash. Likewise, people today need to come out of sectism and get into truth, but the Spirit cannot induct them and baptize them into the body until first of all there is a ministry with a message that enables them to see themselves. They must see the position they are in and see their need of "the washing of water by the word."

For one to truly come to the knowledge of the truth is exactly God's will. The Apostle Paul penned it to the young minister, Timothy, in 1 Timothy 2:4, "Who will [God's will is two-faceted] have all men to be saved [that is the first aspect], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth [that is the second aspect]." The only way people are going to come unto the knowledge of the truth is found in Jeremiah 3:15, which states, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." It takes a ministry with a message to bring people to a knowledge of the truth.

When people receive a knowledge of the truth, 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us that it takes the one Spirit to baptize or induct them into the body. Then 1 Corinthians 12:18 says that God sets "the members every one of them in the body." When you are saved, you become a member. What if you have been saved out in sectism or your member is cut off from its parts, the rest of the body of Christ (Ezekiel 37:11)? In Ezekiel, Chapter 37, when the prophet envisioned a bone yard of scattered members, he was told to "prophesy," or preach, to them. Then they would begin to come together. It takes the Word of God to bring a people together yet today. As people start to get understanding, the Spirit enlightens their eyes (Ephesians 1:18), and they begin to receive a knowledge of the truth. Then God sets each member into the body of Christ, the Church of the Living God.

To Produce Victory, the Message Must Be Mingled With Fire

There is a definite distinction between the "**sea of glass**" portrayed in our text and the one in Revelation 4:6. This one is "**mingled with fire.**" On the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:3-4 says: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . ." This lets us know that fire represents the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God. Also, Revelation 4:5 speaks of "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Yet, Ephesians 4:4 tells us that there is "one Spirit." The "seven spirits" are representative of the Holy Spirit working through the seven periods that comprise this Gospel Day and are described as "seven lamps of fire." Second Corinthians 3:6 tells us that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Thus, the message must be "**mingled with fire.**" In other words, it must be anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 7:6 says, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." This new dispensation is a Holy Ghost dispensation, and it must be operated under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God. It is to be "**mingled with fire.**" It takes the anointing of the Spirit for the Word to be effective. In our text this symbol, or emblem, of "**fire**" takes on a deeper significance. "**Fire**" not only represents the Spirit of God, but throughout the Scriptures it also represents judgment. For a people to truly gain victory, to be in a position where they can stand and be free from the yokes of Babel's lords, it is going to take judgment preaching.

In Genesis 19:24 the fire and brimstone that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah were the judgments of God. Jesus also let us know that Sodom was equated with judgment (Matthew 11:23-24). Then when Moses was executing the judgments, or plagues, upon Egypt, "fire ran along upon the ground," and there was "hail" (Exodus 9:23-24). Furthermore, when John the Baptizer prophesied of Christ and the work He would do, John said that "he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). That is a picture of the judgments of God's Word being poured out. Therefore, the "flaming fire" in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 is associated with vengeance or judgment.

So we can see in all these instances that "**fire**" is also associated with judgment. This reveals that to produce a victorious people, especially in the face of the duping, damning deceptions of false religion, will require fiery hot judgment preaching. Someone may say, "Oh, we don't like that so much today," but not very many people are coming out either. In our text, when this "**sea of glass**" was "**mingled with fire,**" the next scene John saw was a people who "**had gotten the victory.**" Notice that there is a commonality among those "**who had gotten the victory.**" Regardless of what "**the victory**" was over (whether it was over "**the beast, his image, his mark, or the number of his name**"), they all stood in a common place: on the "**sea of glass,**" or the Word of God. This is teaching us that there is only one way to produce "**victory,**" and that is to take a stand on the Word of God. Jude 3 tells us that we have a "common salvation." Thus, to obtain it and retain it, we must stand in a common place; we must stand on the "**sea of glass.**"

Our text also vividly verifies the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:19, when He said to the seventy that He would give them power "over all the power of the enemy." God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). He will give His people power over the enemy today. Those in our text had power "over all the power of the enemy": "**the beast**" (papalism), "**his image**" (Protestantism), "**his mark**" (indoctrination and fellowship; Revelation 13:16), and "**the number of his name.**" Revelation 13:17 lets us know that each of these were distinct and separate. Verse 18 defines the number of the beast as representing the office of the popes of Rome, the ones who stand at the zenith, or apex, of man rule. So when our text talks about "**the number of his name,**" it actually represents anyone under the rule of man, or under man rule.

People With Victory Have the "Harps of God"

Our text clearly shows a people who responded to the message, who were delivered from sectarian bondage, and who came home to Zion. Isaiah 35:10 says, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." That is why they can sing "**the song of Moses**" and "**of the Lamb**" and why they have "**the harps of God.**" They were delivered from bondage. They had freedom and now could rejoice. They were free in the Spirit, free to worship God aright. Isaiah 51:11 states, "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion [the church; Hebrews 12:22-23] and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and

sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

What brought God's people to Zion? What brought them to the **"sea of glass mingled with fire"** (verse 2), a position of **"victory"** (verse 2)? Isaiah 52:7-8 says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice [not *their* voice, but *'the'* voice]; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye . . ." Does that mean they see every jot and tittle, every minute portion of the Scripture exactly the same? No, it means they see "eye to eye." In Revelation 5:6 we read that the "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God." They are in "unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3), and that is how they can bring a people to "the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13). They bring a people to Zion.

God was bringing again Zion in the early portion of the evening time (1880). Because He had a ministry, watchmen who lifted up "the voice," preaching under the unction of the Spirit (and the Spirit will not cause one brother to contradict another brother), people were delivered from sectarian bondage and came home to Zion. Where **"victory"** is, there is playing, singing, and praising. When people came leaping and shouting home to Zion, they came with rejoicing, joy, and praise. Our text says that they had **"the harps of God"** (verse 2). They were singing, and they were praising God, **"saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints"** (verse 3).

Oh, how false religion relegates all of these realities into some supposed future point in time, but thank God, these **"harps"** are for everyone who has **"the victory"**! Everyone who has **"the victory"** has a **"harp"** and a **"song."** If you do not have one, you had better check out your **"victory."** False religion relegates all of these harps and singing to Heaven, but they are to be enjoyed "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). **Verse 2** of our text reveals to us that **"having the harps of God"** is present tense. Each one who has **"victory"** is standing on the **"sea of glass"** and has the **"harps of God."**

Revelation 5:8 tells us, "And when he [speaking of the Lamb, Christ] had taken the book, the four beasts [or the Greek word *zoon*, which means living creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps . . ." How many of them had harps? "Every one of them." Now who are the four living creatures and the "four and twenty elders"? Verse 9 tells us that they are the redeemed of all ages and that every one of them has a harp. If we are redeemed, the psalmist wrote, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (Psalm 107:2). Remember, this is a symbolic picture. What does this depict? To understand we need to find out what the **"harps"** represent. So, let us go back to where the harp is first mentioned in the Scriptures. Genesis 4:21 says, "And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

The harp had its origin with Jubal. *Matthew Henry's Commentary* tells us, "From his name Jubal, probably the jubilee trumpet was so called." So we find that the jubilee trumpet was very probably derived from the name of Jubal, the father of the harp. When we study the trumpet of the jubilee, we learn that it sounded to proclaim the Year of Jubilee. In Leviticus 25:8-10 the Lord gave Moses instructions concerning the Year of Jubilee. It was to be once every fifty years, and in that particular year all who were in servitude, or engaged in service to another, all who were in bondage, were to be emancipated. It was "the year of liberty" (Ezekiel 46:17). They could go home, and the trumpet of jubilee sounded at the commencement of this year.

Thank God, we have also been emancipated! We have been set free from Babylonian bondage and false teaching. We are no longer in servitude. We are free from the yokes of Babel's lords. We have liberty, and we have come home to Zion! However, we do not have a "year of jubilee," but we have a day of jubilee. The Apostle Paul called it "the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). C. W. Naylor and A. L. Byers penned a song entitled "The Church's Jubilee." The chorus reads, *"O church of God, the day of jubilee Has dawned so bright and glorious for thee; Rejoice, be glad! Thy Shepherd has begun His long-divided flock again to gather into one."* We do not have to wait fifty years for a Year of Jubilee, but thank God, we have a day of jubilee. No wonder we have the **"harps of God"** to rejoice, to praise God, and to sing the **"song of the Lamb,"** deliverance, emancipation, freedom, and **"victory"** over all bondage!

The **"harps"** are a picture of a people in the evening time who are rejoicing in their freedom. Second Corinthians 3:17 tells us that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Revelation 14:1 shows us the beginning of this evening time in 1880. The Lamb, Christ, was restored to His rightful position in the church, and a visible church came back in view. With Him were the ones standing on the **"sea of glass"** who **"had gotten the victory."** They had "his Father's name," which is God (or the Church of God), written "in their foreheads," or in their minds. This lets us know

that they had a knowledge of the truth. Revelation 14:2 tells us that John "heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." That was those "hundred forty and four thousand" (Revelation 14:1), those who were redeemed. They had come leaping, shouting home to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They had the **"harps of God,"** and they were singing about their emancipation and their freedom.

A type of the evening time that commenced in 1880 is found in the Book of Nehemiah. Israel had returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which had all been destroyed when the Babylonian captivity began. In Nehemiah 12:27 they were having a "dedication of the wall of Jerusalem." Revelation 21:12 talks about the wall, and Isaiah 26:1 tells that the wall of the city, the Church of God, is salvation. Nehemiah 12:27 tells us that they kept "the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps." Why did they need the harps? There was gladness and singing. They were praising God for the work that He had wrought of rebuilding the wall, a great restoration. It is a picture in type of the rejoicing of an emancipated people, free from the yokes of Babel's lords.

Psalms 137:1-4 says: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, [When you are down in Babylon you do not have the strength to stand. However, when they got back to Zion, to the '**sea of glass mingled with fire,**' they were not sitting, they were standing! They had the strength to stand then.] yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?" Glory be to God, when they came leaping and shouting back to Zion, they did not leave their harps on the willows! They brought their harps with them up to Zion. Again **verse 2** of our text says, ". . . **having the harps of God.**" The praise was back, the songs were back, and the rejoicing was back! When you have a healthy experience that is founded on truth, you can rejoice.

These **"harps"** will also keep evil spirits at bay. First Samuel 16:14 reads, "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." We read in 1 Samuel 16:23, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." If the people of God will, as Revelation 14:2 says, be "harpers harping with their harps," it will keep the evil spirits of sectism at bay and keep them from working in our midst.

"The Song of Moses" and "the Song of the Lamb"

We clearly see Old Testament imagery and an attestation of the fact that **"victory"** brings rejoicing. **Verse 3** of our text says that they sang **"the song of Moses the servant of God"** and **"the song of the Lamb."** The **"song of Moses"** is a song of miraculous deliverance, and certainly one worthy of study and rich in types. (You can read it in Exodus 15:1-19.) In overview it was a song depicting glorious deliverance and victory. But in our text, those who were standing on the **"sea of glass . . . having the harps of God"** were not only singing **"the song of Moses,"** but they also were singing **"the song of the Lamb."** They were singing both songs, because there is a distinction between Moses' **"song"** and the Lamb's **"song."** Moses could only bring a literal deliverance of the flesh. However, **"Lamb,"** Jesus Christ, brought a spiritual deliverance of the soul. What a vivid distinction!

You cannot learn this **"song."** Revelation 14:3 tells us that "no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." It is a **"song"** of experience. You must experience redemption to **"sing"** about it, not only redemption from sin, but also redemption from Babylon. They were redeemed from the earth, and verse 4 states that they "were not defiled with women," speaking of false religion. This is a **"song"** that you can only learn by experiencing deliverance. Again, **"Moses"** delivered a literal people, but thank God the **"Lamb"** (Jesus Christ) delivered a people from spiritual bondage. The question might be asked, "Is that the distinction?" **Revelation 15:3** continues, ". . . **Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.**" We find that this deliverance, this **"song of the Lamb,"** produces **"saints."** It has a spiritual quality to it; it is a spiritual **"victory."**

Verses 1-4 of our text only speak of the sixth seal (1880-1930), and certainly the truths preached then are still applicable and real today; but the prophetic time setting was the first portion of the evening time. It is a portrayal of God beginning to set a people free. He began to lead a people to truth to where they could be delivered from the yokes of Babel's lords, from spiritual Egyptian bondage, from Sodom and Egypt (Revelation 11:8), and be able to come back to Zion. No longer do they have to sit with their "harps upon the willows," but they are able to stand on the **"sea**

of glass mingled with fire," rejoicing with everlasting joy and singing the **"song"** of deliverance and **"victory."**

D. S. Warner penned the song entitled "The Sea of Glass." It reads: *"We stand upon the sea of glass, That's mingled with Jehovah's fire; Our robes are white, our feet as brass, We stand upon the foe's empire. We bow no more to gods of men, We shout the vic'try o'er the beast; Yea, o'er his mark and o'er his name We overcome thro' Jesus Christ. Upon this bright and glowing plane Of heaven's truth and burning love, Our souls in glory ever reign, With all the ransomed host above. In sweet and pure unbroken peace, Upon this sea we glide along; Our hearts so full of holy bliss Flow out in everlasting song. We stand redeemed upon the sea, And sound aloud the harps of God; All glory praise dear Lamb, to thee, For thou hast saved us by thy blood."*

Thank God for a victorious people! I am glad that in that sixth-seal period of time God had and still has yet today, in this seventh-seal period, a ministry with a message that is effective. The message is still producing a people who are on the **"sea of glass."** The message is crystal clear, mingled with the fire of the Holy Spirit, and pouring out the judgments of God. His Word will not come back unto Him void (Isaiah 55:10-11). In our lesson text we see a vivid example of that. It is a historical reality; it did just exactly as the prophecy proclaimed. It produced a separate, distinct, victorious people who are standing free from the bondage of man-made organizations and teachings. Thank God for this **"sea of glass"**! I am glad it is still here today. Truth is something that we can stand on. It will uphold us, support us, give us sure footing, and enable us to maintain the **"victory"** that God desires.

Thy Judgments Are Made Manifest

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

The Song of the Lamb

In this section we will look further into this Scripture text, focusing on the latter portion of the "song," denoted in **verse 3** as "**the song of the Lamb.**" That "song" portrays what produced the glorious victories in **verse 4**: "**for all nations** [or denominations] **shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**" It is notable that the reference in **verse 3** to "**the Lamb**" refers to Christ and His sacrificial work and what was produced by it. We know that because when we are introduced to "**the Lamb**" in Revelation 5:6, it shows Him in the sense of being slain. This figure of "**the Lamb,**" throughout the Scriptures, is a reference to Jesus Christ. (Read John 1:29 and 1 Peter 1:19.)

The figure of "**the Lamb**" is imagery drawn from the old economy. When Moses was given instruction concerning the first Passover, Exodus 12:5-6 and 13 say: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year . . . and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it . . . And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you . . ." Jesus Christ is the antitype, or the reality, of those Scriptures. First Corinthians 5:7 tells us that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

Let us look at the comparison. The pascal Lamb was slain, the blood was applied, and they were delivered from Egyptian bondage and brought to the land of promise (Canaan land). The antitype is very plain and clear as well: Christ, our Passover (or the Lamb of God), was sacrificed for us, the blood was applied, and people were delivered from bondage and brought from Egypt (a type of the bondage of sin) to the land of promise (Canaan land, or the Church of God).

What was secured or purchased by Christ's sacrificial work, by the shedding of His blood? Acts 20:28 clearly tells us that "the church of God" was secured; it was "purchased with His own blood." The prophetic time setting of our text is the sixth-seal period of time (A.D. 1880-1930). Thus, our text is not a depiction of the original inception of the church on the Day of Pentecost (A.D. 33), but the Lord was bringing again Zion, as Isaiah, Chapter 52, tells us. It had gone out of visible view during the Dark Ages and during the dark and cloudy day, but it was now coming back into visible view. Isaiah 52:8 says, "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice [not *their* voice, but *the* voice; that is the 'unity of the faith']; with the voice together . . . for they shall see eye to eye [there is the 'unity of the spirit'], when the LORD shall bring again Zion." The watchmen first must have "unity of the Spirit" before they are ever brought to a "unity of the faith." Ephesians 4:3 tells us we are "to keep the unity of the Spirit." Every true saint has the "unity of the Spirit," and God will bring them to the "unity of the faith," as Ephesians 4:13 talks about. Those watchmen were standing in serried ranks in a visible "unity of the faith." The Lord was bringing again Zion.

The rejoicing in **verse 3** gives insight as to how the "**victory**" of a visible church occurred. They sang of God's "**works**" and of His "**ways,**" which according to **verse 4** produced "**fear.**" Proverbs 1:7 lets us know, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." As a result of God's "**works**" and "**ways,**" a people came "unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4) at the beginning of the sixth-seal era. When they received that knowledge, that understanding, it began to produce glory, spoken of in **verse 4**: "**Glorify thy name.**" Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:14-15, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [the Father is God], Of whom the

whole family in heaven and earth is named." They are named after God: the family of God, the children of God, and the Church of God. In the sixth-seal era, God's people began to receive understanding concerning the **"name" (verse 4)**.

Revelation 14:1 pictures the Lamb back in His rightful position on Mount Zion and the church back in visible view. It says they had the "Father's name [God] written *in* [not *on*] their foreheads." In other words, they had an understanding concerning God (the Father), the order of His church, and the name of His church in their minds. His church came back into visible view because a people had gained understanding. Then they began to **"glorify" His "name."** They quit regarding and revering the sectarian names and began to revere and **"glorify" His "name."**

What is our text expressing when it says that **"all nations shall come and worship before thee"**? **"Nations"** are created by man-made boundaries. You can drive from the United States to Canada and see that although it is the same terrain, there is a man-made boundary. The map shows a line, but if you drive across it, you do not see a literal line. Spiritually, man-made boundaries are what created denominations. Men drew lines to put a separation between people.

Our text portrays a people coming together out of all the various religious denominations of men, the places where men drew lines and separated God's people. When they received an understanding of the real **"fear"** of God and the truth concerning His **"name,"** they started crossing those man-imposed boundaries and came back to where the presence of God was. Where do you find God's presence, especially in this evening time? Joel 3:16-17 tells us: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice [the voice] from Jerusalem . . . So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion . . ." Then Joel 3:21 states, ". . . for the LORD dwelleth in Zion." God's presence is in Zion, the church (Hebrews 12:22-23). When people came to worship before Him, they came back to Zion where God dwells.

Zechariah 8:3 also lets us know that "Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth." Jesus said God's "word is truth" (John 17:17). The Church of God is a city where God's Word is revered, where it alone is exalted. In our text we see a beautiful portrayal of a people brought together in oneness where they all stand on the **"sea of glass,"** or the Word of God. They had **"gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,"** which are the various divisions in which men were scattered and divided by artificial lines and boundaries. The expression of **"the song of the Lamb" (verse 3)** reveals to us how this was brought about: **"for thy judgments are made manifest" (verse 4)**. We need to understand these expressions and how and why they are employed, because what produced a visible church in the sixth seal will do the same today in our seventh-seal period of time.

The Wrath of God

What caused the **"judgments"** to be **"made manifest"**? There are several different expressions that we need to give consideration to. **Verse 1** speaks of **"plagues"** and **"wrath"**; **verse 4** speaks of **"judgments"**; and **verse 7** speaks of "vials." We must keep in mind that "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). There is a divine purpose behind "every word" that is incorporated in the sacred Scriptures. If we will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal them to our heart (1 Corinthians 2:10), it will help us to understand the spiritual depths behind these expressions. Every one of these figures is distinct, and there is an important lesson being conveyed in that distinction.

Let us begin to consider these expressions, beginning with **"the wrath of God" (verse 1)**. Romans 1:18 tells us, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Here we are introduced to **"the wrath of God"** because men in Revelation, Chapters 12-13, had been holding the truth "in unrighteousness." In other words, those who were supposedly dealing in truth were not dealing with it honestly. They were holding it "in unrighteousness." Romans 1:18 in the Amplified Bible says, ". . . repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative." We see that God is stirred with those who alter, pervert, or hinder the truth. Romans 1:16 tells us the truth is "the gospel of Christ . . . the power of God." That word "power" is *dunamis* in the Greek language. It is the word from which our English word *dynamite* comes from. It is what God uses to move people and rearrange things. So when men hold it "in unrighteousness," it cannot operate as God ordained.

Down in the realms of sectarian religion, men *dilute* the dynamite, *dissect* the dynamite, and *destroy* the dynamite. They do everything but *detonate* the dynamite. They hold it to where it causes people to live ungodly and

unrighteous lives, yet think they are standing in truth. They teach unrighteousness and ungodliness right out of what is supposed to be the Gospel of Christ. It is a perverted gospel; thus, it has held people in bondage, keeping them from victory and deliverance. God had enough of that. When the sixth seal was opened, He started pouring out **"wrath."**

Galatians 1:6-7 says: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Much of what has been preached out in the realms of sectism is nothing more than a perverted gospel. It leaves men powerless when the true Gospel is designed to bring men power. It leaves men sinful when the true Gospel is designed to leave men sinless. Why does false religion "pervert the Gospel"? According to 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, there is an enemy of souls who transforms himself "into an angel of light and his ministers transform themselves, supposedly, into "ministers of righteousness," but they are "holding the truth in unrighteousness." Their gospel does not produce victorious people; it produces powerless people who maintain a lifestyle of ungodliness and unrighteousness.

The reason there is "another gospel" is because there is "another spirit" at work (2 Corinthians 11:4). That "another spirit" wants to produce "another Jesus," not the One the Scripture holds forth. That "another spirit" is the enemy of souls, trying to dupe and deceive the souls of men. This spirit is behind men who are perverting the Gospel. They are moving a people, not to holiness but to ungodliness. Jude 4 says they are "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [or loose living], and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." They do not deny His existence; they deny His lordship. Titus 1:16 makes that expressly clear, stating, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." This perverted gospel misleads people and even holds honest people in its bondage. That is what happened through the dark and cloudy day, which brought about **"the wrath of God" (verse 1).**

What Are the Judgments?

Just as when God's people were held in Egyptian bondage, to get a people free, God sent **"judgments" (verse 4)**. What does this depict? If we want to know God's judgment on a matter, we need to look in the Word of God. Psalm 119:43 and 160 let us know that the Word of Truth, or God's Word, is what His **"judgments"** are. In our text we could just simply say, "Thy Word is made manifest."

The **"judgments" (verse 4)**, or the Word of God, are described as the **"seven last plagues" (verse 1)** contained "in seven golden vials" (verse 7). We learned in a prior study that the imagery of the **"plagues"** is drawn from the Exodus, but there are some other aspects we need to consider. Let us consider the "two witnesses" in Revelation 11:3. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:14 that the "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness." So one of the witnesses is the Gospel, or the Word. Then Hebrews 10:15 tells us that "the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." These "two witnesses" are the Word and the Spirit.

Speaking of the "two witnesses," Revelation 11:6 says, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood [an allusion to the old economy; Exodus 7:19], and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." Who dictates when the earth is going to be smitten with **"plagues"**? The Word and the Spirit do. In Revelation 11:8 we find that the two witnesses laid dead (or inoperable) in the street, showing us that they were not allowed to operate during the 350 years of Protestantism.

Revelation 11:11-12 says: "And after three days and an half [these are prophetic days representing the 350 years (from 1530 to 1880) of Protestantism; see *The Revelation Explained*, Volume 3] the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." The word "heaven" when used in the Revelation is speaking of "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). In other words, they were allowed to resume the proper role that they were to occupy in the church; they ascended back to a position of prominence in the church. The **"seven angels having the seven last plagues" (verse 1)** in our text are a picture of a ministry operating under the direction of the Word and the Spirit. They are entrusted with these **"seven last plagues."**

Just as in the Exodus account, these **"seven last plagues"** are specific. The reason that the individual plagues in the Old Testament were specifically chosen was because each one of the plagues dealt with a pagan deity of Egypt (Exodus 12:12). Each one was designed to show the supremacy of the God of truth over the false gods that Egypt

revered. Each one was designed to execute judgment. These plagues serve as a type. Each one of the **"plagues"** in Revelation, Chapter 16, is designed to be poured out on a specific falsity that holds people in bondage to its false teaching and false belief. The **"plagues"** are symbols. They reveal the specific truths of God's Word that He poured out on false religious systems and spirits so people could get understanding. Then they could get loosed and be free to come home to Zion and worship in truth.

Judgments Are Made Manifest Through Preaching

Let us look at the expression "vials" (Revelation 15:7). The word *vials* in the Greek language is actually "bowls." These were the containers that held the **"plagues."** There is at least one truth we want to glean from that. The bowls were to be "poured out" as Revelation 16:2 says. When you attempt to tip a bowl, it is hard to pour out just a little of the contents; you are likely to pour out the whole thing. So God is conveying to us that He wants it *all* poured out, as Isaiah 58:1 says, "Cry aloud, spare not . . ." It takes all this truth to get people loose from the systems, the teachings, and the spirits that hold them bound.

We find in **verse 3** that they began to sing **"the song of the Lamb"** in the sixth seal (1880). The last words of this **"song"** were **"thy judgments are made manifest"** (**verse 4**). We have seen what **"thy judgments"** are, but how are they **"made manifest"**? This is vital for us to understand, because the same manner in which they were **"made manifest"** then, is the same manner in which they must be **"made manifest"** today. This does not occur automatically; there are conditions that must be met. The sixth-seal brethren, at least in the initial portion of that period, made a very conscious effort to manifest the specific truths that called a people out of sectarian religion. They preached and even wrote books that dealt with specific doctrines which held people bound. They would refute point by point the falsities of those doctrines. For example, they wrote books refuting the errors of Russellism and the false teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventists. These brethren exposed error and enlightened saints and called them out of Babylon.

How are these truths **"made manifest"**? There are at least four aspects portrayed in our text. Before we read of a victorious people who **"stand on the sea of glass"** (**verse 2**), we were first introduced to **"seven angels having the seven last plagues"** (**verse 1**), or a ministry with a message. So, the first aspect shows us that before there was a people, there had to be preaching. What an independent day we live in when people do not think they need preached to! However, "the foolishness of preaching" (1 Corinthians 1:21) is God's ordained plan. God uses human instrumentality.

In Acts, Chapter 8, God used Philip to bring the Gospel to an eunuch. An angel gave Philip instructions (Acts 8:26), and he found the eunuch in a chariot, reading "Esaias [which is Greek for the Hebrew word 'Isaiah'] the prophet" (Acts 8:28). In this example, we have an angel involved and the Bible involved. Then verse 29 says, "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." So, we have the Spirit involved as well. Why did not the angel reveal to the eunuch how to be saved? Why did not just reading the Bible reveal to the eunuch how to be saved? Why did not the Spirit of God reveal to the eunuch how to be saved? Rather, all three of them were instrumental in thoroughly furnishing the man of God so the eunuch could be reached.

Furthermore, the eunuch had a lot more understanding than people today who have an independent spirit. When Philip asked if he understood what he read, he said in verse 31, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Then verse 35 tells us that "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." That was when he was converted. It was through "the foolishness of preaching." Also, in Acts, Chapter 9, we read that Jesus personally appeared unto Saul. Could not Jesus have explained to him right then how to be saved? He could have, but that is not His ordained plan. Instead He used "a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias" (Acts 9:10). Again, human instrumentality was used: "the foolishness of preaching."

God not only uses "the foolishness of preaching" to save those that are lost, but it also keeps the believer saved. We are living in an era of time when the enemy is feverishly working to eliminate preaching. He is working to shorten it, to make it more superficial, and to circumvent it in every way that he can. If we want to see more accomplished for God, people need to hear more, because the plan of God is focalized around "the foolishness of preaching." Romans 10:14-15 says: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings

of good things!" Who brings it? The preacher brings it. Preaching was what produced a people in our text.

Everything has its place in the operation of the kingdom, but the enemy's role is to try to get things out of place, out of kilter, and out of balance. He will have people sing, sing, sing, but God did not say that people are saved by the foolishness of singing. In order for people to be saved, they have to hear the preaching. They have to have enough understanding to know what they are doing, and that comes from the expounding which comes through preaching. Then, it takes a lot of truth and understanding to stay saved.

Titus 1:3 says, "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching" The Word, or the **"judgments,"** is **"made manifest"** through preaching. Look at the great results on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:37 tells us, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They had to hear something first to be pricked, and to cry "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Verse 41 lets us know that they "gladly received his word." There was a lot of rejoicing going on, but this happened after Peter stood up with the eleven and preached (Acts 2:14-36).

If we want to see more people understand and embrace the truth, we need to have more preaching. People in sectism will not see the truth of what they are bound in until it is preached. John received a vision of spiritual Babylon when the angel (the messenger, the minister, or the preacher) showed him (Revelation 17:1). He received a vision of the church in the same way (Revelation 21:9). Likewise, if people are going to get a vision of spiritual Babylon and of the church, it will come through the preaching. It takes one of the vial angels to cause people to receive a revelation, because truth has to be poured out in a strong manner on the falsities of religion.

Yes, the Lord still uses "a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). However, with all of the voices that are sounding out in the religious realm today and causing such a babel of confusion with all of their teachings, doctrines, and dogmas, we must have a ministry that cries "mightily with a strong voice" (Revelation 18:2). It takes "a strong voice" to cut through all of the voices that are crying out in Babylon. We do not read about "a still small voice" in the Revelation; we read about an angel who "cried mightily with a strong voice."

Judgments Are Made Manifest Through Living Examples

Let us move on to the second aspect of how these truths are **"made manifest."** In **verse 3** of our text, we see the word **"they."** To make a message truly effective, there has to be a people who will stand for it. **Verse 2** says that they were standing **"on the sea of glass,"** or on the message. When John saw the Lamb back on Mount Zion (the church back in visible view), he saw ones "with him" (Revelation 14:1). This lets us know there was a visible people, and that is what made the church visible. Living examples of what the message will do is what is convincing; that is what makes it **"manifest."**

Galatians 5:1 states, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Certainly, we can apply this to those who were coming out of sectarian bondage, who were free from the yokes of Babel's lords. They had liberty; they had come to where the presence of God was. ". . . where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Once you have seen and heard this truth, once the Spirit of God has witnessed this truth to you, "stand fast."

The greatest convincing force to the message is its witnesses: a people who rejoice in it and testify to its truth. The Apostle Paul, in his final epistle before his martyrdom, wrote to the young minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." He was teaching that the truth was effective because of the "many witnesses." Also, because of the "many witnesses," it can be such a convincing agent that it will produce "faithful men" who can perpetuate it.

John 3:21 says, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, [That is what those honest hearts did in the sixth seal. They had been out in the mingled hills of Babylon in the dark and cloudy day. When they heard the truth, they came to the truth.] that his deeds may be made manifest [the same expression as in our text], that they are wrought in God." When a people will embrace the preaching, come to the light, and embrace the truth, their deeds and their lives will back up the truth, and that makes the truth **"manifest."**

Second Corinthians 4:10-11 says: "Always bearing about in *the body* the dying of the Lord Jesus [that is what purchased the church; Acts 20:28] that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest [same expression as in our text] in *our body*. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest [same expression again] in our mortal flesh." In verse 10 "*the body*" refers to the church (Colossians

1:18). When an individual hears the message on the church and brings their body (their experience; "our body") into the truth, into the true church, it makes God's Word "**manifest**."

The Power of Unity and Praise

Thirdly, the truth is "**made manifest**" by a people with the power of unity. Those in our text are pictured as a collective unit by the words "**them**" and "**they**" (**verses 2-3**). In other words, they stood together. There is power in unity. That is why the enemy works so fiercely against it. God not only calls a people *out* of division, but He also calls them *into* unity. Deuteronomy 6:23 says, "And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in . . ." He not only brings us *out* of Babylon, but He also brings us *into* Zion. Isaiah instructed a ministry to "Go through, go through the gates" (Isaiah 62:10). Why did he say it twice? There are two sets of gates to go through. He was telling them to get the people out of the gates of Babylon and into the gates of Jerusalem. There are two sets of gates. You have to go out of one and into the other. I have seen people come out of religious organizations, not because they saw light and truth and received understanding, but because they were too cantankerous to get along with anybody. Although they left a religious organization, they never came into the truth.

Let us read Jesus' high-priestly prayer as He agonized in the Garden. John 17:20-21 states: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word [that incorporates you and me]; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee [that is unity of the Spirit, because John 4:24 tells us God is a Spirit], that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." It even gets stronger. John 17:23 says, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect [or complete] in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me . . ." This brings us to the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13). Now that is a strong convincing power, so "the world may know." People will be convinced when they see not only the unity of the Spirit, but a people brought together in a visible unity (the unity of the faith), standing together harmoniously on the "**sea of glass**" (the Word of God).

Those people in our text were an example of what the Apostle Paul penned in Philippians 1:27, which says, "Only let your conversation [or conduct] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ [not another gospel, not a perverted gospel]: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." There is your unity: not only standing together in one spirit, but "striving together for the faith of the gospel." Philippians 2:16 states, "Holding forth the word of life." In other words, it will make the Word of Life "**manifest**." Again, there is power in unity.

Let us look at the fourth aspect of how these "**judgments are made manifest**." We have already studied it. In our text, **verse 2** tells us that they have "**the harps of God**," and **verse 3** says that "**they sing**." In other words, there is a convincing power in praise. So the four aspects we have covered—(1) preaching the truth, (2) people who stand for the message, (3) the power of a people in unity, and (4) people with praise—are how the "**judgments**," or the Word, are "**made manifest**," or put on display in such a way that people can openly and readily see it. This was how the evening time began. As long as they manifested those attributes, they did an effective work, but the evening time contains two portions. In our next study we will see that John envisioned another scene. In Revelation 15:5 he said, "And after that I looked . . ." He began to see representations of the seventh-seal period of time in which you and I are privileged to live. God does not want His people divided, but He desires that they all come together as one body. Thank God, if you and I will fill our role, His "**judgments**" can be "**made manifest**" yet today.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN—PART FOUR

The Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven Was Opened

Revelation 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

The Need for the Seventh-Seal Message

As we progress through Revelation, Chapter 15, notice that the scene in John's vision has drastically changed. He no longer speaks of "the sea of glass" (verse 2) or "the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb" (verse 3). Instead we have a new scene, one that has captured John's interest and his attention. Here not only the scene has changed, but the prophetic time setting has as well. How do we know that? Where else do we see **"the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven . . . opened"**? We see it in Revelation, Chapter 11, when "the seventh angel sounded" (verse 15) and "the temple of God was opened in heaven" (verse 19).

We were introduced to those trumpet angels in Revelation, Chapter 8. They sounded forth the messages throughout the various portions of the Gospel Day. The seventh angel began to sound his trumpet (the message given to him in the period of time in which it was entrusted) in A.D. 1930 when Brother Walter S. Goodnight and other brethren began to preach what is commonly referred to as the seventh-seal message. Notice that during the sounding of the seventh trumpet, "the temple of God was opened" (Revelation 11:19). We find much the same expression in our lesson text. This clearly places the prophetic time setting of our text in this seventh-seal period of time.

Since everything seemed so glorious in the prior verses (Revelation 15:1-4) during the sixth seal, why was there a need for the seventh seal? We must understand that each series in the Revelation depicts a specific aspect of truth. No single series depicts all of the aspects of any given period under consideration. That is why the Lord gave us seven distinct series. We must lay "precept upon precept; line upon line . . . here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13). We cannot isolate any Scripture from the context of the Scriptures. Second Peter 1:20 says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Isaiah 34:16 tells us, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate." For every Scripture that might be somewhat obscure or unclear, there is another Scripture somewhere in God's Word that can shed light and bring understanding to us.

There was a need for a seventh seal, because toward the end of the sixth-seal period of time, there began to be a "silence in heaven" (Revelation 8:1). The ministry began to become silent on what they considered to be the more offensive portions of the message. Because this particular series does not specifically address these negative aspects, we will not spend a great deal of time addressing them.

In the sixth-trumpet period of time, Revelation 9:19 tells us, "For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents." In symbolic expressions, "tails" represent the end of a thing; at the end of that period of time, there was a decided change. "Serpents" used in the context of this verse denote religious spirits. When addressing the scribes and Pharisees of His day (men who were motivated purely by religious spirits), Jesus called them "serpents" (Matthew 23:33, 29). So, when Revelation 9:19 says that "their tails were like unto serpents," it denotes that they became just like other religious organizations, which were merely dominated, motivated, and operated by religious spirits.

Revelation 9:19 also says that these serpents "had heads." Paul warned of that in 2 Timothy 3:1 when he wrote of "perilous times" that "shall come." Speaking of how ones will be, verses 4-5 say: "Traitors, heady [they 'had heads'], highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." They went from the "power" to the "form," because they became "heady." In other words, they became just like sectism: man-made "heads." Revelation 9:7, speaking of sectarian religion, says that "their faces were as the faces of men." So men were at the head of those sectarian organizations; men dominated denominationalism. That is what happened in the sixth seal. They came out with a powerful message initially—they had power "in their mouth" (power in the message they originally preached)—but in the end "their tails were like unto serpents" (Revelation 9:19). They were moved from reality to religion, from performance to profession. They became "heady." Just like false religion

has man-made heads, they made general offices and national councils dominated by heads of men.

In the book entitled *The Teachings of D. S. Warner and His Associates*, C. W. Naylor wrote these words concerning D. S. Warner: "In hundreds of instances he misinterpreted and misapplied texts, as do all who use his method. We have been compelled to reject a very large portion of his exegesis [his understanding of a Scripture text] because it has proved to be unsound." He went on to say: "Brother Warner had an extreme view of unity. . . . the text: 'At evening time it shall be light' (Zechariah 14:7b) . . . has no reference whatever to our day. . . . Revelation 18:4 [which says 'Come out of her, my people'] has no chronological dating in the Scriptures. For all they set forth, the fulfillment of this Scripture may be a thousand years in the future." That was written by a man whose eyes had become blinded, who had lost his vision.

By the end of the sixth seal, the enemy had moved many people away from the very message that had once been entrusted to them. That type of thinking began to permeate the movement which became known as the "Anderson Movement." Thus, judgment had to be poured out on the people who were representing themselves as the church. Revelation 16:9 says that they "blasphemed the name of God . . . and they repented not to give him glory." We just read where Brother Naylor "blasphemed" the work of God. The truths that were revealed to the earlier brethren in the sixth seal, he blasphemed them right in his own ranks. The seventh-seal ministry had to pour out judgment on that "movement."

Isaiah 11:11 tells us that "it shall come to pass in that day [a prophetic expression of the Gospel Day], that the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people." In 1930 the Lord set His hand, and He called a ministry and a people the second time in this evening time (at the beginning of the seventh-seal period of time). Our text certainly reveals the prophetic time setting, but it also portrays an immensely practical message. **Revelation 15:5** says that "**after that,**" or after the sixth-seal period of time, John saw that "**the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.**" Here we have a compounded symbol. We will break down the phrase into various portions and see what it is actually representing. As we consider this text, we must remember that the Revelator was a Hebrew. Much of the symbolism employed throughout the Revelation is in Hebrew imagery; it is in a language that John could easily relate to.

Some of the Major Aspects of Hebrew Imagery in the Revelation

When John first saw the vision of Christ in Revelation 1:12, he "saw seven golden candlesticks." The Greek word for "candlesticks" actually refers to *lampstands*, a symbol from the Old Testament tabernacle that was familiar to every Hebrew. The reference to the "four and twenty elders" (Revelation 4:4) would be familiar to every Hebrew as the twenty-four courses of the Levitical priesthood. The expression "four beasts" (Revelation 4:6) is from the Greek word *zoon*, which means "living creatures." Those four living creatures were also familiar to every Hebrew, because they were the insignias of the four major divisions in which Israel encamped (Numbers, Chapter 2). Revelation 8:3 speaks of the "golden censer" and the "golden altar," which also refer back to the Old Testament tabernacle. The plagues incorporated in Revelation, Chapters 15 and 16, take us back to the plagues on Egypt that are recorded in Exodus, Chapters 7-12. Likewise, our text uses imagery that is drawn from the old Hebrew economy.

THE "**TESTIMONY**": Our text speaks of "**the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony.**" Let us start with the innermost expression and work out, because there is a progression there. What was the "**testimony**"? The Hebrew word for "**testimony**" means *witness*. It is very common in our usage as well. When you give a testimony, you are a witness; the words are interchangeable. One thing God gave as a witness to the Old Testament brethren was "the two tables of testimony" (Exodus 32:16). They were a picture of God's Word. Notice that the "two tables of the testimony" were placed "into the ark" (Exodus 40:20). The ark is even called "the ark of the testimony" (Exodus 25:22). What else was in the ark? Let us see what were the witnesses to the children of Israel's covenant. Hebrews 9:4 tells us that the ark contained three items: "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." They are certainly not listed in the order in which they were placed in, but they are in the order that the Hebrew writer recounted them.

What overshadowed the ark? In Exodus 25:21-22 the Lord said: "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony [the tables of stone] that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony . . ." God met with them there, so His presence overshadowed the ark of the testimony. There are some absolutely essential truths that must be recognized and be in their proper place to have the presence

of God. God's presence did not just appear. Moses had to prepare everything according to the pattern revealed to him in the mount (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5). God gave explicit detail. First Corinthians 10:11 tells us, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [the Greek word is *tupos*, meaning 'a type']" God was so explicitly specific because these are types of spiritual realities.

THE POT OF MANNA: One of the truths that must be in its proper place to have the presence of God is described by the Hebrew writer as the "golden pot that had manna." When the children of Israel were on their sojourn, they were instructed to take a pot of manna "and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept" (Exodus 16:33). So, Aaron "laid it up before the testimony" (verse 34), or in other words, he put it in the ark with the tables of stone.

This symbol reveals divine sustenance. It is a portrayal that God cares about every level of our being. He not only was Israel's spiritual guide through the wilderness by His presence, but He also took care of their physical needs. The Apostle Peter penned that God "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life [that is the physical] and godliness [that is the spiritual]" (2 Peter 1:3). Also, 3 John 2 says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." God incorporated salvation for the soul into the plan of atonement, and in Isaiah, Chapter 53, you will find He incorporated divine healing for the body as well. Furthermore, Philippians 4:19 tells us, "But my God shall supply all your need"

The symbol of the "golden pot that had manna" also serves as a type. The manna, which was literal life to old Israel, stands as a type of Jesus Christ, who is spiritual life to new Israel. John 6:32-33 states: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he [not it] which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." In verse 51 Jesus went on to say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." Thank God, Jesus Christ is our sustenance for spiritual life. To gain and maintain a real experience of salvation, it is necessary to partake of that divine sustenance, to be ever eating of Christ.

Concerning the manna, Jesus said to those who were faithful during the Pergamene Age (A.D. 530-1530) that He would give them "to eat of the hidden manna" (Revelation 2:17). It was "hidden" during the Dark Ages; it was underground in the catacombs and caves. But glory be to God, in the seventh seal, it is not "hidden manna" anymore. Our text says that the "**temple**" has been "**opened**," and Revelation 11:19 says that the ark has been seen. It is back in public view.

How do we partake of the manna? Hebrews 9:4 says "Aaron's rod that budded" was also in the ark. Numbers, Chapter 16, tells us about Korah, Dathan, and the other ones who rose up against Moses and Aaron. They were against the authority that God had put in place. In Chapter 17, the children of Israel were instructed to take a total of twelve rods, one for each of the houses of their fathers, and lay them up. Verse 5 says, "And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel" Then verse 8 tells us that "the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." This is a picture of God's witness to the ministry He had chosen. He had chosen Aaron to be the high priest; his sons were to be the priests. They were representatives of the ministry of that day. If we truly want to have the experience that we need, we have to have manna ministered to us by the ministry that God has chosen. The ministry that He has chosen is fruitful, living, and thriving and is the ministry that God wants us to give respect unto. That is why He put Aaron's rod in the ark.

THE TABLES OF THE COVENANT: this third item in the ark portrays to us that the only way for mankind to have spiritual life, to enjoy the presence of God, is through the Word of God. The divine sustenance (manna) has to be ministered continually to us on our earthly sojourn through the ministry (Aaron's rod) by the Word of God (the tables). That will keep us healthy and wholesome and keep the presence of God in our lives. Certainly, each of the articles that were in the ark is a study in themselves, but we are just merely viewing them in overview in light of our text.

The Testimony Is to Be Within the Tabernacle

The "**testimony**" was housed in "the ark" (Exodus 25:16) where the presence of God overshadowed (Exodus 25:22), but where was this ark housed? Our text speaks of the "**tabernacle of the testimony**." What was this? Numbers 1:53 says, "But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony" Then Exodus 40:21 tells us, "And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses." God's Word was housed in a very special locality. Hebrews 9:3-4 says:

"And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant . . ." The first room was referred to as "the sanctuary" (Hebrews 9:2), but the ark was "after the second veil," or in the second room, and was referred to as the "tabernacle." There was a veil that separated the two rooms. The tables of testimony were in the ark of testimony, and the ark of testimony was in the "tabernacle of testimony" (Exodus 38:21), or that second room where the presence of God overshadowed the ark.

The Hebrew word for "**tabernacle**" is *mishkan*, which means "residence, habitation, or dwelling place." This word also means "the innermost part." Remember, our text in **Revelation 15:5** is symbolic of the New Testament reality. To get the picture, we must first understand the natural picture being conveyed. On Mount Sinai God gave His Word. It was engraved by His own finger on tablets of stone that became known as "tables of testimony." Then He gave a ministry (Aaron and his sons) to hold forth that Word. "Aaron's rod that budded" showed that he was whom God had blessed; the ones God blessed would be a fruitful ministry. God gave physical sustenance to Israel through the manna to give them strength for their journey. Each of these three articles served as a witness of their covenant, and they were placed in the ark. When they did so in accordance with His Word, the presence of God went with them, overshadowing the ark (Exodus 25:21-22).

The Tabernacle Is Your Body

Of what is this literal picture emblematic? The "**tabernacle**" in which the Word, Aaron's rod, and the manna abided and where God's presence dwelt is a type of our individual experience. We are the "**tabernacle**" of God now. We are to have the "**testimony**" (God's Word) within us. We are to give the proper place to God's ministry, and we are to be continually taking in that divine sustenance from Christ. We are the antitype or the reality of that picture. It is a picture of our salvation, of when we take in the Word sounded forth by the ministry into the innermost chambers of our heart and when we receive the presence of God.

The charge to the ministry in 2 Timothy 4:2 was, "Preach the word." When the Word is preached in the New Testament, it has a vivid distinction from the Old Testament. Ezekiel took up the prophetic glass, looked down through the telescope of time, and envisioned some realities of our day. Ezekiel 36:26 states, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." In the Old Testament, God wrote on tables of stone because it was reflective of the condition of men's hearts. They had stony hearts; so He wrote on tables of stone. Verse 27 goes on to say, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." In this New Testament dispensation, He takes out the "stony heart" and gives us a "heart of flesh."

In 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 Paul said: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." God's Spirit is writing His Word on the "fleshy tables of the heart." We have the "**testimony**" written within the chambers of our heart; and when that happens, the "**testimony**" is right within an earthen "**tabernacle**."

How do we know the body is an earthen "**tabernacle**"? Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." The "**tabernacle**" is our individual bodies that house our individual experiences. Also, in 2 Peter 1:13-15 Peter said: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease . . ." He was talking about his earthly "**tabernacle**," or his body, that which housed the "**testimony**," that which the Spirit of God had written on the fleshly tables of his heart.

Look how the word "**tabernacle**" is used in the Revelation. Revelation 21:3 says, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says that "He will tabernacle with them." The Amplified Bible renders it in this manner: "See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God." Another rendering says this: "Now at last God has His dwelling among men." For centuries, throughout the old economy, God was confined to that second room behind the veil. The presence of God could not get out and dwell in the hearts of men. However, when Jesus uttered those words on Calvary's tree, "It is finished" (John 19:30), that

veil was rent, and God was able to get out and move into the hearts of men. He was able to **"tabernacle"** with men.

In John 14:23 Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words [there is the '**testimony**']: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him [there is the '**tabernacle**']." When does He make His abode? When an individual keeps His Word. Where do we keep it? Psalm 119:11 tells us, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart . . ." That is where we keep it. When we take the Word and the articles of the ark into our heart, we gain an individual experience and become "the tabernacle of God" (Revelation 21:3). God desires to **"tabernacle"** with men. The reason we do not see Him tabernacling more with men is because men fail to accord the articles of the ark their proper position.

The only life that the Israelites had in the wilderness, the only thing that sustained them on their earthly sojourn through that wilderness was the manna. Forty long years it sustained them. The only thing that can sustain men and women on this earthly sojourn is the bread of God, which is Jesus Christ. For man to truly have divine sustenance through this earthly sojourn where we are strangers and pilgrims is to continually partake of this bread, to accord Christ His rightful position in our hearts and lives, to ever be sustained by Him. How are we sustained by Him? It comes from those other two articles that are in the ark: Aaron's rod (a picture of the ministry) and the tables of **"testimony"** (a picture of the Word that the ministry ministers). Only as a faithful, fruitful ministry administers the Word of God will we be able to continue to partake of that sustenance that will keep us alive on this journey through life.

Whenever an independent attitude gets hold of people, as it did back in Korah's day, and they say, "You take too much upon yourself; we can all get hold of God just as you can, preacher," it invites disaster. Study Numbers, Chapter 16, where the earth opened up and swallowed a good number of people. Then fire devoured an additional two hundred and fifty, and the next day "fourteen thousand and seven hundred . . . died" (Numbers 16:49). It invited literal disaster in the old economy, and it invites spiritual disaster in the new economy as well. God did not ordain that we be *independent*; He ordained that we be *interdependent*. He ordained that we be submissive and that we look to Aaron's rod (the ministry) to feed us of the Word of God so that we can partake of Christ.

Just as the literal articles of the **"testimony"** were kept in a localized place (the second room), it is the same yet today. Just as they had witnesses in the Old Testament, we have witnesses today in the New Testament. Those articles were a witness to them and future generations that they were the people of God, they were in favor with God, and they enjoyed the presence of God. Our witnesses are the Word (Matthew 24:14) and the Spirit (Hebrews 10:15). As we take the articles of witness into our hearts and lives (just as they took the ark into the **"tabernacle"**), our **"tabernacle"** will have the presence of God and become the dwelling place for God in this New Testament dispensation.

The Temple Is the Church as a Collective Unit

Notice that our lesson text goes further. **Revelation 15:5** speaks of **"the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony."** These are separate Greek words. The word used for **"temple"** is a different word than the one used for **"tabernacle"** in this verse. Proverbs 30:5 tells us, "Every word of God is pure," letting us know there is divine significance behind every word that is incorporated in the Scriptures. Thus, there is a significance between the distinction of the **"temple"** and the **"tabernacle."**

The burden of our text is in the word **"opened."** In other words, the **"temple"** was in plain view, or made visible. How did that occur? It was accomplished by getting the **"tabernacle"** (the individual experiences) together, which made up the **"temple."** That is what put it in plain view and made it open so the world could see it. The **"temple"** is a picture of the collective unit. Ephesians 2:19-22 says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens [a collective unit] with the saints [that is a plurality], and of the household of God [that is a pluralism]; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building [many components] fitly framed together [that is unity] groweth unto an holy temple [the collective unit of the saints, the church] in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Christ spoke of "the temple of his body" (John 2:21). Then Colossians 1:18 tells us that "he is the head of the body, the church." The **"temple"** is referring to the church as a collective unit. Second Corinthians 6:16 says, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God [the rest of this verse lets

us know this is not speaking individually]; as God hath said, I will dwell in them [plural], and walk in them [plural]; and I will be their [plural] God, and they [plural] shall be my people [plural]." The **"temple"** is the collective aspect. Paul was writing to "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1). Thus, the **"temple"** of God is a people who have come unto the knowledge of the truth and are standing together in unity.

The Temple Is Now Open

Many times the terms **"temple"** and **"tabernacle"** may be used interchangeably throughout the Scriptures, but when they are used together, they portray separate entities. In the Old Testament, the **"tabernacle"** was the second room where God dwelled, and the **"temple"** was where the people could gather together. In our text, the **"temple"** became **"opened"** when a people came out of sectism (man-made religion) and the Anderson Movement and brought their individual experiences together, making a visible **"temple"** (or church) that people could see and gather into. This is a spiritual reality that began to occur in 1930 when the seventh seal was opened. God wants it **"opened"** in our portion of the seventh seal as well, and the good news is that it is **"opened"** everywhere there is a true Church of God congregation. Sadly, toward the end of the sixth-seal period of time, the truth of a visible, separate, distinct, peculiar people began to become blurred and somewhat obscured because of the prevailing compromise which was occurring at that time. This is why the Lord has had it clearly **"opened"** in this seventh and final period of time.

When the **"temple"** becomes **"opened,"** others will see the ark, or the truth. Revelation 11:19 states, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven [heavenly places in Christ Jesus'; Ephesians 2:6], and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." The witness, the rod, and the pot are brought to mind because when the people saw the ark, they knew what was within it. It made the presence of God very visible. (Bear in mind, this is Old Testament imagery speaking of a New testament reality. It does not have reference to Old Testament Israel in this instance because it is depicting a New Testament reality in this seventh-seal period.)

In the seventh-seal period of time in which you and I live, God has the **"temple . . . opened."** He is showing the world a visible church that will no longer be obscured from public view by the divisions of men. People are able to see His presence and know where His truth is. The thought of God's **"temple"** being **"opened"** is an encouraging truth. Truth is more manifest today than at any other point in human history. It will never be obscured again; it is in clear view for all to behold. However, it brings a tremendous responsibility to us as the people of God, because the only way it is **"opened"** is by bringing our individual experiences into the **"temple,"** which makes up the Church of God. What a glorious truth! What a glorious day! May God ever help us to be faithful to the message and hold these truths forth for all mankind to see.

The Lord desires that others see the **"temple"** as well. He desires that all men come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). It is not enough for them to be saved. Unless they come to a knowledge of truth, they will not have the faithful ministry that will give them the truths of God's Word so they can maintain their experiences. The rod that budded was where the Word and the sustenance were. God not only wants His people to have a victorious individual experience, but He wants to bring His people together in a collective force so people will know where to go to gain help for their never-dying souls. We are living in a day and time when the enemy is working in a feverish manner to cause division, because he does not want the **"temple . . . opened,"** or in plain view. The more he can divide people into factions, the less the **"temple"** is in visible view. However, God has a people who are going to stand with the truth, with Christ, and with the ministry. That will enable the **"temple"** to be **"opened"** so that men can see.

The proper place for our **"tabernacle"** is not to be severed from others, but to come together as a collective unit, the **"temple."** In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world [people who have understanding; Psalm 119:130]. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." In that verse, the Greek word for "hill" is *oros*, which means "mountain." Thank God, we are in Mount Zion! A city set on that mountain cannot be hid. How is it kept from being hidden, and what makes it a city? Matthew 5:15 says, "Neither do men light a candle [the Greek says *lamp*; Isaiah 62:1 tells us that the lamp is the individual experience], and put it under a bushel [something man-made; in the dark and cloudy day of sectarian religion, the light was hidden under man-made bushels, or in man-made organizations], but on a candlestick [the Greek says *lampstand*] . . ." In other words, we are to bring all of those lamps (individual experiences) together and put them on the lampstand (a collective unit). Revelation 1:20 tells us the lampstand is the church. It is something that cannot be hidden; it is something **"opened,"** or in plain view.

Our text portrays a people embracing truth (the **"testimony"**) and bringing their experiences (the **"tabernacle"**) to Christ's body (the **"temple"**). Then God can use that to serve as an evangelistic force by opening it so all men can

see, so men can receive a knowledge and an understanding of the truth. We are entrusted with a precious message, a glorious message. We live in the brightest period of human history. God is unraveling truths and shining light that has never been seen down throughout the annals of time. We are in a very responsible position as His people. We must walk in the light and work together as a cohesive unit. We can do more by shining forth collectively than any one of us could do individually. God's call is yet the same today. He wants a people to "come out" (Revelation 18:4), so they can "come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13). But if this is ever going to occur, we are going to have to be a people who keeps the "**temple of the tabernacle of the testimony . . . opened.**"

The Understanding of the Seven Vial Angels

Revelation 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Greater Understanding Is Given

In viewing these verses, we are reintroduced to "**the seven angels . . . having the seven plagues.**" Verse 7 tells us that their "**vials**" were "**full of the wrath of God.**" These are the same "**seven angels**" and the same expressions that we were initially introduced to in verse 1 of this chapter. However, there is a clear distinction between where they were initially introduced and this reintroduction. In **verses 6-8**, we find that the detail is more descriptive and complete. That is the first truth which is notably apparent. In the seventh-seal period of time of the Gospel Day, there is a more complete understanding. Thus, our text shows a more complete insight to the specific details concerning these "**angels,**" their message, and their purpose.

We found in our study of verse 5, the prophetic time setting has changed, progressing from the sixth-seal period of time to the seventh. That is substantiated by the fact that "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." The opening of the temple was viewed under the seventh period of time, when the seventh trumpet angel began to sound, beginning in A.D. 1930 (Revelation 11:15, 19). Our Scripture text is a continuation of the description of the truths that John began to view in verse 5.

Notice that verse 5 ends with a colon. That informs us that the sentence is not complete. The period is not placed until the end of **verse 6**; thus, these two verses together compose one sentence. John not only envisioned "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony" being "opened," but he also received a more explicit vision of these "**seven angels.**" This may seemingly appear to be a minor detail, but it is rather important. It lets us know that he was envisioning events in the seventh-seal period of time; and he saw something that he had not seen previously.

Let us look at this closely to dispel any confusion. Revelation 15:1 tells us there were "seven angels having the seven last plagues." We know they began to pour out these plagues in the sixth-seal period of time, because verse 4 tells us that "thy judgments are made manifest." That is what produced a people standing on the "sea of glass," having victory (verse 2). So, why are we reintroduced to these "**angels**" in **verses 6 and 8**? At an initial reading, it would almost sound as though these "**angels**" had not begun to pour until the seventh-seal period of time. Yet, it was not until the seventh seal that John saw the details concerning those "**angels.**" The sixth-seal brethren did not understand the truth concerning the "**seven angels**" or the "**seven last plagues.**" Although they were pouring them out, they did not have the complete understanding as we do in our day. They did not understand the scriptural premise behind it. Thus, we see the necessity of being reintroduced to these "**angels**" in this seventh-seal period of time.

Brother F. G. Smith in his book, *The Revelation Explained*, the fourth edition, wrote on page 286: "These angels are not designed to symbolize any agencies on earth, for they do not appear on earth. They are simply conductors of the Revelation. God never commissions His people on earth to perform such great judgments." In Chapter 16 of his book, he placed the first five plagues, according to page 295, "to some period between the sixteenth century and the present day." Basically, he taught that these plagues were literal, and they were poured out on Europe. Those good brethren walked in what light they had, but their light in that sixth-seal period of time was an imperfect light; it was incomplete. They did not have the fullness of understanding that we are privileged to have in this seventh-seal period of time. The seven seals were not all loosed in their day; all of the understanding was not given. Even though they were engaged in pouring out the first three vials, they did not have the scriptural understanding of exactly what was occurring. That portion of the vision was not opened to them.

In Revelation 15:5-6 John said: "After that [after the sixth-seal period of time] I looked [or he saw] . . . the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: **And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the**

seven plagues . . ." Then John gave explicit details. All of this did not all happen under the seventh seal, but John *saw* it under the seventh seal. In other words, that is when the vision was given. The sixth-seal brethren did not see this, but we see it so clearly because of the day and time in which we are privileged to live.

Concerning this seventh-seal period of time, Revelation 10:7 tells us, "But in the days [not speaking of a singular day but of a time period] of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'completed'] . . ." We are living in that fullness of time when God is completing the mystery. Paul said in Romans 16:25-26 that "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets . . ." Certainly, if that were so in the first century, how much more is it so in this twenty-first century when the seals are all loosed?

Revelation 10:7 continues, saying that "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Furthermore, Amos 3:7 tells us, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." In this evening of time, especially in this seventh seal, those things that have been "kept secret since the world began," things that are housed in prophecy, housed in the Gospel, and housed in the Revelation, are being revealed. These truths were in the mind's eye of God from eternity past. Psalm 119:89 tells us, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." It was settled before it ever came down to this earth. God is now revealing things that have been "kept secret since the world began"; they are now being "made manifest." God is giving understanding of truths at an unprecedented rate; truths that have never been heralded throughout human history. What a glorious day we live in! Isaiah 30:26 tells us, "Moreover the light of the moon [the Old Testament] shall be as the light of the sun [the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, [when?] in the day [the seventh seal, or the seventh day] . . ." We have the benefit of the light of all seven days (seven seals) plus the light God is unveiling today.

Babylon's Ministry Is Blind

Verse 6 of our lesson text tells us the "**seven angels**" are "**clothed in pure and white linen.**" Let us examine these symbolic expressions. According to Revelation 19:8, "fine linen, clean and white . . . is the righteousness of saints." God has a ministry that is pure and righteous, a contradistinction to the ministry in Babylon. The Prophet Isaiah spoke of the ministry in Babylon in Isaiah 56:9, saying, "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour . . ." That is exactly what all of the beasts depicted in the Revelation do. They are instruments of the enemy of souls, that one who goeth about "as a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Isaiah 56:10-11 states: "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter."

That is the deplorable condition of the ministry in the realms of sect Babylon. They have eyes, but they do not see. They do not see truth, or light, and they do not have understanding. Jesus said that "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14). The Greek word for *ditch* also means "pit"; so Babylon's ministers go right into the "bottomless pit." They are ignorant, ever learning but "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). They are all asleep, and someone who is asleep cannot keep others awake. The Scripture also says that "they are greedy dogs." Much of the ministry in the realms of false religion is in it for a profession, for a career. They are in it for the financial reward, the financial enhancements. They are carnal (fleshly) rather than filled with the Spirit.

Isaiah 56:12 goes on to say, "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink." Two applications can be taken from that. Certainly, you can take the literal; many of the ministry in false religion are imbibers. Many are smokers and drinkers and fornicators and most everything else imaginable. However, they are also drunk on Babel's wine; they are sipping at her cup to where they have been relieved of good senses and are spiritually intoxicated. Certainly, there may be some honest-hearted ones mixed among the false ministry of Babylon, but the call to them is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers" (Revelation 18:4). In other words, come out or you will become just like what you are associating with. First Corinthians 15:33 tells us that evil associations "corrupt good manners." By and large, the false ministry of Babylon is an impure lot. In Matthew 7:15 Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." In John 10:12 Jesus called them "an hireling." Many are just merely out for whatever compensation and benefits they can receive in the flesh.

The Seven Angels Are Personal Representatives of Christ

Thank God for the true ministry! The true ministry in our text was a pure, clean, and holy ministry. The Apostle Paul penned in 2 Timothy 2:6, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." This lets us know that before a minister can be effectively used, he must first be measured to the message himself. The portrayal of the ministers being "**clothed in pure and white linen**" before they began to pour out their vials is a picture of a ministry that has first put on the message themselves. Before they poured out the message, they made sure they were measured themselves.

Continuing in our text, we read that the "**angels**" had "**their breasts girded with golden girdles.**" There are a couple of truths worthy of consideration here. First, we see that they had their heart covered, or protected, because within the breast is the heart of man. The wise man admonished in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Another rendering says to "Guard thy heart." Their hearts were covered with "golden girdles," and "**golden**" denotes purity, preciousness. If the enemy gets our heart, our purity will be removed.

The second truth portrayed in our text is that this is an allusion back to the old economy. This is a portrayal of the high priest's vesture (garments). It was the high priest who wore "white linen" and a "golden girdle." Leviticus 16:4 speaks of the "holy garments." According to scholars, they are known as the white garments worn by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Exodus 28:8 tells us the "girdle" was "even of gold." Leviticus 8:7 tells us that Moses girded Aaron, the high priest, "with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe." John saw Christ attired in the vesture of the high priest in Revelation 1:13. Hebrews 3:1 tells us that Jesus Christ is our "High Priest." That is why He appeared to John in high priestly vesture.

The "**seven angels**" in **verse 6** of our text clothed in this high priestly attire reveal that these "**seven angels**" are personal representatives of the "High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). Every one of these "**angels**" (portraying the evening-time ministry, both in the sixth and seventh seals) was attired with the vestures of the high priest. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us [speaking of Paul and Timothy; 2 Corinthians 1:1]: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In other words, Paul and Timothy were "in Christ's stead"; they were personal "ambassadors," or representatives, of Jesus Christ.

I realize in this day when the ministry, especially a fallen ministry and a false ministry, has let men down and disappointed them so severely, that little regard is given to a minister or to the ministry; but God gives high regard to *His* ministry. Likewise, the true people of God should give high regard to His ministry. In Revelation 4:4 the "four and twenty elders" (or the ministry) were right next to the throne of God, right in the presence of God, in "white raiment," again. They were the closest to the throne. How else were they going to get a message to preach to the people?

The Four Beasts Represent the Redeemed of All Ages

At first observance **verse 7** of our text would appear to be a strange scene. It says that "**one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials.**" Initially this seems so startling because we know the ministry is to get their message from God. Yet, "**one of the four beasts**" was giving the "**vials**" to the "**seven angels.**" First of all, we must acquaint ourselves with these "**four beasts,**" or as the Greek says, "living creatures." We were first introduced to them in Revelation 4:7, where it says, "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle."

These four living creatures are an allusion to the old Hebrew economy. As the children of Israel progressed in their travels through the wilderness, there were times when the presence of God would tell them to encamp, and they would put the tabernacle in the midst of the camp. Then the twelve tribes of Israel were divided into four major divisions, and they camped on the four sides of the tabernacle. In Numbers, Chapter 2, we find that each one of these camps had an "ensign" (an emblem, or a flag) that they would raise so the tribes knew where to gather. The standard of the camp on the east side was a lion; on the south side, the standard was a man; on the west side, the standard was a calf; and the standard on the north side was an eagle.

There were three tribes in each of the four divisions. Three times four equals twelve; that is the twelve tribes of Israel. The standards of the camps are the same expressions found in Revelation 4:6-8, which speaks of the four living creatures. In Revelation 5:8-9 "the four beasts" said that Christ had "redeemed" them. Just as the four major divisions

represented all of Old Testament Israel, the four "living creatures" represent all of God's people under the New Testament era; they are the redeemed of all ages.

Our text in **Revelation 15:7** says that only **"one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials."** In this particular text, it does not specify which one. However, Revelation 4:7 shows that these four "living creatures" represent the four major epochs of the Gospel Day. The morning time was represented by a "lion" when they "went forth conquering and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2). The "calf" represented the era of time when the saints succumbed to martyrdom from the dragon, and "they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). There were fifty to sixty million martyrs during the Dark Ages. Thus, the saints had to take on a calf-like nature, which is a sacrificial animal.

Next, the third beast "had a face as a man," representing the time when God's people were subject to man-rule, both during the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day. Lastly, at the evening time, thank God, "it shall be light" (Zechariah 14:7). The "eagle" is the only creature that can fly right into the face of the sun. It corresponds with the fourth epoch of this Gospel Day, the evening time. When our text says that **"one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels,"** it is reasonable to assume this beast was the flying eagle. It was moving people toward the brilliant light of the evening time of the Gospel Day.

Ezekiel 33:7 lets us know that the ministry is instructed to get the Word at God's mouth. When our text says that **"one of the four beasts"** (or the redeemed in this evening time) **"gave unto the seven angels,"** it is simply telling us that unless there is a people who will give the ministry liberty to preach the message and who will stand behind it, it will not truly be effective. Preaching to an empty room would not be tremendously effective. Ezekiel 33:30-32 reads: "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

Whenever there is a people who do not live the message, the Word will not be as effective as it should be. **Verse 7** of our text is a depiction of the redeemed giving their full support to the ministry preaching these truths. That is what made the Word effective in Paul's day. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul said, ". . . when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." They believed that it was the Word of God. When there is a people who will believe that the man of God has the message of God, they will give liberty and sanction and support to the message, and it will do an effective work. Also, Philippians 2:12 tells us there were a people who "always obeyed," and that made the work effective.

The Purpose of the Vials

Notice what the **"seven angels"** were entrusted with in our text. **Verse 7** says that they were given **"seven golden vials."** *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* says, "The Greek word which is here used signifies not a small bottle but a broad, shallow bowl." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says, "The *phiale* [the Greek word for vial] was a flat, shallow bowl shaped much like a saucer." In Revelation 16:1 they were instructed to "pour out the vials." If you tried to pour out a saucer, it is so shallow that if you tip it, it is all going to go. That is the very lesson behind these **"vials."**

Isaiah 58:1 says, "Cry aloud, spare not. . . ." God does not want any sparing when these **"vials"** are poured out. If you look at how the expression **"pour"** is used in connection with God's judgment in the Scriptures, you will see what God is talking about. Ezekiel 7:8-9 lets us know that when God pours out His judgment, He does not spare. When it is time to pour out, He wants it all poured out. Nahum 1:6 says, "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." In other words, when God's judgment comes through, there is nothing left unturned or untouched; all is affected.

So it is in our text. These **"vials,"** or saucers, were designed so that the preliminary judgments, the truths, were poured out completely and entirely to set a people free. When God poured out the plagues on Egypt, He did not hold back. When the children of Israel came out of Egyptian bondage, Egypt lay in ruins. Nothing had been untouched

or unscathed; everything lay in tatters, from the house of Pharaoh right down to the home of the most common man. All were affected; none was spared.

Verse 8 of our text portrays what the Lord desired to accomplish through this pouring out, saying that **"the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power."** His desire was to have a people who would build their lives according to the pattern, so **"the glory of God"** and the **"power"** of God could fill **"the temple."** Remember, **"the temple"** is the church, the collective unit. **"The temple"** being **"filled with smoke"** is also an allusion to the old economy. When Moses received the pattern upon Mount Sinai, he was cautioned to "look that thou make them after their pattern" (Exodus 25:40). There was no tolerance for deviation. In other words, he was told, "Make sure you follow the pattern in explicit detail." Exodus 40:16 lets us know that he did so. Moses did exactly what he was told. When everything had been done in accordance to the pattern, Exodus 40:34-35 tells us: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud [or the shekinah glory cloud] abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

In 1 Corinthians 10:11 Paul wrote, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition . . ." That word *ensamples* in the Greek is *typos*, which means "a type." These things were typical, and God used them in the Revelation to show the reality of the antitype in our dispensation. They were to build everything according to the pattern before the presence of God, or the glory of God, would move into their midst. Likewise, God is working to bring a people to the place where they can walk in obedience to His counsel, be obedient to the pattern, and build their lives according to the Word of God. When that happens, they can enjoy the presence of God, the glory of God, and they can have victory.

The word *cloud*, as found in Exodus 40:34, in some instances is recorded as "cloud," in other Scriptures it is referred to as "smoke," but both are emblematic of the presence of God and **"the glory of God."** In **verse 8** of our text, the word **"smoke"** represents the presence and **"the glory of God."** This is confirmed by reading Isaiah 6:2, which speaks of the same six-winged creatures that are mentioned in Revelation 4:8 (a portrayal of the redeemed of all ages). Isaiah 6:3 says that they cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Then verse 4 says that "the house was filled with smoke." Furthermore, Exodus 19:18 says, "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke [why?], because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." The presence of God and **"the glory of God"** was there.

By looking at Isaiah 4:5, we can see that the cloud and the smoke are correlated. It reads, "And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory . . ." Not only does the cloud and the smoke represent God's presence and glory, but they also represent when He is pleased. It pleases God when a people has obeyed and built according to the pattern. So it was in Moses' day and in Solomon's day. Second Chronicles 5:1 states, "Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished." Verses 13-14 continue: ". . . then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."

Study the history of where the presence of God was, and you will find it has a typical nature. In Eli's day, the ark was taken (a type of the morning-time apostasy). Then the Philistines set it in the temple with Dagon, the fish god (a picture of the Dark Ages). Next, it was brought to Abinadab's house (a picture of a partial reformation, the Lutheran era). After that it was brought on to Obbedom's house (a picture of the Wesleyan era). Then David brought it up to the city of David, Zion (a picture of the sixth seal); but it was in a tent; it was still a portable affair. Finally, Solomon built a temple, a fixed, permanent structure (a type of the seventh seal).

When Christ was transfigured, Matthew 17:5 says, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The same shekinah glory cloud that appeared in Moses' day appeared in Solomon's day, and it also appeared when God was pleased with the Son of God. First John 3:2 says that "now are we the sons of God." God is pleased with His people when they are building their lives according to the pattern and bringing their tabernacles (their individual experiences) into the temple (the Church of the Living God). That will produce the presence of God and **"the glory of God."**

Being Able to Enter the Temple

Our text continues in **verse 8**, ". . . and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The word "fulfilled" in the Greek is the word *teleo*, which comes from the root word *telos*, and it means "to set out for a definite point or goal." This ministry, or these "angels," set out for a definite goal—to get a people loosed from bondage, the bonds of sectarian religion, and enable them "to enter into the temple." In other words, it was to get a people out of Babylon and into the Church of the Living God, so they could come to a knowledge of the truth and build their lives according to the pattern. When they do that, "the glory of God" will be on display.

The purpose of the "seven plagues" was to fulfill that definite goal. When God poured out the plagues on Egypt, it was for one reason—to set a people free. When the plagues were finished, they were able to go; they were loosed. God is working the same way today. He has a ministry that is pouring out the plagues with a specific goal—to get a people loose. He is working to set a people free from the bondage of man-made religion, so they are "able to enter into the temple."

Someone may say, "Well, it says that no one could enter until all seven were fulfilled." No, it does not say that. **Revelation 15:8** says that "no man was able to enter into the temple," which is the church. You cannot enter into the church until you first hear the message on the church. You have to hear the message to receive the understanding to be able to enter in. Also, it does not say that all seven plagues had to be poured out before anyone entered in, because the word *fulfilled* means "set out for a definite point or goal." When that point was met, when people received the understanding of their condition, they were able to see the position they were in, that they needed to come out so they could come in. When they saw that, they were able to come leaping and shouting home to Zion.

God is working to set a people free from the bondage of man-made religion and to bring them together where His presence is. Then they can build their lives in accordance to the pattern, the Word of God. Someone may ask: "How can I tell the true temple of God? How can I tell the true Church of God?" To answer those questions, we need to ask: "Is the smoke there? Is the cloud there? Is the glory of God there? Is the power of God there?" That is the compelling witness. A name over the door does not make a Church of God. Paul said that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6). Jeremiah 7:4 says, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these." Just saying it does not make it so.

Certainly, the truth of understanding the biblical name is important, but it is more than just a name. The "temple" of God is a place, a spiritual position, that is "filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power." That is what is needful today. If a people will truly let the "angel" pour out the "vial" and give him the liberty to proclaim the message, God will still sanction it. There will be "power" and "glory," and people will receive a revelation of truth and be able to enter into "the temple."

Chapter 15 ends the summation, or the summary, and Chapter 16 will give us the very particulars of the pouring out of each of these specific plagues. It will show what the Lord has done and is doing in this evening time. He is doing it for one purpose, and that is to produce "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). In John 11:52 the high priest prophesied, "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." That is certainly what God is working to do in this period of time in which you and I live. Jesus spoke of it in this manner in Mark 13:27, saying, "And then shall he [Jesus Christ Himself] send his angels [His ministers], and shall gather together his elect from the four winds [the winds of doctrine; Ephesians 4:14], from the uttermost part of the earth [sectarian religion; Revelation 13:11] to the uttermost part of heaven ['heavenly places in Christ Jesus'; Ephesians 2:6]." That is what the plagues are accomplishing. They are gathering a people together. They are bringing them to the "temple" of God, the Church of the Living God.

Verse 8 of our text lets us know that there was a people who would "enter" in. Thank God, as people come to the light and understanding of this truth, they are entering in. They are coming out (Revelation 18:4); they are coming in (Ephesians 4:13); and they are "able to enter into the temple" (**Revelation 15:8**). Isaiah 55:10-11 says: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God's Word does an effective work. As long as men held true to it in the sixth seal, it did an effective work. As men hold true to it in this seventh seal, it will do an effective work. Thank God for the precious truth! These "vials" were "golden vials." They are pure and precious, and the truth they contain is pure and precious and will do an effective work.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN—PART ONE

The Pouring Out of the First Vial

Revelation 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

False Religion Holds People in Bondage

God's desire, as in all ages, is for all nations to come and worship before Him (Revelation 15:4). Unfortunately, the enemy of souls has created a religious babel of confusion. As Revelation 13:4 proclaims, there are those who worship the dragon and who worship the beast. Revelation 13:15 tells us that they "worship the image." Men are engaging in many objects of worship rather than worshipping the Lord. Psalm 29:2 says, "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." God desires man's worship in the only acceptable manner to Him: "in the beauty of holiness." When man does so, it gives "glory due unto his name." This lets us know that any other worship which is not biblically sound and conducive to holy living does not glorify God.

Worshipping "in the beauty of holiness" gives man the stance needed in order to be in a state pleasing to God. God is ultimately concerned with our spiritual welfare. Thus, He designed the "beauty of holiness" to encourage and enhance our ability to live in a holy manner before Him. God is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14). He is very stirred when men's hearts are engaged in the worship of other objects. When men engage in worshipping in falsity, such as the dragon, the beast, and the image, it not only jeopardizes the welfare of their own souls, but it also robs God of that which is due His name and the glory which belongs solely to Him.

Many of God's people, as in Egypt of old, were and are being held in bondage in a strange land. The Lord's desire for them is the same as it has been throughout the ages (Malachi 3:6). God's desire and message to Pharaoh in Exodus 7:16 was, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." Then He sent plagues by the hand of His man, and ultimately the people were let go. So it is in our lesson text. God desires His people to be freed from the spiritual bondage of man-made systems.

Spiritual Babylon is referred to as Egypt. Revelation 11:8 says, "And their dead bodies [the Word and the Spirit] shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt . . ." The "great city" is Babylon (Revelation 16:19), but here it is represented as "Sodom" (wickedness) and "Egypt" (bondage). The picture of Babylon is false systems, false teachings, and false spirits holding people in a position where they cannot truly worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). False religion holds ones in spiritual bondage.

The "Great Voice" Is the Voice of Christ

Verse 1 of our text says, "**And I heard a great voice . . .**" Whose voice was this? Well, it came "**out of the temple.**" What does the "**temple**" represent? Second Corinthians 6:16 says that "ye are the temple of the living God." Later in this verse, he declares that "they shall be my people." From this we understand that "the temple of the living God" is a people, not just any people, but a people who have a "knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Those are the ones who comprise the Church of God, which was whom he was addressing in this epistle (2 Corinthians 1:1), and the "**great voice**" came out of it.

The "**great voice**" was a "**voice**" of authority. It commanded the ministry to go. We were introduced to this "**great voice**" in Revelation 1:10-11 when John said, "I . . . heard behind me a *great voice*, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega . . ." Revelation 22:13 and 16 lets us know that Jesus is "Alpha and Omega." He was that "**great voice.**" He certainly is the One who has the authority in the church. Before Jesus' Ascension, He said, "All power [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'authority'] is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). That lets us know the authority had not been given prior to that time. Since Christ filled that sacrificial role, triumphed over death, and resurrected out of the grave victorious, He was ready to ascend to the right hand of God as the Head of the church. His is the "**voice**" of authority.

Colossians 1:18 tells us, "And he [speaking of Jesus] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning,

the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." He is the ultimate authority in the church. Furthermore, Ephesians 1:20-22 states: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'every authority'], and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

Jesus Christ is portrayed in **Revelation 16:1** as the "**great voice**" that said "**Go.**" He was the One who gave the commission. He was also the One who uttered the Great Commission found in Mark 16:15, which states, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The same "**voice**" that stood on the mount ready to ascend from earth to Heaven, that said "Go," is the same One who uttered to the "**seven angels**" in our text the commission, "**Go.**" The words that Christ spoke in our text are as much a divine commission as the Great Commission.

Why is it so important to know that it was Christ's "**voice**"? We must understand that it was not the angel's message; it was Christ's. When the "**angels**" poured out the "**vials**," they were not preaching their own message. Before ones rise up and reject the "**vials of the wrath of God**," it might be well to consider that Christ was the One who sent them and He wants to use them to work for the good of souls. The truths that these "**vials**" contain are very pointed and very plain. Christ in His wisdom sent forth these truths, not to hurt men, but to help them. Their help can only come from truth. We need to pause and consider that it was Christ who sent these, and a rejection of these truths is a rejection of Christ.

Notice when the Gospel Day was in its initial state, there were "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8). Yet, in the evening time there were "golden vials full of the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:7). Both were "golden vials full," but they are very different. Conditions had changed between the morning time and the evening time. When the Gospel Day commenced, Acts 2:1 tells us that "they were all with one accord in one place." What did they do in one accord? Acts 1:14 lets us know that they "continued with one accord in prayer." There are the "golden vials full of odours." It is also a picture of unity. Acts 2:44 says, "And all that believed were together . . ." However, in the evening time the contents of the "**vials**" have changed from the prayers of the saints to the "**wrath of God.**"

To understand why the contents of the "**vials**" changed, we must look at what intervened between the morning time and the evening time. Amos, Chapter 8, prophesies of an apostasy and a dark age right in the midst of the clear Gospel Day. Verse 9 says, "And it shall come to pass in that day [a prophetic expression of this Gospel day], saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun [New Testament light] to go down [a picture of apostasy; the light began to go out] at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." Then verse 11 tells us that there was going to be "a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."

Joel 2:2 speaks of a day of darkness followed by a day of clouds or a cloudy day. Succeeding the dark papal night came an age of Protestantism, which was a mixture of darkness and light, a cloudy condition. Ezekiel 34:12 tells us, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." In the morning time, God's people were all together, but sad to say, they have not all been together since. God's people became scattered throughout the various religious organizations of men. Just as in Egypt of old, God's people went into a strange land and became in bondage to their ideas, their teachings, their traditions, and their institutions.

Isaiah 5:13 tells us, "Therefore my people are gone into captivity [why?], because they have no knowledge [the predominant condition was darkness and cloudiness, so the people went into captivity]: and their honourable men are famished [a famine in the land], and their multitude dried up with thirst." This is the picture out in the religious realm. The only way to reveal one's true condition and to show him the Lord and truth is through the pouring out of these judgments. Isaiah 5:16 says, "But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." Also, Isaiah 1:27 tells us, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." The only way that God can begin to get a people loose from all the places they have been scattered is to start pouring out these judgments.

Judgment Is Poured Out on Protestantism

Revelation 16:2 says, "**And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth . . .**" This portion of the verse establishes the prophetic time frame for our text. We find the symbol of "**the earth**" also mentioned in

Revelation 13:11, which speaks of a beast coming up. That beast was a religious system that John saw "coming up out of the earth," or out of the minds of men. **"Earth"** represents man. Jeremiah 22:29 says, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." The terrestrial earth has no capability to hear. Jeremiah was not speaking about terra firma; he was speaking of man. Ecclesiastes 12:7 lets us know that man is the dust of the earth. Second Corinthians 4:7 tells us that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." Also, 2 Corinthians 5:1 states, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." So, this thought of **"earth"** refers to man.

The Apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies . . ." The word *heresies* in the Greek language is the word *hairesis* and also means sect. It is rendered as "sect" in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22. That reveals to us that every sect is devised from a heresy. God never ordained that the first sectarian organization be founded. Sectism is a work of the flesh. The Apostle Paul listed "heresies" (*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "sects") as one of the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-20). Sectism comes about when people deviate from the Word of God, deviate from the Spirit of God, and follow the flesh, rather than following the Spirit. Sects are still being formed today. They may call themselves "Church of God," but whenever they depart from the truth and whenever they are divisive, they are following spirits of division. If they leave established congregations where true pastors are setting forth God's eternal Word, it is a work of the flesh prompted by a devilish spirit.

Second Peter 2:12 lets us know that these false prophets and false teachers are "brute beasts." They are religious men who give rise to systems and organizations that are contrary to the sound teaching of God's Word, to the Spirit of God, and to God's will. They are dividing God's people. Jude 4 states, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [loose living], and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." They do not deny His existence; they deny His lordship. Titus 1:16 tells us, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." They deny Him by their works and by how they live. They deny Him lordship of their lives.

Jude 10 lets us know that these certain men "speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." So these "beasts" are religious men. They caused religious systems to arise that were contrary to God's eternal Word. They began to divide God's people, and God's people became scattered through that Protestant Era.

The beast "coming up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11) was the religious system of Protestantism. This lets us know that the time setting for the pouring out of the **"vials"** in our text must be subsequent to the Protestant Era. The very **"first"** angel went **"and poured out his vial upon the earth,"** or the earthen system of religion known as Protestantism. This began when the evening time of this Gospel Day commenced in A.D. 1880. Notice whom **"the wrath of God"** fell on. **Revelation 16:2** tells us, **"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men [that is whom the earth is] which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."** This **"vial"** was **"poured out"** on those whose minds were indoctrinated with sectarian teachings. The only way they can get help is to pour out the truth on them. You cannot just ignore it and hope it will get better. Truth has to be proclaimed; judgment has to be **"poured out"** on those who **"worshipped his image,"** or worshipped in the various organizations or denominations that comprise sectism or Protestantism.

None of mankind, except those who have a knowledge of the truth, is exempt from the onslaught of sectarian teachings and the infiltration of indoctrination into their minds. In the Protestant Era, all had to have a mark "in their right hand" (Revelation 13:16). This represents those beastly organizations extending the hand of fellowship to them (Galatians 2:9). The mark was also "in their foreheads." In Ezekiel 3:8 God told Ezekiel, "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads." God was going to set Ezekiel's mind to where he would not be moved or affected. The mind is in the forehead. Verses 9-11 continue: "As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity . . ." Those people were in captivity, just as people today whose minds are set with the false teachings of religion. The thinking, the mentality, and the teachings have them captivated. They have a **"mark"** in their minds.

If you were to ask them: "Are you ready to go into eternity? Is everything settled between you and God?" They

might say, "Oh, I was baptized when I was a child; I was sprinkled; I was christened." Others might say, "Oh, back in my youth I got saved and joined the church; once saved, always saved." From their answers it is apparent that they have a **"mark"** in their mind, and it is holding them captive. The only thing that is ever going to get that **"mark"** out of their mind is to let the **"vials of the wrath of God"** be **"poured out"** on those false teachings. That **"mark"** is damning the souls of men and women.

A "Grievous Sore"

Let us look a little closer at the ministry entrusted with the **"vials."** Revelation 15:7 says that one of the four beasts "gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials." Where does their gift originate? The body of Christ recognized it and gave it room. Proverbs 18:16 tells us that "A man's gift maketh room for him." But where did the gift actually come from? In other words, what was the source of these plagues? Revelation 11:6 says that the two witnesses (the Word and the Spirit) have power to "smite the earth with all plagues." The true source from which these plagues come is the Word and the Spirit operating under direction from Christ. Refusing these plagues is to refuse Christ.

The plague that is referred to in our text is described as a **"grievous sore."** We previously found that these plagues are an allusion to the old Hebrew economy. Exodus 9:8-9 says: "And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains [or blisters] upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt." That word *boil* in *The Septuagint* version (the Greek translation of the Old Testament in use at the First Advent of Christ) is the same Greek word translated as **"sore"** in our text.

We see in type several notable truths. First, the paramount purpose of the plagues was "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 9:1). God wanted His people loosed from the captivity of the pagans so they could truly serve Him. This also reveals the startling truth that you cannot truly serve God in Babylon. Secondly, the service in sectism is not sacred, but it is Satanic. Revelation 14:9-11 states: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in 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: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." When ones are engaged in sectarian organizations, they may think they are worshiping God; but when they are paying homage to those organizations, they are worshiping the beast, or they are worshiping the image. They are not engaged in worship of God.

Thirdly, Exodus 9:14 says, "For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart . . ." What is this telling us? If ones do not respond to the judgment that God sends initially in His love and faithfulness to their souls, He will continue to send the plagues of His judgment. They will become more and more severe until He gets their attention and presents them with ample opportunity to get out.

What was this **"sore"** that Exodus 9:9 called a "boil"? There is a notable truth portrayed in that it was the first vial in the Revelation, yet the plague of boils was the sixth plague. Why was it the first in the Revelation? In the Exodus account, the magicians of Egypt, through trickery, could mimic what Moses had done until the plague of lice. When they came to that plague, "the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not" (Exodus 8:18). Beginning with the plague of lice, they began to be stymied. However, in the plague of boils, we find a notable difference. Exodus 9:11 says, "And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians . . ." This plague struck the magicians, and that was what distinguished it from all of the other plagues.

What is the spiritual picture? Many times Babylon's hold is reinforced with their false beliefs by false prophets, just as it was with Pharaoh. However, there came a time when God stopped the effectiveness of the false prophets. They had no effect on Pharaoh after the boils. God will put judgment on false prophets, so if ones are truly honest, they will see the falsity of what they have been trusting in. God will jerk the cover off and kill the effectiveness of the false prophets. Just as Pharaoh was trusting in his magicians, in their sorceries, and in their abilities to seemingly do miraculous things, so does false religion today. In 2 Timothy 3:5-7 Paul wrote: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive

silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts [today they do not even have to physically creep into the houses; all people have to do is turn on the television, and they creep right over the airwaves into thousands of homes at the same time; then, these televangelists can do their damnable work], Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Then Paul began to talk about the magicians. Verses 8-9 continue: "Now as Jannes and Jambres [the magicians] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further." There came a time when Jannes and Jambres were too busy dealing with their boils to be thinking about Pharaoh. Up to that time they had been pretty busy speaking to him about their thoughts and what they could do; but there came a point when judgment was put on them, and their effectiveness to Pharaoh was gone. You do not read of the magicians again in the Exodus account after the plague of boils. Just as Paul said in verse 9, "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." In other words, just as God manifested Jannes and Jambres' folly, God is going to drop judgment on false preachers. They will not be able to proceed any further. They will no longer have an effect on ones, because the truth will show them for what they are.

How will their folly be manifested? It will be when God's "judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:4). Titus 1:3 tells us that God "manifested his word through preaching." The pouring out of these "**vials**," or the preaching of these truths, will expose the falsity. When the plague of boils was poured out on the magicians, they were stuck with it. They were shown to be as powerless as everybody else. They were shown to be what they were—false prophets. If people, religious or not, get "**sore**" when truth is poured out, they are showing you their "**mark**." The Israelites did not get boils, and honest hearts do not get "**sore**" when truth is poured out on falsity.

Notice where the "**sores**," or boils, came from. Exodus 9:8-9 says: "And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth . . ." The Hebrew actually says "ashes of the brickkiln" instead of "ashes of the furnace." The brickkiln was where the Hebrews made bricks at Pharaoh's command. Exodus 5:6-9 states: "And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words." When the Hebrews gathered straw and made the brick, they put the bricks in the brickkiln. They had to be baked to make a hard brick. What is the lesson here? The very boils on Pharaoh were from the ashes that he was responsible for having the Israelites make. The plague that caused him such pain and discomfort was the result of his own actions. That perfectly fulfills Galatians 6:7, which warns, ". . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Sores Bring Self-Examination

Why did the men in our text get "**sore**"? Why was it a plague to them? When the plague of boils struck, all of the Egyptians were sore; but none of the Israelites were. Only those who have a belief rather than a birth get "**sore**" at the truth. Revelation 15:4 tells us God wants all nations to worship before Him. That requires a birth (being born again), not a belief. The Egyptians had a *belief*, but they were not *born* as Hebrews. Those who were born as Hebrews were exempt from the boils. This serves as a type of the New Testament dispensation. The Egyptians are those who merely have a belief. When truth attacks those beliefs, it lands on them as a "**sore**" thing. However, when truth comes to those who are true Israelites, even if they are down in Egypt's bondage, it is not a "**sore**" thing to them. They are glad for it.

The men in our text had the "**mark of the beast**." Again, the "**mark**" was "in" their right hand (fellowship) or "in" their foreheads (their minds). They had a mind filled with religious indoctrination, and they were readily accepted into the fellowship of religious bodies; but nothing is said about their hearts. Jesus said in Matthew 15:8, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." True religion changes men's hearts; it does not just fill men's minds. False religion can fill men's minds, but it leaves their hearts empty and barren.

When we look at the thought of a "**sore**," it represents sin. Isaiah 1:4-6 says: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden

with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Sin is equated with "putrifying sores." A physical sore or a boil will cause you to take a close look at yourself. That is one of the reasons that God used the plague of boils. It was to stop men, get their attention, and cause them to begin to look at themselves. Then they would begin to examine their condition.

Certainly, not everyone in sectism is **"sore,"** meaning in sin or unsaved. Revelation 18:4 lets us know some of God's people are in there. One way to reveal Babylon to an honest heart is to let the judgments fall on those who are not honest. That will show the honest how the dishonest ones respond to the truth. The dishonest have the **"mark"** in their mind and in their hand. When they get angry with biblical truth, yet are still accepted into the fellowship of Babylonian organizations, without having any reality in their lives, it will reveal to honest hearts how they are "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). Someone may be coming toward the truth, but he may not truly understand all of the depths of it. So, it may unsettle his thinking because of his preconceived notions and prior teachings. Then he may watch someone in the same organization that he is in become angry, get **"sore,"** and show a nasty spirit about the same truth. After that, God can witness to his heart that there is something wrong with the system he is in.

The ones with the "putrifying sores" (Isaiah 1:6) and the ones in our lesson text were both a religious people, a people who were full of religious teaching. Though they had full heads, they had empty hearts. Religion is not the great need. Too many times today religion is just nothing but a set of creeds, dogmas, and doctrines. People are religious but not righteous; they have beliefs but not the new birth (John 3:5). Many times they think they are right until they get around the truth. As truth begins to be heralded and God begins to witness to them, they will begin to see the falsity of that which they have been in. If they are not honest, they will get **"sore."** If they are honest, the plague will loose them.

We must remember that Babylon is not a location; it is a spiritual condition. We are living in a time of the most specious apostasy. It is a time of insidious compromise. People are maintaining the biblical name, but they are making moves that turn them away from the truth. Yet, they think that they are all right. Whenever spiritual conditions degenerate and meet the description of Babylon in the Scriptures, it is Babylon regardless of what name it calls itself.

Judgment on False Religion

In Exodus 9:8 the ashes of the furnace that turned to boils were the result of the stance that Pharaoh had taken. They were a result of his own beliefs and the consequence of his own actions and sin. The **"sore"** in our text was produced for the same reason. Regardless of the stance that men take, the beliefs they embrace, or the actions and sins they engage in, they will suffer when God turns this plague loose. They think their religious persuasion will save them, but they will suffer as a result of their own actions and beliefs, just as Pharaoh did. In our text, when the sixth-seal brethren came on the scene (A.D. 1880), the first thing they put judgment on was false religion, man-made organizations that were deceiving the souls of mankind.

Isaiah 28:15 says, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." That is where much of the body of false religion is today. Because people have aligned with a creed, a doctrine, or a dogma, because they have learned a catechism, have gone through a confirmation, were christened, sprinkled, or baptized, or because they have joined a church and shook a preacher's hand, they think they have made their agreement "with hell." They think that they are hid from the judgments of God.

Verses 17-19 continue: "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail [solid truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." When God turns loose His judgment, you might have been comfortable before because you had no understanding, but when light and understanding come, you will no longer be comfortable. You will no longer be able to hide. The bed will be too short; the covers will be too narrow (Isaiah

28:20). You will no longer be able to hide yourself under those falsehoods, because God will show you just what they are, and you will no longer be able to rest comfortably in them.

Man needs more than religion; he needs righteousness (Titus 2:11-12). Sadly, just as the Israelites were bound in Egypt's bondage, people are bound today by religious teachings and traditions. The purpose of the plagues was, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 9:1). Likewise, today God wants a people free from falsity, free from that which fills their minds yet leaves their hearts empty. He desires that ones, as Revelation 18:4 says, "Come out of her" and come where the needs of their hearts can be met. Ezekiel 36:24 says, "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land." This is a picture of God gathering a people together from where they had been scattered in the Dark Ages and in the dark and cloudy day. Verses 28-29 go on to say: "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you."

Thank God! He will bring you to a land where there is not a famine, where you can be fed on the milk and the honey (the Word and the Spirit). You can enjoy the good things of God in that land of Canaan (a type of the church), the place where God wants His people to be. You can be free from the teachings, the traditions, and the organizations that do not let you worship God as He desires that you do.

If there is indeed a "**mark**" upon you, there is an ointment for the "**sore**." Song of Solomon 1:3 tells us, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth" There is still a balm in Gilead, thank God! If you desire truth, God will bring you into a position where His judgments can make the truth clear to you. Then you can be freed from the bondage of religious teachings. You will be able to come home to Zion and worship God in the beauty of holiness.

When this first vial began to be poured out, in the evening of time (beginning in 1880), people responded to these truths and came leaping and shouting home to Zion. It produced a people. It is the same yet today. Truth will still produce a people. There are still ones who are honest-hearted, who desire truth. They want to live the way God wants them to live and worship Him acceptably. When this vial comes in contact with them, they will not get "**sore**," but they will be willing to come out and be where God wants them to be. Then they can worship God in the manner that He ordained. The question is, where does this "**vial**" find you?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN—PART TWO

The Pouring Out of the Second Vial

Revelation 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

A Faithful Ministry

As we examine these vials, it is noteworthy to point out that without exception all seven vials are portrayed as being **"poured out."** The Amplified Bible renders it as having "emptied his bowl." We found in a prior study that this was Christ's commission to the angels (the ministry) in verse 1. In the face of all of the conditions that have had to be contended with, both in the sixth and in the seventh seals, God has had a faithful ministry, a ministry who will "cry aloud" and "spare not" and lift up their "voice like a trumpet" (Isaiah 58:1). They speak in commanding tones so as to secure attention.

Certainly, there were periods of time within this evening-time era when people backed up on truth, but God still had a faithful ministry through it all. God's ministry considers "Zion's sake" (Isaiah 62:1). They look out for the common welfare of the body of Christ more than the supposed individual rights. They are God's watchmen, "which shall never hold their peace day nor night" (Isaiah 62:6). They do not compromise the message, but they pour it out. There is a vivid distinction between a true ministry who hears the Word at God's mouth and gives people a warning from Him (Ezekiel 3:17) and those whom Isaiah envisioned in Isaiah 56:10 described as "blind" and "dumb." God's watchmen are neither "blind" nor "dumb." However, out in the realms of sect Babylon and even around much of that which professes to be the Church of God, they have compromised or apostatized. They are blind to the truth. They are dumb, meaning they do not sound out an alarm, warning the saints of God concerning the approach and assault of the enemy on the truth.

Thank God, Christ still has a faithful ministry in His right hand! When John envisioned Christ, he saw Him with seven stars "in his right hand" (Revelation 1:16). Revelation 1:20 tells us that the seven stars "are the angels [the Greek word is *aggelos*, meaning messengers] of the seven churches." That is depicting the ministry throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day. Christ has a ministry whom He controls. They listen to Him, preach the truth, and do what is best for Zion's sake. They follow His direction and empty the bowl. They can say, as the Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:27, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

As we begin to consider the second **"vial,"** we find that this **"vial"** was **"poured out . . . upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man."** This, again, is an allusion to the Exodus account of the plague of blood. In Exodus 7:15-18 Moses was given instructions from God concerning this plague. Let us draw our focus to verse 15 where Moses was to meet "Pharaoh in the morning." One rendering of the verse says to "meet him on the bank of the Nile." There was a specific reason why God commanded Moses to go at that time. Pharaoh was a heathen. Every morning he went down to the river to worship Hapi, the god of the Nile. Exodus 8:20 confirms that this was his practice. Every one of the plagues poured out on Egypt was a judgment on a false deity that the Egyptians worshiped. In Exodus 12:12 God said, ". . . against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: [why?] I am the LORD." He wanted to dispel their thinking that any other god was indeed the true God. He wanted to let them know "I am the LORD." When Moses first went to Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked, "Who is the LORD?" (Exodus 5:2). Well, he soon found out, because every god of Egypt was attacked with the plagues. The judgments are so that people will come to a knowledge of the Lord. Then they will know who the Lord truly is, and they will know where the truth is.

The Nile River is considered by many to be the longest river in the world. One scholar said: "The Nile is associated with life. . . . Since time immemorial Egyptians have associated the River Nile with life, fertility, and development." What is the picture? In this plague, that which represented life to the Egyptians produced death (Exodus 7:18). In Exodus 7:17 Moses said, ". . . I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." This is a picture of a ministry taking the rod, putting it on those false things that men trusted in, and showing them that they were not life at all but rather death.

What does the rod represent? Micah 6:9 lets us know that the rod is the Lord's voice. Well, what comes out of a voice? Words do. So, the Word of God is what the rod represents. Micah 7:14 says, "Feed thy people with thy rod,

the flock of thine heritage" Peter said to the ministry in 1 Peter 5:2, "Feed the flock of God which is among you" Paul charged the young minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2 to "Preach the word." You feed the flock with the Word. When Moses raised the rod and smote that river, it is a typical picture of the Word of God being laid out on falsity. They were trusting in Hapi (the Nile god); they thought it was life, but God let them know it was death.

The "Sea" Represents Apostasy

In our Scripture text we find that the "**angel** [ministry] **poured out his vial** [bowl or saucer] **upon the sea.**" The "**sea**" stands as an emblem of apostasy. Revelation, Chapter 8, reveals that an apostasy took place, and the outgrowth of that apostasy was a false god, just like the one the Egyptians were worshiping at the river Nile. One was raised up being revered as a god who was no god, and God wanted to pour out the truth on that so people could see it clearly. Revelation 8:8 says, "And the second angel [the second trumpet angel; A.D. 270-530] sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea." When that occurred, two things happened: first, as it sank beneath the level of the sea, the fire was extinguished, and secondly, it went out of public view. To understand what this represents, first let us see what the "great mountain" represents. Daniel, giving Nebuchadnezzar the explanation of the image seen in his dream, said in Daniel 2:35, ". . . the stone [Jesus Christ; Acts 4:10-11] that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:44 tells us that the "great mountain" represents God's kingdom. Now the kingdom and the church are interchangeable and synonymous terms. In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said: "I will build my church And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom"

Revelation 21:9-10 states: "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain" This verse speaks of "the bride, the Lamb's wife" and Revelation 19:8 states that she "should be arrayed in fine linen" and that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." If the "righteousness of saints" is the wedding garment, then the bride (or the wife) who is in the garment represents the saints, spoken of in a plural form; thus, this is a picture of the church. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 11:2 says, "For I am jealous over *you* with godly jealousy: for I have espoused *you* to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ." This "virgin" being addressed in this epistle was "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1). That is who the "Lamb's wife" is and who the "great mountain is." Revelation 8:8 tells us that this great mountain was "burning with fire." *Fire* represents the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). Thus, the "great mountain burning with fire" is the morning-time church on fire with the Spirit of God. But sad to say, the "great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea" (Revelation 8:8). In symbolic tones, this is a picture of an apostasy.

Let us begin to identify the "**sea.**" Isaiah 57:20 says that "the wicked are like the troubled sea." What particular type of wicked people does that refer to? Psalm 50:16-17 says: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." Who does God consider to be at the apex of wickedness? Those who continue to profess, practice, and preach religion, yet they cast God's Word behind them and will not take instruction. These religious people want to take God's statutes and (supposedly) declare them, without really taking the truth. They will not be submissive. They have a preeminent attitude. So, the "**sea**" is apostasy.

A preeminent attitude began to work as early as when John came off the Isle of Patmos. Third John 9-10 says: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Here we read of two fundamental attributes of the system that rose up out of this apostasy: preeminence and excommunication. Whenever ones get an overinflated estimation of themselves, thinking that they are better than others, they are ready to fall from the position they once held. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." However, those who have a spirit of preeminence do not adhere to the Pauline admonition.

We find that as this apostasy began to move in, they continued their profession, but unfortunately they caused the fire to go out. The church which had been in an exalted position, high and visible, fell out of the hands of God and into the hands of apostate men. It lost its exalted position, and it became hidden for 1,260 years. Jude saw a picture of the apostasy, when he wrote in Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." They did not deny His existence; they denied His lordship. Titus 1:16

tells us, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him . . ." The Amplified Bible says that they "deny and disown and renounce Him by what they do."

The Apostle Paul saw this apostasy on the horizon before his death. In Acts 20:28-30 he said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves [a minister must first take heed to himself before he is in a position to help the people], and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." That happened right in the midst of the Church of God, in congregations that once knew the truth. It is no wonder that the Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:12-13: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." Anyone who tries to "draw away disciples" after themselves is someone who is "perverse" and working against the cause of truth.

Paul also wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [speaking of the Second Advent] shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . ." The Greek word for "falling away" is *apostasia*. Our English word *apostasy* is derived from that word. Jude spoke of the apostasy, Paul spoke of it, and Peter said in 2 Peter 2:1-2: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [the same Greek word is rendered as 'sects'], even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The word *apostasy* means "a defection from truth." These people were coming under a spirit, and they were defecting from truth; yet, they continued to profess, practice, and preach religion.

The Beast Rose Up Out of the Sea

In Revelation 8:8 the "great mountain" went into the sea of apostasy. Not only did something go into this sea, but something came out of it as well. Apostasy always has a product; something is always produced when men defect from the truth. John talked about the apostasy as well. He said in 1 John 2:18-19: "Little children, it is the last time [he wrote this in A.D. 100]: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come [you still hear that today out in the realms of false religion], even now are there many antichrists [plural]; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." He said that "they went out from us." The ones who began the apostasy in the morning time were Church of God people. That is the "great mountain" which sank down into the "sea."

Much of what had been the church went into the hands of apostates, or wicked men (that was the predominant condition from A.D. 270-530, the second trumpet age). Then, out of those same minds of the same men, a beast rose up. Revelation 13:1 describes it as rising "up out of the sea." Our text in **Revelation 16:3** says that "**the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea.**" Notice it is upon the "*sea*," not upon the *beast*. God put judgment on the *cause* of the rise of the beast. The cause was apostasy. Certainly, judgment was put on the beast as well, but in our text judgment was "**poured out**" on apostasy. Those brethren in the sixth seal (1880) understood this truth, but we need to understand it today because apostasy is well afoot. Apostasy is yet working feverishly. In the very day and time in which we live, there is another very specious apostasy taking place. Out of that "**sea**" are coming ideas, beliefs, congregations, fellowships, and stances that are just as deadly if we fall prey to them. Unless we understand what gave rise to the beast, it will just continue producing other systems. Unless we understand why this occurred, we will be prone to let it occur again.

Before the rise of the beast in Revelation, Chapter 13, Revelation 12:15 says, "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." One of the things that started moving people was "the flood" of apostasy. It was such a flood that it created a "sea," and the beast rose up out of that "sea." As a result of the apostasy, a system arose, a false god that men were worshipping, thinking it produced spiritual life. In reality, when the truth of the Word was put on it, it was shown to be producing spiritual death, just as the worship of the Nile god Hapi. When a man of God with a rod stood up and smote the river, it showed that Hapi was no god at all.

The beast that rose "up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1) was men who arose with perverse ideas and perverse

teachings; it was the rise of papalism. It is clearly identified as something Roman in the expressions "seven heads and ten horns." The "heads" represent heads of government ("the government shall be upon his shoulder"; Isaiah 9:6). The head is on the shoulder. Rome, in its pagan form, had seven distinct heads of government. Also, the "horns" denote political powers. Daniel 8:20 tells us that the "horns are the kings," or one rendering says "kingdoms." So, these "ten horns" represent the ten kingdoms that comprised the Roman Empire.

The system of papalism is best identified by a man. Revelation 13:18 says: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." The Latin inscription on the crown of the popes of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei. When given a Roman numeral equation, it comes out to six hundred and sixty-six. Just as Pharaoh went down to the Nile to worship Hapi, during the Dark Ages there were those who revered the popes of Rome as gods. Second Thessalonians 2:4 says that he "sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Here you see that same element of preeminence. The popes of Rome are the antitype of Hapi. There are multitudes of people in Roman Catholicism thinking that system produces life, but in reality it is **"as the blood of a dead man" (Revelation 16:3)**. It does not produce life. (I am not speaking against individuals. Ephesians 6:12 says that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood." I am talking about a religious system that is contrary to the sound teachings of God's eternal Word and is deceiving millions.)

It is inherent in man's created nature to worship. However, when men are not honest and do not desire truth in the inward parts, they will worship the dragon, the beast, the image, and most everything else imaginable. In the darkness of their minds, just as with Pharaoh, they worship a god who is no god. Isaiah 46:9 says, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." Sad to say, our society is riddled with people who are actively engaged in worship. They are just as faithful as Pharaoh, who went down to the Nile every morning. They will go to mass every week, but they are no more worshipping God than what Pharaoh was. They may be sincere, as Pharaoh was, but they are no more right than he was.

Isaiah 44:8 states: "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." Verse 17 of that same chapter says, "And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." That is exactly what Pharaoh thought, "Thou art my god," but he was worshipping a false god through a false system. Likewise, those in the ranks of Roman Catholicism are worshipping a false god through a false system. Revelation 13:4 says, "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?" They were actively engaged in worship, but they were not worshipping God. Someone may ask, "Do you think people are like that?" Oh yes, I do. You can listen to them curse all day; they do not think a thing about taking God's name in vain. However, if you say something about their religious organization, they are ready to fight you.

Revelation 13:8 tells us, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [speaking of the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Those who worshiped the beast did not have life. Their names were "not written in the book of life of the Lamb," because there is no life in that system. There is no life in eating the consecrated host, there is no life in Marian worship, in praying to the saints, and in lighting candles. There is just no life there.

Once you yield to apostasy, there is no telling what you will end up believing. I have seen people overtaken by a spirit of apostasy, and you would never have thought that they would believe the things they believe. You would never have thought they would be engaged in the things they are engaged in. When they relinquished truth, they had to have something to replace it, and the enemy was right there. To think that a priest could consecrate a wafer and that wafer would become the body, the blood, and the divinity of Jesus Christ, Himself, is foolishness. But there are multiplied millions who believe that in the darkness of their minds. Then there are those who engage in Marian worship. On the exterior of the coffin of Pope John Paul II is a great big "M" for Mary. This serves as a warning to us not to yield to the powers of apostasy. Once we yield, there is no telling how far it will take you, what you will end up believing, or the ultimate state in which you will be in.

Some of the Teachings of Roman Catholicism

When the host (or the wafer) is prayed over (or consecrated), supposedly it becomes the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. That is what the Apostle Paul called "a lying wonder." In 2 Thessalonians 2:9 Paul said, "Even him [the son of perdition; verse 3], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying

wonders." The Amplified Bible reads, "... with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels—[all of them] lying wonders." There is no man who can pray over a wafer, call Christ down from Heaven in bodily form, and put Him in a wafer. That is a lie!

Mary is not the mediatrix (female mediator). In 1 Timothy 2:5-6 we read, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave himself a ransom for all" Mary did not give herself a ransom, Jesus did. He is our mediator. We do not have to go through Mary, light candles, or go through saints. We have direct access to Jesus Christ! He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). "It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest (Hebrews 2:17). He is the High Priest of our profession. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" Where do we go? Right to Jesus.

The Bible teaches us not to pray to saints nor to use vain repetitions. Matthew 6:9 says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father" There is only One you should address as "Our Father," not the pope, the priest, nor anyone else. In Matthew 23:9 Jesus told us to "Call no man your father." God is the One we should pray to, not Saint Christopher or Saint Jude or others. Also, Matthew 6:7 says, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do." That takes in the rosary, fingering the beads, and blindly repeating the same words. That is vain repetition. In so many words, Jesus said, "Don't do that." Apostasy moves people far from the truth. When one starts on the slippery slope of apostasy, there is no telling how far down he or she will go. Judgment needs to be **"poured out"** on apostasy because the end result of it is spiritual death. Our text says when the **"angel poured out his vial upon the sea . . . it became as the blood of a dead man."**

There is no life in Roman Catholicism. Taking in its teachings and its catechisms is like taking in **"the blood of a dead man,"** just as in the Exodus account. Everything in the river was killed (Exodus 7:18), and that is just what the teachings of Roman Catholicism will do. Their teachings are "doctrines of devils," and they are "Speaking lies" (1 Timothy 4:1-2). What are some of the lies perpetuated by Roman Catholicism? The perpetual virginity of Mary is one. She had several other children with Joseph subsequent to Christ (Matthew 13:55-56). She did not remain a virgin. That is a lie. Regardless of who she is, a woman who has a relationship with a man is not a virgin. Another lie taught is the bodily assumption of Mary, saying that her body went right into Heaven. That is not so. The Bible lets us know we go back to the dust (Ecclesiastes 12:7). When people begin to deviate from the truth, they disregard the plain teachings of the Word of God. They must or they could not depart.

Papal infallibility is another lie; although it was not accepted until the 1800s by Roman Catholicism. If it is true, then why does one pope contradict another? They teach that Peter was the first pope and that all the popes descended from him. However, Peter did not have papal infallibility. Peter was wrong: he had to be corrected, and he had to be rebuked. In Galatians 2:11 Paul wrote, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." He was not walking according to the truth of the Gospel. That is hardly papal infallibility. The popes claim to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). For years when mass was said in Latin, a part of every mass included the words "Dominus Deus Noster Papa," which translates as "Our Lord God the Pope." Was that Peter's attitude? Look at how he acted when Cornelius fell at his feet to worship him. Acts 10:26 says, "But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." Peter laid no claim to be worthy of being worshiped or any claim to being God.

Another one of the "doctrines of devils" is found in 1 Timothy 4:3: "Forbidding to marry." The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 7:2, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Although they claim that Peter was the first pope, Matthew 8:14-15 lets us know that Peter was married. These are not doctrines that produce life. They are also taught to lay aside certain meats during Lent. First Timothy 4:3 mentions this very thing—"commanding to abstain from meats"—and calls it "doctrines of devils" (verse 1). Thank God, if you know the truth, you do not have to lay aside certain things at certain times. Some things are either wrong or they are not. They are not wrong sometimes and then all right at other times. That is confusion, and "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

"Every Living Soul Died in the Sea"

What does our lesson text mean when it says that **"every living soul died in the sea"**? What does this mean? If there was no life-giving quality in their teachings, where did these **"living souls"** come from? This verse refers to those prior to the age of accountability. In Romans 7:9 Paul said, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came [when he had an awareness of it, when he came to an age of accountability], sin revived [or

came alive], and I died." A child comes into this world in a state of innocence. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright [or the Hebrew word *yashar*, which means 'righteous']; but they have sought out many inventions." When one comes to an age of accountability, has the power of choice, and makes inventions contrary to God's eternal Word, that is when sin comes alive. In Ezekiel 28:15 Ezekiel told the king of Tyrus, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Infants are created in a state of sinless perfection, and they were the "**living souls**" spoken of in our text. When they came to an age of accountability, rather than offering them the wonderful words of life, they were offered sacraments, penance, rosaries, confessional booths, and masses. That is why "**every living soul died in the sea.**"

God's people are not stirred enough with false religion and its false doctrines and the multiplied millions that it is damning to hell. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." That way is the way of false religion. People become engrossed in religious systems and think that as long as it is religious, it is good. Proverbs, Chapter 7, talks about a harlot, typifying false religion. Verse 27 says, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." The "**living souls**" died because they were in the house of a harlot. Rather than being raised with a knowledge of truth in the nurture and admonition of God, they were raised in a religious system that has no life; and as soon as they came to an age of accountability, they were handed death through the false teachings of that system.

Until this vial of judgment is "**poured out**" on what gave rise to Roman Catholicism, people assume that it is just another faith or a Christian "system." Revelation 16:13-14 states: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils . . ." That is what motivates all these systems: the spirits of the devil. If ones do not hear the call of the Gospel, heed it, and "Come out" (Revelation 18:4), they will be partakers of Babylon's fate! Again, I am not against people, but I am against systems and spirits that hold people in spiritual bondage.

Remember, the purpose of the plagues was to "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 7:16). I say it in love, but I must say it: you cannot serve God in Roman Catholicism. It is not a biblical nor a Christian system. It teaches penance, rather than repentance. However, Jesus said in Luke 13:3, ". . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." They teach a salvation based on works, but Ephesians 2:8-9 says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Psalm 119:39 tells us, "Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good." God's judgments are good. Though these truths may be unpleasant for some to hear, though they may be contrary to their teachings and traditions, and though they may be a plague to them, they are still good. Psalm 119:75 says, "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Why does He send these plagues to afflict? Psalm 119:71 states, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." God sends these plagues and afflicts people to get their attention, so they can learn His statutes, so they can gain a knowledge of the truth. Once they do this, then they can come to a determination, as Psalm 119:112 says, "to perform thy statutes." They are ready to walk in it.

When we truly see Roman Catholicism, the religious system that apostasy produced, in the light of truth, we will realize it is as false as the worship of Hapi, the god of the Nile. Just as the ancient Egyptians sacrificed their children to this false god in the Nile, millions of Roman Catholics today are sacrificing their children to a false god as well. This system has no life-giving qualities; rather, it produces death! Notice that when apostasy started (in Revelation 8:8-9), only "the third part of the sea became blood" and only "the third part" of the creatures in the sea died." But now in the evening time, once apostasy had fully formed a religious system, "**it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea**" (Revelation 16:3). Babylon has not gotten any better; it has gotten worse!

The Pouring Out of the Vial Reveals Truth

Where are the life-giving qualities to be found? They are not in "**the blood of a dead man.**" If you want to get life, you have to go to the One who has life. Jesus Christ is the source of life. In Revelation 1:18 He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Exodus 7:21 tells us that "the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river." They would not drink of the blood, for they knew it would mean death. Yet, in John 6:53 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." What a paradox! Drinking the blood of the river brought death, but drinking Jesus' blood, along with

eating His flesh, produces life.

What are Jesus' blood and flesh? John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh." God's Word is the flesh that Jesus was talking about. Then, John 6:55 puts Jesus' blood in this context, stating, ". . . my blood is drink . . ." We are not supposed to drink literal blood. Deuteronomy 12:23 tells us clearly that "the blood is the life." So what are we supposed to drink in? First Corinthians 12:13 says that we "have been all made to drink into one Spirit," and Romans 8:10 says that "the Spirit is life." The life-giving qualities are in the Word and in the Spirit.

The Word and the Spirit are the Ones who impress and move the ministry to pour out these plagues. Revelation 11:6 tells us, "These [the Word and the Spirit] have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." They smite the waters to blood to show that those things that men think have life, do not have any life. Then they direct ones to the true source of life, which is Jesus Christ. His body (the Word) and His blood (His Spirit) are what gives life! Life is not found in the systems of men or in that which arose out of apostate minds. John 6:63 tells us, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [or makes alive]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The plagues are not meant to condemn, but rather they are to give people understanding so they can get free from bondage. The greatest and most deceptive bondage in the world is religious bondage. Ancient Egypt was steeped in religion, yet totally devoid of truth. That is much like our dear land today. God's desire and the burden of a faithful ministry are that "The eyes of your understanding [be] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). At the breaking of the evening time, God had a faithful ministry who poured out a cup of judgment on Babylon. Revelation 18:6 says, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." When those brethren in 1880 began to pour out the cup of judgment on Babylon, it enabled people to see the truth and come leaping and shouting home to Zion.

The first, second, and third vials (poured out in the sixth seal) were poured out concurrently, not consecutively. Do not fall into the false thinking that they were simultaneously consecutive of one another. They were poured out against those "men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (verse 1). At the same time they were also "**poured out . . . upon the sea**" (Revelation 16:2-3).

We are in the throes of an apostasy in this seventh-seal period of time. We need to be aware of the deceptive works apostasy is doing. There are those who are coming up with ideas, beliefs, congregations, fellowships, and stances that are just as deadly as worshiping Hapi or the pope. They are just as deceptive and just as damnable. May God help us to keep eating and drinking of the true, life-giving substance! Is that what is being offered where you worship? If not, you need to do as Revelation 18:4 says and "Come out of her, my people." If you have come out, you need to be cautious because these spirits have also come out. They are working to move a people from power to peril, from being apostles to apostates, and from being possessors to professors. We need "to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1) and we be carried away as well. Thank God for His faithfulness to pour out these truths and help us to see things as they truly are!

The Pouring Out of the Third Vial

Revelation 16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

A Fountain Was Opened for Sin and Uncleanness

As we view this passage of Scripture text, we must ever remember that the nature of the language of the Revelation is symbolic. Humanity is ever prone to embrace literal thinking. Our text tells us that **"they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,"** and if we are not very careful, immediately our minds will run off with the thought of the martyrs. However, this verse has nothing whatsoever to do with martyrs or martyrdom. If it did, that would be giving a literal rendition to this text. We must also remember the prophetic time setting of our text. The very first vial was poured out on those who were enslaved or encompassed within the system of Protestantism, those who had fallen prey to their teachings and hence received the mark. So, our time setting has to be a period of time subsequent to the Protestant Era. The first three vials were poured out in the sixth seal, and the remaining four vials are being poured out in this seventh-seal period of time.

In **verse 4** of our lesson text, we have a very unique occurrence. Previously, we found that these "seven plagues of the seven angels" (Revelation 15:8) correspond with the plagues that were poured out on ancient Egypt. The first corresponds with the plague of boils; the second corresponds with the plague of blood; and now we clearly see that the third also corresponds with the plague of blood. This is the only place where two vials correspond with one plague. As we study, we will find that there is a definite reason that this was portrayed as such; it will show a very great truth to us.

The only way these truths are going to be seen and understood is if a ministry pours them out. That is God's ordained plan. You can sit at home and study the Bible all you would like, but 1 Corinthians 1:21 says that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe [the preaching]." As you believe the preaching, you maintain your salvation. We live in such an independent age. People want to just sit at home and read their Bibles and expect God to give truth to them the same as He gives it to the man of God. He will not do it! They want to select their own materials and buy their own recordings of services. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with those avenues. God uses those avenues, but they are not to replace assembling ourselves together, sitting in a congregation, and being preached to under a pastor. That is God's will for us.

Verse 4 says that he **"poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters."** Notice the plural tense employed in these words. There is a very specific reason for that. Proverbs 30:5 tells us, "Every word of God is pure." There is a divine significance incorporated in every word in the sacred Scriptures. First, notice that **"fountains of waters"** are in the plural. According to the Word of God, how many fountains are there supposed to be? Zechariah 13:1 says, "In that day [the Gospel Day] there shall be a fountain [singular] opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." So where is this fountain? In the song "The All-Cleansing Fountain," the writer penned, *"When that fount was opened in the Savior's side, How the thief did rejoice in that day."* John 19:34 tells us, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." There is the fountain; it was opened in the Savior's side.

Notice that this fountain consisted of "blood and water." It was designed to deal with "sin" and "uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). The blood deals with the sin. In the old hymn "Nothing but the Blood," another songwriter wrote: *"What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."* Romans 3:25 states, "Whom God [speaking of Christ Jesus] hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of

sins that are past" The "blood" remits the sins of mankind.

Then the "water," the other aspect of this "fountain," deals with the "uncleanness," which is what produces the sin. Zechariah 13:2 says that God would cause "the unclean spirit to pass out of the land." The "unclean spirit" causes people to sin; they sin because of the spirit they possess. Some people have a "lying spirit" that causes them to lie. Others have lustful spirits that cause them to lust or covetous spirits that cause them to covet. It is the "unclean spirit" that an individual possesses which causes him to commit particular sins. It is not sufficient to remit the sins that are past; there must be something afforded to mankind to cleanse his spirit so that he does not continue to do the things he did before. This is one of the great fallacies of false religion.

Roman Catholicism tells people to come to a confessional booth where they are to confess their sins and supposedly receive absolution from a priest. Even if the priest had power to remove their sins (which he does not), they would still leave in a powerless condition. They would leave without the power to keep them from going right back to those same sins. Likewise Protestantism will tell you, "Confess, ask God to forgive you." And many do; but they still are powerless because they did not get their spirit cleansed. Unless the "unclean spirit" is cleansed out of their life, they will continue to persist in the sins that it generates. That is why a part of this "fountain" is "water." What is the "water" that cleanses man's spirit? In Luke 11:20 Jesus said, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils" What was Jesus referring to? Matthew recorded the same account in Matthew 12:28, which reads, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" Thus, the finger of God is the Spirit of God. The finger moves under the direction of the Head (Christ), and He dictates to the Spirit (John 16:13-15).

Continuing in Luke 11:21-22, we read, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Verse 24 lets us know that Jesus was depicting a man's spirit being cleansed. The "stronger than he" (verse 22) is the Spirit of God (verse 20; Matthew 12:28) who overcomes the "strong man" (verse 21). The "strong man" represents the "devils" of which verse 20 speaks. The "devils," or "unclean spirits," hold a man captive, so he cannot truly operate his will as he would like. That is what "his armour" and "his spoils" represent. It takes a "stronger" than the "strong man" to rid the "palace" of the "unclean spirit."

Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." That is when the stronger than the strong man comes in and cleanses our spirit and expels the unclean spirit. That is the "washing of regeneration." Then the Holy Ghost is renewed as He moves into the cleansed "palace." The "water" that came forth out of the Savior's side is a portrayal of the Holy Spirit. John 7:37 says, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a priest would pour out water and quote Isaiah, Chapter 12, which speaks about "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." When a thirsty man sees water being poured out, he just becomes thirstier. Jesus said in John 7:38-39: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit.)"

There Is Only One Fountain

A "fountain" is a source, and God ordained only one source for man's salvation—Jesus Christ. Speaking of Jesus, Acts 4:12 says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The "fountain" is not only for the forgiveness of sins that are past, but it is also for removing the unclean spirit that caused man to sin. Real salvation is more than remission; it is remission and regeneration. **Verse 4** of our text speaks of "**fountains**." God ordained only one "fountain," but false religion supposedly has many sources or many avenues from which you can receive salvation. That was why God was pouring out judgment on them. When the "**vial**" was "**poured out**," people were trusting in lots of supposed "**fountains**": joining a church, signing a card, shaking a preacher's hand, being baptized, being confirmed, being catechized, being christened, and a host of other things. Even today ones are trusting in these "**fountains**," but these false religious sources are duping and damning the souls of men. Our text is predominantly referring to the system of Protestantism. There are about as many "**fountains**" as there are sectarian organizations.

Why does Babylon have so many "**fountains**?" It is because of the "**rivers**." Notice **verse 4** uses "**rivers**" in the plural also. Yet, the Scriptures talk about a "**river**" in the singular (Psalm 46:4; Ezekiel 47:5; Revelation 22:1). When John envisioned the same "river," he defined it as "a pure river of water of life." The water that composes this

river brings life. Where is spiritual life found? Romans 8:10 lets us know that "the Spirit is life." Now we have an insight as to what the "river" is: the Spirit of God. Second Corinthians 3:6 tells us that "the spirit giveth life." Christ uses the Spirit of God to bring spiritual life to mankind.

There is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4), "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). This has nothing to do with water baptism, but rather it means that we have been immersed or inducted into the body. We become a part of the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. When we get saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, the Spirit sets our member into the body (1 Corinthians 12:18). When ones are truly born again, they not only have all of their sins that are past remitted, but they also have the Spirit of God come in and cleanse their "palace." He makes it a place for the King to dwell. Next, the Spirit of God comes in and takes up His abode. Then if they are in a position where they are not under the sound of the truth, the Lord has a "vial" of judgments "poured out" so they can come to a knowledge of truth and the Spirit of God can set them into the body, which is "the church" (Colossians 1:18).

The "river" in the singular is the Holy Spirit, yet our lesson text speaks of "**rivers**" in the plural. If "river" in the singular denotes the one Spirit, then "**rivers**" in the plural denote many spirits. That is why there are many "**fountains**," or many supposed sources that man can access for salvation. That is why there are many doctrines, many beliefs, and many supposed faiths. They were produced by these spirits. The one Spirit will "set the members . . . in the body" (1 Corinthians 12:18), which is "the church of God" (Acts 20:28), but these other spirits will bring you into one of the teachings and doctrines that they produced. That is why our text says that the "**waters . . . became as blood**." There is no spiritual life in those organizations; they are just as deadly as papalism was.

First Timothy 4:1 tells us that "the Spirit speaketh expressly [we had better pay very close attention], that in the latter times some shall depart from *the* faith." Remember, there is "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5). Why would people "depart from the faith," or the truth? They were listening to things they should not listen to or "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." The "seducing spirits" are the "**rivers**" that produce the "**fountains**," which are the "doctrines of devils." John warned in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets . . ." Notice that the "spirits" have picked up bodies. The "spirits" work first, and then they get hold of a person by their doctrines, teachings, and false beliefs.

The truths revealed in the second and third vials parallel the systems that were developed in the second and third trumpet ages. Notice the similarities. In Revelation 16:3 when the second angel poured out his vial, the sea "became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." Then in the second trumpet period (A.D. 270 to 530), Revelation 8:8-9 tells us that "the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died." Notice a distinction in the two. When Roman Catholicism was being formed, just a "third part" died. However, in the evening time, it had developed to such a point and it was so corrupt that "*every* living soul died in the sea."

Our text in **Revelation 16:4** says, "**And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.**" In the third trumpet period (A.D. 1530 to 1730), Revelation 8:10 says that "there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers [plural], and upon the fountains of waters [plural]." Verse 11 goes on to say that "the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." When Protestantism was being formed, "many men died"; but in the evening time, **verse 6** of our text says that "**they have shed the blood of saints and prophets.**" Babylon did not get better; it has progressively gotten worse.

The Trumpet Series exposes the conditions that *caused* those systems to develop, but the Vial Series exposes the terrible conditions that those systems developed *into*. You cannot start something out wrong and have it end up right. If it starts out wrong, the farther it goes, it is just going to get worse. God is so stirred with those systems that He is pouring out judgment. They are doing terrible things to the souls of men. Remember, the purpose of the plagues is to "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 7:16). When we go back to the plague of blood, Exodus 7:21 tells us that "the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river," because it brought death "and the river stank." Why would Babylon be a stench? Revelation 18:2 tells us that it has "become the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Can you imagine how dirty that cage is? Can you imagine what it smells like? No wonder "the river stank." Babylon is a stench in God's nostrils because it is composed of uncleanness.

When the plague of blood in Exodus occurred, "the fish that was in the river died" (Exodus 7:21). Why do both the second and third vial correspond with this plague on the River Nile and on the god of the river, Hapi? It shows that Protestantism is no more godly than papalism. God used the same plague on both to let us know that one is not

a bit more Christian than the other. One is just as pagan as the other. Pharaoh engaged in paganism when he sacrificed children to Hapi, by feeding them to the crocodiles. That is just how pagan, heathen, and false both papalism and Protestantism are yet today.

Many people do not believe that, but it is true. It becomes more obvious during the holiday seasons. On Easter, they will have bunnies and baskets full of eggs. Where did that come from? Protestantism got it from papalism, who got it from paganism. It is the same with all of the trappings of the Christmas season; they got it from paganism. Worshiping in papalism or Protestantism is the same as worshiping in paganism. Protestantism is just as deadly to the souls of men as papalism. Neither one of them worships God. Revelation 13:4 tells us that "they worshipped the dragon [paganism] which gave power unto the beast [papalism]: and they worshipped the beast." Verse 11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb [Protestantism], and he spake as a dragon [paganism]." Both of them have their roots in paganism. Revelation 13:15 states, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." They worshiped the dragon, the beast, and the image.

Papalism and Protestantism are in the same position in the eyes of God. Revelation 19:20 says, "And the beast [papalism] was taken, and with him the false prophet [Protestantism] . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Then Revelation 20:10 tells us, "And the devil [or the dragon, which is paganism] that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are . . ." They were all categorized in the same position. Paganism, papalism, and Protestantism are the devil's unholy trinity.

"Fountains" of False Doctrines

Let us look at a few of the "**fountains**," or doctrines, that the "**rivers**," or spirits, have produced. One is to join a church. However, Acts 5:13 tells us that "of the rest durst no man join himself to them." You cannot join God's church. The only mode of entrance to God's church is through the new birth. Psalm 87:5 says, "And of Zion [the church; Hebrews 12:22-23] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." You can only be born into God's church through salvation (John 3:5). Acts 2:47 says that the Lord adds to the church when people get saved. If they are born again while in a sectarian organization, they need to come out of Babylon, so they can be set in the Church of God. First Corinthians 12:18 tells us, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Church joining is actually "**blood**" (**Revelation 16:4**); it is death. It is a false fountain that causes people to trust in a false hope, which ultimately damns them.

Baptismal regeneration is another one of the "**fountains**." There are those who feel that water washes away their sins, but there is no power in the water to save mankind. That teaching is a lie which ends in death. The thief was not baptized, yet Jesus told him that he would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:43). Another one of the "**fountains**" is eternal security: once saved always saved. They say that you can never backslide, you can never fall, but what does the Bible say? (Each of these could be an exhaustive study in themselves, but we will just quickly touch on them.) In Revelation 2:5 Jesus told the Ephesian congregation, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent . . ." The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Both Jesus and Paul said you could fall; yet multitudes trust in that damnable doctrine which leads to death.

Many sectarian bodies subscribe to "antiholiness" positions. They do not believe you can live holy. Jesus said if you die in your sins, you cannot go to Heaven (John 8:21). The Bible lets us know in 1 John 3:8-9: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose [sin] the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Multiplied religious organizations on every side say, "You can't live above sin," but the Bible says if you do not, you are of the devil. Yet, many embrace that damnable doctrine.

Some think if they have attended classes, have been confirmed, have been catechized, have been christened, or have spoken in some unknown tongue that they are fit candidates for Heaven. However, in 1 Corinthians 14:19 Paul said, "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." It does not sound like he put a very high premium on what was occurring in Corinth. (Note: what was occurring in Corinth is not what is occurring in Pentecostal churches today.)

These are all "damnable heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). Someone may ask: "Why be so strong? Why not just say they are false doctrines?" It is because people are basing their eternal welfare and destiny on these false teachings,

damning them to a Christless eternity. There are many other damnable heresies that space will not allow us to enumerate. People out in sectism who fall under these "**rivers**" (spirits) and embrace these "**fountains**" (doctrines) end up drinking "**blood**." They lose any spiritual life they may have had. They may be dissatisfied from time to time because of God's faithfulness. But sad to say, too many times they do what those back in Egypt did. They "digged . . . about" (Exodus 7:24), trying to find something better; but as long as they stayed in Egypt, it was all blood, or death. Likewise, there is no use digging around in Babylon. It is all the same no matter where you dig; it is not going to get any better. You will just keep coming up with "**blood**," just as the Egyptians did. You have to leave Babylon to find the living water. You need to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

When God gives the call to come out of Babylon, some fall under the delusion: "Well, I'm going to stay and help them." However, Jeremiah 51:9 says, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her . . ." If God cannot heal her, there is nothing anyone else is going to do with her. Do not stay in there. Jeremiah 51:6 states, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity."

Verse 7 of our text says "**true and righteous are thy judgments**." The "**rivers**" that produced the "**fountains**," which are nothing more than alternate sources of salvation, were not true or right. They were anti-holiness. Someone may say, "Oh, there are sectarian organizations that preach holiness." They do not preach the fulness of it, because division is sin. As long as they are divided from the body of Christ, they are not truly in holiness; they are sustaining sin. The "**rivers**" and "**fountains**" were false; they did not lead ones to righteousness. Instead, they left men and women in a dead, powerless condition. **Verse 4** of our text says that "**they became blood**."

Drinking the "Blood" Produces Death

Revelation 16:6 says, "**For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink**." What "**blood**" did they "**drink**"? The "**blood**" came from the "**rivers**" (spirits) and the "**fountains**" (their doctrines). People who started out right, started out honest and with life, ended up spiritually dead when they drank in Protestantism's teachings. That is why the call is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). In other words, if you stay in Babylon, you will become a partaker of her sins. That is what Babylon will feed you; you are what you eat. If you "**drink**" in that "**blood**" (their doctrines), it will produce death. That is how they "**shed the blood of saints and prophets**."

Let us lift a case from the Scriptures. First Kings, Chapter 13, talks about a nameless prophet, "the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel" (verse 4), who reproved King Jeroboam for engaging in a priestly practice. Then verse 11 speaks of an old prophet. That old prophet pursued the nameless prophet, and when he found him in verse 18, he lied to him. Verse 19 says, "So he went back with him . . ." In other words, the lying prophet caused the nameless prophet to compromise. That spirit of compromise is exactly what Protestantism is built on. It is the "pale horse" in Revelation 6:8.

The nameless prophet compromised and went back, and a lion took his life (verse 24). First Peter 5:8 warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The nameless prophet was killed because of the words of the lying prophet. Then verse 26 says, "And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD." When he compromised, God's judgment fell on him for his disobedience, and it resulted in his death.

Babylon acts just as the lying prophet. It is even referred to as "the false prophet" (Revelation 16:13). Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." The "ravening wolves" take the life of the sheep. Protestantism had some lamb-like features (Revelation 13:11), but it was a beast. You may start out alive, but if you stay in it, you are going to die.

Babylon's teachings have caused people to do as the Prophet Isaiah envisioned. Isaiah 28:15 says, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." In Babylon, people have hidden their experience, not in the cleft of the Rock, but in false teachings and false hopes. If you ask them about their soul, they say, "Well, I joined the church." They have made lies their refuge, but those are false shelters. They have been deceived by the "**rivers**" and the "**fountains**" that lead to death. That is why judgment needs to be poured out on it.

In our text, those who started as "**saints**" had a genuine experience of salvation. Then, after false prophets had "**given them blood to drink**" from "**the rivers and fountains,**" they ended up spiritually dead. We, as God's people, need to be more fearful of false doctrine. We need to be careful of tracts, pamphlets, books, magazines, songs, recordings, and radio programs because the men who wrote or produced them have a spirit. You can imbibe that spirit if you are not very, very careful. All it takes is just being a little sympathetic with it. We need to see false doctrine as serious and deadly and damnable as it really is. In 2 Corinthians 6:17, God not only told us to "come out from among them, and be ye separate," but also He told us to "touch not the unclean thing." We also need to have a greater burden for those who are in these organizations. There are multiplied millions who *think* they are on the route to Heaven. If we do not get the precious truth to them, they are going to wake up, just as the rich man (Luke 16:23), dismayed that they landed in hell. May God help us.

Notice that the first vial angel poured out his vial "upon the men" (Revelation 16:2). That was so they could personally see the condition they were in. However, the third vial angel poured out his vial on the source (the spirit that produced the system and the organizations), so people could understand why they were in the condition they were in. Again, you are what you eat and drink. The first three vials were all poured out in the same period of time (1880-1930). The sixth-seal brethren, at least when it initially began, had a clear understanding and a clear message concerning the truth against papalism and Protestantism. They exposed those systems for one reason: so honest hearts could get out. The only way you can be "**true and righteous**" (**verse 7**) is to eat and drink that which God provides.

The primary purpose of the plagues was to set people loose from bondage so they could serve God. The Lord is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). You cannot stay in Babylon and maintain spiritual life. You must come out and stay out. The spirits that produced those organizations would like to move right in on us. We must "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1). Beginning with the next vial, the fourth vial, we will see that the time frame has changed. It is being poured out in the seventh-seal period of time, but the same truths that were poured out in the sixth seal need to be poured out yet today. What was truth in that period is still truth today (Psalm 119:89). May God help us to not grow "weary in well doing" (Galatians 6:9), but to hold fast and to be true and faithful. Let us continue to stand for these precious truths and uphold a ministry that pours out these vials. God wants to set people free, so that they can come and worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN—PART FOUR

The Pouring Out of the Fourth Vial

Revelation 16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

The First Three Vials

In this text we have before us another unique plague. What Revelation 16:1 denotes as "the vials of the wrath of God" are referred to as the "seven plagues" (Revelation 15:8). Seven is a biblical number for perfection or completeness. Six of the seven plagues correspond with the plagues poured out upon old Egypt. The only notable exception is when **"the fourth angel poured out his vial" (verse 8)** in our lesson text. This is the only plague not correlated to one of the plagues poured out on the Egyptians, and there is a definite reason for that. By the help of God, we will see why that vivid distinction was made.

Let us survey what had occurred previously. In Revelation 16:1 Christ gave a divine commission to the ministry. The commission was not only to "go," but it was also to "pour out the vials of the wrath of God." When this occurred, God's judgments were "made manifest" (Revelation 15:4). The ministry was letting those who embraced false religion know what God's feelings are on the matter. The first three vials were poured out in the evening time during the sixth-seal period of time (A.D. 1880-1930). The first vial was poured out to show people their true spiritual condition in sectarian religion (Revelation 16:2). The second vial was poured out "upon the sea," which is a picture of apostasy and what arose out of apostasy (verse 3). Roman Catholicism was shown to have no life-giving qualities within it, because "it became as the blood of a dead man." The third vial was poured out "upon the rivers and fountains," or the false spirits and sources of teachings that produced the many Protestant bodies. Verse 4 says that "they became blood," which tells us that the system of Protestantism did not have a bit more life-giving quality than the system of papalism did.

The first three vials did a successful work. John saw a people "that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass [the Word of God]" (Revelation 15:2). He saw that the message produced a victorious people. However, toward the end of the sixth seal, something necessitated the opening of the seventh seal.

Silence in Heaven

Revelation 8:1 says, "And when he . . ." The antecedent of that pronoun "*he*" reverts us back to Revelation 6:1, which tells us that "the Lamb [Jesus; John 1:29] opened one of the seals." Revelation 8:1 continues, "And when he [Jesus] had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Again, this is not God's Heaven, but rather it is the ecclesiastical heaven in which the Revelation was transpiring. The seal is a picture of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), whom Christ loosed to open men's understanding. He did that because "there was silence in heaven."

What does "silence in heaven" mean? Isaiah 62:1 and 6 tell us: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence." The biblical injunction is that the watchmen "keep not silence." When they see what God desires, they must faithfully herald it. God made Ezekiel "a watchman unto the house of Israel," and He told him to "warn them from me" (Ezekiel 33:7).

Sadly, by the end of the sixth seal, the ministry began to "silence" up on various portions of the message: points that were considered to be socially unattractive and points that were not palatable to the masses, such as the message on a separate and distinct people and the message concerning the one church. Psalm 137:5-6 says: "If I forget thee,

O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." That is exactly what happened. When they began to mix and mingle with sectarianism, when they began to desire to be like denominational organizations, when Jerusalem quit being their "chief joy," then their tongues cleaved to the roof of their mouths, and they were put to "silence."

Jeremiah 8:14 would well exemplify many of those congregations that are in that movement today. It says, "Why do we sit still [you do not see them shouting or running the aisles as they used to]? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD." How did they sin? They quit walking in the light. They backed up on the message. They began to be silent about the separation God wants between His people and Babylon. They began to "silence" up on the necessity of calling a people out and on revealing the evils of sectarian religion. They no longer expressly dealt with worldliness as they once did and with many other aspects of truth. A silence set in.

Brother C. W. Naylor penned *The Reformation Glory*, which contains these words:

*There's a mighty reformation sweeping o'er the land,
God is gathering his people by his mighty hand;
For the cloudy day is ending and the evening sun is bright,
With a shout of joy we hail the light.*

*When the voice from heaven sounded, warning all to flee
From the darksome courts of Babel back to Zion free;
Glad my heart to hear the message, and I hastened to obey,
And I'm standing in the truth today.*

What beautiful truths are being conveyed through that song! However, the brother who wrote those beautiful words later wrote these words in a booklet entitled *The Teachings of D. S. Warner and His Associates, A Survey and an Analysis*: "Thrashing Babylon never was God's plan. I am glad that most of us have stopped that sort of preaching." There was the "silence" that set in. Jeremiah 51:33 states, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come." When they threshed Babylon, they harvested some saints, but this brother said, "I am glad that most of us have stopped that sort of preaching."

Brother Naylor went on in his book (page 8) to say, "The text 'at evening time it shall be light' has no reference whatever to our day." If that is so, then why did he pen in his song, "*For the cloudy day is ending and the evening sun is bright, With the shout of joy we hail the light*"? He once saw that truth, but he backed up on it. The Anderson Movement as a whole backed up on it. In his book he continued: "Revelation 18:4 [which is 'Come out of her, my people'] has no chronological dating in the Scriptures. For all they set forth, the fulfillment of this Scripture may lay a thousand years in the future." However, he wrote in his song that "*the voice from heaven sounded, warning all to flee From the darksome courts of Babel back to Zion free.*" All I can conclude as I read our brother's contradicting words is what the Apostle Paul told the Galatians when he said in Galatians 2:18, "For if *I* build again the things which *I* destroyed, *I* make *myself* a transgressor." I did not make Brother Naylor a transgressor, but his own words tend to indicate he made himself "a transgressor."

Why do we delineate 1930 as being the opening of the seventh seal? By 1930 what had been known as "The Reformation Movement of the Church of God" was more aptly described as "The Anderson Movement." By that point they began to be "heady, highminded," as the Apostle Paul penned when he talked about perilous times (2 Timothy 3:4). Speaking of the sixth-seal period, Revelation 9:19 says that they started out with power "in their mouth," but in their latter end, "their tails were like unto serpents [or religious spirits], and had heads."

This Movement degenerated to such a position that they desired, as Israel of old, to "be like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:20). That is exactly what happened; they became like all the denominations. C. E. Brown, editor of *The Gospel Trumpet*, Anderson, Indiana, in his book *When the Trumpet Sounded*, wrote: "Nearly every writer who has undertaken to tell the story of the Church of God Reformation Movement has dealt with the subject as if it were extremely unusual in church history. The Church of God Reformation Movement was comparable to the growth of other Protestant movements in church history." It sounds as though our brother was classifying the church with other

Protestant movements.

On page 381 he said, "The College [speaking of Anderson College] was incorporated June 24, 1930, under the laws of the State of Indiana as Anderson College and Theological Seminary." Page 385 continues: "The Board of Sunday Schools and Religious Education was set up by the General Ministerial Assembly. In 1930 a Field Secretary was appointed assisting with supervision of Sunday Schools in local congregations." That sure sounds like a headquarters telling the local congregations how to conduct their Sunday schools. They had a General Ministerial Assembly, which was full of all types of men who were heads of various components. *The Gospel Trumpet* had a head. The college had a head. The Board of Sunday Schools and Religious Education had a head. The missions had a head. They became "heady."

Page 386 goes on to say: "The General Ministerial Assembly authorized the young people to hold a three-day international convention. That convention was held in October, 1930." Then page 377 tells us, "January 1, 1932, organized a local women's group; in June of that year women organized the National Women's Missionary Society." Page 384 says, "The Alberta Bible Institute had its beginning January 3, 1933." Also page 383 says, "The Pacific Bible College opened its doors for students October 5, 1937." We can see all the heads. When old Israel rose up and wanted a king so they could be like other nations, they wanted a man to rule them instead of God. That is exactly what happened to the Movement; they became just like all of the denominations.

Edward Ellis, in his book entitled *Troubles of the Church of God Reformation*, wrote, "They had drifted so far from the message of truth God gave us in the beginning of this great work that there is an affinity and fellowship down there in Babylon with those things they would have cried out loud against before they drifted away." That is why around A.D. 1930 God had to reach down with His hand of power and get hold of Walter S. Goodnight and other brethren and open the seventh seal. He had to set His hand the second time to recover His second remnant (Isaiah 11:11) so they could begin to pour out these truths again.

The Fourth Vial Was Poured Out on the Sun

Because of the opening of the seventh seal, the fourth vial in our text is unique. All of the other vials were poured out on false systems and people who were caught up in those systems, but this vial was poured out **"upon the sun" (verse 8)**, that which was supposed to be God's people, the church. The fourth vial was poured out on what became the Anderson Movement. Again, we are not speaking against individuals, but we are speaking against a system that has become contrary to the teachings of God's eternal Word. God is true. Whenever the church starts acting like Babylon, God is going to pour judgment on it, just as He does on Babylon. First Peter 4:17 says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." If necessary, God will put "judgment" right on His own house, right on His own people.

As we begin to consider the symbolic expression of **"the sun"** in **verse 4** of our text, where else did we see this symbol employed in the Revelation? Remember, we are in the midst of Series 5, which began with Revelation 12:1. Many symbols that are used in Revelation, Chapter 16, are drawn from earlier portions of Series 5. For example, "the earth" in Revelation 16:2 refers to the "beast coming up out of the earth" in Revelation 13:11. Also, "the sea" in Revelation 16:3 refers to "the sea" in Revelation 13:1. Likewise, **"the sun"** in our text is drawn from earlier symbolism as well. When Series 5 commenced, we were introduced to "a woman clothed with the sun" (a figurative expression of the qualities of the morning-time church).

Verse 8 of our text says that **"the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men."** This gives insight as to what the **"sun"** actually was. It was composed of **"men,"** because when the **"angel poured out his vial upon the sun,"** it scorched **"men."** Judgment was poured out on the **"men"** who were supposed to be a representation of the church. Our text also tells us that **"power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat."** This plague was a plague of **"fire."** God reserved it for those who were supposed to be His people. That is why it is unique from the other **"plagues."** The other six **"plagues"** corresponded with the plagues God poured out on ancient Egypt, a heathen people. However, this plague of **"fire"** was **"poured out"** on those who were supposedly God's people.

Leviticus, Chapter 10, speaks of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, the high priest. Nadab and Abihu were priests. In the New Testament, God's people are "kings and priests" (Revelation 1:6). The **"sun"** was made up of **"men"** who were supposed to be kings and priests, yet judgment was being **"poured out"** on them. Leviticus 10:1-2

says: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." There is the plague of **"fire."** God sent forth "fire" and "devoured them." They were supposed to be His people; they were supposed to be His men. They knew the truth; they knew what they were supposed to be doing, but they chose to willfully disregard it. That is just like the brethren who wrote songs and books about truth, and then they willfully disregarded it.

In Numbers 11:1 God sent fire on His people. They were people who knew better, were told better, and were taught better; but they still did wrong anyway. Also, amongst the usurpers who told Moses he took too much on himself, Numbers 16:35 says, "And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." These plagues of fire fell on those who had been God's people. It is the same in our Scripture text.

In our text, why were they **"scorched"**? Why does **verse 9** talk about **"great heat"** and **verse 8** talk about **"fire"**? Why did it repeat that they were **"scorched"**? Malachi 4:1-2 says: "For, behold, the day cometh [a prophetic expression envisioning the Gospel Day], that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Verse 2 talks about the "Sun of righteousness." Christ was referred to as the "Sun," because when He made His First Advent, a new day dawned. Second Peter 1:19 says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." Jesus Christ was the Light that shined in the dark place—old Judaism. He was the "Day Star."

Genesis 1:16 states, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." Psalm 136 tells us what these lights are. Verse 8 tells us that "the sun [is] to rule by day," and verse 9 says that "The moon and stars [are] to rule by night." In Hebrew reckoning, night came first. Genesis 1:5 tells us that "the evening and the morning were the first day." Genesis 1:8 says that "the evening and the morning were the second day," and so on. The moon ruled first. The people were under the moon in the Old Testament dispensation; they were under that "lesser light." The Law was "a shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). Then Jesus Christ arose as the "Day Star," the "Sun," and a new day dawned. He is the "greater light" that rules this Gospel Day.

Matthew 4:16 says, "The people which sat in darkness [people in Judaism] saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." When Jesus began to preach, the "light . . . sprung up." That was when the "greater light" began to shine. Speaking of Christ, John 1:4 says, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." The morning-time church embraced the light; they embraced the truths of the New Testament covenant. In doing so, they "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). That is why they were portrayed in Revelation 12:1 as being "clothed with the sun." Speaking of the evening-time church, Song of Solomon 8:5 says, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" When the church came back into public view (A.D. 1880), she came back in an extremely dependent position, "leaning upon her beloved." Those in the church were divinely dependent, and they walked in the light of the Word; but something happened.

Men Were Burned With Their Own Message

Looking again at Malachi 4:1-2, we find the day "that shall burn as an oven" burnt "all the proud" and "all that do wickedly." That is whom the **"fire"** burns and who gets **"scorched."** However, the Sun does not burn those who fear God's name; it heals them. The same message burns and blisters some and blesses others! It is all according to what spiritual position one is in.

Why does the "Sun" burn the proud and the wicked as in an oven? What is it that burns in an oven in the Scriptures? According to Matthew 6:30, the "grass of the field" was "cast into the oven." Matthew 13:38 tells us that "the field is the world," and Isaiah 40:6-7 says that "All flesh is grass . . . surely the people is grass." People who are fleshly and worldly burn in an oven. We are beginning to get a picture of why those in our text were **"scorched"** and burned. They were burned with their own message. It became too hot for them to handle, and when someone else handled it, it still burned them up. They became proud and wicked because they catered to the flesh. So, they burned in the oven.

Revelation 16:9 says that **"they repented not to give him glory."** They took the glory to themselves, to that Movement, rather than giving it to God. They became proud. They wanted to be more socially acceptable. They

wanted an educated clergy and their own college—Anderson College. They wanted their ministers and their writers to have D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) after their name. They quit calling one another "Brother So-and-So"; they had to upscale it to "Reverend So-and-So" or "Doctor So-and-So." However, the Scripture lets us know very clearly that "holy and reverend is his [God's] name" (Psalm 111:9). They wanted to start taking what was God's to themselves. They wanted to make His name their name and His deeds their deeds. That is why they silenced up on the message. Pride will silence you on a socially objectionable message.

Malachi 4:1 not only talks about "the proud" but also about those who "do wickedly." Who does "*wickedly*"? Psalm 50:16-17 tells us: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." The "wicked" desire to teach and preach and propagate religion, but they will not take instruction. They cast God's Word, the real truth, behind them so they can pursue their own ways. In the Parable of the Sower, Matthew 13:5-6 says, "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away." The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11), and it fell upon "stony places" ("stony heart"; Ezekiel 36:26). Those people never truly gained a real conversion "because they had no root." Jesus is "the root and the offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16), but they had no root. Thus, the sun exposed the fact that they did not have what they said they had.

The evening-time Reformation Movement began as a move of God, led by godly men, but a combination of things occurred. As the older brethren passed away and others backed away from the message, it became a system of proud men who silenced up on the truth. The younger men did not even have an experience or the reality of the message, yet they were put into positions of responsibility.

Explaining the parable, Jesus said in Matthew 13:21, "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." As the older brethren died off, the younger brethren who came on were "stony places." When the offensive part of the messages brought persecution, they were offended by the Word; so they discarded that part and silenced up on it. Isaiah 11:11 tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people . . ." In our text, God got a second remnant. He got hold of another ministry in the proximity of A.D. 1930, and the first thing they poured judgment out on was the Movement.

Jesus gave a picture of what the "**fire**" from the "**sun**" will accomplish. Matthew 13:41 says, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels [the Greek word *aggelos* means a messenger or the ministry], and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." God wants to take out the things that offend; but if He cannot get them loosed from you, He will take you out with them. Verses 42-43 go on to say: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." This does not have anything to do with eternity; this is how God cleanses the church and separates the "good seed" from the "tares."

Where is the "furnace of fire?" Isaiah 31:9 says that God's "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." It is in the church. What is the "**fire**"? In Jeremiah 23:29 the Lord asked, "Is not my word like as a fire?" The angel, or the ministry, uses the Word to gather out of the kingdom all that offends. The Word of God separates. It is the ministry's responsibility to crank the heat up to make the Word a furnace. Then those who are not right will be gathered out, and those who are right will be refined. After that will "the righteous shine forth as the sun."

There was nothing wrong with the "**sun**," or the message in our text; the problem was with the "**men**." They could not take their own message. Unfortunately, **verse 9** says that "**they repented not**." They did not change the direction they were going, and the Anderson Movement is farther away from truth today than when this "**vial**" was initially "**poured out**." Again, I am speaking about a system; I know there are some good people in that system, but God wants to get them out. The Lord desires that we, as the evening-time church, "shine forth as the sun" (Matthew 13:43). The only way we can do that is take the heat of the Word. We live in a day when the enemy is working to cool off our intensity and our fervency.

Failing to Keep Pace With the Light

In the seventh letter, representing one aspect of our day, which is recorded in Revelation 3:15-16, Jesus said: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." We live in a very dangerous time. If Jesus spews us out

of His mouth, that means we are no longer part of the body, the church. What could cause us to no longer be the church? Jesus said that it was "because thou art lukewarm." *Lukewarm* is neither cold nor hot. If you leave a hot drink out, eventually it will become room temperature. Then it is too cool to drink. If you leave a cold drink out, eventually it will adjust itself to room temperature. Then it will be too warm to drink. Becoming lukewarm is acclimating to the surrounding climate.

Becoming lukewarm is exactly what the enemy wants the church to do today. He wants us to just take on the temperature that is around us, so there is no sharp differential between the church and Babylon. That is a grave danger of our day. When we become like those about us, we are in jeopardy of being spewed out of the body, the church. Lukewarmness is a compromise between two extremes: cold and hot. It is a comfortable in-between. However, the only way that the world and Babylon will see the church is if our light is burning, we are on fire, and we are hot.

In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." If you study the light in verse 15, you will find it was not designed to flicker, but rather it was an oil-fed lamp. Where this verse speaks of a "candle," the Greek actually says *lamp*. Isaiah 62:1 tells you that the lamp is our salvation. The lamp was to be put "on a candlestick" (or the Greek says on a *lampstand*) with all of the other lamps so that it can be fed. Zechariah envisioned two olive trees on either side of the lampstand (Zechariah 4:2-3). Then Revelation 11:3-4 tells us that the "two olive trees" are the "two witnesses," the Word (Matthew 24:14) and the Spirit (Hebrews 10:15). That is what feeds the golden oil into the lamps (Zechariah 4:11-12) to keep them burning.

We must keep the fire lit if we are going to be the city that cannot be hid and the light to a lost-and-dying world. Luke 12:35 tells us, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." The way we keep the lights burning is to "walk in the light, as he [God] is in the light" (1 John 1:7). We must keep pace with the light. We must not get behind the light, but we must keep walking, progressing, and advancing. Romans 12:11 tells us to be "fervent in spirit." That verse in The Amplified Bible says to "be aglow and burning with the Spirit."

The sad commentary is that every movement of the past has fallen because they failed to walk or progress in the light, and they failed to stay fervent. Sad to say, that is what happened in our text. God desires that we take hold of these truths and "**give him glory**" (Revelation 16:9). Those in our text "**blasphemed the name of God.**" How did they do that? They took the name of God, the name of the Church of God, and blasphemed it by not walking in the light of the message of God's Word. May God help us not to blaspheme the name of God, the name of the Church of God, by not obeying the message.

Revelation 18:8 says, "Therefore shall her plagues [speaking of Babylon] come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." When God's judgments burn you, that lets you know that you are not where you need to be. When the three Hebrew boys were where they needed to be, the furnace did not burn them. It just took off their bonds, and set them free (Daniel 3:24-25).

Still speaking of Babylon, Revelation 18:6 says, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." Babylon is to have two cups of judgment poured out on her. One cup in the sixth-seal period of time and one in the seventh-seal period. She is to have judgment poured out "in one hour" (Revelation 18:10), one half of that hour was in the sixth seal and one half in the seventh. Are you in a position where you can take the heat of the Word, or does it "**scorch**" you? The reason God "**scorched**" men was to move them. If the Word scorches you, it is because you are not where you ought to be, and you need to move. When you change your position and take the truth of God's Word, it will not "**scorch**" you anymore.

The judgments are being "**poured out**" because God wants a people loose from bondage so they can serve Him. He wants them loose, not only from Egyptian bondage, but also from Babylonian bondage. Babylon is not just a system; it is also a condition. Whenever any people are moved away from the sound teachings of God's eternal Word and the free operation of His Spirit, they warrant His judgment. They have become just as false as any other man-made system. They may still go by a biblical name and espouse some biblical doctrines, but if they depart from the truth and fail to yield to the Holy Spirit, they have done nothing more than set up another institution of men. Regardless of what it may seem on the surface, if the Word and the Spirit are not allowed the free and full operation, people need to come out of it.

God had to pour out the truth on the Movement that had at one time been greatly used. When they silenced up on the message, compromise entered in. God had to set His hand again and get a second remnant. It is essential for God's people to take the heat of the message to produce a bright people that can be a shining city on a hill. This fourth vial and the remaining three are all working right in the very day and time that you and I are privileged to live. The question is, How are we responding to the truths of our day?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN—PART FIVE

The Pouring Out of the Fifth Vial

*Revelation 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,
11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

Judgment Poured Out on Babylon

According to our text, the vials are, in essence, poured out twice: three in the sixth-seal period of time and four in the seventh-seal period. Revelation 18:6 tells us, "Reward her [Babylon] even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." Two cups of judgment are to be poured out on Babylon, and there are several reasons why. The first reason is because Babylon is not in a better condition in the seventh seal than she was in the sixth seal. Instead, it is like the woman who put her condition in the hands of men, and she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26). Man-made religious organizations are progressively getting worse. This is one of the reasons why their condition is likened to "the bottomless pit" (Revelation 11:7).

Another reason Babylon receives the second cup is because the sixth-seal brethren became silent on much of the message. The seventh seal had to be opened because "there was silence in heaven" (Revelation 8:1). This was not in God's Heaven, but it was in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). Toward the end of the sixth seal, they began to "silence" up on what they considered to be the more offensive portions of the message. So, God had to set His hand again and recover a second remnant (Isaiah 11:11). In the proximity of A.D. 1930, He raised up Brother Walter S. Goodnight and other seventh-seal brethren to herald these truths once again.

The third reason it is necessary that the vials be "**poured out**" in the seventh-seal period of time is because there is a younger generation who is ignorant of what Babylon is, how it originated, what constitutes it, the spirits that originally promoted it, and the powers that are working to replicate it. Therefore, truth needs to be sounded forth; these vials need to be poured out. The spirits that gave rise to the beast-like systems in bygone days are working feverishly right in the day and time in which you and I live. They want to replicate what has already happened. The most deceptive part is that they are not necessarily known as sectarian organizations by name, but they are raising up sectarian organizations by the spirit that is producing and promoting it. As in Isaiah 4:1, they take the name of Jesus Christ to try to take away the reproach, but it is not the name that takes away the reproach. They are trying to take the name *Church of God*, yet there are sectish spirits and practices working right in their midst that are creating Babylonian conditions.

When the sixth-seal brethren poured out the first three vials, the judgment fell predominantly on the false religious systems. However, as we progress into the seventh seal, we see that there are greater depths to these vials. Not only do they expose the systems, but they uncover the very spirits that lie behind those systems. Those spirits get hold of people and carry them away from truth and make them sectish. Just as the vials were poured out concurrently in the sixth seal, so it is in this seventh seal. When the brethren poured out the fourth vial, they did not only deal with the Anderson Movement and then deal with papalism later and so forth. No, the fourth through the seventh vials are all part of one message. They were not in chronological succession in that sense. For example, a judge in a courtroom may have a defendant before him who has three offenses. Let us say that the judge gives him a five-year sentence for each offence. If he gives them consecutively, fifteen years must be served. However, if he gives them concurrently, the total is five years because he would serve for the three charges at the same time. That is how the vials were poured out, concurrently.

A Kingdom Full of Darkness

Verse 10 of our text says, "**And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness . . .**" We have found that these plagues (Revelation 15:8) correspond with the

plagues poured out on ancient Egypt. This one coincides with the plague of darkness. Exodus 10:21-23 tells us: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Oh, what a type is portrayed before us!

The plagues poured out on old Egypt were plagues on the Egyptian pagan deities. In Exodus 12:12 the Lord said, ". . . against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD." He wanted them to know who the Lord was. Isaiah 45:22 says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." That is the point of truth He was trying to drive home, and He is trying to drive it home yet today.

Moses was instructed to stretch out his hand "that there may be darkness." What Egyptian deity was this attacking? One of the Egyptian's chief objects of worship was the god Amon-Re, also known as Ra, the sun god. The plague of darkness was a revelation of the fact that their false god and false system of worship provided no light whatsoever. Regardless of how much they prayed, went through religious motions, or petitioned this deity, there was no light. When the plague of darkness set in, Amon-Re was shown powerless. What the Egyptians were trusting in was not a god at all. He was a figment of their darkened imaginations, and he was powerless to bring light to them. As long as Pharaoh walked in disobedience to the Word of God, he was going to be in darkness for the prescribed time. There was nothing he could do about it.

The religious system that is symbolized in our text is exactly the same as the plague of darkness. It was produced because the people failed to obey the Word of God. Then they were enveloped in "**darkness.**" As long as they continue to refuse God's avenues of light (His Word and His Spirit), they will continue to be in darkness. **Revelation 16:10** tells us that "**his kingdom was full of darkness.**" Why? It is the same reason that darkness came on ancient Egypt. Exodus 10:20 states, "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go." Pharaoh would not obey the Word of God. He set himself above the Word of God. He felt his dictates, or mandates, were superior to what was set forth by the Word of God. Likewise, the system that we see judgment poured out on in our text is headed by a man who feels his dictates, or mandates, are superior to the Word of God. This system fails to obey the Word. That produced darkness back in ancient Egypt, and it produces "**darkness**" yet today.

Second Thessalonians 2:10-11 says: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth [John 17:17 says that 'thy word is truth'; they received not a love of the Word], that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." The whole system of Roman Catholicism is built on lies. Again, I am speaking of a system, not individuals. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12); I am not against people, but I am talking about religious systems and spirits that are contrary to the sound teachings of God's eternal Word. That system received not the love of the Word of God. Psalm 50:17 speaks of those who "hatest instruction, and castest my [God's] words behind thee." When a people did that, Revelation 8:8 describes "a great mountain burning with fire" being cast into the sea (the sea of apostasy). Then up out of the same sea of apostasy arose the papal beast (Revelation 13:1). Out of that sea came a false god and a false system.

Does that system hold forth a false god? Second Thessalonians 2:3-4 says: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come [speaking of the Second Advent], except there come a falling away [a defection from truth] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." For years when their Mass was held in Latin, included in every Mass were the Latin words *Dominus Deus Noster Papa*, which translated is "Our Lord God the Pope." They style the pope as a god and revere him as such, just as the Egyptians revered Amon-Re in ancient Egypt.

The one who sits "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" best exemplifies the "**beast**" in our text, because "**his kingdom was full of darkness.**" This papal "**beast**" produced the Dark Ages that lasted at its zenith one thousand years (A.D. 530-1530) and a totality of one thousand two hundred and sixty years (A.D. 270-1530); Revelation 13:5. Revelation 13:1 identifies this "**beast**" as "having seven heads and ten horns." "Heads" represent heads of government. Isaiah 9:6 says that "the government shall be upon his shoulder," and the head is on the shoulder. In its pagan form, Rome had seven different types (heads) of government. The "horns" represent kingdoms (Daniel 8:20). The Roman Empire was comprised of ten minor kingdoms. In Revelation 12:3 the great red dragon (paganism) had "seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Compare it with the beast that had "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1). In

pagan Rome, the crowns were on the seven heads of government, but notice that the crowns moved from the heads to the horns on the papal beast. In papal Rome, the political power was vested in the ten minor kingdoms.

Revelation 13:18 says: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." One man bears that numerical inscription. Inscribed on the front of the miter that the popes of Rome have used for years at their coronation is a Latin inscription: *Vicarious Filii Dei*. When given a numerical expression, it equates to 666. The office of the popes of Rome best represents that "**beast**," and that "**beast**" is Roman Catholicism.

A morning-time apostasy ensued when people began to cast God's words behind them. They failed to take instruction, and they became wicked. So, out of the sea of apostasy came a false god and a false system. Revelation 13:4 says that "they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast." They thought this system brought light, but just as the sun god in Egypt of old, it did not produce any light. Instead, it equated to the powerlessness of Amon-Re when the Egyptians were enshrouded with darkness. Isaiah more aptly described their true condition. Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness." Roman Catholicism sets forth darkness and calls it light.

Jesus cautioned in the very morning-time of the Gospel Day in Matthew 6:23, saying: "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" When apostasy set in, the light became darkness to many. It was one of the greatest periods of darkness in human history. It was so dark that between fifty to sixty million people were martyred. In John 16:2 Jesus prophesied that "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service," and that time came.

Our text declares that "**his kingdom was full of darkness.**" There is no light in Roman Catholicism! It is "**full of darkness.**" Again, I am speaking of the religious system. Do not allow your mind to run to some good person whom you may know in that system. We love them; our burden is to help them see the truth. Then they can come out, so they will not be "partakers of her sins, and . . . receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). God wants them out! If they are ever going to get out, someone has to tell them the truth.

Refusing Light

Why was "**his kingdom . . . full of darkness**"? People refused all of the avenues of light. John 1:7-9 says: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Roman Catholicism refused the "true Light," Jesus Christ. Someone may say, "Catholics very vocally confess their belief in Christ and that they are in a Christian system." Let us see whether the Bible validates their claims. In John 14:15 Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He also said in John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." So the validation to truly be one who embraces Jesus Christ is to be one who embraces His commandments, His Word. However, Roman Catholicism refuses His Word; they are not in light, they are in "**darkness.**" Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." As Pharaoh of old, Roman Catholicism exalted their dictates and mandates above the Word of God. Rome follows Canon Law, and they feel that it is much more relevant to dictate the behavior of the supposed church by it rather than by the Scriptures.

God's Word is one avenue through which He brings light, and His Spirit also brings enlightenment to men's minds. Ephesians 1:17-18 says: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." You gain a knowledge of Him through the Spirit, and the Spirit is never going to contradict the Word. First John 5:7-8 tells us: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water [or the washing of water by the Word; Ephesians 5:26], and the blood: and these three agree in one." The Spirit and the Word always agree.

We live in a time when people will rise up and say, "The Spirit led me to do thus and so," but it crosses up the clear teachings of God's eternal Word. Well, it may have been a spirit, but it was not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will never lead an individual to go contrary to the Word of God, and the Word of God will never lead an individual to go contrary to the Spirit of God. Roman Catholicism has discarded both the Word and the Spirit. It is viewed by many as "just another Christian system," but it is not a Christian system. It worships gods and a system that are contrary to the Scriptures. It produces no light or understanding for the true redemption of the souls of men.

"The Seat of the Beast"

Notice that the "vial" in our text was "**poured out . . . upon the seat of the beast.**" What is the significance of it being "**poured out**" on the "**seat**" of Roman Catholicism? The Greek word for "**seat**" is the word *thronos*, and it is a word from which our English word *throne* comes. The same word was translated as "throne" in a number of other Scriptures. Revelation 16:17, Hebrews 1:8, and Hebrews 4:16 are just a few of them. This word *thronos* is defined by *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* as "a throne, a seat of authority." The *Dictionary of New Testament Words* says "by implication, power." *The Expanded Greek New Testament* renders this phrase in **verse 10** as "upon the throne of the wild beast." A throne represents rule or authority.

Verse 10 in our text goes on to speak of "**his kingdom.**" In other words, it is speaking of his domain, or those under his authority. The one who sits upon "**the seat**" sits in a position of authority and holds a people under that authority. The authority that he holds, that "**seat**" that he sits upon, is producing nothing but "**darkness**" in the lives of those individuals! Kings were depicted as being in the ultimate of their authority when they sat upon the royal throne. That was when they were actually fulfilling the role of their office. In Esther 5:1 we read that "the king sat upon his royal throne." Everyone else, even Queen Esther, was treated as a subject. They had to come before the king as the one who had the sole and sovereign authority. From the throne, he dictated the law, the judgment, and what was acceptable and unacceptable.

In our text, the one who sits upon "**the seat,**" or the throne, has much the same power as a king does. He acts as a sovereign; he acts as a sole authority; he acts in official capacity. The pope actually holds authority in Roman Catholicism when he speaks *ex cathedra*, which means "from his seat." When he speaks from his seat, it is supposedly infallible. His seat represents his office, his power, and his authority. Again, 2 Thessalonians 2:4 tells us that "he as God sitteth [**the seat**'] in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God [the one in power]."

What kind of authority or power emanates from "**the seat**"? He "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). His authority and power is in direct contradiction to God and to His agencies of light (the Word and the Spirit). His power is the power of darkness. In Revelation, Chapter 2, the Pergamene letter represents the time period when the papal beast was at its zenith (A.D. 530-1530). Revelation 2:13 says, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat [the Greek word *thronos*] is." Jesus referred to "**the seat**" as "Satan's seat." This tells us that Satan, the prince of darkness, had produced the "**kingdom**" which "**was full of darkness.**"

The "**beast**" (papalism) got its "**seat**" right from paganism. Revelation 13:2 tells us that "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." *The Expanded Greek* says that "the dragon gave him his [the dragon's] miraculous power and his throne, and great authority." We clearly see that "authority" is coupled with his "seat." How far did the beast's authority extend in the Dark Ages? Revelation 13:8 says, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life . . ." Everyone who was not saved was affected by this system during the Dark Ages. According to the type in Exodus 10:21, it was a "darkness which may be felt." It was felt by all but the Israelites, the people of God. Exodus 10:23 says that "the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." While the Dark Ages ruled the landscape, thank God, God's people were hid away in the catacombs and caves ("into the wilderness"; Revelation 12:6). While the Bible was chained to the pulpits, one of the most familiar inscriptions found on the catacomb walls was, "The word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy 2:9). They had light in their dwellings! Certainly not as we see today, but they had light during that time of darkness.

Roman Catholicism's authority was extended to where it affected all of false religion. Speaking of the Protestant beast, Revelation 13:12 says that "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast [papalism] before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast." Worshiping in Protestantism is no better than worshiping in papalism, and worshiping in papalism is no better than worshiping in paganism. It is the devil's unholy trinity, and one is as ungodly and full of darkness as the other. It was so dark during the Egyptian plague that the Egyptians could not even light a candle. The power of this "**beast**" reached out and extended into all governments. Revelation 13:7 tells us that "power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

In our text the truth was "**poured out . . . upon the seat**" to break the power of its hold on people. It revealed that "**his kingdom was full of darkness.**" It exposed that the one who sat on the throne and spoke *ex cathedra* was not speaking infallibly for Christ, but rather that system was the same as the old system of Amon-Re, the pagan sun god, who had no power. Its teachings never have produced light and never will produce light. The authority that it

holds over people is the power of **"darkness."** Behind that is Satan. It is **"Satan's seat!"** God wanted judgment **"poured out"** so people could see that they did not need to be enslaved in such a system, that there is a way they can be delivered "from the power of darkness" and translated "into the kingdom of his dear Son," Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13). Thank God!

Darkness and Light Will Not Dwell Together

Regardless of Roman Catholicism's appearance, it has not gotten any more light in the seventh-seal period of time than it ever had. Actually, it is more deceptive than it was in the Dark Ages. To understand how this is, look at the statements of some of their most revered leaders. The famous Mother Theresa, whose beatification took place on October 19, 2003 (beatification is one of the steps in the canonization process where one is supposedly made a saint), and who was canonized as a "saint" on September 4, 2016, said, "I am told that God lives in me, and yet the reality of darkness and coldness and emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul." That sounds like a **"kingdom full of darkness."** This excerpt in her diary was uncovered and printed in *Newsweek Magazine*. Saint John of the Cross, a sixteenth-century Spaniard, spoke of "the dark night of the soul." Saint Therese of Liseaux, Mother Theresa's namesake, who died in 1897 at the age of twenty-four, spoke of "the night of nothingness." That was what their most revered leaders, canonized saints, found in that system. If those are the testimonies of people who are at the apex of that system, where does that leave the others?

In the first plague (during the sixth seal), there was "a noisome and grievous sore" on them (Revelation 16:2). However, our text (the seventh seal) says that **"they gnawed their tongues for pain."** That is a most significant expression of the writhing of anguish. The word rendered **"gnawed"** does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament, nor is that expression used elsewhere in the Bible. This depicts to us that Babylon is not getting any better and also the longer a system or individual refuses truth, the worse they become. Truth is very painful when you are in the wrong position, especially if you refuse to move. These ones **"gnawed their tongues"** because they were **"full of darkness."** Truth will put judgment on any darkness in our lives. First John 1:5 tells us that "God is light." The reason He puts judgment on darkness is to get people out of it. The judgment will get worse, just as in old Egypt, if they do not move. God in His goodness will pour it out, because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked . . . why will you die?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

When one moves from a position of light to where darkness enters into his life, God in His faithfulness will pour out judgment. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." The Amplified Bible states it more clearly when it says, "Take no part in and have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds and enterprises of darkness, but instead [let your lives be so in contrast as to] expose and reprove and convict them." This **"darkness" (verse 10)** is not just in Roman Catholicism. When we take it from a prophetic to a practical application, it includes anyone who embraces the deceptive thinking that one can walk in darkness and still be in light. Certainly, this deception began to be fostered in the most prevalent manner by the system of Roman Catholicism, but that spirit has been loosed and is embraced by almost all of false religion today, even among many who once were saints of God.

First John 1:6 states, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." You cannot allow the works of darkness to enter into your experience and be able to remain in the light. If there is any darkness on the throne of your heart, holding authority over your life, God wants you to repent of it and get the victory. Roman Catholicism started the thought that people could have darkness in their life and just confess and go on with it and be right, but that is a damnable doctrine. We live in a time (and we will get to it when the sixth angel pours out his vial) when these spirits have been loosed. They are no longer merely housed in these religious systems, but they are working right amongst the saints of God, amongst congregations of the Church of God. These spirits cause people to feel that they can walk in darkness and yet be in fellowship. That is the deception, and that is darkness.

Jesus said in John 12:35: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." We must keep pace with light; we must progress and advance as truth progresses and advances. Sadly, there are people who are in what purports to be the Church of God, but they have not continued to walk in the light. Some stopped walking in the light in the sixth seal, some stopped in another place, but the only way to stay in the light is to walk in the light. We must progress, because

as light advances, it will reveal more things that are in the darkness, and those things need to be put away.

Just as in Pharaoh's case, the plagues in our text continually became worse. **Revelation 16:11** says that they **"blasphemed the God of heaven."** How did they do that? Well, in the system of Roman Catholicism, every time a priest enters a confessional booth and supposedly forgives sins, it is blasphemy. Matthew 9:2-3 says: "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth." They had the right definition; they just had the wrong person. Only Jesus can forgive sins. When anybody else says they can, it is blasphemy. In Roman Catholicism, every time Mass is offered and souls are supposedly prayed out of Purgatory, it is blasphemy. God said, ". . . all souls are mine" (Ezekiel 18:4). Then Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us, ". . . if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There is no alteration of man's spiritual state after death. Men do not have that power. That supposed light is **"darkness."**

Stronger Judgment Is Poured Out

Our text says that they **"repented not of their deeds."** Roman Catholicism has not repented, and does not teach repentance. The spirit that produced that system is loose in our day. It will make ones think that they can be disobedient, yet just profess over top of it and go on. That is **"darkness."** However, the hordes of humanity in religion are living in such a manner. This spirit desires to rule over and dominate the souls of men. It wants to set up a **"kingdom . . . full of darkness"** on the throne of one's heart. God will not compromise on light or His Word. Pharaoh tried repeatedly to get Moses to accept a compromise. In Exodus 8:28 he said, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." Then in Exodus 10:24 he said, "Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed." However, God does not accept compromise. Either you "walk in the light," or it is the plague of darkness for you.

We read in Revelation 11:3 that during this 1260 year period, the "two witnesses" were "clothed in sackcloth." They were mourning over the conditions. Whenever any person tries to make room for **"darkness"** and disregards the Word of God and the Spirit of God, it puts the Spirit and the Word into mourning. That is grieving the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 clearly enjoins us not to do that. The Word and the Spirit are faithful to us. They will let us know when things that have no rightful place are beginning to find access into our lives. However, if we are not careful, this spirit in our text will make us feel that we can walk in darkness and still have fellowship. John said if you do that, you lie (1 John 1:6). You are living a lie when you go against light and say you are in light.

What is the lesson of the fifth vial? It lets us know that spiritual conditions in Babylon have worsened much since their inception, and we are receiving a revelation of that truth in this seventh-seal period of time. They are portrayed in our text much worse than when they began. They are even worse in the last four vials than they were in the first three. Babylon is in a "bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:11) condition. Revelation 20:3 talks about the dragon being cast "into the bottomless pit." Something that is "bottomless" has no bottom or no foundation. That is where paganism was put. In Revelation 11:7 we see the Protestant beast ascending "out of the bottomless pit." And in between those systems was the beast (Roman Catholicism) that got his "power, and his seat, and great authority" from paganism which had no biblical foundation. First Corinthians 3:11 tells us, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is the only biblical foundation. Paganism, papalism, and Protestantism were not built on Jesus Christ. They were built on falsity. They were built in a "bottomless pit" type of condition with no Bible base, no foundation in truth.

The same spirits that produced those systems are loose and working today to deceive a people who have been on a biblical base and move them from light to darkness. That is why Revelation 18:2 says that "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." Notice the expression "is fallen, is fallen." This is what is known grammatically as present perfect tense. That means a past event that has present consequences. It tells us that Babylon has already fallen, and because it has no basis in truth, it continues to have present consequences. It continues to sink to lower levels.

There is no grace without "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32) and "the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29). Those are the two witnesses and the "two olive trees" on either side of the lampstand that Zechariah 4:3 tells of. They are the only ones that are going to produce light. When they produced light, Zechariah 4:7 says, ". . . Grace, grace unto it." The Word and the Spirit meeting in the heart of the believer is what produces grace. When one moves away from the Word and the Spirit, they go from grace to disgrace and begin gnawing **"their tongues for pain"** (**Revelation**

16:10). The other main lesson depicted in our text is that judgment is going to be "**poured out**" stronger and stronger. Why is that? Well, God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). His will is to "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). In John 8:32 Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He wants a people free. Again, that is the purpose of the plagues (Exodus 7:16).

You do not have to stay under these plagues. If you will do as Revelation 18:4 says and "come out," you can be free. Remember, according to Revelation 15:1, these are "the seven last plagues." After these there are no more. Then it is eternity. God is working feverishly to break the authority and the power of false religion and false living from the lives of individuals so they can truly "serve" Him. That is what He desires. That is what truth is for. These judgments are so people, individually and collectively, are able to be loose from everything unlike God. Are you truly in a position where you are walking in light, walking in all of the understanding that God has shed on your pathway? Are you anxiously seeking for more understanding, so you can be a better man or woman? As quickly as He sheds light on your pathway, embrace it and walk in it, so you can engage in more effective service. That is what the Lord desires.

The Pouring Out of the Sixth Vial

Revelation 16:12 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.

13 And I 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.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which 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.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Judgments Bring Life

We have found that the vials which we are studying contain what Revelation 15:4 describes as "thy judgments." According to Psalm 119:43, God's "judgments" are the "word of truth." So, when the vials were being **"poured out,"** God's Word was being put forth in a very strong manner. Psalm 119:175 says, "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me." God's "judgments" are to "help" our "soul live." That is the very intent behind these vials, though many may view them in a manner other than that. The true burden of these vials is to loose men and women from systems, beliefs, and spirits that take the life of their soul.

The last four vials are all unique because they occupy three tenses. Since the seventh seal commenced in A.D. 1930, we could accurately say that these vials *have been* **"poured out,"** *they are being* **"poured out,"** and as long as time stands, they will *continue to be* **"poured out."** The Book of Revelation itself incorporates all three tenses; it is all-inclusive. In Revelation 1:19 John was instructed, "write the things which thou *hast seen* [past tense] and the things which *are* [present tense], and the things which *shall be hereafter* [future tense]." Then Revelation 16:5 says, ". . . Thou art righteous, O Lord, which *art* [present tense], and *wast* [past tense], and *shalt be* [future tense], because thou hast judged thus." The truth of these vials occupies all three tenses.

Again, the vial angels are not to be confused with the trumpet angels, which are a whole different set of angels in a completely separate series and occupy different time periods. Although, there is a great similarity between the sixth vial angel and the sixth trumpet angel. **Revelation 16:12** says that **"the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates."** In the Trumpet Series, Revelation 9:14 records, "Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." Unfortunately, because of this similarity many confuse them as representing the same time period. The sixth trumpet angel, spoken of in Revelation, Chapter 9, was during the sixth-seal period of time (A.D. 1880-1930). However, the sixth vial angel, spoken of in our text, is in the seventh-seal period of time (1930 to the Consummation).

Notice the distinct differences between the conditions described under the sixth trumpet angel and the conditions described under the sixth vial angel. The sixth trumpet angel predominantly deals with men. Revelation 9:15 says that four angels were loosed "to slay the third part of *men*." Verse 18 says that "the third part of *men*" were killed. Then verse 20 says that "the rest of the *men* which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works." Judgment in the sixth seal was predominantly poured out on the system and on the people who comprised that system. Remember that two cups were to be poured out on Babylon, one in the sixth seal and one in the seventh seal (Revelation 18:6). In the seventh seal, judgment is not only **"poured out"** on the systems, but the message is even closer; it uncovers the spirits behind the systems. In **verse 13** of our text, John saw **"three unclean spirits like frogs,"** and **verse 14** says that **"they are the spirits of devils."** God is making truth so crystal clear that we can see the very **"spirits"** which gave rise to those systems.

Verse 13 of our text tells us that **"three unclean spirits"** have **"come out."** They are no longer housed merely in religious systems. Just as we have **"come out"** of Babylon, they have **"come out"** as well. We are not the only "come-outers." **Verse 14** says that these **"spirits"** would **"go forth unto . . . the whole world."** They are working today on the people of God all over the land. They are working to replicate sectism right within the congregations

of the Church of God. They work to cause God's people to imbibe sectish thoughts, sectish teachings, and sectish practices. We are not so much contending with systems in our battle as we are dealing with the "**spirits**" that gave rise to those systems. They are working through a very specious apostasy. These "**spirits**" are infecting and motivating ministers, congregations, and fellowships to operate in the same manner as the sectarian systems that they have promoted. You may attend worship services in a building with the name Church of God, but beware. The desire of these "**spirits**" is to cause you to be overtaken by them. If the enemy has his way, he will cause a spirit to be imbibed so it will start producing sectish conditions right where you are.

These "**spirits**" are working to gather a people away from the truth. In this closing day of time, there are two main gatherings going on. Everyone is going to be gathered to one or the other. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Matthew 7:13-14, 17-18 tells us that you are either on the broad way or the narrow way, either a good tree or a corrupt tree; it is just that simple. As time prepares to reel into eternity, it is going to come down to two groups—the for or against, the truth or error, the church or Babylon.

Revelation 19:9 says, "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." God is calling today; He is gathering. Converse to that, the enemy is also gathering. **Revelation 16:14** says, "**For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather . . .**" These "**spirits**" have gone forth with one express purpose—"**to gather**" a people away from truth. Revelation 19:19 states, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army [against Christ and the church]." Then Revelation 20:8 says, "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them . . ." The whole move of the enemy in our day is "**to gather**" a people together into an amalgamation against God and against truth.

The River Was Dried Up

Verse 15 of our text says: "**Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked . . .**" These "**spirits**" are working to strip saints of their "**garments**" so they "**walk naked**," spiritually, resulting in them becoming just another sectarian body motivated by a sectarian spirit. **Verse 12** of our text speaks of "**the great river Euphrates**." What does that signify? The Euphrates River is the longest river in western Asia. It flows from Turkey to the Persian Gulf, a distance of 1,780 miles. *Holman's Bible Dictionary* tells us that there were "many significant cities located on the Euphrates, Babylon being the most important." Ancient Babylon was built on "**the great river Euphrates**." This "**river**" was its source of life, its mainstay. The ancient historian Herodotus wrote, "The city is divided into two portions by the river which runs through the midst of it." Babylon's agriculture and commerce depended on this river. The city was built and centered around it. It was their security; it was their lifeline.

Our text tells us that when the "**sixth angel poured out his vial**" on the "**great river Euphrates**" that "**the water thereof was dried up**." When truth and judgment are put on Babylon, what appears to be life and security will be dried up. People trust in all kinds of false refuges, such as; church membership, card signing, church joining, shaking a preacher's hand, and so on. They think those are life, but when God turns His Word loose, those things will all dry up. There is no life in them whatsoever! The thought of "**the water thereof was dried up**" is a symbolic statement of a divine act. It is something that only the Divine can do. Exodus 14:21 says, "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea [the Red Sea]; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." The waters were dried up, in essence. Man could not do that; only God could do that. It was done in accordance with God's Word. That is what parted it and brought about the dry land.

In Joshua, Chapter 3, we see much the same thing happening at the Jordan River. The Israelites obeyed God's Word, the river was parted, and they "passed over on dry ground." Also, Isaiah 11:15 says, "And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." These are all pictures of a Divine act.

Our text not only denotes divine intervention, but it also refers to two specific Old Testament allusions. **Verse 12** says that "**the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared**." The first

allusion refers to when Cyrus and Darius, "**kings of the east**," conquered Babylon. It might be well to review a bit of Old Testament history. The people of God became disobedient (a type of the morning-time apostasy), and they were carried away into Babylonian captivity for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10). At the end of the seventy years, the Babylonian Empire was overthrown. It was when the two "**kings of the east**" came in that the people were permitted to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and the city (a type of the evening time).

In Isaiah 44:26-28 we read: "That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem [bear in mind that Nebuchadnezzar had laid that city waste and carried the people away], Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers [this is the prophecy our text is alluding to]: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

Let us consider this. Cyrus, who was mentioned in verse 28 and also in Isaiah 45:1, began his reign about 550 B.C. This prophecy by Isaiah names him specifically almost one hundred and fifty years prior to his ascending the throne. Herodotus wrote in *The History of Herodotus, Volume 1, Section 191*, "He diverted the river into a lake and went in on the riverbed." The time came when the seventy years of Babylonian captivity were accomplished. In the prophecy concerning Cyrus, Isaiah 45:1 tells us that God "will loose the loins of kings." Daniel 5:1-6 tells us: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem [there is where he crossed the line]; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels . . . and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

"In the same hour came forth fingers [the same fingers that stooped and wrote on the ground when the woman had been taken in the act of adultery; John 8:8-9] of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." Babylon was seemingly an impregnable fortress. The city of Babylon was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; it had the world-famous hanging gardens. It was a great walled city, and "**the great river Euphrates**" ran right through the middle of it. Where the "**river**" entered the city of Babylon, there were gates that were normally shut. The water flowed through them, for they were leaved gates. The water could get through, but nobody else could get through.

God put it in the minds of Cyrus and Darius to divert the river, so the water would dry up. Their armies were able to go into that riverbed dryshod. Isaiah 45:1 also tells us that "the two leaved gates . . . shall not be shut," so that night the gates were open. Right while Belshazzar was having his drunken feast, the armies of Cyrus and Darius were marching right into Babylon to overthrow it. That is the literal analogy that our text is being drawn from. Judgment was put on Babylon because of how they handled the vessels of God. Daniel 5:30 says, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." Today God has vessels as well. Second Timothy 2:21 tells us, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." God's people are His vessels. Spiritual Babylon is misusing the sacred vessels, just as Belshazzar misused the sacred vessels. That is why God is putting judgment on it.

The Word and the Spirit Bring Knowledge and Understanding

In our text, the Lord wanted "**the kings of the east**" to show His people the way out of Babylon. Notice that the word "**kings**" (in the plural) is without a numerical designation; so it denotes two. "**East**" is the direction from which light comes; these "**kings**" bring light. Also, "**kings**" are ones you should submit to, and they have authority over you. What do "**the kings of the east**" represent? What two specific agencies does God employ to bring us light? Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding . . ." The Word is one agent of light, and the Spirit is the other. Ephesians 1:17-18 reads: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

Some may believe the two "**kings**" represent knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15 tells us that pastors

feed the saints with knowledge and understanding, and the charge to the ministry is, as Timothy was told, "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). So, knowledge and understanding come from the Word. Also, 2 Corinthians 3:6 tells us that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Also, 1 Corinthians 12:8 says, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit." It is the Spirit that enlightens "the eyes of your understanding." So, we could say that **"the kings of the east"** are knowledge and understanding, but the Word and the Spirit are the ones who bring those to us.

When the **"kings of the east"** (the Word and the Spirit) get in, they destroy the rule of Babylon over a people. Belshazzar was slain, and then Daniel 5:31 says that "Darius the Median took the kingdom." The Medo-Persian Empire, jointly under Darius and Cyrus, replaced the Babylonian Empire. As a result of the overthrow, God's people who were held captive in Babylon received permission to return to their own land and rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. (Read Ezra 1:1-3.) When you get around where the Word and the Spirit are in the seventh-seal period of time, what will you see? **Verse 13** of our text says that **"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs."** When truth is **"poured out,"** when the two **"kings of the east"** are bringing light, the **"great river Euphrates"** will dry up; then you will begin to see things as they really are. Those frog-like spirits were in the water all along. They were at the bottom of paganism, papalism, and Protestantism the whole time. They were behind every bit of it, but the truth has to be **"poured out"** to dry up the river, giving people a clear vision of these **"spirits"** and the true condition working.

The frog-like spirits had been out of view; they had been underwater. It takes a lot of preaching, a lot of truth being **"poured out,"** to cause people to see Babylon as it really is and to see the **"spirits"** that are behind it. Many people do not see it, because if they did, they would not dabble around in it. John did not see it until the **"vial"** was **"poured out,"** and people today will not see it until the **"vial"** is **"poured"** and emptied **"out."** Just as God has a Trinity, the devil has a trinity of evil. Our text says that the **"three unclean spirits like frogs"** came **"out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]."** **Verse 14** tells us that they are motivated by **"the spirits of devils."** One is no better than the other. Not a one of these systems is of God; not a one of them is a Christian system. Babylon is devilish; it always has been, and it always will be.

We do not have to take things or even people at face value. First John 4:1 says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [the Greek says *test*] the spirits . . ." The best way to test a spirit is to watch how it reacts to the Word. If it rises up against the Word, you know it is an unclean spirit. Someone with an unclean spirit may act so nice, so polite, and so kind, but when you put the Word on him or her, you will be surprised what you uncover. You will see all kinds of spirits flare up, comments such as: "Who do you think you are? Who are you to tell me? Do you think you know everything? Are you holier than thou?" It will be amazing how fast the mask will drop when you put the Word down. The Word reveals **"spirits."**

Spirits Are Compared to Frogs

Comparing unclean spirits to **"frogs"** is the second Hebrew allusion in our text. It alludes to the plague of frogs on ancient Egypt in Exodus, Chapter 8. I want you to notice that the word **"frogs"** used in **Revelation 16:13**, does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament. Why did God strike Egypt with the plague of frogs? Again, each of those plagues was a blow against one of the false Egyptian deities. The plague of frogs was against *Heqet*, a frog-headed woman, the supposed goddess of creation, birth, and resurrection. Frogs in Egypt were sacred; killing one could be answered by the penalty of death, because the Egyptians worshiped *Heqet*.

Let us look at this plague. Exodus 8:3-4 says: "And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs: And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants." What the Egyptians thought was a blessing and brought life to them became a curse and a plague. It kept them from doing the very things that sustain life. The frogs were in the ovens and the kneadingtroughs; the Egyptians could not make bread, and they could not cook. However, they could not do anything about it because the frogs were sacred.

This plague is a picture of false religion, which is the worst plague upon society. It does not produce life; it is not a blessing to mankind, but it is a plague and a curse. It hinders the sustenance of spiritual life. People are sick of it, yet because they are bound with a false belief, they will not raise a hand to deal with it. Can you see the type? The

Egyptians were worshiping frogs that to them represented creation, birth, and resurrection; but they were in their kneadingtroughs and ovens, and they could not even touch them because of their false teaching. Exodus 8:3 says that "the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly." Likewise, Babylon is abundantly full of **"unclean spirits."** In Revelation 18:2 an angel cried, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Jeremiah 5:26-27 tells us: "For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds [that is what Babylon is full of], so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich." These foul spirits are out to deceive the souls of men. They want to **"catch men"** to fill their **"cage"** down in Babylon. God wants all mankind to recognize the truth that false religion is a plague upon society and that every religious system is motivated by a spirit. According to **verse 14** of our text, everything that is not the true church is operated by **"the spirits of devils."** There is nothing almost like the Church of God. Song of Solomon 6:9 says that "she is the only one of her mother." She is unique. First Corinthians 12:13 states, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." The one body, the church (Colossians 1:18), has one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4). Every other religious body has a spirit as well. That is why God wants His people out of them; He does not want them to take in those **"unclean spirits."**

In **verse 13** of our text, John did not say that these spirits *were* **"frogs"**; he said that they were **"like frogs."** What are **"frogs"** like? They make a lot of noise. People in religion do also (Matthew 7:21-23), but salvation requires more than that. In Matthew 15:8 Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." **"Frogs"** can live on land and in water. That is just like people in Babylon. They can be equally comfortable in their religious environment or out in the world. **"Frogs"** are known for their jumping. Likewise, these **"spirits"** cause people to jump around: in the world, out of the world, in this congregation, then over in that congregation; jump, jump, jump. **"Frogs"** are also very slick and slimy. They are hard to get hold of and hard to pin down. Have you ever tried to pin someone with a religious spirit down? These **"spirits"** work to cause people to take on their nature or their frog-like characteristics.

What is so deadly in this seventh-seal period of time? It is slick, slimy **"spirits"** that have **"come out"** and are working among us to produce sectish conditions. As a matter of fact, **"frogs"** can work only in stagnant water. When the water gets stagnant, conditions are prime for these **"spirits"** to start working. They cause people who used to be settled and established to jump around. One moment they believe this; another moment they believe that. You do not know where they are going to stand on the truth, on doctrinal issues, or on matters of the standard. They just jump, jump, jump. These **"spirits"** cause people to embrace thoughts, stances, and practices that are produced by **"spirits of devils."** Fellowships and congregations are being moved by them. They are so deceptive, the people do not even see them.

Dear heart, we are not immune from the moves of the enemy. This is why these truths need to be **"poured out."** What is **"the way"** **verse 12** speaks about? John 14:6 tells us that Jesus is "the way." If we will give place to Jesus, He will bring **"the way of the kings of the east"** to us. We need the Word and the Spirit to expose these **"unclean spirits"** that replicate what produced spiritual Babylon in prior ages. We must try every thought, every idea, every teaching, and every practice in the balances of the Word and the Spirit.

Verse 14 of our text tells us that these unclean spirits **"go forth."** They are working **"to gather"** a people against truth. They are gathering a people together to form the eighth beast (Revelation 17:11), the final foe that the church is facing. This is the one last-ditch effort to try to overcome Christ and His church. Let us be wise. Let us not be moved by these **"spirits"** or by the thoughts and practices that they present. If you have been moved by these **"spirits,"** or if you are in a place that is not of God, the Lord is revealing that to you so you can get loose. That is why He sent this plague. In Exodus 7:16 God let us know that the very purpose of the plagues was to "Let my people go, that they may serve me." If God has shown you the truth, you need to do as Jeremiah 51:6 says, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance." This is the day the Lord is pouring out judgment on those **"spirits."** He wants His people free.

Thank God for His faithfulness! He is uncovering these **"spirits"** so that we can see what is working in our very day and time, so we can see what we are having to labor against. As in every age, God has made provision for victory. We need not be overcome, but we can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). If we will allow the **"kings of the east"** to have their free right of way, thank God, they will take us back to Jerusalem, back to the temple of God, and back to the land of our choice, the Church of the Living God.

The Spirits of Devils Working Miracles

Revelation 16:12 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.

13 And I 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.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which 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.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Supposed Miracles Are Deceptions

It is needful that we keep in mind the prophetic time setting of our text. The seven vials being poured out transpire in the evening time of the Gospel Day: the first three were poured out in the sixth seal, and the remaining four are being poured out in the seventh seal. The "**spirits of devils, working miracles**" is an event that the truth is revealing concerning this day and time in which you and I live. On the surface, merely reading the phrase in our text, it would appear that "**spirits of devils**" can indeed work "**miracles**." However, when we rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15), we will find that is the farthest thing from the truth.

The thought of "**spirits of devils, working miracles**" brings much confusion in the realms of religion. There are those who are very baffled when they see religious charlatans and organizations that have absolutely no biblical basis seemingly able to perform "**miracles**." As they see supposed-healing campaigns, "**miracles**" being worked, and exorcisms being performed; they stand in wonderment and say, "How can these things be?" However, when this "**vial**" is "**poured out**," when these things are put under the examination of truth, people will find that this is not as it appears to be.

Our text clearly shows that the "**spirits**" which motivate religion are the "**spirits of devils**." Verse 13 tells us that they have "**come out of the mouth of the dragon** [paganism], **and out of the mouth of the beast** [papalism], **and out of the mouth of the false prophet** [Protestantism]." These "**spirits**" have never changed. Even Protestantism was of devilish origin, and it is called "**the false prophet**." It came "*up* out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11), or out of the minds of men ("earthen vessels"; 2 Corinthians 4:7). It did not come *down* from God out of Heaven as the church did. Revelation 13:11 also lets us know that although there are some deceptive, lamb-like features, it speaks as a dragon (paganism), because the same devil motivates both systems.

Let us consider the mass healing campaigns that have been so popular. Certainly, we know the Lord can heal, but in these supposedly miraculous events, there are other things also occurring, such as people becoming financially prosperous. According to the Scriptures, the organizations that are producing these things are motivated by "**spirits of devils**." We must ask ourselves some questions. Can the devil heal? Can he give life? Can he work "**miracles**"? If we isolate the expression in our text, it would appear so. However, we must remember that we are in the midst of a series. This fifth series in the Book of Revelation commenced in Revelation 12:1, and John clarified this expression earlier. First of all, consider how the devil works. Jesus plainly told how he works in John 8:44, stating: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." The devil deals in lies. He works to deceive through falsehoods.

Earlier in the fifth series, John introduced expressions concerning "wonders and miracles" (Revelation 13:13-14). The word translated as "wonders" in verse 13 and as "miracles" in verse 14 is the same Greek word. Speaking of the Protestant beast, John said in verse 13 that "he doeth great wonders," but notice that the sentence does not conclude there. He clarified it when he said that "he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth." That expression is an allusion to the Old Testament when Elijah, a true prophet, was able to call down fire from Heaven. Israel was almost given completely over to idolatry under the evil king, Ahab. So, Elijah called for a showdown up on Mount Carmel.

He was one man against eight hundred and fifty men, but he had the true God. When he called the fire down, it was a convincing agent, and the people said, "The Lord, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God" (1 Kings 18:39).

Protestantism, called "**the false prophet**" in **Revelation 16:13**, has been trying to do a deceptive work, trying to convince people that he is the true prophet, trying to call down fire from Heaven. However, this fire that supposedly came down from Heaven was something that was merely done "in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13). In other words, to those who had no real understanding and knowledge of truth, it looked to be "great wonders" (Revelation 13:13). But it was not "great wonders" at all, because he was not a true prophet; he was a "**false prophet.**"

If you still think that he does real "wonders," let us read on. Revelation 13:13-14 says, ". . . so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them . . ." These "wonders" and supposed "**miracles**" are a work of deception; they are not true "wonders" and "**miracles.**" Verse 14 tells us that he "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." Remember, the Protestant beast came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11). People who are on the low level of man-made religion, who do not truly have an understanding of the truth, are deceived by these supposed "wonders." They are deceived by these supposed-healing campaigns, miracle rallies, prophecy seminars, and all of these other types of items that Protestantism is touting.

Verse 14 goes on to say, "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." That beast refers to the first beast. Speaking of him, Revelation 13:8 says, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." That incorporates all who are not spiritually alive, who have not been born again. Jesus said that if you have not been born again, you cannot see (John 3:3). If you cannot see truth, you certainly cannot see through falsity, and you can be duped and deceived by it.

Wonders of Falsehood

We need to understand that these are not real "wonders" or real "**miracles.**" They are lies that the devil makes appear real to those who do not know the truth. They are nothing more than "lying wonders [the Greek says 'wonders of falsehood']" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Falsehood does have some "wonders." The papal beast has some falsehoods that are "wonders." It is a real wonder that a priest can consecrate a wafer and have Christ (His body, His blood, and His divinity) come down from Heaven and inhabit that wafer. That is a wonder, but it is a "lying wonder." It is a wonder when one goes into the confessional booth for auricular confession and begins to confess his sins to a priest, that the priest can give him absolution. It is a wonder that a man can forgive and absolve sins, but it is a "lying wonder." It is a wonder that when a man sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God and speaks *ex cathedra*, from his seat, that his words are infallible, but it is a "lying wonder." It is a wonder when people die and supposedly go to Purgatory and their family can pay a priest to buy their way out of Purgatory. That is a wonder! But it is a "lying wonder."

The Protestant beast has "wonders" also. It is a wonder when preachers stand in pulpits and tell men and women that they cannot live right, that no one can live a holy life, and that "You sin, I sin, we all sin." Yet, they say you can die right. That is a wonder, but it is a "lying wonder." It is a wonder to those who believe in "once in grace, always in grace" that you cannot live right, but you cannot die wrong. That is another "lying wonder." It is a wonder when multitudes can speak "in tongues" and supposedly have the evidence of the Holy Ghost, yet do not have holy lives. That is a wonder, but it is a "lying wonder."

False religion is full of lies and deceptions, "signs and lying wonders." There are many, many more than we could enumerate. So when our text speaks of "**the spirits of devils, working miracles,**" and when Revelation 13:13 says that "he doeth great wonders," they are just the lies that false religion, motivated by "**spirits of devils,**" propagates to deceive the souls of mankind. The Amplified Bible renders 2 Thessalonians 2:9 as the "working of Satan and will be attended by great power and with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels—[all of them] lying wonders."

We need to clearly understand the truth. The devil cannot heal, nor can those operating under the power of one of those devilish spirits heal. Healing is an attribute of deity. Exodus 15:26 tells us, ". . . If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee." Healing is a divine property.

The devil has no power concerning life and death. In Exodus 7:12 the sorcerers cast down their rods, and they

became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed them all up. That is because truth will get rid of falsity. Truth will eliminate false doctrine, false teaching, and deception. Only God can create life. Acts 17:28 says, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." The life and breath of every living creature is in God's hands. Revelation 1:18 tells us that Christ has "the keys of hell and of death." The pope, the priest, and the preacher do not have the keys; only Christ has the keys.

The devil does not have power to do "**miracles.**" The only way he can perform (supposed) "**miracles**" is "in the sight of men." In other words, it appears to be a miracle, but it is not. The devil does not control man's health or man's life. There are Scriptures where the enemy puts conditions upon man, but there are no Scriptures that I am aware of which show he has removed these conditions. He was able to afflict Job, but God set his bounds; God told him what he could do. The devil does not control the elements, either. Nahum 1:3 tells us that "the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." Someone may say, "Oh, the devil is a powerful being." Most of his power is in the powers of darkness and deception. In Matthew, Chapter 4, he told Christ he would give Him the kingdoms of the world. However, in Mark 5:12 he had to get Christ's permission to enter into a herd of swine. That does not sound much like a world sovereign to me. We must remember the devil speaks and deals in lies. He might veil them with half-truths or cover them with something palatable and attractive, but underneath of it all is lies to deceive.

Satan does not possess anything but what is given to him. That is why the Scripture teaches us in Ephesians 4:27, "Neither give place to the devil." He uses these "lying wonders" to try to cause people to give him place. He uses works of deception to win men's confidence and to win men's approbation so that their minds will yield to the spirit which was manifested. It is a deceptive work to get hold of the souls of men. These supposed-miracles, done under the guise of religion, are nothing new. Ecclesiastes 1:9 lets us know that "there is no new thing under the sun." They were done in the morning-time. We read in Acts 8:11 that Simon "had bewitched them with sorceries." The word *sorceries* is from the Greek word *mageia*, which means "magic, magic acts." This verse, in *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*, reads, ". . . using magic." In the Amplified Bible, it says, "And they were attentive and made much of him, because for a long time he had amazed and bewildered and dazzled them with his skill in magic arts."

The people gave place to Simon as some great man. They said in verse 10 that he was "the great power of God," but it was not the power of God at all! It was the power of sorceries, or magic arts. "This man is the great power of God" is the same cry today regarding many religious charlatans. They want to mail you a "miracle cross" that will bring you peace and prosperity, or they will send you some "Holy Land dirt." On and on we could go with all of the various machinations that these false religious advocates engage in. However, Jesus never promised us peace or prosperity in that sense. In Matthew 10:34 Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Philippians 4:19 tells us, "But my God shall supply all your need [not all your greed]"

I remember years ago a radio broadcast on WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia. There was a man on there regularly with this slogan: "You can have what you want to have. You can be what you want to be. And you can do what you want to do." Nothing could be further from the Gospel. Those types of things appeal to the flesh, and they are motivated by "**spirits of devils.**" They deceive those who have no knowledge of the truth. The miracles that are wrought by that type of a supposed-ministry are done "in the sight of men." The purpose of those types of maneuvers is to cause men to give place to the devil and imbibe the very spirit of those things.

Notice the definition that *Webster* gives us concerning magic: "the pretended art of providing baffling effects or allusions by sleight of hand, concealed apparatus, etc." That is exactly what is occurring in Revelation 13:13. The Protestant beast was trying to establish himself as a true prophet when in reality he was a false prophet. This system appeared as though they were great prophets, great men of God! But they were only using lying wonders and sleight of hand. *Webster* defines the word *sleight* as "crafty, clever, cunning or craft used in deceiving; a clever act of deception; skillful trick." That is exactly what is transpiring in the realms of religion. They are using clever, cunning acts to bring deception to the souls of men. Revelation 13:14 says, "And deceiveth them" That ought to let us know that there is no divinity in it, and if God is not in it, there is no real miracle-working power in it.

We need to dry up the "**river**" of Babylon as it is portrayed in our text so people can see the devilish "**spirits**" behind these false religious moves. We need to pour out God's judgments on them. Certainly, healing is in God's plan, but there are some requirements to healing. You just do not walk down the line and throw your hand on everybody's forehead and they are slayed in the Spirit and healed. James 5:15-16 tells us: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults

[or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'sin'] . . . that ye may be healed." God will not heal over top of sin.

The people who come into these religious campaigns come with every type of spiritual condition. We do not see where any confession is made, and we do not see where there is any repentance. We just see a supposed-miraculous healing work. However, conditions have to transpire before miraculous works can be wrought. Even Jesus could not do miraculous works in every type of condition. (Read Matthew 13:58.) False religious prophets, charlatans, and hucksters are making merchandise out of the souls of men. "Send me some money and I will send you . . ." There is usually one common denominator, "God will prosper you if you will send me some money." The only one who is prospering is the one who is receiving the money.

Revelation 19:20 says, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them . . ." Bear in mind again, when we read expressions like "wrought miracles," we are still in the closing verses of the fifth series. John, as many writers, introduced us in Chapter 13 to the expressions he was employing and how he was using them (Revelation 13:13-14). Then thereafter, he made a more abbreviated reference to them (Revelation 16:14; 19:20). That is common in writing. A writer will explain something when he begins the onset of the writing, and then later he will refer to it in a more brief form. When John talked about "**working miracles**," he was referring back to how he introduced them initially: deceptive "wonders" performed "in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13).

Who were the ones deceived? Revelation 19:20 continues, ". . . the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image." A people devoid of a knowledge of truth were the ones deceived by these false wonders. This is a picture of a people whose minds had already been marked by false teaching produced by a false spirit; thereby, they were deceived. "**The false prophet**" could only deceive those who have that mark, those who have imbibed that spirit, and those who are under the power of that system. God has angels who pour out vials of truth so His people do not get taken up with those things. John 8:32 says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The truth makes you free from a lie. Someone may say, "Oh, it makes you free from sin." No, 1 John 1:7 tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Truth makes you free from falsity, from a lie.

Modern-Day Sorceries

These mass healing campaigns and prophecy sessions are a modern version of Simon's sorceries in a Christian cloak. Our world is saturated with them. You can know if a prophet is a true prophet or not by whether what he prophesies about comes to pass or not (Jeremiah 28:9). False prophets throughout the years have looked for a personal, political antichrist. There were those who touted Hitler as the Antichrist. Mussolini, Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt, and Saddam Hussein were all called the Antichrist as well. On and on we could go, but they are all dead and gone. That proves that those prophets were false.

Deuteronomy 18:22 says, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." We have false prophets on all sides today. They prophesy of all kinds of events that are going to transpire. They say, "There is going to be a war, and the blood will run up to the horses' bridles." Do not be afraid of that. Again, these campaigns are nothing more than Simon's sorceries in a Christian cloak. Revelation 9:21 tells us, "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries . . ." Those who had compromised on truth began to engage in sorceries. Speaking of Babylon, Revelation 18:23 says, "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

If you study the word *sorceries* in the Greek, you will find that it actually means "medication and magic." In modern language it is a picture of "**the spirits of devils**" administering drugs to deaden men's minds so they can control their minds and their affections and seduce them. We need to understand that the enemy is a liar, and he works through lies and deceptions. He does not have power to take any place; a place has to be given to him. Thus, he uses lies to persuade men and women to give him place. His power is the power of deception and darkness.

Let us go a step further. These "**spirits**" cannot raise people in seances. They cannot work through mystics in the sense of doing anything that is reserved for the divine realm. They can only work to deceive. Look at 1 Samuel, Chapter 28, when Saul consulted the witch of Endor. There a work of deception was being wrought. Verse 11 says, "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel." Then verse 13 says that

the woman "saw gods ascending out of the earth." First of all, there are no gods (plural). Isaiah 44:8 says, "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." When a man dies, he does not become a god. There are no other gods, and they do not ascend out of the earth.

The second thing we need to recognize is Samuel was not in the earth. When Jesus uncapped a picture of eternity, Luke 16:22-23 tells us: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes . . ." When our eyes close in the finality of death, we either go to Paradise or we go to Hades. So, Samuel was not in the earth. In verse 14 Saul asked, "What form is he of?" The woman told him that "An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle." I wonder how he got the mantle over there. Then verse 15 says, "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" Yet, she could not bring him up. We know this because when the rich man wanted Lazarus to come over and just dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, Luke 16:26 tells us, ". . . between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." Also, when he entreated God to send Lazarus to go back and preach to his brethren, God would not allow it.

Samuel supposedly told Saul in verse 19, ". . . to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Saul was not headed for the same eternal destiny as Samuel was. That was a blatant lie. The woman did not bring up Samuel. Verse 7 tells us that she had "a familiar spirit." The Hebrew word for "familiar" is *owb*, which means, "mumble, hence a necromancer." A *necromancer* is "one who speaks from the hollow of his belly," or in other words, a ventriloquist. Saul was hearing the witch of Endor. His deluded mind was expecting to see Samuel, and she was able to use the powers of the spirit she possessed to be a necromancer, or a ventriloquist, and caused Saul to think he heard the voice of Samuel. All he really heard was the voice of a devilish spirit performing a "lying wonder." Isaiah 8:19 warns, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

Some people may say, "Some of what this supposed-voice of Samuel said was true." In Acts, Chapter 16, what the woman who had the spirit of divination said was true as well. Many times the enemy uses half-truths in order to bring his deceptive work. The words in Acts 16:16, "a spirit of divination," in the Greek says "a spirit of python," or of the serpent. That is the same spirit which motivates this beast of Protestantism: it "spake as a dragon" (Revelation 13:11), and Revelation 12:9 denotes that dragon as a "serpent."

God's will is to "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). It is only as we have a "knowledge of the truth" that we can protect ourselves from these "**spirits**." Those who do not have an understanding of the truth make themselves candidates for deception by seeking signs and following supposed wonders. Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matthew 12:39). We are not to follow signs. If we are truly living in the manner that God ordained, signs will be following us (Mark 16:17-18).

The sixth "**vial**" being "**poured out**" is a time of revelation. We are living in a day when God is uncovering the works of darkness. He is uncovering the enemy's deceptive manners of operation. He is sending forth truth to dry up the waters so men and women can truly see what is behind these things. These "**spirits of devils**" are not truly "**working miracles**," but they are working "lying wonders" to deceive the souls of man. Thank God, when you get around where the truth is, God will uncover that! Then you do not have to fall prey to it and give place to the devil.

The Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:12 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.

13 And I 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.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which 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.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The Battle Is Spiritual

As we begin to consider the expressions "**the battle**" (verse 14) and "**Armageddon**" (verse 16), we must be mindful that the nature of the language of the Revelation is symbolic (Revelation 1:1). The word "*Armageddon*" in *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* is defined as "a symbolical name." Even the scholars have recognized that fact. So, while the religious masses are so prone to literalize this text, we must be reminded that these are symbolic expressions that are conveying spiritual truths to us. Also, we must recognize the prophetic placement of this event. This gathering, or this "**battle**," is portrayed in the sixth vial or in the seventh-seal period of time, the very day and time in which you and I live.

These "**three unclean spirits**" that have "**come out**" (verse 13), are the "**spirits of devils**," and one of their primary purposes is "**to gather**" a people "**to the battle**" (verse 14). They are working in these closing days of time "**to gather**" a people as an amalgamated force against Christ and His church for one last attempt and confrontation to fight against Christ and truth. We can see this truth that the enemy is working to consolidate and amalgamate his forces repeated through the succeeding chapters of the Revelation. Survey these chapters with me. Revelation 17:13-14 says: "These have one mind [speaking of those that comprise the eighth beast; Revelation 17:11], and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb"

Revelation 19:19 declares, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together [for what purpose?] to make war against him [Christ] that sat on the horse, and against his army." We see the same thing in Revelation 20:7-8 which says: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan [which represents 'the dragon' in this reference; Revelation 20:2] shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle." What the "**unclean spirits**" could not accomplish individually throughout the Gospel Day, they will try to accomplish collectively.

Verse 16 of our Scripture text says, "**And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**" The King James Version assumes a personal pronoun, but just to clarify it, *The Pulpit Commentary* on page 396 says: "They gathered, that is, the spirits of verse 14, of which this is a continuation, the same verb being repeated." So when we read that "**he gathered**," in essence it is "*they* gathered." The "**unclean spirits**" are the ones who are doing the gathering. The "**spirits**" of the "**dragon**," the "**beast**," and the "**false prophet**" (verse 13) are working as a collective unit in order to bring about a consolidation of all of the powers of evil.

The "**spirits**" and what they are producing are portrayed in the plural in the verses of the succeeding chapters previously referenced. Revelation 17:13-14 uses the word "These." Revelation 19:19 speaks of "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and *their* armies." It is a collective effort; it is a force of false unity to counteract the true unity that is being fostered by the Spirit of God. The "**unclean spirits**" are bringing these forces of the enemy (forces that have worked individually and separately through the years of time) together in a collective manner. Revelation 20:7-8 again shows a plurality of "Satan" (the dragon) and "Gog and Magog" (papalism and Protestantism) united in concerted effort. The move of these "**spirits**" is "**to gather**." Furthermore all of these texts have their prophetic time setting in the seventh-seal period of time.

We need to understand that the nature of this **"battle"** is spiritual. These are **"spirits,"** so it is a spiritual **"battle."** Revelation 19:11 says, "And I saw heaven [not God's Heaven, but 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus'; Ephesians 2:6] opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." This lets us know that it is a war over righteousness: righteousness versus unrighteousness; right versus wrong; truth versus error. While multitudes on all sides are looking for a *literal* war to come, the nature of this **"battle"** is *spiritual*.

Revelation 19:15 says, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." The article of this warfare is a "sword," and this sword that went "out of his mouth" is "the word of God" (Hebrews 4:12). Whose mouth did this sword come out of? Revelation 19:13 says, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." Verse 16 tells us, "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." It went out of Jesus Christ's mouth.

Again, Revelation 19:11 says that "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." This is a **"battle"** over righteousness. The true church has never engaged in or resorted to carnal warfare. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 the Apostle Paul clearly told us: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [they are not literal swords and guns], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is a spiritual warfare over the minds of men where the enemy is trying to access and deceive.

The Kingdom Is Spiritual

The thought of literal warfare comes from an erroneous concept of the kingdom. When Christ came in His First Advent, the Jewish nation was looking for a literal king. They were looking for one to come and overthrow the Romans. They wanted him to cast off that galling Roman yoke and restore sovereignty to Israel. In John 6:15, after Jesus fed the five thousand, He "perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king." They wanted a king who could give fish and loaves; they wanted a literal king who could satisfy the desires and appetites of the flesh. However, Jesus let Pilate plainly know that "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Jesus never came to establish a worldly kingdom in His First Advent, and He is not going to come to establish a worldly kingdom in His Second Advent. He is not coming back to fight some literal battle, ride on a literal white horse, take a literal sword, engage in carnal warfare where the blood will run up to the horses' bridles, defeat the enemy, and then set up a literal kingdom over in Palestine. Nay, nay, dear heart, Jesus will never do such. When He comes the second time, He is not coming to *set up* a kingdom, He is coming to *deliver up* a kingdom.

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:24, "Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God" The kingdom was set up in His First Advent. In the prophecy of Daniel, when Daniel interpreted the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had concerning the metallic image, he let us know the four different substances represented four different successive world empires. The four empires were connected chronologically. They were: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. He said that right "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom" (Daniel 2:44), and He did. He came during the rule of the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1, 7).

Jesus said in Mark 9:1, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." The Kingdom of God already came. If it did not, we must conclude one of three things. First, Jesus lied, but we know that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); so we can dismiss that thought. Second, there must be some men standing around who are more than two thousand years old. However, if that occurred, it would definitely be newsworthy. The third option is we must conclude that the kingdom came with power before those people died, and this occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus gave us insight to the nature of His kingdom. In John 18:36 He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" His kingdom is not a literal kingdom, it is not a worldly kingdom, and His adherents do not engage in carnal warfare. Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is [present tense verb] not meat and drink [not literal]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Every one of those is a spiritual quality that emanates from the Spirit of God (the Holy Ghost). This kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. The Scriptures instruct Christians not to engage in carnal warfare. When Peter smote off the high priest servant's ear in the Garden (John 18:10), Jesus told him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all

they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Then Romans 12:17 says, "Recompense to no man evil for evil."

When the Prophet Isaiah looked down through the prophetic glass and envisioned the New Testament Dispensation, he told us in Isaiah 2:4, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." He was not talking about a literal aspect; he was talking about in "the mountain of the LORD'S house" (verse 2), which is Mount Zion or the church (Hebrews 12:22-23). He was talking about the spiritual realities that the New Testament would bring in. Rather than carnal warfare, there would be fruitfulness; there would be a harvest of souls. Truth is never to be defended or propagated through carnal means or force. The nature of this "**battle**" is spiritual.

Think with me: truth and error have been at war with one another since the church appeared on the stage of action. In Revelation 12:1, at the beginning of series five when John introduced us to the Gospel Day, he introduced us to a woman representing the morning-time church. As soon as she appeared, verse 3 says that the "great red dragon" appeared. When these two met, there was "war" (verse 7); a spiritual conflict began afresh. In one sense, there has been war between truth and error since the dawn of human history. Second Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The Apostle Paul brought up Eve and how the serpent warred against the welfare of her soul. Since time immemorial there has been a war between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.

The church is in a warfare yet today. Ephesians 6:11-12 tells us: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood [it is not a literal battle], but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [or the Greek says 'wicked spirits'] in high places." Paul admonished the young minister Timothy to "war a good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18). In 2 Timothy 2:3-4 he again admonished him: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." However, this warfare is not "**the battle**" of "**Armageddon**" spoken of in our text.

The Final Battle

Our text and the succeeding chapters depict a gathering for one final conflict in the evening time. Revelation 16:14 says "**the spirits**" are going "**to gather**" ones "**to the battle**"; that is in the singular. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* defines the word "**battle**" in **verse 14**, as "a single encounter or a series." In accordance to the verbiage employed in our text, the word "**battle**" is prefaced with "**the**," which denotes a singular encounter. Again, the church has been in a warfare since the commencement of the Gospel Day. The nature of "**the battle**" in our text will be the same as in the war—right against wrong, truth against error. A war has many battles throughout its duration. Our text is not speaking of the war, but rather the final "**battle**."

The truth of a final and decisive conflict has been held by brethren who understood the message of the Revelation throughout the years. F. G. Smith, in his book entitled *The Revelation Explained*, the 1918 edition, page 332, wrote this: "When the confederation of wickedness is complete, the united host of God's enemies will be utterly defeated as by the overthrow of Megiddo." Lawrence J. Chestnut, in his book entitled *The Battle of Armageddon: What, Where, and When*, wrote on page 51: "It is shown beyond all question there is going to be an Armageddon battle." Harold Barber in the tract entitled *The Battle of Armageddon* says on page 11, "God is gathering His faithful over into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon for the decisive battle."

How do we know that this decisive "**battle**" has not yet occurred or is not yet occurring? Well, "**the spirits**" have not fully consolidated the forces of the enemy. They are still gathering. The eighth beast is forming, but it is not fully formed; and this "**battle**" does not take place until after it is fully formed. The only place the word "**Armageddon**" appears in the New Testament is in our text in a seventh-seal setting. This leads us to the reason for the employment of that word. As with much of the imagery employed in this chapter, it is an allusion to the Old Testament economy. What does "**a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon**" refer to? If you look in *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, it is from the Hebrew word *har-megiddo*. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *har* as "a mountain." It is actually speaking of the mountain of Megiddo.

According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, the word *Megiddo* means "place of troops." One scholar defined it through a Bible dictionary as "Mount of Holiness and Truth." Just to show you the folly of literalists and dispensationalists who try to say that a literal, final **"battle"** is going to transpire there, the *Archeological Commentary*, page 38, tells us that Megiddo is a "13-acre site." It would be awfully hard to fight a world war on thirteen acres. Why the Hebrew allusion to this mountain of Megiddo? William Barclay, in his *Daily Study Bible Series*, said: "Megiddo was in the Plain of Estralon. This was part of the great highway from Egypt to Damascus. And from the most ancient times to the time of Napoleon, it has been one of the great battlegrounds of the world. Megiddo and the Plain of Estralon was the site of many of the great decisive battles of Eastern history."

Keep in mind that we are dealing in imagery and in symbolism. When our text employs **"Armageddon,"** it is drawing us back to the mountain of Megiddo. Megiddo holds a special place in Old Testament history; it was the scene of two of the greatest victories won by ancient Israel. It was where Barak conquered the Canaanites (Judges, Chapter 4) and where Deborah sang her war song (Judges, Chapter 5). They overcame an insurmountable foe, because God intervened. Then it was where Gideon overcame the Midianites (Judges, Chapter 7). It is also noted for two great defeats: the death of Saul (1 Samuel, Chapter 31) and the death of Josiah (2 Kings 23:29). It was at Megiddo that Azariah died by the arrows of Jehu (2 Kings 9:27). This was a site where many decisive battles were fought.

Two Final Gatherings

Let us bring the lesson up to the New Testament setting. The "mountain" of "the place of troops," or the "mountain of holiness and truth," is portraying the final gatherings. Just as the **"three unclean spirits" (verse 13)** are gathering people together (**verse 14**), God is gathering a people together too. In the seventh-seal period of time there are two great, final gatherings. This is it! After this is the end; time is going to reel into eternity. The two gatherings are going on right now.

Revelation 18:4 says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God is gathering a people together. Isaiah 35:10 tells us, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." God is working. He has "set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people" (Isaiah 11:11). Isaiah 51:11 says, "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Revelation 19:9 reads, "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." There is a gathering to two different suppers. The other side in Revelation 19:17-18 says: ". . . Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh . . . and the flesh . . ." God is gathering a people to "the true sayings of God," to the Word of God, where they are standing on the "sea of glass" (Revelation 15:2). At the same time, the **"spirits of devils"** are gathering a people together to "eat the flesh" of men, the teachings of men who are motivated by them.

God's people are being called to the mountain of holiness and truth. Zechariah 8:3 tells us, "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion [a picture of the evening time], and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain." Then Isaiah 35:8 says, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness." Zion is the "holy mountain," the "way of holiness," and the "city of truth." The "mount of holiness and truth" (the definition of Megiddo, according to one Bible dictionary) is the church. God is gathering His people to the church, to truth, and to holiness.

God is amassing His forces, while the enemy is amassing his for this decisive **"battle."** Again, Megiddo was also called a "place of troops." The saints are God's troops. Revelation 19:14 says, "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Who is "clothed in fine linen, white and clean"? Verse 8 lets us know who this is: "And to her [Christ's wife, the church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The saints are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3), and they are to "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). In Psalm 18:29 the psalmist penned, "For by thee I have run through a troop." We are being gathered to a "place of troops." If we live long enough, we will be in it; but if not, our posterity will be.

Let us get a clear picture. This is not a literal "**battle**," but rather a "**battle**" produced by "**spirits of devils**," a spiritual "**battle**." In 1 John 4:6 John said: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Those are the two components that have comprised this warfare since the dawn of the Gospel Day and will also comprise it in the final conflict. It will be "the Spirit of truth" against "the spirit of error." "**Armageddon**" is a symbol depicting the final and decisive "battle," which will transpire in this seventh-seal period of time prior to Christ's Second Advent.

Revelation 20:8-9 says: "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 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." Please bear in mind, we are dealing in symbolic expressions. "**The spirits**" of the enemy are gathering religious forces to compass "the camp of the saints." They will feverishly work to amass a people against truth. They will work so feverishly that verse 8 says that "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." However, Ecclesiastes 1:9 tells us that "there is no new thing under the sun." God's people, numerically, have always been outnumbered (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). The word *compassed* merely means "encircled." At that fateful time, the saints will be surrounded by falsity and error. They are already surrounded by falsity and error, but at this time, it will be at an heightened pitch.

Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and 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." How will Christ "overcome" them? He will "overcome," as He has in all ages, through a faithful people who stand true to the message. Ecclesiastes 1:9 tells us, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." What brought victory in the past is what will bring victory in the future. The Lamb is the "King of kings." Now, it would not be good to be the "King of kings" if one did not have any "kings" to be "King" over. Who are the "kings"? Revelation 1:5-6 says that "Jesus Christ . . . hath made us kings." We are the "kings," the "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9) over whom Christ is the "King."

The Word Brings Victory

Revelation 20:9 says that "fire came down from God out of heaven." People commonly view that as the fire of the Consummation, the end of time; but to be consistent, we must recognize we are dealing in symbolism. Thus, it cannot be the literal fires that will come at the Consummation. What is this "fire" that overcomes the power of the enemy? Jeremiah 23:29 says, "Is not my word like as a fire?" God sends victory through His Word! What did God use to bring victory in times past? What did He use to defeat the dragon? Revelation 12:11 says that "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Their testimony was based in God's Word. That is what defeated the dragon. What laid a deadly wound to papalism? Revelation 13:14 says that it "had the wound by a sword." Hebrews 4:12 lets us know that "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." The Word of God laid a deadly wound to papalism.

It will be through the Word of God and through a faithful people who stand true to the message of truth that the final "**battle**" shall be won. When we are "holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:16), we will shine out in the midst of the encircling darkness. "**The spirits**" of the enemy are going to encircle "the camp of the saints." However, the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:8, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." The enemy will think that they are working against truth, but it is just as what Joseph said concerning his brethren selling him into slavery: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good . . ." (Genesis 50:20). God has a way of turning things around.

As "the camp of the saints" is compassed in a greater way, it will work for truth. How will it work for truth? Deuteronomy 33:17 says, "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together . . ." As the compassing amplifies, God will begin to use it to push the people of God together into a greater, more cohesive unity. Isaiah 30:26 reads, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days [the seventh-seal period of time], in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people . . ." As the pressure increases, God will turn it around and use it to work for the truth. He will bind up the breaches that have produced the various camps and bring His people together into greater unity; unity brings power.

The eighth beast is described in Revelation 17:3 as "having seven heads and ten horns." Notice that there are no crowns. The paganistic beast had "seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" (Revelation 12:3),

and the papal beast had "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns" (Revelation 13:1). Both paganism and papalism had political aspects; they were politico-ecclesiastical bodies with civil power behind them. "Crowns" indicate the power of civil rule (in 2 Kings 11:12 a crown was put upon Joash, and he was made king). However, the eighth beast will have no civil power, as such. His power is the power of religious deception and the power of influence.

Revelation 19:15 says, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword . . ." As the unity becomes more cohesive and people remain faithful to truth, the message that goes out of Christ's mouth will bring an awakening. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:6 says that "at midnight there was a cry made." The word *cry* denotes *preaching*. How do we know? Matthew 3:1 says, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching . . ." Then verse 3 says, "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one *crying* in the wilderness . . ." At midnight, or at the end of the day, there was some preaching. After that, Matthew 25:7 tells us that "all those virgins arose"; it was a universal awakening. They did not all make the right moves, but they were all awakened to their condition. Also, Revelation 20:9 says that "fire came down." These are all various expressions of the one and self-same thing: the preaching of the Word!

When we are compassed about and the enemy is ready to consummate things with this final "**battle**," Christ will loose "the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword." We will be able to see a unified people who will be true to the message, continue to be faithful, and be able to be victorious. God will be able to use them and the truth to reap every honest heart! This is a glorious picture! Jeremiah 51:2 says that the Lord "will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her." Matthew 3:12 says that Christ's "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." What is the fan? Christ "had in his right hand seven stars" (Revelation 1:16), and the "seven stars are the angels [*aggelos*, ministers]" (verse 20). The fan is a ministry with a message. They are going to "empty her land" (Jeremiah 51:2). Before the end comes, God is going to empty out of Babylon every honest heart.

Speaking of Babylon, Revelation 18:21-23 says: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee." Before time reels into eternity, every part of the bride of Christ will be emptied out of Babylon. In John 3:21 Jesus said, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light . . ." The preaching of the truth will provide an awakening so that every honest heart will be saved. Truth will be "clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11), and "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). God will vindicate His truth and vindicate His church in the end.

I trust we can see the truth concerning "**the battle**" of "**Armageddon**." It is not literal, as many suppose, but spiritual. It is going to be the final and decisive "**battle**" of the Gospel Day, a "**battle**" of truth against error. These "**spirits**" that **verse 14** speaks of, are working even now to set the stage for the final "**battle**." However, God is also working to "**gather**" a people to set the stage for this final "**battle**." Thank God, not only do we know that, but we also know the outcome! Revelation 17:14 says that "the Lamb shall overcome." We are on the winning side! Truth will prevail! The Lord has a message that will continue to be heralded and a people who are gathering to it and who will live it.

Verse 15 of our text tells us the role that we are to play now and to continue to play until the end. It says, "**Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments . . .**" These "**spirits**" want to strip us of our "garments of salvation" (Isaiah 61:10) and "**gather**" us away from truth. However, if we will watch and keep our experience up to date, we can remain "with him . . . called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). May God help us to ever be such.

If we are allowed by time to still be here, we can continue to be a part of that faithful band, the "armies . . . upon white horses" (Revelation 19:14). Christ can use us to defeat the powers of the enemy. The Gospel Day will end as glorious, powerful, and victorious as it began, times seven! We have every reason to be encouraged. When we see the day of redemption drawing nigh, Jesus said to "lift up your heads" (Luke 21:28). He brought in the church as a beautiful bride in her pristine glory, and He is not going to take her out as anything less than a beautiful bride. He is going to take her out in glory! We now live in a glorious day, and "brighter days are sweetly dawning." Only God in Heaven knows when the final and decisive "**battle**" of this war will transpire. We have to make certain we stay with Him. We may live to see it, or we may not, but it will come.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN—PART NINE

The Pouring Out of the Seventh Vial

Revelation 16:17 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.

18 And 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.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Two Ministries With the Same Message

In this text we see "**the seventh**" and final "**vial.**" Each "**vial**" contains a host of truths, and certainly there are many more truths contained within Chapter 16 than we have been able to deal with in this study. However, my burden has been to present an overview of "the seven plagues of the seven angels" (Revelation 15:8) and deal with the predominant truths incorporated in these verses. Our lesson text is no different. As we begin to consider this text, let us remember that these vials, "**poured out**" in the seventh-seal period of time, are unique. Jesus said in Revelation 1:19, "Write the things which thou hast seen [past tense], and the things which are [present tense], and the things which shall be hereafter [future tense]." This lets us know that the scope of the Revelation is all-inclusive: it incorporates the entirety of the Gospel Day. Some is past, some is present, and some yet lies ahead. That takes on special significance when we look at the pouring out of the last four vials. They began to be poured out in A.D. 1930, which is historical today; they are being poured out presently; and as long as time stands, they will continue to be poured out.

The final four vials are being "**poured out**" in the seventh-seal period of time; there are no more. This is one reason the cry in **verse 17** was "**It is done.**" When these vials are done, human history will be done, and time will be no more. However, since time is still standing, the last four vials are still being "**poured out.**" Although Revelation, Chapter 16, refers to "seven angels," it was only two ministries: one in the sixth seal and one in the seventh seal. Essentially, they have the same message. Certainly, the seventh-seal message has more detail and more depth, but it really is one ministry speaking one message with one voice.

Someone may ask, "Was it really one ministry speaking different facets of truth?" In Revelation 17:1 "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" gave John understanding concerning "the great whore." The Scripture does not designate which vial angel, because they all essentially had the same truth and the same message. It is the same in Revelation 21:9. "One of the seven angels which had the seven vials" gave John a revelation concerning the church, "the Lamb's wife." It does not specify which one.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10 the Apostle Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing . . ." Those who truly have a message of truth in this evening time speak the same message concerning Babylon and the church. Isaiah 52:8 tells us, "Thy watchmen shall lift up *the* voice [not their voice]; with *the* voice together [there is unity] shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion." The four angels pouring out their vials in the seventh seal are all one ministry pouring them out concurrently, or at the same time. It is a picture of that second cup being poured out on Babylon (Revelation 18:6).

Pouring the Vial Into the Air

Verse 17 of our text says, "**And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.**" At casual observance, this would appear to be a strange thing to do. What is wrong with "**the air**"? God created it, designed it, and ordained it; why put judgment on it? Keep in mind that we are dealing in symbols. "**The air**" cannot be seen. Yet, we can see its effects. We can see the rustling of the leaves on a tree, but we cannot see "**the air.**" Jesus spoke of this in John

3:8 when He likened the wind to the Spirit; you hear it and you see its effects, but you cannot see it. In our text, we know that the judgment could not be put on God's Spirit. However, "**the air**" does represent a spirit. This "spirit" is called "the prince of the power of *the air*" in Ephesians 2:2. It is talking about Satan, the devil, because he is the master spirit behind all other spirits. He works as "**the air**," unseen; yet, his effects are all very visible. We can identify what "**the air**" is by identifying "the prince." Satan is the one who is the "prince."

Look at the words of Jesus in John 12:31, which reads, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." He was talking about Satan. In John 14:30 He said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Jesus also said in John 16:8-11: "And when he [speaking of the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." When Jesus referred to "the prince," He was referring to the "prince of the power of the air," the "spirit" behind all disobedience and sin: Satan.

In the sixth vial, Revelation 16:14 spoke of "the spirits [plural] of devils [plural]." The "spirits of devils" were uncovered, but in **verse 17**, judgment was put right on the devil himself. What is the lesson? Just as the wind (or "**the air**") is behind the rustling leaves, since time began, behind every obstacle to man's spiritual welfare, behind every opposing force, has been the devil. In this final "**vial**," truth has uncovered Satan himself. It has ripped off the mask from all of the religious spirits and shown that the devil is behind them. What will that realization do? **Verse 18** says that "**there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake.**" When a man realizes that what he thought was right is actually of the devil, it will shake him to the core of his being. If there is any honesty in him, it will cause him to begin rearranging things and to start making moves in his life; it will bring an "**earthquake.**"

The Apostle Paul is a good example. He had been persecuting the church, but when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, the Lord said, "I am Jesus" (Acts 9:5). Can you imagine the thoughts that passed through Saul's mind when he heard that? Up to that point, he had thought Jesus was an impostor. He thought he was doing God's service (John 16:2). He thought he was standing for right, only to find out that everything he was upholding was wrong! Acts 9:6 tells us that Saul was "trembling and astonished." He thought Jesus was like the others who had made false boasts, like the ones mentioned by Gamaliel in Acts 5:36-37. However, when Jesus appeared to him personally, it produced an "**earthquake.**" Saul was shaken. He had been a zealous persecutor (Galatians 1:13-14), but he did it in ignorance (1 Timothy 1:13), thinking he was right.

There is a whole host of people today engulfed in religion, just as Saul of Tarsus was. They are in the wrong systems, but they are convinced they are right. They are just as zealous as Saul was, but they are also just as wrong as he was. It took a light brighter than the noonday sun and the appearance of Jesus Christ to help Saul see the error of his ways. In our day, God has a ministry that is pouring out judgment on false systems and revealing that every one of them is produced by Satan himself.

The Voice of Christ

Verse 17 of our text says that there came "**a great voice out of the temple.**" This is the same phrase used in Revelation 16:1 at the commencement of the pouring out of these vials. What is this "**great voice**"? In Revelation 1:10 John heard behind him "a great voice." Verse 11 tells us that the "**great voice**" said, "I am Alpha and Omega." We see the expression "Alpha and Omega" also used in Revelation 22:13, and Revelation 22:16 lets us know that Jesus was the One speaking. This "**great voice**" is the voice of Christ. It is notable that when we were introduced to the vials, this "**great voice**" appeared on the scene, and then in the last "**vial**," it appeared again. Jesus continued in Revelation 1:11, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." "Alpha and Omega" are the first and last characters of the Greek alphabet. His "**voice**" was spoken of in the first vial and in the last "**vial.**" When you see the truth of the pouring out of these vials, you will see it is the voice of Christ speaking through these judgments and truths. Furthermore, when the ministry is pouring out the vials, in reality, you are hearing the voice of Christ.

Verse 18 of our text says, "**And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake . . .**" This type of language was also employed in the Trumpet Series. Revelation 8:5 says, "And the angel [Christ] took the censer [performing a high priestly function], and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth [those earthen vessels in the upper room]: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." In Revelation, Chapter 8, these symbolic expressions represent what occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

The employment of the same expressions in our text portrays the truth the songwriter described, when he wrote, *"Back to the light of the morning, Jesus our Captain leads,"* ("Back to the Blessed Old Bible"). In the evening time, specifically in the seventh seal, we are moving *"back to the light of the morning."*

Of what were those expressions emblematic? First, what did they represent in the morning time? Acts 2:4-6 says: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues [or the Greek says 'languages'], as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak [here are the 'voices'; one hundred and twenty people came out of that upper room] in his own language." Then we read in verse 11 that the people heard "them speak in our tongues [languages] the wonderful works of God." Verse 14 states, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice . . ." The **"voices"** are those who are filled with the Holy Spirit, who serve as God's witnesses (Acts 1:8). When they came out of that upper room, they were witnessing.

The **"voices"** in the period of time in which you and I live are also those who are filled with the Holy Ghost. They have a real experience, and they are witnessing to others. If we want to see precious men and women get help, there must be some **"voices,"** or some witnesses. God uses human instrumentality; that is His plan. It always has been and always will be.

What do the **"thunders"** in our text represent? Let us consider some Scriptures and also see what it represents when it is introduced in the morning time. In Job 37:5 Elihu, the comforter to whom God never laid any charge, said, "God thundereth marvellously with his voice." So, in the morning time there were "voices" first; the one hundred and twenty who came out of the upper room and began to witness. Then Peter stood up with a message. He was not witnessing; he was preaching, and when he preached God began to thunder. The thundering represents the sounding of God's voice. When Peter thundered out the Word of God, there was some "lightnings": people gained light and understanding. After the "thunderings" and the "lightnings," there was "an earthquake." People were shaken up and said in Acts 2:37, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

There are other Scriptures that also make it clear what thunder represents. Psalm 18:13 says, "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice." Psalm 29:3 tells us, "The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth." Then John 12:28-29 says: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered." Thundering is the voice of God.

In our text, we see that God has a ministry who will pour out the truth of God's Word and expose Satan for what he is, revealing that he is behind all of these other systems. When God's ministry will "cry aloud, spare not" (Isaiah 58:1), there will be some witnesses who will stand to their feet, some saints who will put a voice to it, and God's Word will be just that much more thundered out. That will bring **"lightning."** People will receive understanding. Then there will be **"an earthquake,"** some shaking up, and people will do some moving. The convincing agent to others is the witness. If we will be witnesses when the presence of God is there, it will set the stage for the **"earthquake."**

Let us look closer at what **"lightnings"** represents. Psalm 77:18 says, "The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook." This reveals the same truth as our text. Whenever God's Word goes forth, there will be **"lightnings."** Light is "understanding" (Psalm 119:130; Psalm 97:4). God's Word is sent to bring enlightenment, or understanding, and then some shaking and quaking will begin to take place.

Do you want to know why people are not shaking as they should? It is because they do not have the understanding that they should have. In verse 2 of the song, "At Calvary," the song writer penned, *"By God's Word at last my sin I learned; Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned . . ."* When understanding comes and you realize your spiritual position, that will cause trembling. As we are being led back to the light of the morning, and as we surpass it to where we have "the light of seven days" and the breach is bound up (Isaiah 30:26), more and more things will be shaken up.

A Great and Mighty Earthquake

Let us consider what **verse 18** of our text describes as **"a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."** The Revelation mentions three earthquakes. The first took place in the morning time, commencing on the Day of Pentecost. Revelation 8:5 describes it as "an earthquake."

It was of such a magnitude that Acts 19:10 tells us that "by the space of two years," this earthquake reached all Asia. Acts 17:6 says that they "turned the world upside down." The second earthquake took place in the sixth-seal period of time. There is a more detailed description of this earthquake. Revelation 6:12 describes it as "a great earthquake," and those sixth-seal brethren were a mighty force for truth. The third "**earthquake**" is the one in our text. It has an elaborate and detailed description, far outstripping what has been used for other time periods.

Remember, we are in a unique period. Since time is still standing, the last four vials are still being poured out. There are things yet to be done, and results that are yet to be seen! There are those who advocate that all prophecy has been fulfilled, that everything has been done. If that is so, where is Jesus? The very fact that time yet stands lets us know that God has more in store. As the seventh "**vial**" continues to be "**poured out**" through the remainder of the seventh seal, the results will be greater.

Isaiah 30:26, speaking of "the light of seven days," lets us know that in the seventh-seal period of time, light and understanding will far surpass morning-time light! In many ways, it already has. Revelation 15:2 talks of those who were standing on the "sea of glass mingled with fire" and "had gotten the victory." The least saint among them had greater victory than the Apostle Paul and the morning-time brethren, because they never had to confront the beast, the image, the mark, and the number. We have greater victory and greater understanding of truths than those precious brethren in the morning time. I am certainly not minimizing their obstacles nor their victory, but I am simply stating that today we have "the light of seven days." We not only have the benefit of the light of our day, but we also have the light of all of the previous days. We are a blessed people!

Speaking of our day, Isaiah 30:26 says that "the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people." There is to be unprecedented victory and unity in this evening time, in the seventh seal. Also, we found in our previous study that there is going to be a universal awakening right before the end of time (Matthew 25:6-7). Matthew 25:10 says that the virgins "that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Right there is a picture of the end of time.

Some may ask, "Do you feel that there are things on the horizon in this seventh-seal period of time that we have not yet experienced?" Has the "breach" (Isaiah 30:26) been healed yet as God desires? Has a midnight cry, a universal awakening as portrayed in Matthew 25:6-7, occurred yet? To understand these questions, let us examine what the "**earthquake**" did in our lesson text. **Verse 19** says, "**And the great city** [Babylon; Revelation 18:10] **was divided into three parts** [the dragon (paganism), the beast (papalism), and the false prophet (Protestantism)], **and the cities** [or the congregations] **of the nations** [or the denominations] **fell.**" Babylon received the second cup (Revelation 18:6). **Verse 20** says, "**And every island** [individual congregations] **fled away, and the mountains** [places of worship] **were not found.**" In John, Chapter 4, the Samaritan woman said that their fathers "worshipped in this mountain." The church worships in Mount Zion; thus, "**mountains**" represent places of worship. Therefore, when truth is poured out, all of those false places of worship will disappear as being a viable place of worship.

The "**earthquake**" will uncover all of the religious moves of our day. Regardless of what they call themselves, they will be shown to be one of these three: paganism, papalism, or Protestantism. They will all be shown to be part of "**Babylon**," which is motivated and produced by the devil. Men think there are a multitude of positions in which they or their organizations may stand; but if it is not the truth, it is part of "**great Babylon**" (**verse 19**); it is of the devil. Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." This might seem to be simplistic, but the Bible talks about "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). However, there are deceptive moves in our day, and "the prince of the power of the air," the spirit of the devil himself, is behind them all. He is even behind those who represent their moves as the church.

An Earthquake Brings an Awakening

Let us look a little more at what this "**earthquake**" does. It is spoken of in other places in the Scriptures. Hebrews 12:25-28 says: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth [old Mount Sinai]: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven [the heavenly Jerusalem (verse 22), the church (verse 23), Mount Zion]. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made [or man-made], that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved" God has an

"earthquake" that is shaking out everything that is man-made, everything that is not true. Now everything that professes to be the church is not the church. Everyone who professes to be a part of the church is not a part of the church. God has a pure church, a glorious church (Ephesians 5:27). To keep it pure, He is going to shake it out with an **"earthquake."**

In one of the prophetic parables, Matthew 13:41 says, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels [or His ministry], and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." He would rather just gather out the "things that offend," but if people will not turn loose of the "things," He will gather "them" out too. We are in a time of separation, a time of shaking and quaking.

Joel 3:16-17 says: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem [figures of the church]; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." God is going to shake those who think they are part of the church to show them whether they are or not. If they are holding on to man-made, fleshly things rather than truth, He will shake that out too. He will reveal to people that they are holding on to man-made teachings and practices, that they are no different than fallen sectism in their positions, in their practices, and in their spirits.

Remember, **"Babylon"** is a spiritual condition. There are many people in our day who have the right name and some of the right doctrine, but they do not have the right spirit and the right practice. Their name should be called *Ichabod*, which means "the glory is departed" (1 Samuel 4:21). They are as much, if not more so, **"Babylon"** than sect Babylon.

The Lord has greater unity and greater victory ahead for the church. Ecclesiastes 7:10 tells us, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." Some want to revel in the glory of the past days. Certainly, we are thankful for everything that was accomplished in time past, but as the songwriter said, *"Brighter days are sweetly dawning."* Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We are in the "perfect day." We should be encouraged; there are great things yet on the horizon for the church.

Let us take a look at what a literal earthquake accomplished in Acts, Chapter 16, when Paul and Silas were in prison. Verse 26 says that "the doors were opened." A real spiritual **"earthquake"** will open some doors that were shut up tight before. That verse also says that "every one's bands were loosed." Verse 27 lets us know that there was some awakening. Then verse 29 tells us that "he called for a light"; people will begin to look for light. Also, verse 28 says that "we are all here," a picture of unity. Finally, there was salvation in verse 31.

Those in **"Babylon"** who are all bound up are just as those who were in the prison house in Acts. The doors to truth and freedom are shut against them; there is no light within; they are bound up by sectarian cords. They are not truly awakened to their condition, but thanks be to God, there is a **"great earthquake"**! This **"earthquake"** is just going to continue in intensity until God empties out **"Babylon."** Dear heart, do not look behind. Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Why? You cannot focus on what is in front of you with a mind looking behind. Also, Philippians 3:13-14 says: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark . . ." We need to reach forth and do some pressing; God has great things ahead of us.

Heavy Hailstones

How are we going to know the separation between "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18)? **Verse 21** of our text says, **"And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent."** That would get your attention. Some scholars say **"the weight of a talent"** is "one hundred pounds"; some say it is "one hundred fourteen pounds." Can you imagine a one-hundred-pound hailstone hitting you on the head? Do you think it would make you startingly alert, aware, and awake? Have you ever been in a car and been drowsy, about to have a wreck, then all of a sudden you run over the rumble strips and you are wide awake? When these hailstones start coming, God is going to get people's attention.

The **"great hail"** in our text is an allusion to the plague of hail that fell upon the Egyptians in Exodus, Chapter 9. Verse 26 says, "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." That is how God

is going to make a distinction between those who serve Him and those who do not. What is **"hail"**? *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines it as "frozen raindrops." *Raindrops*, according to Scripture represent "doctrine" (Deuteronomy 32:2), and doctrine is "all scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16). If **"hail"** is frozen, or solid rain, it is solid doctrine or solid truth symbolically. If God's doctrine drops as the rain, why does our text talk about heavy hailstones? The only difference between rain and hailstones is the atmosphere they fall through. If rain goes through a cold atmosphere, it freezes and becomes hard. People who accept truth warmly do not need hailstones; God can give them gentle rain. However, if they are in a cold atmosphere, spiritually, God has to make it more solid to get it across.

Isaiah 28:17 says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies . . ." Only solid truth, judgment, can sweep away lies. People put their trust in false securities and jeopardize their soul; so, God has to put some solid truth on them to wake them up. Those who are in one of the **"three parts"** (paganism, papalism, or Protestantism) of **"great Babylon"** and those who are made disobedient by the "prince of the power of the air" need something solid to get their attention. That is when the **"hail"** is necessary, and then truth becomes a plague to them. Through the **"hail,"** the honest hearts in Babylon can see that denominationalism is in a fallen state. Some will obey the call of Revelation 18:4 and "Come out." However, those who are not honest will do as Pharaoh did in Exodus 9:34 when "he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart." As the seventh **"vial"** continues to be **"poured out,"** the line between the true church and **"Babylon"** will be more clearly distinguished by how people respond to the solid truth.

The end of the sixth vial portrays a gathering (Revelation 16:14). It depicts forces amalgamating and amassing to form the eighth beast (Revelation 17:11). The seventh **"vial"** exposes that foe; it exposes the devil who is behind it all. It shows the fallen state of false religion, and it shows its defeat (Revelation 17:14). In the Scriptures, decisive battles with amalgamated forces have had **"hail"** as a determining factor. In Joshua 10:5 many kings "gathered themselves together." This is a picture, in type, of the amalgamation and consolidation of the forces of evil in the evening time. Verse 11 says, "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel . . . that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." In this decisive battle, God unleashed hailstones and defeated His enemy.

Ezekiel 36:25 says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." This is a prophetic expression of the New Testament Dispensation. The clean water is the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26). Ezekiel 36:26-27 continues: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you . . ." So the Spirit started writing on "fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3) in the morning time. Then in Ezekiel 37:1-12, we proceed from morning time to evening time when we see the valley of dry bones. Verse 7 says, "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together . . ." This is a type of the evening time, a time when God is bringing the body back together.

When we come to Ezekiel, Chapter 38, we see a prophecy that has relevance in our day. It is a picture of a very decisive battle that is going to take place prior to the end of human history; it is the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16). Ezekiel 38:2-3 speaks of Gog and Magog (the same ones mentioned in Revelation 20:8-9), the powers of papalism and Protestantism. Verses 18-23 of that same chapter read: "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face . . . Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking [the **'great earthquake'**] in the land of Israel . . . and the mountains [places of worship] shall be thrown down, and the steep places [things that are exalted in men's minds] shall fall, and every wall [imitations of salvation] shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword [the Word] against him . . . and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD." Notice that there will be "great hailstones" in this decisive battle.

Ezekiel 39:1 says, "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog . . ." Then verse 6 says, "And I will send a fire on Magog . . ." This is the same picture as Revelation 20:9, which tells us that "fire came down." Ezekiel 39:6-7 continues: "And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel." Verse 11

tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel . . . and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog." This is a picture of the final conflict and the ultimate triumph of God and truth.

Again, the purpose of these seven plagues is, as Exodus 7:16 says, "Let my people go." God wants His people free to serve Him. In the days ahead, He is going to intensify the plagues to expose everything that is not of Him for what it really is, so a people can get loose from it and be free to "serve him in sincerity and in truth" (Joshua 24:14).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN—PART ONE

The Identification of the Eighth Beast

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 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.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And 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:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

The Enemy's Plan to Counteract True Unity

Our Scripture text reveals perhaps one of the least-understood scenes portrayed in the Revelation, yet one of the most important to understand to recognize what is working in this seventh-seal period of time. Keep in mind that we are in the midst of Series Number Five. (The Book of Revelation is broken up into at least seven distinct series, and Series Five begins with Revelation, Chapter 12, and concludes at the end of Chapter 19.) It is the most lengthy series in the Book of Revelation, and it is also very unique. It starts at the commencement of the Gospel Day with Revelation 12:1, and then it consecutively takes us throughout the Gospel Day until we reach the end of Revelation, Chapter 14. Then Chapters 15-19 each begin with the sixth seal and end with the seventh seal.

As we closed our study of Revelation, Chapter 16, we saw a vivid portrayal of the seventh-seal message. There was a "silence in heaven" (Revelation 8:1) at the commencement of the seventh seal, but that "silence" has been broken by the seventh-seal ministry. They have produced a people who have some "voices," who serve as witnesses. Then Revelation 11:19 tells us, "And the temple of God [the church] was opened [in visible view] 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." These are the same expressions that are spoken of in Revelation 16:18 and 21, teaching us that we are living in a time period when truth has been "opened" in such a manner that the church is in visible view again. The reason the "temple" was "opened" is because all of the seals are loosed, and the book is open (Revelation 10:2). There is a revelation of the church in this evening time, and God is working to affect a unity as never before.

Because the book and the "temple" are open, the move of the enemy (revealed in Revelation, Chapter 17) is to counteract God's move of unity. From the institution of the church on the Day of Pentecost until the end of time, the enemy has brought opposing forces against God's true church. The first opposing force to the morning-time church

was "a great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3). Revelation 12:7 tells us that "there was war," and verse 11 tells us that "they overcame him." Pagan Rome began to decline and divide.

The enemy saw that this method was not successful, so another system arose. This "beast [that rose] up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1) was papal Rome. The people of the sixteenth-century Reformation took the Word of God, the message of "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), and laid a deadly wound (Revelation 13:3) to that papal beast. The dark night of papalism was forever broken. Yet another system arose in its stead in A.D. 1530 (Revelation 13:11). This beast was the religious system of Protestantism. The rise of the Protestant beast enabled the "deadly wound" to be "healed" (Revelation 13:12) because they built an "image of the beast" (Revelation 13:15) and became just like the system against which they were protesting. Thank God, in the proximity of A.D. 1880, a ministry arose and put Christ back in His rightful place as the Head of the church (Revelation 14:1).

Once again an opposing force is coming against God's people—"the beast that . . . is the eighth" (verse 11). Our text gives clear insight as to the time frame of when this "beast" began to appear. **Revelation 17:1** says, "**And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials . . .**" The vial angels are introduced in Revelation 15:1. Their commission was to "pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Revelation 16:1). The first one "poured out his vial upon the earth" (Revelation 16:2), those who were enveloped in the religious system of Protestantism. Thus, the prophetic time setting of the vial angels is subsequent to the Protestant Era, which brings us prophetically to the evening time of the Gospel Day (beginning in A.D. 1880). The prophetic time setting of our text begins with the sixth seal. The system portrayed in our text, by their own admission, claimed to be formed "by the close of the 1920s," which was still in the sixth-seal period of time. Those dear sixth-seal brethren did not clearly see the truths contained in Revelation, Chapter 17, that later would be understood to be the fulfillment of prophecy in the seventh-seal period of time. However, they did see the danger of the formation of that system.

We must be reminded that every system which is foreign to God's eternal Word has been produced by "seducing spirits." First Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from *the* faith . . ." There is only one faith (Ephesians 4:5). Why would people depart or defect from "*the* faith," or from the truth? Paul explained why. First Timothy 4:1 continues, ". . . giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Just as Eve was beguiled by the serpent that was motivated by the enemy, these false systems are motivated by the enemy. They begin with "seducing spirits," which move people away from "*the* faith," or the truth. Then those "spirits" give rise to "doctrines of devils" that ultimately produce the false systems. First John 4:1 warns us, "Beloved, believe not every spirit [it begins with a 'spirit'], but try the spirits [plural; there are many 'spirits' of the enemy] whether they are of God: because many false prophets [the 'spirits' take on a form of human representation] are gone out into the world."

In this chapter we will consider the "**scarlet coloured beast**" and the "**woman**" who sat upon it (verse 3). We also want to consider the spirit that promotes this false system, because we are confronted with it as well. **Verse 11** tells us that "**the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven.**" This is the eighth beast. We will divide this study into three segments: identification (what the eighth beast is), operation (what the eighth beast will do), and culmination (what the eighth beast's ultimate outcome will be).

This Beast Is a System of Worship

First, let us identify the "**beast that . . . is the eighth**" (verse 11), which John saw. Again, remember that we are seeing a spiritual picture in the language of symbols. The vial angel (or the ministry) in **verse 1** wanted John to see, but in order to see, something was required. **Verse 3** says that he carried John "**away in the spirit.**" It takes a divine revelation by the Spirit of God to see the church and to also get a clear vision of Babylon. A message must be brought by the ministry, but the Spirit of God has to enlighten the eyes of understanding (Ephesians 1:17-18). First of all, the angel speaks of "**the great whore**" (verse 1) or "**a woman**" (verse 3). Notice where the "**woman**" sits. In **verse 1** of our text, she is depicted as "**the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.**" **Verse 3** speaks of her sitting "**upon a scarlet coloured beast.**" Then **verse 9** says that she is sitting on "**seven mountains.**" Think with me; "let us reason together," as Isaiah 1:18 says. She could not have been sitting in three different positions. Our text is revealing three different aspects of truth of the same thing.

First, what do the "**waters**" symbolize in **verse 1**? According to Revelation 17:15, "The waters . . . are peoples." She is sitting upon "peoples"; in other words, she is above or over people. Secondly, what does sitting "**upon a**

scarlet coloured beast" (verse 3) reveal to us? In reality this **"beast"** is a man-made system consisting of people. However, it reveals the nature of these people—bestly. Thirdly, what do the **"seven mountains"** in **verse 9** represent? Remember, *"mountains"* in the Scriptures represent places of worship (see Isaiah 2:2 and John 4:20). Therefore, the **"seven mountains"** let us know that this **"beast"** is a system of worship, a religious system.

This **"beast"** is a universal move, because the woman is sitting **"upon many waters"** (**verse 1**). The symbol of **"waters"** is employed because water is dense, which portrays a massive move. However, this move is not as massive as the move in Revelation 13:1, when the papal beast came "up out of the sea." The sea is much more dense, more massive, than just general bodies of water. This universal move is massive, but not as massive as it was back in the Dark Ages.

In reality, this **"beast"** is a people who have embraced the false system of worship produced by devilish spirits. The word **"beast"** in our text is the Greek word *therion*, which means "wild beast." It is the same word used in describing the papal beast (Revelation 13:1) and in describing the Protestant beast (Revelation 13:11). This word denotes something with uncontrolled appetites, something that is predatory, and something that is out to consume and devour others. That is the spirit behind this **"beast"**; it is a wild **"beast."** Its nature is not a godly nature, because Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb . . ." This is another system that is opposing Christ and truth.

Let us begin to identify this **"beast."** **Verse 3** in our text denotes it as **"a scarlet coloured beast . . . having seven heads and ten horns."** This is the first definite color described since the description of the "great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3), which also had "seven heads and ten horns." According to Isaiah 1:18, the expressions scarlet, red, and crimson are synonymous or interchangeable; they represent the same thing: "sins." To gain further understanding concerning this **"beast,"** look at **verse 11**, which says that **"the beast that was [past tense], and is not, even he is [present tense] the eighth, and is of the seven."** This **"beast"** is an amalgamation, or a consolidation, of all of the previous beasts.

Let us begin to examine the composition of this consolidation and see of what it is specifically comprised. **Verse 3** of our text lets us know that this **"beast"** is embracing and incorporating **"names of blasphemy."** That expression reverts back to the papal beast who Revelation 13:1 says has "the names of blasphemy. Therefore, the papal beast is incorporated in this system. Because of this, the four beasts of Daniel's prophecy are also incorporated. Compare the description of the papal beast in Revelation 13:1-2 to the four beasts described in Daniel, Chapter 7. All four of the beasts in Daniel are what comprises the papal beast. Revelation 13:2 describes specifically the "leopard," the "bear," the "lion," and the "dragon." The four beasts represent four kingdoms, or four pagan world empires: the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the pre-Christian era pagan Roman Empire.

This Beast Is a Consolidation of All the Previous Beasts

We are seeing that the **"beast that . . . is the eighth . . . is of the seven."** The pagan empires are represented by four beasts, giving us four of the seven. The coloration of **"scarlet"** (the *Aramaic Bible in Plain English* renders it as "blood red"; another rendering offers it as "bright red") shows that it includes the "great red dragon"; that is five. The **"name of blasphemy"** picks up papalism; that is six. What about the seventh? Well, **verse 8** of our text says, **"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit . . ."** The **"eighth" "beast"** came **"out of the bottomless pit,"** but this verse also lets us know that it **"was"** (past tense). A manifestation had previously come out of this **"bottomless pit."** Revelation 11:7 tells us, "And when they shall have finished their testimony [the two witnesses—the Word and the Spirit; bringing us to A. D. 1530], the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war . . ." This was the beast of Protestantism, the Protestant beast that succeeded the papal era. This is the seventh beast. Thus, the eighth **"beast"** is comprised **"of the seven"**: the four beasts of Daniel, then paganism, papalism, and Protestantism.

Verse 8 of our text continues, **"The beast that thou sawest was [there was a historical aspect of what comprised this 'beast'], and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [in a similar manner as the Protestant aspect], and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth [those that are on the low earthen level of Protestantism that came up 'out of the earth'; Revelation 13:11] shall wonder . . ."** Although the eighth **"beast"** was rising later in time, notice that its nature is equated to the nature of Protestantism, which is made up of multiple religious systems. That is exactly what the eighth **"beast"** is made up of. It is **"of the seven" (verse 11)**. **Verse 9** talks about

the **"seven mountains,"** or multiple systems of worship, and we have seen that the elements of all of the **"seven"** are depicted in the symbols. This **"beast"** is a consolidation of all of the previous beasts, and it is the last opposing force that the church faces in the Gospel Day.

How do we know that the **"eighth" "beast"** is the final force that the church faces in this Gospel Day? **Verse 11** lets us know that it **"goeth into perdition."** In other words, after this **"beast"** is eternity. It is the final **"beast,"** the final enemy of truth that the church must face. What does the **"eighth" "beast"** represent? We found that it has the characteristics of all of the heathen powers of the Old Testament. It has the nature of paganism, papalism, and Protestantism from the Gospel Day. Where are all of these opposing forces found in one entity? Where do we see that amalgamation working today? We see it in what is known as The World Council of Churches (WCC).

Let us look at quotes from The World Council of Churches' own website. They claim, "The WCC brings together more than 340 churches, denominations, and church fellowships in more than one hundred countries and territories throughout the world, representing some four hundred million." Remember that it is a universal move; it spans boundary lines. It has "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). The WCC website goes on to say, ". . . including most of the world's orthodox churches, scores of denominations from the Protestant Reformation." They state, "The Roman Catholic Church is a full member of many national ecumenical organizations and has a regular working relationship with the WCC." They also say, "Recognition of the importance of interreligious dialogue and relations with other faiths have been particular hallmarks of the Ecumenical Movement." Their website gives you links to the following religions: "The Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism, and Taoism." In one organization, you have paganism and papalism, with all of the related heathen practices, and Protestantism all coming together.

The WCC was founded "by the close of the 1920s." Now we are beginning to gain an insight as to why the Revelation used such figurative expressions concerning the **"eighth" "beast."** It finds its reality in an amalgamation of supposed churches, supposed religious faiths, all brought together. They refer to themselves as "the Ecumenical Movement," and that it is all inclusive.

Identifying the Woman

To identify the **"woman"** that **verse 3** of our text speaks of, let us look at the descriptions given to her. **Verse 1** refers to her as **"the great whore."** When we stop and give consideration to that expression, it is not a pleasant one, but it is very graphic. A **"whore"** is one who has relations and partakes of marital benefits without the benefit of marriage. In Revelation 21:9 the church is spoken of as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." The church is also portrayed as a mother (Revelation 12:2). Galatians 4:26 tells us that "Jerusalem [the church] which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Although the **"whore"** is styled as a **"mother"** as well (**verse 5**), there is a vast difference. The church is a "mother," but not only is she a "mother," she is a "wife"; she was a "wife" first.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house" (1 Timothy 5:14). That is still God's order; marriage is to come before the children. The church is "the bride, the Lamb's wife"; she is one who has taken vows, and made a commitment. She is one who is married to Christ. Isaiah 54:5 says, "For thy Maker [Jesus Christ; Ephesians 3:9] is thine husband." In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul said, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The "virgin" is "the bride, the Lamb's wife," because this epistle was addressed to "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1). The Church of God is a bride, and Christ is her husband. As her husband, He is her head. She has taken vows, yielded her will to His, and entered into a holy state of matrimony. Therefore, she is entitled to be a mother, "the mother of us all."

The **"woman"** in our text is a picture that is the total opposite of what is true and honorable. In **verse 1** she is referred to as **"the great whore,"** and in **verse 5** she is referred to as **"THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS."** First she was a **"whore"**; in other words, she would not engage in matrimony. False religion will not enter into submission to Christ; they will not take vows to obey Him, neither will they let Him be their head. This **"woman"** is not married to the husband, Christ, and neither are her harlot daughters.

The **"woman,"** this **"MOTHER" (verse 5)**, is Roman Catholicism, and all the Protestant bodies are her harlot daughters; they have come out from her. They are as much a harlot as she is, because they were not a product of a marriage to Christ. They were products of an illicit relationship, as Jesus told the Jews of His day, "Ye are of your

father the devil" (John 8:44). So, this "**MOTHER**" is Roman Catholicism, the "father" is the "devil," and the harlot daughters are all the Protestant bodies.

Verse 5 of our text says, "**And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT.**" "**Babylon**" means "confusion, religious confusion." Their ranks are filled with confusion, and it becomes more confusing as it progresses. **Verse 5** continues, ". . . **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**" All of the harlot daughters are referred to as "**ABOMINATIONS.**" B. K. Kuiper in his writing *The Church in History* called this woman, "the Mistress of the world," speaking of Roman Catholicism. Again, I am speaking of a system, not of individuals whom you may know. We love all people everywhere. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood [we are not against people], but against principalities, against powers . . ." We are against spiritual systems that are dominated and motivated by spirits that are working against the welfare of the souls of mankind.

Notice how the "**woman**" (Roman Catholicism) is "**decked.**" **Verse 4** says that she "**was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour.**" Those are royal colors. That lets us know that she naturally assumes her right to rule; she takes a superior position at the helm of this "**beast.**" They are also the colors that are associated with Christ (Mark 15:17; Matthew 27:28). She claims to be Christ's representation. **Verse 4** also says that she was "**decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.**" What do "**gold and precious stones**" represent?

First Corinthians 3:11-13 says: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire." The "fire" that is going to reveal what is truth and what is not truth is God's Word (Jeremiah 23:29). The "gold, silver," and "precious stones" are all durable qualities; but the "wood, hay," and "stubble" are not durable qualities under fire. The "gold, silver," and "precious stones" represent truths. Verses 14-15 go on to say: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The "**woman**" initially never had any truths; she has always been darkness. Through the periods of time when truth has come out, she has picked up a few truths to adorn herself with, just to make herself more palatable and acceptable. However, they do not go beyond the surface; they are there to be deceptive. They do not reach into the heart and change her nature and her lifestyle; she was a "**whore,**" and she is still a "**whore.**" What do the "**pearls**" represent? Jesus said in Matthew 7:6, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine . . ." He was talking about truths; "**pearls**" represent truths as well. Roman Catholicism resisted and fought against revealed truths throughout the Reformation, but in this time period, they seemingly have embraced these truths just to be in a favorable position.

What position is Roman Catholicism in? Our text says in **verse 3** that "**I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast.**" She is wearing royal apparel; she assumes the right of supremacy. She sits upon the "**beast,**" or at the reins, in control, at the helm, as it were. The World Council of Churches' website states, "The Roman Catholic Church has been since the Second Vatican Council an active participant in the Ecumenical Movement and a valued partner with The World Council of Churches." They go on to say, "It is inconceivable that either the WCC or the Roman Catholic Church could pursue its ecumenical calling without the collaboration of the other." Papalism is their guiding force. The daughters are dependent upon the "**MOTHER,**" and they will reunite with their "**MOTHER**" through this system.

Notice in **verse 3** that the "**beast**" has "**seven heads and ten horns.**" Previously, when we saw this type of symbolism employed, there were crowns associated with it. Revelation 12:3, speaking of paganism, says the great red dragon had "seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." The crowns denote civil power, political power, and the power of rule. Now the papal beast had "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns" (Revelation 13:1). Notice that the crowns moved from the heads of government that Rome had in its pagan form, to the horns, which were the ten minor kingdoms that comprised the Roman Empire. The political power shifted, but it was a political power; it still had civil force. With the "**eighth**" "**beast,**" there is a notable absence of crowns, letting us know this "**beast**" will not have overt civil power; its power will be more the power of deception and influence. The enemy worked in bygone days through fierce persecutions, through ages of martyrdom, and that did not work in his favor, but rather, it worked against him.

What is the move behind this religious system? In every age the enemy has had a counterfeit for the truth. Isaiah

4:1 says, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man" In other words, there has been a false church in every age. The "seven women" are the false churches throughout the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day. The "one man" represents Christ.

In Isaiah 4:1 the "seven women" said, "We will eat our own bread" However, in John 6:48 Jesus said, "I am that bread of life." In verse 51 He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He continued in verse 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man . . . ye have no life in you." John 1:14 says that "the Word was made flesh." That bread, or Jesus' flesh, is the Word of God. In John 6:63 Jesus went on to say, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The "seven women" do not want to take His Word; they do not want to take truth. They want to take their own doctrines and dogmas.

In Isaiah 4:1, the "seven women" also said, "We will . . . wear our own apparel." What is the apparel? Isaiah 61:10 tells us that "my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." That is the apparel which the true church wears. However, false religion wants to wear their own apparel and eat their own bread, yet "be called by thy name," be called a Christian or the Church of God, "to take away . . . reproach" (Isaiah 4:1). What is a reproach? "Sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34), but the name does not take away the sin.

Counterfeit Unity

In every age the enemy has had a counterfeit. Today in the evening time, the message of our age has been the message of unity. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith" God is gathering His people; it is a message on unity, the oneness of the body of believers (Ephesians 4:4). So what does the enemy do? What is the move? It is to present people with a counterfeit unity.

When Moses and Aaron first came unto Pharaoh and brought a type of the evening-time message, saying, "Let my people go," what did the false religious leaders do? Exodus 7:10-12 tells us: "And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers [a type of a false ministry]: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." Aaron had only one rod; there is only one church and only one message. The magicians had many rods, many serpents, many messages, and many false doctrines. They were the counterfeits, but the truth consumed every one of them! It showed them for what they were.

In this very day and time, the enemy is using a counterfeit, or a false, unity. This amalgamation of all of the enemies of truth is supposedly a spiritual move. People who have no discernment at all will look on the "**eighth**" "**beast**" and say: "Oh, isn't this wonderful! Everyone is getting together." Well, the Pharisees and Sadducees and all of the enemies of Christ got together, but it was not a wonderful move then, and it is not a wonderful move now! If you get "**carried . . . away in the spirit**" as John did in **Revelation 17:3**, you can see it as a work of the enemy and a move to deceive people and work against the cause of Christ and truth.

This move of the enemy has a deceptive appearance. It is so deceptive that **verse 6** of our text says that John "**wondered with great admiration.**" He was carried away with what it looked like externally, what it appeared to be, until the "**angel**" said in **verse 7**, "**Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery**" The "**angel**" was going to tell him the truth, so he would not "**marvel**" anymore.

The "**eighth**" "**beast**," and the "**woman**" upon it, may have a fine looking exterior, it may appear to have some truths and look very appealing, but that is part of its deceptive work. What is the real spirit behind it? They refer to themselves as: "The Ecumenical Movement." The word *ecumenical* comes from the Greek word *oikouneme*, and it means "the whole inhabited earth." That is exactly what they intend to take in: everyone, the whole inhabited earth. They will take everyone in, regardless of belief and regardless of experience. There are no requirements, no absolutes, no standards, just absolute tolerance EXCEPT toward truth. Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb" Like pagan Rome of old, they can tolerate any god, any belief, any lifestyle, just do not lay down the truth and do not be exclusive, because they cannot tolerate that. Through this false unity motivated by a seducing spirit, they are out to obscure the light of the true church and true unity. They are working on every level. They have

the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the states councils, and local ministerial associations. Sad to say, some will affiliate with a local ministerial association, but that is the local arm of the "eighth" "beast"! We must recognize the devilish spirit behind it regardless of the dazzling, deceitful appearance of the "woman." The Lord reveals this system as a wild "beast." This symbol reveals the true nature and spirit of this system.

What should our stance be? Second Corinthians 6:14-15 teaches: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" That not only takes in the "eighth" "beast" in the sense of the World Council, the National Council, and the state councils, but it also takes in the local ministerial associations and Gospel sings, songfests, and singspirations. All they are is a consolidation and an amalgamation of all kinds of spirits, people, and systems.

Verses 16-18 continue: "And what agreement hath the temple of God [or the Church of God] with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them [that should be our stance], and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." God's people are to "come out from among them, and be ye separate"! The spirit of the "eighth" "beast" is working right around the camp of the saints. The seducing spirits that produced these systems in bygone days have "come out" (Revelation 16:13). They are working to gather a people right into this system or to get them to imbibe that spirit.

Although there are many who have not joined up with the system, yet they have been overcome by the spirit of it—they are ecumenical. They accept everyone and accept everything; they fellowship everybody and get along with everyone. They say, "Let's just all be one; why can't we just get together?" However, they lay down truth and the Spirit of God in a false, deluded attempt to accomplish this. Those who compromise truth for unity will have neither!

In every age the church has had her enemies, and today is no different, but God has always been faithful to reveal the truth and expose the enemy's workings and devices. Hebrews 13:8 tells us that "Jesus Christ [is] the same." Though the enemy is working through a different beastly system in our day, God will bring victory, just as He did in bygone days. However, we need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened (Ephesians 1:17-18) so we know what we are dealing with.

The "eighth" "beast" is working to consolidate its forces against truth in a feverish manner. It may not have overcome some as of yet; although I have seen more and more congregations defect and depart from the precious truths that they once stood for. I have watched other spirits come in, and now many of them are aligning themselves up with the "beast." Congregations that once stood in seventh-seal light have now joined the Anderson Movement, and the Anderson Movement is a participating affiliate of The World Council; they are being drawn right in. First their spirit changes. Next, they become sympathetic with organizations that are party to that system. Then they are taken right in.

Thank God, God is still going to have a true people. Verse 8 of our text says, "**The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder** [notice who is being affected], **whose names were not written in the book of life . . .**" It is those who have compromised, who have apostatized, who have departed from truth, and who have been overcome by seducing spirits who are being gathered into this opposing force, this false unity. However, those whose names are in the "book of life" (those who are truly saved and have the presence of God abiding in their hearts and lives) are not going to be gathered into this false unity. God will gather them in to the true unity of the faith. John 3:21 tells us very clearly that "he that doeth truth cometh to the light." So they will come to the light. They will be gathered out of Babylon and come leaping and shouting home to Zion, the Church of God.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN—PART TWO

The Operation of the Eighth Beast

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 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.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And 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:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and 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.

The Forming of the Eighth Beast

In this segment of our study, we will consider the operation of "**the eighth**" "**beast**": when it began to operate, why it has arisen to operate, the manner in which this system operates, and the deceptive nature of the spirit behind it. Previously, we found that "**the eighth**" "**beast**" began to be revealed by "**one of the seven angels which had the seven vials**" (verse 1). Since this is "**one**" of the seven vial angels, the prophetic time setting was initially in the sixth-seal period of time (commencing in A.D. 1880). Although those sixth-seal brethren did not understand this Scriptural text to the extent we do today, and they did not see its application to the system that we are warring against today, yet they did expose the formation of it. They decried the development and the move of this "**beast.**" Because the seventh seal was not yet loosed, full understanding was not yet given; thus, their view was limited. However, they did cry out against what they saw as the formation and the move of the enemy to amalgamate his forces.

Let us take a look at the sixth-seal brethren's understanding. Brother F. G. Smith, in *The Revelation Explained*, commenting on Revelation, Chapter 17, wrote on page 336: "In this Chapter a more particular description of the church of Rome . . . is given under the symbol of a drunken harlot. . . . That beast carried her in royal state. The civil powers of Europe . . ." He saw clearly that the "**woman**" represented Roman Catholicism, but he did not understand from a Scriptural perspective what the "**beast**" represented. Page 349 continues, "The beast that John saw here with the seven heads and ten horns was Rome under the papal power." Thus, it is obvious that the understanding of the

"beast" was not clear in the sixth-seal time period.

Again, the sixth-seal brethren did cry against the move to form this "beast," or this system, even though they did not fully understand it. Brother Smith exposed the parliament of religions held in Chicago in 1893. On pages 407-409 he wrote: "That he is meeting with great success in forming his confederation of all false religions, is obvious. The world's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year 1893 [right in the midst of the sixth-seal period of time] is an illustration of this statement. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet met in 'mutual confidence and respect.' A 'brotherhood' of religions: Theism, Judaism, Mohammadanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, the Greek Church, and Protestantism in many forms—all of these were represented. And the devotees of these religions met, as they said, 'To unite all religion against all irreligion; to make the golden rule the basis of this union; and to present to the world *substantial unity of many religions*.'"

The following are a few extracts found on pages 407-409 from addresses made before the Parliament: "President Charles Carroll Bonney, in the opening address, said: 'Worshippers of God and lovers of man: Let us rejoice that we have lived to see this glorious day. . . . That we are permitted to take part in this solemn and majestic event of a World's Congress of Religions. The importance of this event cannot be overestimated. Its influence on the future relations of the various races of men cannot be too highly esteemed. If this Congress shall faithfully execute its duties with which it has been charged, it shall become the joy of the whole earth, and stand in human history like a *new Mount Zion*, crowned with glory, and marking the actual beginning of a *new epoch of brotherhood* and peace.

"*For when the religious faiths of the world recognize each other as brothers, children of one Father*, whom all profess to love and serve, then, and not until then, will the nations of the earth yield to the spirit of concord and learn war no more. . . . We meet on the mountain height of absolute respect for the religious convictions of each other. . . . This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress arises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife. *It is the brotherhood of religions*."

"Chairman John Henry Barrows in his address said: 'We are here not as Baptists and Buddhists, Catholics and Confucians, Parsees and Presbyterians, Methodists and Moslems; we are here as members of a Parliament of Religion over which flies no sectarian flag. . . . but where for the first time in large council is lifted up the banner of love, fellowship, brotherhood. . . . Welcome, one and all, thrice welcome to the world's First Parliament of Religions! Welcome to the men and women of Israel, the standing miracle of nations and religions! Welcome to the disciples of Prince Siddhartha, the many millions who worship their lord Buddha as the light of Asia! Welcome to the high-priests of the national religion of Japan! This city has every reason to be grateful to the enlightened ruler of "the sunrise kingdom." Welcome to the men of India, and all faiths! Welcome to all of the disciples of Christ! . . . It seems to me that the spirits of just and good men hover over this assembly. I believe the spirit of Paul is here. I believe the spirit of the wise and humane Buddha is here, and of Socrates the searcher after truth. . . . When a few days ago I met for the first time the delegates who have come to us from Japan, and shortly after the delegates will come to us from India, I felt that the arms of human brotherhood had reached almost around the globe.'"

It is very clear that Brother Smith saw the move of the enemy in amalgamating the forces of evil and beginning to formulate a consolidation of religious efforts into one cohesive body. H. M. Riggle also poured out judgment on this same event in his book entitled *The Christian Church, Its Rise and Progress*. Under the section "Exclusiveness of the Church," he penned on page 97: "The spirit of this age is to place Christ and Belial on an equality—to call everything that has a name to be religious God's church, and thus try to palm off upon the Almighty the corrupt works of the devil and insult his holiness by classifying with his heaven-born church all of the hypocrites and abominable characters taken into the false branches of Babylon; but 'the Lord knoweth them that are His'."

Page 98 continues: "The great congress of all religions held in 1893 in Chicago at the World's Fair was a perfect selling out of Christ. The representatives gathered in that congress claimed to meet in one common brotherhood, thus attempting to force fellowship between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, God and idols, Heaven and hell. Heathen idolaters, Shintoists and worshipers of all of the ridiculous gods that Satan has invented, met on one common level as one great family—an act which virtually denied the exclusiveness of the God of the Bible and placed God on the level with heathen idols. This, we say, was a slander on the name of Christ and wicked blasphemy in the sight of God. It virtually proves that Roman and Protestant Babylon have left God and gone over to the gods of Baal; for surely Christ is separate from all such, and the God of the Bible is the only God, his church is the only true and safe fold, and the faith of Christ is alone from heaven." It sounds to me like Brother Riggle was showing "**the judgment of the great whore**" and the "**beast that carrieth her**."

Brother H. M. Riggle in his book entitled *The New Testament Church, Spiritual, Practical*, under the section "The Unity or Oneness of the Church," on page 103, wrote, "There is quite a movement among some today in this direction; it is properly termed 'interdenominationalism,' but if all the denominational bodies of Christendom were to unite in one great union, the result would be a conglomerated mass of confusion and would not be the unity taught in the Scriptures." Brother Riggle said it well. It is very obvious that this **"beast"** began to be viewed in the sixth-seal period of time. They may not have had the correct understanding of our text, but they had the vial, and they began to pour it out when the **"eighth" "beast"** began to form.

Verse 10 tells us, **"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."** Let us remember that we are dealing in symbolism. The **"kings"** are not literal kings. The Greek word for **"kings"** is the word *basileus*, and it means "a foundation of power" (according to *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*). It is essentially speaking of a predominant power. In the Scriptures, Christians are called "kings," which refers to their spiritual position and power. Revelation 1:6 says that Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Revelation 5:10 says, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." These verses are not speaking literally, but they are speaking of spiritual power, the power to reign.

Romans 5:17 states, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Christians have the power to reign. Romans 6:12 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body . . ." Verse 14 continues, "For sin shall not have dominion over you." Thank God, we have dominion over sin; we are reigning over it! Jesus said in Luke 10:19, "Behold, I give unto you power [spiritual power] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." The **"seven kings"** in our text denote spiritual power, ruling power, or the predominant condition ruling over the religious landscape.

In the book entitled *The Revelation With Gospel and Prophecy*, penned originally by W. S. Goodnight, J. F. Lawson, and G. W. Pendleton, pages 154-155 say: "John said, 'there are seven kings: five are fallen.' Counting from the morning church age for 270 years up till the opening of the Sixth Seal, where one of the vial angels made this known to John, there are five ages: the pagan age, two papal ages, and two Protestant ages. At this time when John saw this, these five were fallen. The one at that time was the Sixth-Seal age, and then the Seventh-Seal age was the one yet to come, and is in this age we are now living." So the five **"kings,"** the pagan power and the two periods of papal power and the two periods of Protestant power, were fallen by the evening time (A.D. 1880). They began to receive this understanding in the sixth-seal period, during the time when the **"one [king] is."** The other one that was **"not yet come"** is in the seventh-seal period.

The Predominate Purpose of the Eighth Beast

This **"beast"** began to operate just as soon as he saw that he was exposed in the form of sectism, or Protestantism. Just as he has done in every other age, he did not quit working. When the sixth-seal brethren began to herald the message, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4), when the evening time became light (Zechariah 14:7) and people started seeing the evils of sectism and division, the enemy started this deceitful and deceptive work of a counterfeit unity through the **"eighth" "beast."** Why has the enemy devised the operation of this system? Well, **verse 14** of our text tells us that its predominant purpose is to **"make war with the Lamb,"** or to oppose truth. The **"Lamb"** is a representation of Jesus Christ (John 1:29). Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Therefore, making war with Christ is making war with the truth, and opposing truth is opposing Christ. It is obstructing the only way for man's salvation. This system is working to dupe and deceive the souls of mankind as every other beast in the past has attempted to do. This system and its adherents are fighting against truth and to keep people from seeing the true way.

In what manner is this most deceptive system of the **"eighth" "beast"** operating? **Verse 6** of our text says, **"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."** What a tremendous power of deception! John, the beloved disciple, the last living of the original Apostles, and the only one who did not die a grisly death, saw this **"woman drunken."** Yet, because of her appearance (**verse 4**), he **"wondered with great admiration"** (**verse 6**) until the **"angel"** gave him a revelation of truth. Then, John got past the surface and actually saw what she was and what this system

represents. **Verse 12** of our text speaks of **"ten horns, which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet."** We must recall the **"waters" (verse 1)** upon which **"the great whore"** is sitting are "peoples" (verse 15). However, this **"beast"** is comprised of not just any people. Remember, it is described as a **"beast"** in order to depict its nature, its spiritual attributes, and its character. This **"beast"** is hideous; it is vicious. The Greek word is *therion*, which means "a wild beast." It has an unrestrained nature and unrestrained appetites. Those who are taken in by this system, the people that comprise it, are people **"whose names were not written in the book of life" (verse 8)**. They have a profession of religion and a beastly spirit, but no spiritual life.

Only those who have life, those who have been born again, are inscribed in the Lamb's **"book of life."** The psalmist received a glimpse of it, writing in Psalm 87:5-6: "And of Zion [the church] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people [who does the Lord add to the Book of Life?], that this man was born there." Those who are born again are the only ones "whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). The Lord is the secretary of the Church of God. He writes their names "in heaven" (Luke 10:20). They are not written on any denominational roll book, but written in Heaven in the Lamb's **"book of life."** Everyone who has life has their name inscribed in the Lamb's **"book of life."** Contrariwise to this truth, the names of those who comprise the system in our text **"were not written in the book of life" (verse 8)**. In other words, they do not have a born-again experience, no spiritual life. Romans 8:9-10 tells us: ". . . if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life" It is the Spirit that births the believer and brings life.

Those that comprise this system do not have life because they have a different spirit. They have one of those "three unclean spirits like frogs" that came "out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]" (Revelation 16:13). At one time those spirits worked separately in their own respective age of the Gospel Day, but now they are working together to introduce a new spirit: an ecumenical spirit. That spirit is not a godly spirit. It is not the Spirit of God; it is a foreign spirit. If ones were in the **"book of life,"** and they succumbed to and imbibed a seducing spirit, they would lose the Holy Spirit. When they lose the Holy Spirit, they lose that life; and they forfeit their place in the Lamb's **"book of life."** One of these "three unclean spirits" is ever working "to gather them" (Revelation 16:14) together against truth and get them under their power and into this system.

Power With the Beast

Verse 12 of our text tells us that these people who have no spiritual life and have yielded to a devilish spirit have **"no kingdom as yet,"** or no kingdom experience. As a matter of fact, most of them do not even believe that the Kingdom of God is come as of yet. They are looking for some future utopian society without any strictures, without any biblical premises, that people can just enter in and enjoy carnally. However, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). It is a spiritual kingdom, not a literal kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is an experience; it is not literal. Luke 17:20-21 says: "And when he [Jesus] was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." It is not physical, it is not something you can see with the naked eye, and it is not something that comes with observation. It is not in Palestine, Jerusalem, Salt Lake City, or any other geographical location. It is a spiritual kingdom. It is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." However, those who are imbibing this ecumenical spirit are picking up teachings that are looking for a **"kingdom"** which has not come **"as yet,"** and it never will come in the manner in which they are looking for it.

Most, if not all, are looking for a futurist kingdom. Sadly, they do not enjoy any victory or kingdom experience presently. The only power they have is **"with the beast."** **Verse 12** in our text says that they **"have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."** They do not reign in life through Christ Jesus, because Jesus will never share a platform with Shintoists, Taoists, Moslems, Confucians, or sectarians. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am *the* way [it is exclusive], *the* truth, and *the* life." The only way you are going to find *the* life" and get in the Lamb's **"book of life"** is to come through "the [one] way," Jesus Christ, and take hold of His truth.

What is this **"power" "with the beast"**? What is the deception it uses? **Revelation 17:13** says, **"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."** The **"power"** is the fact that they **"have one mind."** That depicts unity (see 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27; and 2 Corinthians 13:11). The system in our text is a portrayal of unity, but keep in mind the nature of it. It is a wild **"beast,"** a predator with an unrestrained, ungodly nature. It is a false, deceitful, devilish, counterfeit unity. Peter gave insight into those who have a beastly nature and spirit about them. Second Peter 2:1 lets us know he was speaking of "false teachers." Verse 10 says, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government." It is not *civil* government that they despise, but *church* government. They despise divine order, just as Korah, Dathan, and others in the account in Numbers, Chapter 16. They despise God-given government, God-given authority. Ecclesiastes 1:9 tells us that "there is no new thing under the sun," and "that which shall be" is that which has already been; history is repetitive. So it is in our day.

Why do these people "despise government," or those whom God has set in position? Second Peter 2:10 goes on to say, "Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." The **"beast"** in our text is composed of people who are "self-willed." They would not go God's way; so they raised up a system contrary to the truth. The same spirit Korah had, when he said to Moses, "Ye take too much upon you" (Numbers 16:3), is still loose and working today. It gave rise to the other beasts throughout the Gospel Day, and it is working in the **"eighth" "beast"** today. People want to join in and lock arms with a system where no one has any authority, everyone respects everyone else's right to their own beliefs, and no one lays down any strictures or scriptural requirements. Everyone just tolerates everything. However, they have no tolerance for the truth.

Second Peter 2:12 reads, "But these [the false teachers that verse 1 speaks of], as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." These are not literal beasts, for literal beasts do not speak. These are men. This verse reveals the beastly, brutish nature that people have who are presumptuous and self-willed and who despise God's government. Those kind of natures and spirits will give rise to a **"beast"** that works against truth.

Our text says in **verse 14**, **"These shall make war with the Lamb . . ."** Although **verse 13** represents a picture of unity, in reality, it is a false unity used as a deceptive work. The **"woman"** and the **"beast"** together represent composite Babylon, which is called **"BABYLON THE GREAT" (verse 5)**. We were first introduced to Babylon in the annals of the Scriptures in Genesis, Chapter 10. Speaking of Nimrod, Genesis 10:10 says, "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel . . ." Then Genesis 11:4 tells us, "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name . . ." This is a picture of a people who wanted to build another way to Heaven other than God's way. That is the origin of Babylon, and that is where Babylon is still today; they want to build a way other than what God's eternal Word teaches. Verse 6 says, "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language." They were in unity, but it was a false unity. In reality, it was more a *union* than *unity*. However, this is what they use to deceive and gather a people together. Since the message of our day is, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13), they use a counterfeit unity message.

A Type of the Evening-Time Church Portrayed in Nehemiah's Day

Israel had been carried away into Babylonian captivity. After the Babylonians were overthrown by the Medo-Persians, the decree was given allowing the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Nehemiah 4:6 says, "So built we the wall [Isaiah 26:1 tells us the *wall* is salvation]; and all the wall was joined together . . ." This is a picture of God bringing a people who had salvation back into unity. The Lamb was back in His rightful position on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1). The church came back into visible view in 1880 for the first time since the morning-time apostasy.

Nehemiah 4:6-9 continues: "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together . . . for the people had a mind to work. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah [a type of papalism and Protestantism], and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites [all of the various opposers of truth], heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth [the enemy was stirred], And conspired all of them together [there is a type of the **'eighth' 'beast,'** all consolidated to work against God's people] to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." We see a vivid type portrayed here. It is just like we see in our text when it says that **"These shall make war with the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14)**.

In Nehemiah 6:1-4 we can see that the enemies' attempts at working against the work of God were repeated attempts. That is the very spirit manifested in the **"eighth" "beast"** today. It is trying to get God's people to "come down," trying to get them to affiliate with it, trying to get them to amalgamate with it; so that the work will stop, and they will be in no condition to do the work. It wants God's people to come down, as it were, to "the plain of Ono," but our reply ought to be, "Oh, no! I can't come down." The **"eighth" "beast"** uses a counterfeit unity to gather people together. **Verse 13** of our text lets us know that **"These have one mind."** They are under a false unity; they are duped with the deception of it, and that is what produces their **"power" (verse 12)**. There is a **"power"** in unity. Even if it is a counterfeit unity, there is a power in numbers.

The latter phrase of **verse 12** says that they **"receive power as kings one hour with the beast."** What is the **"one hour"**? Revelation 18:10 states, "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Prophetically, the **"one hour"** is a half hour in the sixth seal and a half hour in the seventh seal. That is why Babylon receives one cup of judgment in the sixth seal and one cup of judgment in the seventh seal poured out on her. This system has **"power"** for **"one hour,"** or the prophetic period that comprises the sixth seal and the seventh seal. The World Council of Churches' website refers to themselves as "The Ecumenical Movement." The word *ecumenical* comes from the Greek word *oikoumene*, and it means "the whole inhabited earth." That is exactly who they want to take in: everyone.

The "Woman" Offers a Golden Cup

We have found *when* they began to operate and *why* they operate. Now we will look at the *manner* in which they operate to achieve their goal. The symbolism in our text gives a graphic picture of how this system, and the spirit behind it, is working. Let us view the specific symbolism utilized. Our text refers to the **"woman"** who sits at the helm of the **"beast"** as **"the great whore" (verse 1)**. **Verse 2** speaks of those who **"have committed fornication"** with her. Then **verse 2** tells us *why* they **"committed fornication."** It was because they **"have been made drunk."** **Verse 4** portrays **"the woman"** as being **"arrayed in purple and scarlet colour** [she wants to appear Christ-like; these colors represent Christ; Mark 15:17; Matthew 27:28], **and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls** [she wants to present an appearance that she is manifesting precious truths; see 1 Corinthians 3:12-13], **having a golden cup in her hand."** The **"cup"** contains her own blend, her own mixture, **"the wine of her fornication,"** which has made men **"drunk" (verse 2)**. While **"drunk,"** they do her bidding, which is to **"commit fornication."** That practice is not something novel to the Revelation. Read what happened after Lot and his two daughters escaped from Sodom in Genesis 19:32-35. Lot became drunk and committed fornication with his daughters.

We are beginning to see a vivid picture as to why this **"whore"** is holding an attractive **"cup."** She is beautifully adorned and presenting herself in an attractive and enticing manner. She is inviting ones to sip of the **"cup."** However, once they partake of the drink within the **"cup,"** it becomes an intoxicant, and their sensitivities become dulled. Their thinking is no longer clear, and their vision may even become blurred. Lot "perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose" (Genesis 19:33-35). He was not even aware; however, he was responsible for getting drunk. Once he became drunk, he had no further knowledge of what transpired. He had no idea that he laid with these women and no idea that they had conceived. He had no knowledge of that whatsoever. Why did he not? He became **"drunk"** with their **"wine"**; so he was no longer aware of what he was engaging in or who he was engaging in it with.

There are people who have gotten **"drunk"** with the wine of the **"whore"** who have no idea with whom they are having relationships with and what kind of actions they are participating in. They have no knowledge of it whatsoever, because they are **"drunk."** That is how this system operates. The **"woman"** offers a **"cup"** and makes men **"drunk."** While **"drunk,"** they do her bidding. They commit **"fornication" (verse 2)**, and also they **"make war with the Lamb" (verse 14)**. A man who is naturally a passive, peaceful individual, while under the power of an intoxicant with a harlot, will fight to the death for that harlot. While he is under the influence of that drink, he has no idea what he is doing.

From the oldest Levitical injunctions, one was not to play the whore. Deuteronomy 23:17 says, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel." The judgment of a whore was to "be burnt with fire" (Leviticus 21:9). Notice that Revelation 17:16 says, "And the ten horns which thou sawest 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."

In the Old Testament, the same Hebrew word *zanah* is translated as "whore" and "harlot." Also, in the New Testament, the same Greek word *porne* is translated for both. That is the word from which our English language derives the words *pornography* and *pornographic*. They come from the same word that stands for a "whore" or "harlot." Proverbs, Chapter 7, describes in great detail how the seduction of a harlot works.

In our text, we must recognize that this **"woman"** with the **"beast"** represent composite **"Babylon."** They are an inseparable unit. **Verse 4** speaks of **"a golden cup in her hand,"** and this **"cup"** is spoken of in prophecy. Jeremiah 51:7 tells us, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." At one time this **"cup"** was "in the LORD'S hand"; the various organizations had been used by the Lord. However, notice in our text, it is now in **"her hand."** The control of this **"cup"** shifted, and when it did, so did its contents. When the Lord had a golden cup in His hand, it was "the cup of salvation" (Psalm 116:13). However, when the **"whore"** took it into her hands, its contents changed. She still has **"a golden cup,"** or an outward form (2 Timothy 3:5). That **"golden cup"** is now **"full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4)**. It is full of the **"wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:2)** that she causes people to drink.

Spiritual Drunkenness

Verse 4 of our text portrays a picture of an attractive, enticing **"woman."** She is arrayed **"in purple and scarlet colour,"** or with royal garb. She is **"decked with gold and precious stones and pearls"** (she has covered herself with truths), and she has **"a golden cup in her hand,"** (appearing to offer truth and salvation to mankind). However, this is a work of deception, because underneath the **"gold"** and the **"precious stones"** and the **"pearls"** is a **"whore,"** and within this **"golden cup"** that appears so precious externally is **"abominations and filthiness of her fornication."** The **"golden cup"** is being offered by what appears to be an attractive **"woman,"** a system touting such great unity and oneness without all of the requirements set forth by the Scripture. Could there be anything more enticing to ones who do not have or have lost their kingdom experience? She holds out this **"cup"** to seduce them, to make them **"drunk with the wine of her fornication,"** and to get them in bed with her.

Again, Jeremiah 51:7 tells us that they drank of her cup, and it has "made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." One rendering says that they "reeled and tottered." Another says that they "lay before her helpless," and yet another says that they have "gone off their heads." This is a picture of what happens when one becomes "drunken of her wine." They reel, they totter, they no longer have a sense of balance, and they no longer have clarity of mind. They no longer can walk straight. They are now under the influence of an intoxicant. They lay before her "helpless," just as Lot did before his daughters. Ones lose their clear thinking and their judgment when they are under the power of the whore's intoxicant. That is why we are seeing moves made today that seem so shocking to those who have clear sight and right thinking. These moves are the actions of people who **"have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:2)**. A man who is **"drunk"** does things he would not normally do, and he acts in ways he would not normally act.

The **"golden cup"** in our text seems to hold forth a beautiful message, a message on unity. As ones looks at the **"beast"** and the **"woman,"** they see **"one mind" (verse 13)**, a supposed great unity. Because of the deceptive appearance, they begin to give an ear to her message. The enemy wants us to do as Ephesians 4:27 tells us not to do, "give place to the devil." That will occur when one starts to give ear to "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1). People do not realize when they entertain her doctrines, teachings, and beliefs that they can become seduced by her spirit. In reality, they have begun to drink of her **"cup,"** and once they have drunk, they drink in a spirit.

First Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Certainly, that is speaking of the one Spirit, the one that inducts us into the body of Christ, but the principle is just as true conversely. Should one begin to drink from the whore's **"cup,"** he or she drinks in a spirit, and that spirit is an ecumenical spirit. When one's vision becomes blurry and his thinking is not clear, his resistance is gone. Then he enters into **"fornication"** and becomes one body with an adulteress, a harlot, a **"whore."**

First Corinthians 6:15-16 states: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." When ones drink in this spirit, they enter into

"fornication." They become one body with a harlot; they are now totally yielded to the will of this **"whore."** Because of their intoxication, they see nothing wrong with anything. **Verse 13** of our text says they **"shall give their power and strength unto the beast."** The will of the **"beast"** is their will; they are under the power of an ecumenical spirit.

There are two ways that ones can come under this ecumenical spirit. They could become disgruntled with truth and pick up a "seducing spirit" (1 Timothy 4:1), and then they are moved to embrace the whore's practices and teachings. When they have become disgruntled, they have failed to accord truth its proper place; they failed to love it. Paul warned us that if we do not have that love, we are ripe for "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). That is a very dangerous position. Another way is when ones begin to participate in ecumenical events, such as: community prayer meetings, prayer breakfasts, businessmen's prayer meetings, Gospel sings, gospel concerts, joint services, and the local ministerial association. When they take hold of the whore's practices and have fellowship with those who have imbibed that spirit, they begin to yield to her beliefs; they also begin to imbibe that spirit. To bring it even closer to the camp of the saints, if we worship together in fellowship meetings or camp meetings with congregations who have an ecumenical spirit and espouse this to where it effects our clear thinking, it can cause us to imbibe that spirit.

The enemy tried that with Nehemiah. Nehemiah 6:2-5 says: "That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort [this spirit is persistent]; and I answered them after the same manner [that is what we need to do]. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand."

The spirit behind this **"beast"** is persistent; it wants to get the people of God to come down, to compromise. It wants God's people to attend their prayer breakfasts. They plead, "It is a community prayer breakfast," or "It is a businessmen's prayer breakfast." They beg, "Oh, come down to the singspiration; there won't be any preaching." Well, false doctrine can be communicated more through singing than through the preaching. Part of that reason is because they sing more than they preach. If you go down to those places, they are full of all types of unclean spirits. Revelation 18:2 says that Babylon is "the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This ecumenical spirit wants to take hold; we can see it working. It says: "Let's just get everyone together. Let's just fellowship everyone. Don't say anything about anything; let everything alone. Let's just get together." This is the deluded thinking of one who is **"drunk with the wine of her fornication" (verse 2)**. A drunk man will have relations with anyone.

This spirit is working right around the camp of the saints. We need to exercise some old-fashioned, Holy Ghost discernment. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 9:6 that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." He let us know that all who say they are Israel are not Israel. It is the same yet today: all that say they are Church of God are not Church of God. The Scripture teaches us in 1 John 4:1 to "try the spirits," or the Greek says to "put the test on the spirits." Does their spirit line up with the Spirit of God? Does it line up with the Word of God? An ecumenical spirit is working when people begin laying down truths, standards, and the clear teachings of God's eternal Word, saying, "Leave everything alone, let's just get together." God's people need to have discernment. Speaking of the New Testament Dispensation, Malachi 3:18 says, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." We need to know who is serving God and who is not serving God; who is standing for truth and who is not standing for truth.

Sad to say, many people have yielded to the winds of apostasy. They have lost their anointing, have begun drinking of her **"cup,"** and have picked up that spirit. Now they are operating and espousing this false unity, an ecumenical move. May God help us to see this spirit that is working in our day in such a feverish manner. It is the spirit of the age, but we are instructed to "be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). Many who once understood and had the light of understanding concerning this truth have been seduced by this spirit. They have locked arms with this **"beast,"** The World Council of Churches. On their website, under the section called "Christian Holiness Partnership," there is a list of what is designated as "Other Members," and one of them is the Church of God, Anderson. They once had the truth of the glorious message that we are enjoying today, but they have been seduced by this spirit. Some have taken whole congregations right into the Anderson Movement; they are joining right up, as it were, with the **"eighth" "beast."** Now they have this ecumenical spirit. They can fellowship everybody everywhere, but not the truth.

True Biblical Unity

There are only two aspects of unity. Jesus prayed in John 17:21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." That first aspect of unity is also portrayed in Ephesians 4:3, which says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." However, Jesus went on and made it more pronounced. In John 17:22-23 He continued: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect [complete] in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me" How? Ephesians 4:13 says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith" The two bases for unity are the unity of the Spirit and the unity of the faith.

Notice that the unity of the Spirit and the unity of the faith are both exclusive. The first thing that is absolutely essential to unity is you must have the same Spirit with the one you are trying to have unity with. You cannot have true biblical unity and harmony if another spirit is involved. That is why we are admonished to "try" (or test) the spirits, because you are fighting a losing battle if you are trying to have unity with someone who has another spirit. The first time you cross them, you will find out you do not have unity, for that spirit will flare up in your face. We must have the "one Spirit" (Ephesians 4:4) to have unity. If you both have the same Spirit, that is how you can meet someone traveling across the country or in another city, and all of a sudden, your spirit bears witness with their spirit. You have never seen them before, but you know they are a child of God, and they know you are a child of God. In a few minutes you feel like you have known them all of your life. That is unity of the Spirit.

Now if that one you met is in a sectarian organization and has not come to a knowledge of truth yet, because they have not been exposed to it, they can have a spirit that is right. You can rejoice and have fellowship and unity with that Spirit, but that is only one aspect of unity. When you proceed to talking about *the* faith and you find out that they are engrossed in error, all of a sudden, the unity is not as rich as before, because there is a difference. However, when that person comes to a knowledge of the truth and comes into the unity of the faith, now you not only have the same Spirit, but you also have the unity of the faith. Now you are standing for the same truths, and you are able to stand in serried ranks in unity of the faith. Those are the only two bases of unity; there are no others. One cannot discard the truth of God's eternal Word, nor the Spirit of God, and have biblical unity.

To have true Bible unity, we must have *the* unity of the Spirit and *the* unity of the faith. The "**eighth**" "**beast**" and those who comprise it have neither. They have a spirit that is totally foreign to the Spirit of God. The message they espouse is this: anything but "the faith." The "**eighth**" "**beast**" is deluding men and women. We need God-given discernment to see this hideous "**beast**" and its deceptive tentacles that are trying to reach into the camp of the saints. Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [free from error and falsity]." Thank God for the revelation of truth! The Lord has led a people in every age, and He will lead His people to victory in our day if they will heed the message of truth. Let us not fall prey to the spirit and the system that is working so feverishly against truth. If we will stay with truth, if we will "try" the spirits, and if we will stay faithful to God's eternal Word, thank God, He will carry us to victory over this last opposing force against the Church of the Living God!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN—PART THREE

The Culmination of the Eighth Beast

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and 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.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest 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.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

A Spiritual Warfare

As we begin to give consideration to this text, I first want to say that I lay no claim to the call of the office of a prophet. I can only teach that which I see and how I understand the Scriptures. I merely ask you to give this study prayerful consideration. Certainly, there are many things in Revelation, Chapters 16-20, that have not yet transpired. It is much easier to look back historically with a greater degree of certainty of what *has* occurred than to look forward with a great degree of certainty at what *will* occur. However, God did set forth His Word and the prophecies in the Book of the Revelation for His children so we can know what we are confronting, and how we can have victory, even in these closing days of time.

We must ever be reminded that we are dealing with symbolic expressions. Our minds are ever prone to turn to thoughts of literalism, but this is a spiritual picture that is being drawn before us in symbolic language. To truly gain insight as to what is being conveyed through these symbolic expressions requires spiritual discernment. First Corinthians 2:14 tells us, "But the natural man [or unregenerate man] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **Verse 14** of our text says that "**These shall make war with the Lamb.**" Again, remember this is spiritual. Second Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us that we are engaged in a warfare, but "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," or *fleshly* the Greek says. This warfare is in the minds of men. The enemy is ultimately after our souls, and the only avenue through which he has to assault our souls is through our minds, or our thoughts.

Verse 14 in our text is not talking about some cataclysmic, apocalyptic, Third World War led by an antichrist as literalists suppose. They think blood is going to run up to the horses' bridles. It will not be another Dark Ages, full of persecutions and martyrdoms, but it is a battle over the minds, over the beliefs of men and women, a work to influence thinking. This is a day when "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened" (Revelation 15:5). This is a day when truth will no longer be obscured, but it will be in plain view. There will never be another dark age; the church will never again have to go underground in the catacombs and caves. There will never be another dark and cloudy day. We live in a day of light (Zechariah 14:7).

The "**these**" spoken of in **verse 14** of our text reverts us back to the "ten kings" in verse 12. It is a picture of a people who have received no kingdom experience, and their only power is with the "**beast.**" Verse 13 says, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." They are not literal kings, no more than you and I are literal "kings and priests" (Revelation 1:6). However, we are "kings and priests" spiritually, and they are spiritual kings who reign with the eighth beast. These kings are a people. **Verse 15** tells us that "**The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples.**" They are a people "whose names were not written in the book of life" (verse 8). In other words, they do not have spiritual life. Romans 8:10 tells us "the Spirit is life," so they must not have the Spirit. If they had the Spirit, they would have life. Instead they have another spirit. That is why they do not have a kingdom experience. They do not have the right Spirit. They picked up another spirit by drinking of Babylon's cup.

The deception of the false unity, which this system promotes, is the only "power" (verse 12) they have. They do not have any "power" that brings them personal victory or a kingdom experience. They do not have any "power" that

puts them in the Lamb's Book of Life. They have been taken over by a spirit that causes them to subscribe to this false unity. Their only power is the power of influence and deception. The only "power" that anybody who is deceived has is the power to deceive someone else. When Eve was beguiled, the first thing she did was offer the fruit to Adam. Since people have gone into this false ecumenical unity, the only thing they can do is work to influence and deceive others, because they do not have any real power or victory.

A Great Deception

Why are the "kings" under this power of deception? Why do ones succumb to such a "power"? **Verse 17** tells us, **"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast . . ."** God did this for the same reason that He hardened Pharaoh's heart and for the same reason that He gives one a delusion. It is "because they received not the love of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). We need to understand that the eighth beast and those who comprise it are people who have spurned opportunity; they have spurned truth. Second Thessalonians 2:10 lets us know that those who are under a "deceivableness of unrighteousness" ultimately "perish." They "perish" because they would not take truth, and thus they are deceived into thinking that their unrighteousness is right.

Isaiah 5:20-22 says: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink." They have drunk of Babylon's wine. It has perverted their thinking; they can no longer see clearly. God has sent them a "strong delusion" (2 Thessalonians 2:11). They believe that their unrighteousness is right. You cannot help them, because they do not think they need any help.

Hebrews 6:4-6 tells us: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted [notice the past tenses employed] the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away [the Greek word is *parapito*, which means 'to apostatize'], to renew them again . . ." Why is it impossible to renew them? How can you "renew" somebody who still thinks he is new? How can you help somebody get right who thinks he is right? It is "impossible." This verse is not talking about backsliders; it is talking about apostates. They have been overcome by one of the unclean spirits that has produced apostasy in bygone ages and are working in the eighth beast to bring people into an ecumenical movement today.

How do people get under the "deceivableness of unrighteousness"? Let us consider the scheme of the Scriptures and the will of God. Second Peter 3:9 tells us that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish [or be lost], but that all should come to repentance." First Timothy 2:4 shows us an extension of God's will when it says, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The Scriptures teach that God wants "*all men*," so, away with this predestination and foreordination falsity. When Paul preached on Mars' hill, Acts 17:30 says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." God's will is all inclusive. It is only men's prerogative of choice that brings exclusion.

God, in His great faithfulness, has "the grace of God" appear to "all men" (Titus 2:11). Everyone is afforded opportunity (often many opportunities) somewhere in life's way. Since that is so, how do people get in such a state as to "believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11)? Well, there are two different types of individuals who fall under that. The first type is the ones who have "done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29). Though "the grace of God" appeared to them, they would not accept "the Spirit of grace." They would not accept the offer of true salvation, because they refused to meet the scriptural requirements Titus 2:12 lays down. Then they became a prey for "the spirits of devils" (Revelation 16:14). You can read a lesson that Jesus taught in Luke 11:24-26 about leaving your heart an open prey. When people are presented with opportunity and they spurn it, they become worse.

The second type of people is those who were "once enlightened" (Hebrews 6:4). They once had an experience, and they once knew the truth, but they failed to continue to "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). When that happened, fellowship was broken. The word *fellowship* is *koinonia* in the Greek, and it means "share in common." What saints share in common is spiritual life, but it is based on light. When people fail to walk in the light, they forfeit the light, and they also forfeit the Spirit, which is life (Romans 8:10). Jude 19 says, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Then they are gathered by one of the unclean spirits right into this ecumenical

movement, which causes them to **"give their kingdom unto the beast."**

Because these ones "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," their "names were not written in the book of life" (Revelation 17:8), and God sent them a "*strong* delusion" (2 Thessalonians 2:11). He hardened their hearts as He did with Pharaoh of old (Exodus 10:1-2). Why did He harden Pharaoh's heart? It was not an honest heart. Pharaoh was not going to take truth, so God hardened it. The people who comprise this ecumenical system fall under the same type of move of God. They are a people who have either spurned the invitation or apostatized on known truth; so they are under the "deceivableness of unrighteousness." This system is not made up of honest hearts but of goats (Matthew 25:32-33). The honest hearts are being gathered into the true camp of the saints; they will not be a part of the eighth beast when it culminates.

"These . . . Shall Eat Her Flesh"

Verse 16 of our text says that the deluded souls **"shall eat her flesh."** This expression has a dual application, so let us look at the first one. In John 6:54 Jesus said, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh." Jesus was talking about eating the Word or taking in the message. The ones in our text are eating Babylon's words, her teachings, her beliefs. As 1 Timothy 4:1 states, they have departed from the faith.

Remember, Ecclesiastes 1:9 says that "there is no new thing under the sun." Just as ones departed from the faith in the morning-time apostasy, people are departing from the faith in this evening-time apostasy as well. They are being gathered out of truth and into the eighth beast. When people become disgruntled with truth and begin to be sympathetic to the causes of the enemy, they become a prey for the seducing spirits. Then they feed on these spirits. They feed on an ecumenical spirit at Babylon's gatherings and their functions; they feed on their promotions and their teachings. They **"eat her flesh,"** and you are what you eat.

Let us view the second aspect of what **verse 16** means when it says **"eat her flesh."** We found that this system is composed of **"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"** (**verse 15**), but it is not just any people. They are people who have imbibed the "spirits of devils" (Revelation 16:14). At the culmination of the eighth beast, it will turn on its own. Galatians 5:15 says, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." The ones who comprise this system are people who possess a devilish spirit. As long as they are successful in the common cause of warring against the Lamb, they can have a point of focus. However, when they are no longer successful in their war against truth, their beastly spirit must "bite and devour" something; so, they will turn on each other. I have watched that happen. I have seen people leave truth with locked arms, but when they saw that they could no longer have an impact against the truth, they turned their guns on each other. The old adage goes, "There is no honor among thieves."

Verse 16 of our text says that **"these shall hate the whore."** When I read these words, the account of Amnon and Tamar came to my mind. Amnon had such a lust for Tamar that he feigned himself to be sick. He asked for her to come and fix him some food. When she arrived, he closed the door and began to force her, even though she tried to dissuade him. Second Samuel 13:14-15 states: "Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her." That is the same type of spirit that we are going to see in the eighth beast.

As long as the ones who comprise the eighth beast are getting their own way and as long as it appears that they are successful against truth, they will continue to **"make war with the Lamb."** However, when they see they cannot make any inroads, cannot prevail against the truth, their beastly spirit will cause them to **"hate the whore."** They will rise up against her; as much as they loved her, they will hate her. When the effectiveness of the eighth beast under the control and guidance of **"the whore"** has reached its zenith, when the true unity of God's people has caused a real awakening (a plague of hail; Revelation 16:21), **"the whore"** will be devoured and hated by her own adherents. It will be just like in the plain in Megiddo in Gideon's day when "the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow" (Judges 7:22).

Verse 16 of our text tells us, **"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast [these are the 'ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet' in Revelation 17:12 or people who have drunken of her cup; 17:2], these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."**

The effectiveness of this "**beast**" will reach its zenith, and it will end. Revelation 11:19 says, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament [the presence of God in plain view in the true Church of God]: and there were lightnings [people were gaining understanding], and voices [witnesses], and thunderings [God's voice], and [which caused] an earthquake." This describes our day, and as our day proceeds, it will intensify. "The temple of God" is being "opened," and a true unity is being effected.

Victory Over the Eighth Beast

The role of "the spirits of devils" is to work together as ecumenical spirits "to gather" a people against truth (Revelation 16:14). They are compassing "the camp of the saints" (Revelation 20:9). As this prevailing condition continues, 2 Corinthians 13:8 tells us that "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." **Verse 17** of our text even says that "**God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will.**" They are not really working *against* truth, but *for* truth. Deuteronomy 33:17 says that "he shall push the people together," and God will use the enemy's influence, through the eighth beast, to push His people together. The people of God will be driven to a greater unity than they have ever had.

Isaiah 30:26 says, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." That is in our day, the seventh-seal period of time. God is going to bind up the breach of His people by pushing them together. As the camp of the saints is being compassed and the enemy is thinking he is gaining the upper hand, he is really just working to fulfill God's will. A greater unity will produce greater light. If you bring more lamps to a lampstand, you are going to have a more powerful light than what you had before. Revelation 16:18 says, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake" As the "voices" (witnesses) come together, there will be more "thunder" (more of the voice of God, more of the message) which will produce "lightnings" (greater understanding). The thunders and lightnings will continue to intensify and amplify as more people are pushed together. That will make for a more powerful message, which will cause more shaking and awakening.

In our text we see the results of God's powerful message. **Verse 14** says, ". . . **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.**" Christ will overcome with a victorious, united people. That is how the church will be able to be victorious against the eighth beast in this final battle. As the Lord overcame in every age, so He will on this occasion.

When the dragon (paganism) made war in Revelation 12:7, how did Christ overcome it? Was it with a civil war, with a literal war with carnal weapons, or with God intervening out of Heaven with fire and devouring the dragon? No, Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Their testimony came from the Word. Christ overcame it with a message and a people who were living it. Likewise, the papal beast received a "deadly wound" (Revelation 13:3) "by a sword" (Revelation 13:14). The sword is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). It was overcome with a message and a people backing that message. Protestantism was overcome the same way. Revelation 11:11 tells us, "And after three days and an half [the three hundred fifty years of Protestantism] the Spirit of life from God entered into them [the two witnesses, the Word and the Spirit], and they stood upon their feet." They stood upon their feet when there was a people who would take hold of the message and stand up for the message. That is what caused Babylon to fall and what caused Protestantism to be shown for what it was!

Christ will overcome the eighth beast with a people who have the message and live the message. First Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Making "**war with the Lamb**" is making war with the church, and making war with the church is making war with the Lamb. Also, Christ overcoming is the church overcoming, and the church overcoming is Christ overcoming.

Revelation 19:13-15 says: "And he [Christ] was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword" Who was following the Word of God? They were "the armies which were in heaven," a people. They were following the message, and that is how the enemy is overcome. Victory comes through a people who live the message.

Revelation 16:21 speaks of a "plague of hail," and Isaiah 28:17 says that "the hail shall sweep away the refuge

of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." Verse 20 continues, "For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." This lets us know that **"the whore"** in our text will be exposed. The true people of God, standing for the message with a greater unity than has ever been, will show the truth in such a plain way that it will be clear the woman is nothing but a **"whore,"** and this system is of the devil. **Verse 16** of our text says she will be **"desolate and naked."** The plague of hail reveals the truth.

Truth Will Expose "the Whore"

The same thing will happen to **"the whore"** that happened in the plain of Megiddo in Gideon's day. Remember, this final battle is going to take place in a place called "Armageddon," or the plain or hill of Megiddo, spiritually or symbolically speaking. What happened in Gideon's day? Gideon divided his three hundred men into three companies, and he gave each of them an earthen pitcher (an earthen vessel) with a lamp (a light) within and a trumpet in the other hand. When he gave the word, they broke the pitcher so the light shone, and "they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20). (What a beautiful picture of when our earthen vessels are broken so the light of Christ can truly shine out as the message is being sounded!) Then what happened to the enemy? Judges 7:22 tells us, "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow"

Gideon's men did not even have a sword; "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Corinthians 10:4). It was "The sword of the LORD." When the trumpet blew and the message was sounded out with people behind it, God turned the enemy's swords on each other. That is exactly what He is going to do with the eighth beast. He will use them against each other. **Revelation 17:16** says that they will **"burn her with fire."** When the eighth beast's effectiveness has reached its summit, and it cannot prevail against truth, **verse 16** of our text says that **"these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked."** In other words, when truth shines forth so brightly, it will expose that she is truly **"naked."** There will be a very vivid and stark contrast between those who make up the **"beast"** and those who serve God.

In the end the Lord will vindicate the church and show that this system is empty and **"naked."** The church is clothed in "the garments of salvation" (Isaiah 61:10). Revelation 16:15 warns against ones who "walk naked." **"Naked"** in our text means that she is exposed; it is revealed that she does not have the garments of salvation. The woman in our text decked herself, but the church was "clothed" (Revelation 12:1). There is a difference between being clothed and decking yourself externally. The woman in our text looked like royalty (Revelation 17:4); she looked like someone who was reigning. She was decked with supposed precious truths, but when real truth is held up against her, it will show that she is **"desolate and naked."** She does not have the garments of salvation; she does not have a robe of righteousness; she is a counterfeit. All she is decked with is the power of influence and deception. Once that is exposed, and one can see through it, she has no other power.

Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." In our text the shame of her nakedness was appearing. It was because the ones who comprise that system would not take hold of truth; they spurned the invitation, and they would not clothe themselves.

In our text we see the results of this evening-time message and a people gathered about it. **Verse 14** shows us that **"they that are with him [Christ]"** are a victorious, unified people. As this victorious people stay true to the message in this final decisive battle, the Lord will do as He did at Megiddo for Gideon. The trumpet, the light, the shout, and the broken earthen pitchers will cause the enemy to "set every man's sword against his fellow" (Judges 7:22). God will reveal once and for all the spiritual and the carnal—those who are in true unity and those who are in an amalgamated union. All of the honest saints (the sheep) will be in the one body of Christ, and all of the dishonest and reprobate (the goats) will be gathered into the eighth beast. Then the Lord will come to deliver "up the kingdom to God" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Verse 14 of our text says that **"they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."** They are showing forth the power of Christ, a victorious experience in the face of powerless delusion. That just makes the false system more **"desolate"** and more **"naked."** What is the power of Christ? Second Corinthians 12:9 lets us know it is grace. Again, there is a stark contrast between those who manifest grace and those who have spurned grace and done despite to "the Spirit of grace." The enemy tries to show this woman as attractive, but when truth is really shown forth, she

is shown to be **"desolate"** and **"naked."** Every time a victorious people show forth the power of Christ, grace is working in their lives, and they have a victorious experience. First Corinthians 15:57 says, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Also, 2 Corinthians 2:14 states, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ . . ." The more a victorious people are portrayed, the more, as **verse 16** says, **"these shall hate the whore."** Especially when they see they are unable to defeat the truth, that is when the Lord will reveal their true spirit, their powerlessness, and their nakedness.

The seven sons of Sceva tried to show that they had the power of God. Acts 19:13-16 tells us: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." That is exactly what we will see when this happens. Those who comprise the eighth beast will be shown to be stripped of their covering and exposed for just what they are—powerless!

"The Lamb Shall Overcome"

As this final battle and time winds up, **verse 14** of our text lets us know that **"the Lamb shall overcome them."** Again, He will **"overcome them"** through a people and a message as He has every foe throughout the Gospel Day. In the end He will have them "bite and devour one another" (Galatians 5:15) just to show their powerlessness and gracelessness. Paul turned the Sadducees and the Pharisees, who had been united against him, against each other in Acts 23:6-7. Likewise, the Lord will use those who have been her lovers to **"fulfil his will"** (**verse 17**) and bring judgment upon her.

Ezekiel 16:35-43 reads: "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare [can you see the comparison with our text?]. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations."

Notice verse 41 says that "I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot." Praise God, in the end her deceptions will be exposed and her effectiveness ended! When truth becomes crystal clear, all of her exalted positions, how high she was in everyone's mind, will be brought down. People will see it was not anything at all. They will see that she is **"naked"** in the eyes of God, bereft of anything good at all. The jewels that she decked herself with will be stripped off of her; they will have no more effect. Verse 39 says that she will be left "naked and bare." Again, as the enemy compasses the camp of the saints, it will just bring a greater unity, bind up the breach, and produce greater light. It will bring a midnight cry, the fire of God's Word from God down out of Heaven, a powerful message, with a people who stand behind it. Then the bridegroom Himself shall return (Matthew 25:10). Oh, I trust we can clearly see the culmination of this ecumenical **"beast."** It has a tremendous power of influence and deception, but it is just a colossal fraud. There is no true unity whatsoever. In reality, they are warring against one another. They will fulfil God's will in exposing themselves by their internal strife before time reels into eternity.

Thank God for "the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4)! There will ultimately be just two gatherings, and they will be at war. Christ will overcome through the message of truth and through a people backing it by living it. That will be so powerful that every honest heart will be gathered into truth. Only those who are dishonest, those who are reprobate and apostate, will comprise the final enemy in the final day. Thank God, though they make **"war with the Lamb, . . . the Lamb shall overcome!"**

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART ONE

Babylon's Condition Revealed – Part 1

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 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 are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

A Divinely-Called Ministry

As we begin to give consideration to this passage of Scripture text, we see that **Revelation 18:1** commences with a conjunction (the word "**And**"), letting us know that it is vitally connected to the prior scenes. However, it goes on to declare "**after these things,**" revealing that the scene and the vision John was receiving had changed. Chapter 17 concluded with a portrayal of the culmination of the end of the seventh seal and of human history. Thus, the prophetic time setting beginning in Chapter 18 takes us back to the commencement of the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day. Our text clearly portrays this truth. **Verse 1** says when the "**angel**" appeared, "**the earth was lightened with his glory.**" **Verse 2** tells us the message he brought light on: "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.**" That was the light of truth which broke forth when the sixth-seal ministry began heralding it in A.D. 1880.

In the first three verses of our text, we clearly see Babylon's condition revealed. Just as they received a revelation of this truth at the onset of the evening time, I am convinced that we need a fresh vision of Babylon's condition yet today. Many people are losing their vision in this seventh-seal period of time. We are living in the time of the Laodicean letter, found in Revelation, Chapter 3. In Revelation 3:18 Jesus counseled to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." People are not able to see as clearly as perhaps they once did. We need anointing by this "eyesalve" to have a clear vision, to see things as God sees them.

In our text, John said he "**saw another angel**" (**verse 1**). What type of ministry is being portrayed in our text? The "**angel,**" or ministry, came "**down from heaven**" (**verse 1**). That expression is reminiscent of the description of the morning-time ministry in Revelation 20:1, which says, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven . . ." In other words, he had a divine call; his commission came from Heaven. How do we know? He had "the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." Verse 2 tells us that "he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him." That ministry had power to bind up the things the enemy used against the souls of mankind.

What was "the key" the "angel" had? The key represents knowledge (Luke 11:52). A key opens things, and knowledge opens things to you. Jeremiah 3:15 tells us, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." This further clarifies that the "**angel**" is a portrayal of the ministry. The commission to the ministry can be found in Paul's charge to Timothy: "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). Knowledge comes from the Word by a God-called ministry. The morning-time ministry not only had a "key," but they also had a "chain." Men and women all over our land get in pulpits and use the Word of God, but they still do not have any power. You have to have the "key" *and* the "chain" (the Word and the Spirit) to have the power to bind. Jesus "cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28). That is who binds the strong man (Satan) or the systems he uses.

In Revelation 20:2 the morning-time ministry "laid hold on the dragon," the paganistic Roman Empire. It had been exalted in the minds of the men of that day, but when they laid the truth of God's Word out under the anointing of the Spirit, that dragon was bound up. It no longer held an exalted position. It was put in a "bottomless pit" condition, showing that it had no basis in truth whatsoever! Truth will bind up everything that is false. Revelation 20:1 says, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven . . .," and **verse 1** of our text says, "**. . . I saw another angel come down from heaven . . .**" That teaches us that the ministry in the evening time had a divine call, just as much

as the ministry in the morning time. It also portrays what the song entitled "Back to the Blessed Old Bible" declares. The first stanza of that song says, ". . . *Back to the light of the morning, Jesus our Captain leads.*" Stanza three says, ". . . *Now in the evening we've found it, Truth of the gospel light.*" The evening-time ministry is leading us right back to the morning-time truths.

Notice that the evening-time ministry was described in our text as **"having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" (verse 1)**. The **"power"** is equated with light and **"glory."** The light that this ministry brings is what produces the **"glory."** When the people heed the message, see the light and embrace it, it will produce **"glory."** A God-called ministry derives its **"power"** from two sources. The Gospel is not the way *to* the **"power,"** but it *is* the "power of God" (Romans 1:16). The Greek word for **"power"** is *dunamis*, which is where the word *dynamite* comes from. The Gospel is God's dynamite! If you want to move people today, try some spiritual dynamite. Some will move out and some will move up, but they will all move. Romans 15:19 lets us know that the second source is "by the power of the Spirit of God." The Spirit and the Gospel are the two sources from which the **"power"** is derived.

In prophecy Zechariah, Chapter 4, speaks of a candlestick, or the Hebrew says a *lampstand*. On either side of that lampstand was an olive tree. Those two olive trees had golden pipes, which were piping the golden oil out of themselves and into the lampstand. That is what produced the light. Revelation 11:3-4 tells us that the "two olive trees" are the "two witnesses." Matthew 24:14 lets us know that the Gospel is one of the witnesses, and Hebrews 10:15 tells us that "the Holy Ghost also is a witness." So, the Word of God and the Spirit of God are the sources from which the **"angel"** in our text derives his light, his **"power."**

Our text tells us that the **"angel"** had **"great power."** That lets us know the ministry had a **"great"** message and a **"great"** anointing, with signs and wonders following as convincing agents. God was "confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). **Revelation 18:1** goes on to say that **"the earth was lightened with his glory."** The **"earth"** spoken of is the religious system of Protestantism (Revelation 13:11; 14:15; 16:2). Prior to this great message, heralded in A.D. 1880 by Brother D. S. Warner and those other brethren, God's people were not enjoying the light of the message on the church. They were scattered amongst the sects and the creeds and divided one from the other. They were held in **"Babylon,"** the **"cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (verse 2)**. They were in sectarian bondage.

"The Earth Was Lightened"

In our text **"the earth was lightened"** when those in Protestantism received understanding. They had been "scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezekiel 34:12). Throughout the Protestant Era, God's people were scattered in all of the various denominational and sectarian organizations of religion. However, when the evening-light message began to be heralded, God let them know that He did not want them divided. He wanted His people in unity; He wanted them to be a visible body of Christ. Thank God, that light produced a glorious church in the evening time!

Where did the **"angel,"** or the ministry, obtain such great light? The light was the "entrance" (Psalm 119:130) of a message that honest hearts had been seeking for. Honest hearts were never satisfied in a system that did not honor all the counsel of God. They were not content with sectarian walls between them and other brethren. Revelation 6:9-12 is a symbolic picture of the opening of the fifth seal, the second segment of the Protestant Era (1730 to 1880). Verse 9 speaks of "souls" that were "under the altar [Jesus Christ; Hebrews 13:8, 10]," a people who were in submission to Christ, who were yearning for fellowship with all of the saints. These were honest hearts who had been seeking the light of the evening. Psalm 34:3-5 says: "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened." That is exactly what happened. The "souls" that were "under the altar" were crying unto the Lord for judgment, and the Lord heard them. As soon as He got enough people in place, He sent an **"angel"** whose **"glory"** **"lightened"** the **"earth."** Ones were **"lightened,"** and they were able to get out of sectarian bondage and come back to a visible body of Christ.

The Prophet Ezekiel helped to give insight. In Ezekiel, Chapter 40, he began to receive a series of visions. The visions continue through Chapter 47 and are predominantly depicting a temple that has never been and never will be constructed, literally speaking. It is a "prophetic type," a portrayal of New Testament realities that are realized in the New Testament church. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *type* as "a person, a thing, or an event that

represents or symbolizes another, especially another that is to come."

Ezekiel 43:2 says, "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east." East is the source from which light comes, and light is what produces the glory. If we want more glory, we must walk in more light. Verse 2 continues ". . . and his voice was like a noise of many waters." So, "the glory of the God of Israel" is a person. Hebrews 1:3 tells us . . . that Christ is "the brightness of his [God's] glory." John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Also, Revelation 1:15 says that Christ's "voice [was] as the sound of many waters," just as Ezekiel wrote.

Ezekiel 43:2-3 goes on to say: ". . . and the earth shined with his glory [just as in our text]. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city." That alludes to the terrible judgment Ezekiel prophesied of concerning Israel. Ezekiel 30:1-3 says: "The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen." Old Israel experienced "a cloudy day" when they were in captivity. It serves as a type of what has transpired in the Gospel Day: "a cloudy day," a "time of the heathen." Sectism is nothing more than heathendom with a Christian cloak over it.

Although the Protestant beast had some appearances that resembled Christianity, it "spake as a dragon" (Revelation 13:11). Its teachings and practices were paganistic. This heathen system of religion came out of the minds of the same kind of men who produced all of the pagan deities that were around at the dawn of Christianity (such as, Jupiter, Venus, and Diana). The various sectarian organizations that are contrary to the sound teachings of God's Word are just as heathen!

Israel was in a time of cloudiness, a time of the heathen, a time of Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel 1:1 tells us that Ezekiel "was among the captives," and he "saw visions of God." He did not see God personified, but his visions were of divine origin. *The Septuagint* (the Greek Old Testament in use at the First Advent of Christ) clearly unites Ezekiel 43:2 with our text in Revelation 18:1. It says, "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came by the eastern way, and there was a voice of an army, as the sound of many redoubling their shouts: and the earth shone like light from the glory round about." When we look at that in conjunction with our text, we see that the ministry sounded out their message under the power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Their message was the voice of Christ. When ones responded to that voice, it produced a people, and that is what brought the glory of God on the scene. A people who will rise to their feet and stand for the message and shout and rejoice in it is a convincing agent to the world.

Babylon Is Confusion and Bondage

Verse 2 of our text says, "**And he [the angel] cried mightily with a strong voice . . .**" The ministry was not afraid of the message; they had confidence in what it would do. They fearlessly obeyed the prophetic injunction recorded in Isaiah 58:1, which says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet . . ." Now, if we are going to see a powerful move, a powerful response, we need a powerful message; and we have one. We have a message that all Heaven is behind. The message heralded in our text was "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.**" Of what is the Revelator speaking? The term "**Babylon**" is employed in the Revelation three times prior to Chapter 18 (Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5). The word "**Babylon**" comes from the Hebrew word *babel*, which means "confusion." The word takes us back to the Book of Beginnings where the first mention of "Babel" is found in the Bible (Genesis 10:8-10). As a matter of fact, this is the first kingdom mentioned in the Bible as well.

It is notable to mention how Babel's origin is framed. Verse 8 tells us that Nimrod began to be a "mighty one"; the Hebrew word is *gibbor*, which means "tyrant." Verse 9 says, "He was a mighty hunter before the LORD." That is a hostile expression. "Before the LORD" means that he set himself ahead of God, in a superior position. The name Nimrod, as with most biblical names, is significant. It means "let us rebel." All of Babylon is built on rebellion, from ancient Babylon in Genesis all of the way up to spiritual "**Babylon**" in our text.

When we take a look at the kingdom Nimrod began, we find that they used a cheap, man-made substitute ("brick for stone"; Genesis 11:3). Likewise, every sectarian organization is built out of man-made substitutes. Genesis 11:4 tells us that Nimrod's kingdom also began to build "a city and a tower . . . unto heaven," and they said, "Let us make a name." Protestantism is trying to make a way to Heaven other than God's way. They glorify men. They want to make themselves "a name." Genesis 11:9 tells us, "Therefore is the name of it called Babel." That is the origin of "Babel," or "Babylon," and it serves as a very vivid type. Its name was called Babel, because everyone spoke in a

different language; they all said something different. Likewise, in spiritual **"Babylon,"** everyone speaks or teaches something different. It is confusion, and "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). He does not want His people enveloped in "confusion." However, our land is filled with religious confusion. **"Babylon"** also serves as a type of bondage. (Read 2 Kings 24:10-15.) God's people being held in literal captivity in Babylon serves as a type of what occurred in the Protestant Era when God's people were held in spiritual bondage.

Referring to **"Babylon,"** Revelation 16:19 tells us that "the great city was divided into three parts." These three parts are described as motivated by "frogs" in Revelation 16:13, and they came "out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and . . . the beast [papalism], and . . . the false prophet [Protestantism]." Those are the "three parts" of which **"Babylon"** is comprised. Some might question **"Babylon the great" (verse 2)**, thinking that expression only refers to the mother, Roman Catholicism, because it is the same verbiage used in Revelation 17:5. But stop and think with me. **"Babylon"** is a harlot; she has never enjoyed the benefit of marriage. Her name is **"Babylon,"** and she has harlot daughters who never enjoyed the benefit of marriage, so their name would be the same as their mother's: **"Babylon."** Brother F. G. Smith in *The Revelation Explained*, page 356, addressed that question well. He wrote, "If the real name of the mother is Babylon as stated, the proper name of her harlot daughters must be Babylon also."

Some do not want to acknowledge that when our text is speaking of sect **"Babylon,"** it is speaking of Protestantism. However, in the purest sense of the term, it is speaking predominantly of sect **"Babylon."** We know that because none of "my people" (Revelation 18:4) are actually in papalism, or paganism for that matter. Revelation 13:8 tells us, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the beast of papalism], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." So there were no saints actually in papalism; they did not worship that beast. Paganism and papalism had already been exposed for what they were.

Certainly, there are honest hearts in each of the divisions of **"Babylon."** The call goes out to them, and many have come to salvation and truth. In an absolute sense, in the infinite foreknowledge of God, they do constitute "my people," because Ephesians 1:4 says that God chose them "before the foundation of the world." He knew they would be "my people," but in the purest sense, they were not.

Why was the message **"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen"** such a startling and outstanding message? Those to whom it was being proclaimed knew that paganism was not a godly system; it had been cast down in the morning era. They knew that the religious system of papalism was nothing more than darkness, but the message against Protestantism was startling and novel. It was because Jeremiah 51:7 tells us that "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand." The sixteenth-century Reformation was a move that God used. He used John Huss, Martin Luther, and many other reformers in a marvelous way to bring forth light in a period of time that had been darkened previously by the teachings of papalism. However, Jeremiah 51:8 says, "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed." So the conditions have changed.

The evening-time ministry was shining the light of the truth on sectarian religion to get God's people out of sectism. **Verse 2** of our Scripture text tells us that **"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen."** Isaiah 21:9 and Revelation 14:8 also say that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." All these texts in *The Septuagint*, the Greek, as well as the English versions, reflect what is grammatically called "present perfect tense." One authority says, "The present perfect is a grammatical combination of the present tense and the perfect aspect used to express a past event that has present consequences." A textbook entitled *Words and Ideas* by Hans P. Guth says, "Present perfect indicates that something has happened prior to events taking place now." That reveals that **"Babylon"** had already **"fallen"** prior to the message of truth being heralded. It was not the message that made her fall, but rather, it exposed the condition that already existed. It exposed that there were present consequences, that if people stayed in it, they were going to become just like it.

The famous scholar Albert Barnes said that our text indicated, "Fell to rise no more." The word **"fallen"** in **verse 2** is the Greek word *pipto*. According to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, it means "a city has been overthrown, destroyed; metaphorically to be cast down from a state of prosperity, to fall from a state of uprightness to sin, to fall into a state of wickedness, to lose authority, to no longer have force." That certainly describes **"Babylon."** Jeremiah 51:7 tells us that "Babylon hath been [past tense] a golden cup in the LORD'S hand."

However, Revelation 17:4 tells us that the cup is now in the woman's (the whore's) hand. It is no longer in the Lord's hand. It is in the hands of impure people under the direction of "unclean spirits" (Revelation 16:13). That is why the prophet and the Revelator told us that "Babylon is fallen," because the control of the cup had changed hands. God was in the sixteenth-century Reformation, and God was in the succeeding move in the Wesleyan Era, but God

never intended the religious system of Protestantism. Protestantism arose because people became rebellious. They failed to continue to walk in light, and because of that, their spirit changed. **"Babylon"** is built on rebellion; sectism is a work of the flesh. The Apostle Paul told us in Galatians 5:20 that one of the works of the flesh is "heresies." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "religious sects." So sectism, or denominationalism, is a work of the flesh. **"Babylon"** no longer is what she once was, but she **"is fallen."** The only way **"the earth,"** or those in Protestantism, is ever going to be **"lightened with his glory" (verse 1)** is when a divinely-called ministry cries **"mightily with a strong voice" (verse 2)** and exposes the truth of the condition of **"Babylon"** to honest hearts. Honest hearts are thrilled with the truth, and they will come to the light. Jesus said in John 3:21, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." The truth will set ones free from the falsities of men. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The powerful message in our text will still produce **"glory"** when people are enlightened with understanding from God's eternal Word and begin to measure to it. It will cause them to come leaping and shouting home to Zion. They will come out of those systems of men and come into the oneness of God's people in a visible, working body of the glorious Church of God, where God desires that they be.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART TWO

Babylon's Condition Revealed – Part 2

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 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 are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

There Are Only Two Habitations

Verse 1 of our text predominately introduces us to the ministry at the commencement of the evening time. They had "**great power**" because the "two witnesses," the Word and the Spirit, stood to their feet (Revelation 11:3, 11). So they were able to preach a message of truth under the unction of the Spirit of God, which produced light. When light is produced and a people will embrace it, it will produce the glory of God.

Verse 2 of our text describes the deplorable conditions of false religion, and **verse 3** gives us an insight as to how they occurred. **Verse 2** tells us that "**Babylon . . . is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.**" This is a vivid yet unflattering description of Babylon's condition. As the evening time began, truth exposed that although there were many sectarian organizations which comprised "**Babylon**," in reality there are only two habitations. The enemy wants you to believe that there are a multiplicity of positions that you can occupy, but God's Word teaches that there are only two positions for mankind to occupy.

The Greek word for "**habitation**" is used in only two places in the New Testament. One "**habitation**" is found in **verse 2** of our text: "**Babylon . . . is become the habitation.**" There is one "**habitation.**" The other habitation is found in Ephesians 2:16, which says, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body . . ." Ephesians 4:4 tells us that "There is one body." Ephesians 1:22-23 lets us know that the "one body" is "the church." Ephesians 2:22 says, "In whom [in the church] ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The other habitation is the true church. According to *Strong's Dictionary of New Testament Words*, the word "**habitation**" means "dwelling place." The only two positions that you can occupy are truth or error, the church or Babylon. First John 4:6 says: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Those are the two spirits that produce the only two spiritual habitations.

Revelation, Chapter 19, reveals that there are only two gatherings and two suppers. Verse 9 tells us that one gathering is "the marriage supper of the Lamb." That verse also tells us what is the menu there: "the true sayings of God," or the Word of God. Verse 7 tells us clearly that the marriage supper of the Lamb is taking place where His wife, the true church, is. Conversely, Revelation 19:17-18 tells us the other gathering is "the supper of the great God" where all they eat are the things of "men" and the things of "the flesh."

The devil has hoodwinked many by making them feel that some things are almost like the Church of God or close to the Church of God. Song of Solomon 6:9 says that "she is the *only one* of her mother." There is only one true church. Just as God dwells in His church through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), so it is with "**Babylon.**" However, our text says that "**Babylon . . . is the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.**" It is where Satan dwells. He controls and directs it by "**devils,**" or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "demons." These "**devils,**" or spirits, hold people in the bondage of deception.

Verse 2 of our text says that "**Babylon**" is "**the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage.**" Those in "**Babylon**" are bound as much as ones are bound in sin. I hear people who are supposed to know truth talk about their families who go down to "**Babylon.**" They are so blind that they will make statements like, "Well, at least they are going somewhere." That would be like knowing that they are drinking a glass of arsenic and saying, "Well, at least they are drinking something." Would you be pleased with that? No, that is foolishness. That is how foolish it is to rejoice in

the fact that someone is going down to sectism, because sectism damns the souls of men and women. There are more people going to hell from sectarian pews than bar stools. Certainly, God's people are not bound by spirits in "**Babylon**," but the masses there are. The danger is that if "my people" stay in there, they will imbibe those spirits, and they will become "partakers of her sins" (Revelation 18:4). That is why we have to sound out the message of truth to enable them to hear the call to "come out."

In our text the divine penman speaks of a spiritual condition: a "**habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit**." Then under divine inspiration, he picks up a prophetic passage that speaks in terms that are a little easier for us to relate to. He talks about "**a cage of every unclean and hateful bird**," and there is nothing dirtier than a bird cage. In prophecy Jeremiah 5:26-27 tells us that "wicked men" have "set a trap" to "catch men," using "deceit." Jeremiah 5:23 says, "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart." That is what produces "**Babylon**." That is how the cup changed from the Lord's hand to the hands of a man-made system. Verses 28-31 go on to say: "They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" These verses reveal what produces this spiritual condition. Their "revolting" and "rebellious" hearts led to being "full of deceit." Then "they overpass the deeds of the wicked." Deceitful teachings through false prophecies "catch men."

Our text lets us know that in the "**cage**" is "**every unclean and hateful bird**." The thought of being "**unclean**" reverts us to the Levitical law. Leviticus 11:13 says, "And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination." In the following verses, the Levitical law clearly set forth what were considered unclean birds. In our text God wants His people to escape from Babylon's condition, because if they are around spiritual uncleanness, they will become polluted. The "my people" in Revelation 18:4 hear His voice. Jesus said in John 10:27-28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life." Jesus let us know that they hear His voice. That is why they continue to have eternal life; they are not affected by the things of man. As they hear, they follow. They will follow Him out of sectarian bondage, so they do not become "**unclean**" by the spirits there.

A Doom Song

Expressions such as "**a cage of every unclean and hateful bird**" used in our text are known by theologians as a "doom song." A "doom song" describes the judgments of God on a people because of their condition. Basically, it speaks of a place being rendered to such a condition because of people's failure to obey God and His Word. Thus, it is not fit for human habitation; it is only fit for creatures of the night and wild animals. That is exactly what our text is portraying. People have revolted and rebelled. They have imbibed the spirits of the devil, and they have caused the cup to be placed in their own hand, which changed its contents. Now it is nothing more than a "**hold**," or a "**cage**." Unclean spirits are holding people in bondage, in a condition that is suitable for "**unclean**" birds and creatures of the night, in a condition that God told His people to let alone.

Let us look at another "doom song" of "**Babylon**." Isaiah 13:19-22 states: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs [wild he goats] shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

When verse 21 talks about "doleful creatures; and owls," it is depicting creatures of the night. They screech and make the night sound eerie. This is the condition that "**Babylon**" is in. It is a fit "**habitation**" for creatures of the night. They will not walk in the light. They just screech and make noise, but they cannot stand the light. That is why God wants His people out of it.

Isaiah recorded yet another "doom song." Isaiah 34:11-14 says: "But the cormorant [a pelican] and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven [according to Leviticus 11:15-17, these are unclean birds] shall dwell in

it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion [*'Babylon'* means 'confusion'], and the stones of emptiness [not the Rock Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), but a form of godliness with no power (2 Timothy 3:5)]. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." Those in **"Babylon"** may hoop and holler, roll on the floor, froth at the mouth, or scream and carry on; but it is nothing but confusion and emptiness.

Isaiah 34:15 reads, "There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow." They do things without the light, and they hatch more just like themselves. The only thing these spirits of devils can do is cause more people to come under their powers. We have seen a vivid picture of how **"Babylon"** is a **"habitation of devils."** Isaiah was not solely talking about literal birds or literal screech owls; he was also talking about what they represent in a symbolic manner. The type of people who possess those spirits has become creatures of the night. Certainly, **"Babylon"** is not a fit **"habitation"** for saints; it is only for those who have a **"foul spirit"** and those who are bound by devilish spirits.

As we view Babylon's deplorable condition, we may wonder how it occurred. **"Babylon"** was "a golden cup in the LORD'S hand," so how did it become full **"of devils"**? According to Jeremiah 5:23, it happened because of "a revolting and a rebellious heart." Just as with King Saul, when rebellion entered in, another spirit entered in. When Saul was chosen, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he became another man (1 Samuel 10:6). However, he was moved to a place of rebellion. He had been told to kill all the Amalekites and not spare any of the animals; but he brought back the sheep, the oxen, and King Agag. First Samuel 15:22-23 reads: "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft . . ." Saul had become rebellious. When that happened, 1 Samuel 16:14 tells us that "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." He changed spirits.

God had entrusted ones with truth in their era, but they began to rebel against it. They failed to continue walking in the light and being obedient, and their spirit changed. First Timothy 4:1 tells us, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." When they became rebellious, they gave heed to seducing spirits and left the faith. That is how the "golden cup" went from the Lord's hand into Babylon's hand. They took control of what was supposed to have been in divine control. Then they began to produce "doctrines of devils."

Behind every false doctrine is a devilish spirit working. That is why we need to be careful of what we listen to, what we read, and what we let come into our home. When some magazines and periodicals come into your home, the best thing to do is throw them out. Also, be careful of books and CDs that people give to you. Why? The man who wrote the book or preached the message has a spirit. If you are not cautious, you can get sympathetic with what you read or hear, and you can pick up a spirit.

Revelation 18:3 says, **"For all nations [or denominations] have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication . . ."** People who had been leaders became rebellious, and their spirit changed. They imbibed a seducing spirit, and all a seducing spirit can do is seduce someone else. So, it began to formulate doctrines to seduce people. These doctrines make people, as **verse 3** says, **"drunk."** They drink in false teachings. As they become partakers, they imbibe a **"foul spirit."** When they get under the power of that **"foul spirit,"** they are put in bondage, or held in a **"cage."** Why do people not come out of **"Babylon"** at a greater rate than what we see today? One can lay the truth forth, but if people are **"drunk"** on false doctrine, it has seduced them, and it holds them. Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 10:21, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

Devilish spirits working through rebellious people produced the terrible religious condition of **"Babylon."** They produced "doctrines of devils," and people drank those "doctrines" and became bound by those spirits. Then they were placed in a sectarian **"cage."** If you are going to get someone out of a **"cage,"** you have to open the door. That one has to have outside help; he cannot get any help from inside the **"cage."** That is why God called a ministry to preach this message of truth.

Becoming Drunken With Babylon's Doctrines

In **verse 3** of our text, we can clearly see that drunkenness clouded men's minds and affected their proper judgment. Instead of progressing in light and embracing the truths concerning the bride of Christ, they became spiritual fornicators. It was not God's perfect will that truth be restored in a gradual, progressive manner in the sense of having to keep getting succeeding ministries. If they had been obedient, He would have restored it right from salvation to holiness to unity, and there would have been a straight progression of truth. Instead people became rebellious and picked up devilish spirits and concocted false doctrines. When others drank those doctrines, rather than seeing the light on the glorious bride of Christ, they began to commit spiritual fornication with all kinds of harlot bodies.

Does Babylon's "**wine**," or doctrine, really cause men's minds to become clouded? Isaiah 28:7 tells us, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; [Jesus is the way (John 14:6), but these people 'are out of the way.' Sectism professes to be Christian, but it is not; it is 'out of the way.')] the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." That is why "**Babylon**" does not have a vision of truth. That is why they do not see anything wrong with homosexual marriages or homosexual ministers. "They stumble in judgment," because they are "**drunk**."

Verse 8 goes on to say, "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." *Vomit* is something you once took in, but you no longer want to retain. During the Reformation, some took in truth, but then they no longer wanted to keep that truth in them, so they just spit it out. And when it came out, it did not look a thing like when it went in. These Scriptures are not portraying a literal drink, but they are portraying a spiritual condition. Isaiah 29:9-11 says: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine [not literal wine]; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed . . ." They have taken hold of false doctrines. They are so far out of the way that they stagger; they have no way of walking and living right. They have picked up another spirit, and the things of God are closed up to them.

Why did this happen? Jesus said in John 12:35, ". . . Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." They are staggering, and they cannot see because they did not walk in the light while they had the light. They would not walk in the light or the understanding they had, so in their darkness, unclean spirits caused them to drink in false doctrines. Then they offered it to others, and others became "**drunk**."

Notice the action verbs in **verse 3** of our text: "**drunk**," "**committed**," and "**waxed**." This tells us that the spirits behind these doctrines are not passive, and they are not satisfied until they compel people to action. The reason why is because they propagate the false doctrine: "You sin, I sin, we all sin; no one can live above sin." They are not content for people to only believe that doctrine, but they want them to incorporate it into their lives. Some people say, "Oh, it doesn't really matter what you believe." However, it makes a world of difference what you believe because what you believe governs what you do (Proverbs 23:7). These spirits are not satisfied until their doctrine is actively engaged in one's life, because ones are judged according to the deeds done in their body (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17).

The active ones spoken of in our text are "**the kings of the earth**" and "**the merchants of the earth**." The "**earth**" depicts the man-made earthen system of Protestantism (Revelation 13:11). **Verse 3** describes the people and the false ministry of Protestantism, and we see a subtle distinction between them. The "**kings . . . have committed fornication**," but the "**merchants**" have "**waxed rich**." In this context, those who have "**drunk**" (taken in of Babylon's doctrines and her spirit) are referred to as "**kings of the earth**." (They are also spoken of in Revelation 17:2.) The thought of "**kings**" indicates a reign, a rule. Saints are kings (Revelation 1:5-6; 5:10). Romans 5:17 says that we reign by Jesus Christ, and Romans 6:14 says that we have dominion over sin. That is what the saints reign over. However, "**the kings of the earth**" reign in Protestantism. They are limited to a rule that is dominated by the teachings of man and produced by devils. That is why they live on such a low level. Instead of having dominion over sin, sin has dominion over them.

The "**merchants**" in our text are mentioned four times in this chapter: **verse 3**, verse 11, verse 15, and verse 23. They are the peddlers of the false and devilish teachings of "**Babylon**." They are a picture of a sectarian ministry.

The ministry is referred to by the expression "**merchants.**" Proverbs 31:10 is a picture representing the church. Verse 14 says, "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar." The ministry of the church gets food (the Word) from a far country (Heaven) and brings it to mankind. Jesus spoke of the sixth-seal ministry in the sixth of the seven prophetic parables. Matthew 13:45 says, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls." The ministry is referred to as a "merchant" again, because they bring merchandise (truth) from a far country.

However, the "**merchants**" in our text are a picture of a false ministry that makes merchandise out of the souls of men. Isaiah wrote of them. Isaiah 56:10-11 says that they are "greedy," and they do what they do for "gain." Our text says that the "**merchants . . . are waxed rich**"; they are Babylon's hirelings. **Verse 3** tells us it was "**through the abundance of her delicacies,**" or the Greek says the "power of her delicacies." These "**delicacies**" have a power. Perhaps it is "**Babylon**" allowing ones to travel and sing. It could be any number of things. Although these ones know they should take a stand for truth, the power of those "**delicacies**" holds them in Babylonian bondage.

As we proceed further in this chapter, we will see that the Lord is pouring out truth. Verse 8 tells us that Babylon "shall be utterly burned with fire [God's Word; Jeremiah 23:29]." God's Word will put judgment on all falsity and every false religious system and organization. First Corinthians 3:15 lets us know that "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." When God in His faithfulness reveals Babylon's condition, He is just positioning a people to hear His call.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART THREE

The Call and Commission Concerning Babylon

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

"Another Voice"

The tenor of the text has changed from the previous three verses. There is a progression of truth. Verses 1-3 provide a revelation of Babylon's condition. Then **verses 4-8** portray the call and commission concerning Babylon. **Verse 4** says, "**And I heard another voice from heaven . . .**" Whose "**voice**" is this? The "strong voice" in verse 2 was identified as that of the angel (the ministry) as they began to herald this evening-light message. The "angel" (verse 1) revealed Babylon's condition, but there was no move until ones heard "**another voice**" (**verse 4**). This "**voice**" confirmed what had been proclaimed by the "angel" (verse 1).

The ministry brought the Word, or the light ("Thy word is a . . . light"; Psalm 119:105). That is how "the earth was lightened" (verse 1). The Apostle Paul penned in Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; [How?] Holding forth the word of life." When the Word is held forth, it enables light to shine, or understanding to be given.

The ministry is one of God's primary luminary agents to shine forth this light. They are referred to as stars (Revelation 1:16, 20), but who is it that enlightens the minds of men to enable them to perceive the light? There is another agency involved. According to Ephesians 1:17-18, it is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" (or the Spirit of God) that enlightens. Without the Spirit, one can never truly perceive the message that the ministry brings. In Revelation, Chapter 18, the ministry faithfully proclaimed the message with "a strong voice" (verse 2). However, there were not any moves made until "**another voice**" (the Spirit of God) was heard, confirming the message. Thus, the Word is one witness, and the Spirit is the other witness. With both of them working, people can perceive the truth and realize the moves that God desires they make.

Let us read Jesus' words to His disciples prior to being seized in the Garden. He said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [the 'Holy Ghost'; John 14:26] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." In John 16:13 Jesus continued, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth [thy word is truth'; John 17:17]: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you . . ." It takes the work of the Holy Spirit to show us the truth of God's eternal Word.

The "**voice from heaven**" in **verse 4** of our text is a portrayal of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Scriptures we are told that things are established in the mouth of at least two witnesses. From the earliest Mosaic injunction, "two witnesses" was the minimal requirement (Deuteronomy 19:15). We are introduced to the "two witnesses" in Revelation 11:3. Matthew 24:14 tells us that the Gospel, or the Word, is one "witness," and Hebrews 10:15 lets us know that "the Holy Ghost also is a witness."

The "two witnesses" provide a safeguard. People can twist and turn the Bible and cause it to say most anything imaginable. When people get an idea in their head, they can always find a Scripture to back it up. Then there are other people (false Pentecostalism is full of this) who say, "The Holy Ghost told me to do that," even if it crosses up what the Word of God teaches. That is why God said to let everything be established by two witnesses. The Word of God and the Spirit of God will not contradict each other. The Word of God will never tell you something that the Spirit

of God will not confirm. Likewise, the Spirit of God will never lead you to do something that goes against the sound teachings of God's Word. Scripture confirms that the Word and the Spirit always agree. First John 5:7-9 states: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one [they work in unity and harmony]. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water [the Word; Ephesians 5:26], and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." The Spirit and the Word are agreeing to everything that the blood bought for us.

In **verse 4** of our text, the "**voice**" of the Spirit declared, "**Come out of her, my people . . .**" The ministry must proclaim the message, but it is the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that compels people to action. Our text proceeds to give great insight as to why heeding this call is so crucial: "**. . . that ye be not partakers of her sins . . .**" When the saints were enveloped in the Protestant Era, a mixture of light and darkness, truth and error, they could not see truth clearly. They did not have the light, or understanding, that we are privileged to enjoy now in the evening time. There was no visible church; it had not yet been restored. It went out of sight in the morning time and did not come back into view until the evening time. All they had were various creeds and sects of mankind, earthen religion. It had not been revealed to them that division was sin. Certainly, there were those who Revelation 6:9-10 tells us mourned and grieved over the conditions, realizing something was amiss. They knew that there should be a greater move of God and a greater unity than what they were experiencing, but they did not understand the full gravity of the situation, that in God's eyes it was a deplorable and sinful state.

Since the message on unity in the Protestant Era had not been restored, people could not fully see the evils of sectism; so it was not sin to them. For sin to be chargeable, you must have a knowledge first (James 4:17), and then you must exercise your will contrary to what you know is right. In John 9:41 Jesus told the Pharisees, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." He was telling them that without knowledge and understanding, there is no sin. Light brings responsibility. Jesus said in Matthew 11:21, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Why did He hurl this woe and denunciation upon them? They had understanding and light that Tyre and Sidon were never privileged to enjoy, and that light brought responsibility.

Matthew 11:22-24 continues: "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum [the base of Jesus' operations during His ministry; Matthew 4:13], which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Capernaum had greater opportunity; the Gospel was heralded in its midst. Sodom never had a message preached in its midst, that we have record of; but Jesus abode in Capernaum, and He did many mighty works there. Again, light brings responsibility. Where there is no knowledge and understanding, consequently, there is no sin.

"Come Out"

Just as Jesus said, "light is come" (John 3:19). Thank God in 1880 when the sixth seal was loosed, light came. People were "lightened" (Revelation 18:1). The Word brought light, and the preached message brought understanding. The Holy Spirit's confirmation of the Word revealed truth to a people, and then they were "enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). They knew the moves they needed to make. Once light has come and "**my people**" (**verse 4**) continue to stay in Babylon, they will become "**partakers of her sins.**" When there was no understanding in that cloudy and dark day, there was no sin charged to them for being in sectarian organizations. There was no better position for them to occupy in that Protestant Era. However, in 1880 God revealed the message concerning the unity of God's people. He revealed the conditions that were in "**Babylon,**" and the Holy Spirit confirmed the message. The call of the Word and the Spirit to "**my people**" was to "**come out.**" If they stayed in after that call, they were walking against light, and it is so yet today.

The "divisions and offences" that built sectarian walls came from men who "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 16:17-18). These are the ones who foster and promote division. I am not saying that everyone in sectism is lost or unsaved, certainly not, because there is a call to God's people to "**come out.**" Some of God's people are down in sectarian bondage, but they have not yet heard the message of truth and the call to "**come out.**" The call in

our text is to **"Come out."** God's people are not to eat at that trough any longer. They are not to be **"partakers."** Sectism was borne of rebellion that was fostered by selfishness and pride. Those who foster division commit sin. To be **"partakers"** of those organizations is to be a "partaker of other men's sins" (1 Timothy 5:22). If ones do that, they cannot "keep thyslf pure" (1 Timothy 5:22); they will be affected and infected.

There are two separate elements to unity. Jesus prayed that in His high priestly prayer as He was in the Garden. He said in John 17:21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The unity of the Spirit is the first aspect of unity. We cannot produce it (only God can), but we are charged to "keep" it (Ephesians 4:3). When we initially are saved, we become recipients of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9), which produces a unity with every person who has the same Spirit. Then Jesus prayed further in John 17:23, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me" This second aspect of unity would enable the world not just to "believe," but to "know." Ephesians 4:13 calls it "the unity of the faith." In other words, when those who have the same Spirit are gathered together in one visible body, it is a convincing work to an unbelieving world.

The Prophet Isaiah looked down through the telescope of time, envisioning the reality of our day, when he wrote in Isaiah 52:8, "Thy watchmen shall lift up *the* voice; with *the* voice together [the unity of the faith] shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye [the unity of the Spirit]" They have unity of the faith because they have the unity of the Spirit. Does the expression "eye to eye" really mean the unity of the Spirit? Revelation 5:6 tells us very clearly that the "seven eyes" of the Lamb (Christ) "are the seven Spirits of God." The "eye" represents the Spirit of God. Here is a ministry bringing Zion again, bringing a people out of religious confusion as portrayed in Song of Solomon 8:5, which states, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" The church had been obscured and out of public view through the Dark Ages and through the cloudy and dark day, but in A.D. 1880 those brethren had the unity of the Spirit and preached a message that brought people to the unity of the faith. That brought them to a position where they could be one visible body of Christ, and the church was back in visible view.

Isaiah 62:12 says, "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." Isaiah 51:11 tells us, "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Starting in 1880, God's people were leaving sectarian bondage and coming back to where they could be fed milk and honey (the Word and the Spirit) in the promised land (God's church).

The call for God's people to **"Come out" (verse 4)** has roots in the earliest biblical history. Genesis 12:1 says, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out" After the angels had come and presented their message to Lot, in Genesis 19:14 he told his sons-in-law, "Up, get you *out* of this place." When the insurrection of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram occurred, the Lord told Moses in Numbers 16:24, "Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." Then Moses said in verse 26, "Depart." This call is heralded throughout the annals of the Scriptures. Isaiah 48:20 says, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans" Jeremiah 51:6 also states, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul." Then verse 45 says, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD." This call is not novel to our day nor to the Revelation. The Apostle Paul brought forth the same truth in 2 Corinthians 6:17, which says, "Wherefore *come out* from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

God has always had a separate, distinct, different, peculiar people. In every age this has been God's desire and God's standard. When God set forth the very tenets of the Law for His people after they had left Egyptian bondage, He called them "a peculiar treasure" (Exodus 19:5). In Deuteronomy 14:2 we read that Israel was to be "an holy people" and "a peculiar people." God wanted them to be distinct.

In the New Testament God's desire for His people is the same. Titus 2:14 says that Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Peter confirmed that in 1 Peter 2:9, writing, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." The call to **"Come out"** in our lesson text was to bring back into plain view a visible church comprised of "a peculiar people." That was God's desire, and He accomplished it. Then **verse 4** goes on to warn, ". . . **that ye receive not of her plagues.**" Just as the Lord plagued Egypt, He has plagued Babylon to free a people from sectarian bondage.

Exodus 9:13 says, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me." The call in our

text is the antitype of this type. Exodus 9:14 goes on to say, "For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth." Now, in the evening time, there are "seven angels [the evening-time ministry] having the seven last plagues" (Revelation 15:1). In Revelation 16:1 they were told to "pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth [or upon the earthen systems of religion]." Revelation, Chapter 16, tells of all of the "plagues" that were poured out and are being poured out.

When the "plagues" are poured out, the light shines, and honest hearts come to the light (John 3:21). They rejoice in the light, but those who fail to "Walk in the light" (1 John 1:7) have a change of spirit, and they became "**partakers of her sins**" and "**receive . . . of her plagues.**" Truth becomes a "plague" to them. It is a very sad commentary that there are those who once rejoiced in truth, but when light became clear and the Holy Spirit confirmed what they needed to do, they were not willing to make that move; now they no longer want to hear it. They no longer come around where truth is, because when truth uncovered their condition and revealed their sins, it was very uncomfortable. John 3:19 tells us, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . ." Sadly, there were those who did not walk in the light in A.D. 1880, and that still happens today. However, the paramount truth is that there were people who were gloriously gathered, and the church came back into visible view with Christ in His rightful place as the Head (Revelation 14:1).

Revelation 18:5 says, "**For her sins have reached unto [not into] heaven . . .**" This portrays that division (dividing God's people up) is a sin against "**heaven,**" because the church came from "heaven" (Revelation 21:2). It has a heavenly origin; so dividing it up is a sin that stirs God greatly. **Verse 5** continues, "**. . . and God hath remembered her iniquities.**" Sin requires judgment. Jeremiah 51:9 says, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven [again, not *into*], and is lifted up even to the skies." When many get the call to "**come out,**" one of the first things the devil tries to do is to get them to think, "Well, I will just stay down here and help people." You cannot stay in Babylon and help it. You cannot help a drowning man by drowning with him. If God cannot heal Babylon, there is nothing anybody else can do.

The Commission and Judgment

Verse 6 of our text says, "**Reward her even as she rewarded you . . .**" In these words we see the immutable moral law of sowing and reaping. We also see it revealed in **verse 7**, which says, "**How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.**" There is a moral law of retribution. Paul penned in Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The law of retribution has particular application to judgment. In Matthew 7:2 Jesus said, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." James 2:13 also tells us, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy."

Indeed the law of sowing and reaping has application to Babylon. Psalm 137:8 says, "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us." They are going to receive just exactly what they measured out. Jeremiah 50:29 tells us, "Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel." The moral law of retribution is inescapable. Judgment is going to be put on Babylon, and it has been put on Babylon since the brethren began to lay it forth in A.D. 1880.

In **verse 6** of our text, we see the word "**double**" used three times, revealing to us that two cups are to be poured out on Babylon: one in the sixth seal and one in the seventh seal. The sixth-seal ministry started out with a glorious message and great power, but at the end of the sixth-seal period of time, they began to silence up on the message (Revelation 8:1). They no longer wanted to herald the parts of the message that were somewhat socially offensive. So, they began to be quiet on the truth of the church being separate from Babylon. The message of "**Come out**" began to be silenced. That is why God had to reach down a "second time to recover the remnant of his people" (Isaiah 11:11). In this seventh-seal period of time, God is calling a second remnant to give Babylon the second cup.

Verse 8 of our text states, "**Therefore shall her plagues come in one day . . . and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.**" Here we see the form that the judgment begins to take.

Verse 8 talks about Babylon being "**burned with fire,**" and it refers to occurring "**in one day.**" First Corinthians 3:13 tells us, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." In **Revelation 18:8** the "**one day**" is speaking of the evening time. Zechariah 14:7 says, "But it shall be *one day* which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." This "**one day**" consists of two portions: the sixth seal and the seventh seal. That is why there are two cups to be poured out. **Verse 6** of our text speaks of "**the cup which she hath filled.**" To understand what this expression means, we must back up to Revelation 17:4, which says that Babylon has "a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." She is teaching, "Go to the church of your choice; it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." However, that is not the only thing she is filling the cup with. Jesus said Matthew 23:32, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers," or another rendering says, "Then fill up to the brim the cup." In other words, those religious leaders are filling up the cup of God's wrath, God's judgment. That is exactly what Babylon is also filling up, and that wrath is and will be poured out on her.

When God speaks to people, He gives them time and opportunity to repent. If they continue to go over top of that, they are not only filling their cup with the things they desire, but they also are filling up a cup of God's wrath. It comes right back to the law of retribution. When ones fill up that cup, it is going to be poured out on them. Romans 2:5 says, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Every time ones persist in their hardness and impenitence, every time they go contrary to God's eternal Word, they are just filling up the cup more and more.

Revelation 14:8-10 says: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city [the same message as in Revelation 18:2], because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication [that is what produced the condition]. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture [undiluted, full strength] into the cup of his indignation." This speaks of the first cup of wrath that was poured out in the sixth seal. Then Revelation 16:19 tells us, "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." This is the second cup that is being poured out in the seventh seal. It is through the pouring out of these cups that God sets people free from Babylon.

Notice Babylon's arrogance and pride. That was one of the primary reasons why she fell, and it is an attribute that stirs God greatly. **Verse 7** says, "**How much she hath glorified herself** [not glorified God] . . ." Look at the intent behind the tower of Babel. In Genesis 11:4 those ones said, "Go to, let *us* build *us* a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let *us* make *us* a name . . ." That is the same motivation behind spiritual Babylon yet today. She has "**glorified herself, and lived deliciously.**" In other words, she feeds the appetites of the flesh. That is how she seduces people. She says: "Oh, you can come and join with us. You do not have to be that strict; you don't have to be a fanatic or go to those excesses; God doesn't require that." She allows the appetites of the flesh to be fed, and that deliciousness is appealing; it attracts and seduces people.

Second Peter 2:1 tells us, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [or sects] . . ." This verse shows the same type of thing that produced sectism. Second Peter 2:10 goes on to say, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government [not civil government, but God's ordained church government; they will not allow Christ to be the Head of the church; they have to have a man-made head, or man-made headquarters]. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled . . ." Self-will, pride, and arrogancy gave rise to the rebellion that produced sectism.

Verses 18-19 continue: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." This is how Babylon brings people into bondage. "They allure through the lusts of the flesh"; they make people feel like they can have the world and have God too, or have sin and God at the same time. Self-will and pride caused Babylon to fall (Proverbs 16:18). Babylon was full of pride and selfishness; that is what produced her rebellion.

Second Timothy 3:1-2 states: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves [that is the root of it all; these other things are manifestations of that selfishness], covetous,

boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." Every one of these things is taking place in modern religion, and they call it Christianity. How perilous! Verses 3-9 continue: "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded [Babylon is built on people like that], lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." God is pouring out judgment in this evening time, so that "their folly shall be manifest."

"She Shall Be Utterly Burned With Fire"

Notice Babylon's arrogance in our Scripture text. She says in **verse 7, "I sit a queen, and am no widow."** This system of religion is "not holding the Head" (Colossians 2:19). Babylon refuses to give Christ His rightful place as the Head of the church. She refuses the place and authority of the Husband. She claims to be the Bride of Christ, refusing the King and His rule, yet claiming to be "**a queen.**" Is it any wonder that God is stirred? Look how Babylon's arrogance is expressed in prophecy. Isaiah 47:1-3 tells us: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground [she is on the earthen level]: there is no throne [she is not in an exalted position] . . . Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered [God is going to expose her] . . ." Verse 5 continues, "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms."

Verses 7-11 tell us: "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly [how that describes modern religion], that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me [there is the pride, the arrogance]; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know."

There is a whole host of truths worthy of consideration in these verses, but let us lift a few. Verse 9 mentions "one day," or the evening time. That is when Babylon will suffer "the loss of children." In other words, the "children" (God's people) are being called to "**come out.**" Also, she will suffer "widowhood," because she "trusted in [her] wickedness" (verse 10). Death happened because she failed to walk in the light. Thus, sin became chargeable to her. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death." Ezekiel 18:20 also tells us, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Verse 8 of our text says, "**Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine** [certainly, there is a famine in that land; Amos 8:11]; **and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.**" (This is also spoken of in prophecy concerning Babylon in Isaiah 47:1.) What is the "**fire**" that God uses to put judgment on Babylon? According to Jeremiah 23:29, it is the "word." God sends the fiery Word of God to lay judgment on Babylon. Isaiah 31:9 says that the Lord's "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." Isaiah 2:3 lets us know that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." So, the "**fire**" is the law, or the Word of the Lord; in other words, the message that burns up Babylon.

Malachi 4:1 tells us, "For, behold, the day cometh [speaking of the New Testament], that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD . . ." What gets burned up? Just the stubble, the proud, or the wicked; the "**fire**" does not hurt the gold. In the evening time, especially in this seventh-seal period of time, God has a ministry that has "power over fire" (Revelation 14:18). **Verse 8** of our text tells us that Babylon "**shall be utterly burned with fire,**" or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "burnt up." The evening-time message is a strong message. It burns up people who are not honest and do not want to come to the truth. It also burns up every system that is not based on the sound teachings of God's Eternal Word. However, on the converse side, there are those that it saves and delivers.

First Corinthians 3:12-15 says: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day [the evening time] shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire [whether it is precious or just stubble]; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Individuals may have a time in their lives when they expended their efforts in a system of religion; they thought they were building up something for Christ, only to learn it was not for Christ at all but for Babylon. When they came under the sound of truth, all of their efforts building that organization, working for the beast or the image, were completely burned up. Their work was revealed to be "stubble." However, if they take the message of truth and "**Come out**" (verse 4), they will "be saved; yet so as by fire."

When I was a young boy raised in sectism, I can remember a certain revival meeting. They asked us to "pack a pew," and I did. I brought all the kids that I could. I thought I was really doing something for God, but I was doing something for the image instead. When I came out of that thing, my works all had to burn. Thank God, although my works burned, I was saved by the "**fire**." The fiery message of truth saved me and called me out.

Our text clearly reveals the call and commission concerning Babylon. It reveals her pride and her plagues. It also reveals how God called and is calling a people today out of her ranks to be a separate, distinct, and peculiar people. God has gathered them together to form "a city of truth" (Zechariah 8:3), a city that is in plain view. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, "A city that is set on an hill [the Greek word *oros*, which means mountain] cannot be hid." Thank God for the light of precious truth! May God help us to ever continue to walk in the brilliant rays of its light. God does not send light to harm people but to help them. When the truth is brought clear and blazing against the conditions that are in Babylon, honest ones will not stay down there and become a "**partaker**." The truth will show them the situation that they are enveloped in. It will cause them to hear the call of the Spirit and to flee from Babylon. Then they can come to a position where their soul can be properly fed and prepared for a world beyond time. Truth binds every false thing, but it causes honest hearts to find great freedom.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART FOUR

The Commiseration for Babylon – Part 1

Revelation 18:9 And 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,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

"The Kings of the Earth"

As we view these verses, we see another aspect of truth being depicted. In Revelation 18:1-4 Babylon's condition is clearly revealed; verses 4-8 depict the call and commission concerning Babylon; and in **verses 9-14** the commiseration for Babylon is described. (This also continues in verses 15-19.) *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines the word *commiserate* as "to feel or show sorrow or pity for, sympathize with in distress." This is an accurate description of what is being described in our text. As we view these expressions, it raises two questions: "Who is engaged in this commiseration?" and "Why are they engaged in it?" **Verses 9-10** are speaking of "**the kings of the earth.**" It says that they "**shall bewail her, and lament for her.**" Then **verse 11** says, "**And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her.**" Those are the ones who are engaged in this commiseration.

"**The kings of the earth**" (**verse 9**) is an expression employed repeatedly in the Revelation. It is certainly worthy of further consideration. In a prior study, we found that it denoted people, but let us take the sword of truth and pierce a little deeper to see what specific group of people is being spoken of in this expression. It has a depth of truth of which we need to gain understanding. In Revelation, Chapter 6, after the sixth seal was opened, it mentions "the kings of the earth" (verse 15). Revelation 6:12 speaks of "a great earthquake." That is when God began to shake things up in the religious realm; He shook and uncovered the things that had been established in prior ages. When this "earthquake" occurred, verse 15 says that "the kings of the earth" attempted to hide themselves. The Prophet Isaiah told us they tried to hide "under falsehood" (Isaiah 28:15). However, when truth came close and searching, it did an uncovering work. Isaiah 28:20 tells us it makes "the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."

When these sixth-seal brethren commenced to preach the truth of God's eternal Word, an earthquake took place. That "earthquake" did a revealing work; it began to uncover spiritual conditions. Those who were honest came leaping and shouting home to Zion, and those who were dishonest tried to pull the covers back up. When people do not want to be awakened and someone pulls the covers off, they just grab for the covers and try to pull them back up. Likewise, when truth reveals that ones have been "hiding" in falsehood, that will not cover them anymore. Revelation 16:13-14 lets us know that these "unclean spirits like frogs" are "the spirits of devils, working miracles, which 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." These "**kings**" did not take the truth because they had a spirit that was not right.

There is a certain ring to the truth. Honest hearts will take the truth, even if they do not understand it. When they hear it, the Spirit says, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21). On the other hand, those who are dishonest, those who possess another spirit, those who are comfortable in falsehood, will attempt to hide themselves and pull the covers back up. Yet, no matter how much they may attempt to cover themselves up, they will never be as comfortable as they once were. According to Revelation 16:14, the "kings of the earth" are motivated and controlled by the "spirits of devils." They battle against the truth because of the spirit they possess. Revelation 17:2 tells us,

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication [talking about the great whore; 17:1], and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." They committed fornication because they were drunk. They were not physically drunk (we are dealing in symbolism), but they picked up her spirit. When they imbibed that spirit, they were under the control and domination of it. Because of that all they could do was battle against truth.

"The kings of the earth," spoken of in our text, are men who have served as the heads of the various denominations and sectarian organizations. They have reigned on the low level of the mingled hills of Babylon with a false victory. When these reformation moves started, they had victory, but when they became disobedient and rebellious, their victory was taken away. Now all they have is a cheap, man-made substitute. The religious systems of men are a cheap and inferior imitation. There are more people going to hell because of false religion than any one other thing. It is the greatest plague on society.

The reformers that God used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had gold (precious truth). However, many times they or their successors failed to continue to walk in the light. When they failed to be obedient, when self-will, pride, and rebellion raised up, their gold was taken away, and they replaced it with a cheap, inferior substitute. (Read 2 Chronicles 12:9-10.) Why were **"the kings of the earth"** bewailing and lamenting in our text? The Greek word for *bewail* is *klaio*, and it means "any loud expression of grief." It is used numerous places throughout the Scriptures, and it is always accompanied by strong emotion and strong expression. In Mark 5:38-39 this same word is used, and verse 38 calls it a "tumult."

The strong emotion depicted in **verse 9** of our text was displayed because of **"her burning."** When the message (the Word) became so fiery that it began to burn things up, they felt strong emotion because their fortunes were tied to hers. When the ones who head these religious organizations of men see the people begin to embrace truth and start to leave the ranks, Babylon's misfortune becomes their misfortune. It is a sad day for the **"kings of the earth."** It is not an uncommon thing for a sectarian minister to say, "Well, you are getting my best people." Those are the ones that truth is supposed to get. John 10:27 says, "My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow me."

Revelation, Chapter 16, tells of the seven plagues that were poured out on Babylon: three were poured out in the sixth seal and four were poured out in the seventh seal. Revelation 18:8 says, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." God poured out His judgment in the form of "fire" (His Word; Jeremiah 23:29). God turned a ministry loose with His fiery sword.

Second Thessalonians 1:7-8 states: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." This Scripture is not talking about Christ's Second Advent but about what happens when the truth comes. God has a flaming sword. It is the same flaming sword that the cherubim used to keep the way of the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24). It can put ones in as well as keep ones out. That sword is God's Word (Hebrews 4:12). If man will meet Bible conditions, he can enter into an experience with God. Then he can take the heat of the Word and have a fired-up experience. In that way the "fire" will not harm him.

"The Smoke of Her Burning"

Again, Revelation 18:8 says that Babylon "shall be utterly burned with fire." A **"burning" (verse 9)** changes everything; everything is forever altered. A **"burning"** consumes and destroys; items can no longer be used for their intended purpose. **"Babylon"** has concocted many devices to be used for the intent of deceiving the souls of men, but when God puts the "fire" on them, they can no longer continue to deceive men freely. Even if "the fire" does not completely destroy Babylon's devices, **"the smoke of her burning" (verse 9)** will forever taint them. Has someone ever tried to sell you a car that had been on fire? They might have tried to restore it, but it will still smell like smoke. The smell of smoke will taint something; you cannot ever fully recover from the smell of smoke.

Verse 10 of our text tells us, **" . . . for in one hour is thy judgment come."** The **"one hour"** is a prophetic time symbol, consisting of two half hours. Half of the judgment was poured out in the sixth-seal period of time, and the other half was poured out in the seventh-seal period of time. When the sixth-seal brethren began to herald forth the truth, God's judgments were "made manifest" (Revelation 15:4). Titus 1:3 lets us know that God has "manifested his word through preaching." When the ministry began to preach the evening-light message, God's judgments began to be manifested. People began to see what God thought about the many sectarian organizations of men.

Let us see what the "fire" will do. First Corinthians 3:11-14 says: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ [that is the foundation of God's church; the bottomless pit has no foundation]. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones [representing truths], wood, hay, stubble [cheap, earthly things]; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire [God's Word]; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide . . . he shall receive a reward." In other words, if it is built with gold, silver, and precious stones, the "fire" will not hurt it; it will just make it purer. The "fire" will let people know whether they are building on the foundation properly or not. When people in sectism hear truth, it will shake them up. The "fire" will burn up their wood, hay, and stubble. That is when they are faced with the choice to burn with it or to move on with God.

When people come into a worship service where the truth is being preached, if what they have is real, the worship service will just make them better. However, if they are trying to put cheap substitutes in, the "fire" will burn that up and expose them. Then, verse 15 says, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." I was born and raised in sectarian religion. I worked according to what limited understanding I had, which was very meager. I tried to build that organization up, but when I came to where truth was, I found that everything I had been building up was something God said had fallen down. I could have stayed with it and gone down with it, but instead God called me out; so I did not have to go down with it. Although the "fire" burned up all of my works, I was saved by the "fire." It takes the "fire" to expose Babylon, so honest hearts can see it and hear the cry to "Come out."

There have been people who have spent their entire lives in sectarian organizations. They have put their money in, helped them to build buildings, and got people to come, only to find out when God's "fire" went forth, they were not building anything for God. Instead they were building for the image. All of the time they thought they were working for God, they were actually working for the devil. What a startling revelation! Paul had that same startling revelation. He thought he was doing God's service when he was persecuting and making havoc of the church. When Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Acts 9:5 says, "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus . . ." That had to be the most startling revelation of his life. To find out that everything he had been fighting against was right and everything he had been fighting for was wrong will shake a man up.

The "fire" of the message uncovered and consumed the stubble upon which "**Babylon**" was built. It gave honest-hearted people victory over those organizations. They could tread those false teachings and spirits "under the soles" of their "feet" (Malachi 4:1-3; Luke 10:19). In the song entitled "Prophetic Truth," Brother D. S. Warner penned, "*We'll sing of our freedom, though Babylon rages, We'll shout as her city doth burn.*" We can shout because we are not burning with it. Isaiah 61:3 says that God would give us "beauty for ashes." When this truth goes forth, those who are proud and do wickedly will be ashes under our feet (Malachi 4:3). Ashes are something that was good once, but not now. Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand (Jeremiah 51:7), but she is not any good now. She is built on pride and wickedness, and the truth shows her for what she is. It turns her into ashes (something spent and past), and it gives us power to have those ashes of the past put away, allowing us to turn to the beauty of God's eternal truth in the present.

Verse 11 of our text says, "**And the merchants of the earth** [the preachers who peddle Babylon's wares] **shall weep and mourn over her** [why?]: **for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.**" In other words, "**no man**" who has had the Word enlighten his understanding continues to buy Babylon's wares. When the truth began to be proclaimed in A.D. 1880, people began to "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). That took them out of the market; they had no reason to go back. Thus, the "**merchants**" could not make "**merchandise**" of them "**any more.**"

Look at the sixth of the seven prophetic parables, which parallels with the sixth period of time (1880 to 1930), the same time that we are studying in our text. Matthew 13:45-46 says: "Again, the kingdom of heaven [the Kingdom of God, or the Church of God] is like unto a merchant man [in this instance, the Kingdom of God, a man who deals in truths], seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The "pearl of great price" was not Jesus, because the progression of the parables shows that this "merchant man" already had Jesus. This "one pearl" is the message on the church. It was what he had been looking for. It was the message on the fact that God has one people, and they were in unity and harmony. When this man found the "one pearl," he "bought it," and it forever took him out of the market. Babylon could not make "**merchandise**" of him "**any more.**"

This is a picture of the sixth-seal ministry embracing the message of truth. When they embraced it, they began

to proclaim it. Once the people heard it, they came leaping and shouting home to Zion. The **"kings of the earth"** and the **"merchants of the earth"** were showing sorrow (not godly sorrow, but worldly sorrow; 2 Corinthians 7:10). They had worldly sorrow because they were not interested in making any change. They were not sorry for the conditions, but they were sorry they were exposed and their religious racket was ruined!

What do the **"merchants of the earth"** sell that captivates people and puts them in sectarian bondage? Second Peter 2:1-3 says: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [sects], even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways [ways that will destroy or ruin]; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." They captivate precious souls through their teachings, their "feigned words," or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "deceitful words."

Babylon has teachings, such as: "You sin, I sin, we all sin; no one can live above sin. Just try the best you can; God understands." Those are deceitful words that will bring people into bondage. Those teachings will never bring people to an experience with victory. They will throw a chain of religion around people, holding them captive. **Verse 10** of our text says that **"in one hour is thy judgment come."** This **"judgment"** upon Babylon is both fierce and final because they traffic in the **"souls of men" (verse 13)**. They satisfy their selfish desires, self-will, human pride, and covetousness by making captives of people with their deceitful words.

Revelation 13:11, speaking of the Protestant beast, tells us that it "spake as a dragon." In other words, it emulated paganism, and that dragon was covetous. It made merchandise of people to satisfy its own covetousness. Acts 16:16-19 reveals the paganism Paul faced while in Philippi. The "certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" had "masters" who became angry after Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of the damsel. What was driving these men? Was it anything to do with this woman soothsaying, or prophesying the future? Was it their dire belief in that system? Were they concerned about the woman's welfare? No! Verse 19 says, "When her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone . . ." Gain (their covetousness, their selfishness) was driving them. That is exactly what drives false religion yet today. That is all the dragon and the image care about.

Another instance occurred at Ephesus. We read in Acts 19:23, "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way." Is it not amazing how there is always a stir where truth is? That just goes with the territory. If you never stir the devil, you might want to become concerned. If you are doing something for God, you are going to stir him. Verses 24-25 continue: "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana [the pagan goddess of Ephesus], brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." Notice that there was no discussion about whether what Paul was preaching might be truth or not. The discussion was all about gain and wealth. When Babylon's pastors have to report to the district superintendents and bishops and so forth, it is all about numbers. They want to know the increase, how many people they have, and how the finances are. They prey on the darkness produced by their own teachings to take advantage of souls. They profit at the people's expense because of the people's ignorance.

"Thy Judgment" Is "Come"

The Scriptures portray through prophetic times when God unleashed His judgments, and there are many parallels to what is being reaped on Babylon today. One example is found in Ezekiel 7:8-27. These Scriptures give some indicators of how God's judgments are performed. By comparing this Scripture passage with Revelation, Chapter 18, we can see many parallels. Ezekiel 7:9 says that "I will recompense thee according to thy ways . . ." That is the same as Revelation 18:6, which says, "Reward her even as she rewarded you . . ." Ezekiel 7:10 says that "pride hath budded," and rebellion borne of pride produced the condition of Babylon. Then verse 19 lets us know that when God pours out His truth, the things that once satisfied will no longer satisfy.

Verse 27 goes on to say, "The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way [the immutable law of retribution, sowing and reaping], and according to their deserts will I judge them." They will get their just deserts. Ezekiel 27:3 talks about proud Tyrus, "a merchant of the people." That is exactly what Babylon is. Look at the judgment that God unleashed on her in Ezekiel 27:26-36. There are a lot of parallels in those verses using the very verbiage that is employed in our text. Why is that? Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the LORD, I change not." When God puts judgment

out, it is judgment. It does not matter whether it is on Tyrus or on Babylon. Those verses in Ezekiel, Chapter 27, talk about how there would be "wailing" (verse 32) and how the "merchandise . . . shall fall" (verse 34). The reason for the judgment was the result of her pride.

In **verses 12-13** of our text, we find symbolic truths portrayed on several levels. To a Hebrew, truth was somewhat like a kaleidoscope: the more you turned it, the more perceptions of truth you could receive. John was a Hebrew, and much of the truth of the Revelation has Hebrew imagery. Although several various aspects of truth are being portrayed, we want to consider at least three of them. First, we see how **"Babylon"** has been made fabulously wealthy trafficking in the business of religion. No wonder God is stirred. Just as Jesus was stirred with those who made "my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:16), likewise, Jesus finds it deplorable when ones turn the things of God into a business to satisfy someone's covetousness or greed.

Second, our text gives a list of **"merchandise" (verses 12-13)**. Let us view it in the literal sense. Certainly, there is truth behind each expression, but if taken in total, it is a list of all the fineries of the flesh. All the things that the flesh craves are being depicted. This reveals that Babylon cannot meet the needs of the souls of men, but it only panders to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). **"Babylon"** is in the business of trying to provide things of the world, things that the flesh craves. A confirmation of this aspect of truth is found in **verse 14**, which reads, **"And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee . . ."** **"Babylon,"** which was borne of self-will, pride, and rebellion, can only feed the flesh. That is why the cry is to "Come out" (Revelation 18:4). Jeremiah 51:45 also says, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD."

The third aspect of truth, found in **verse 12**, talks about **"gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen."** These all represent precious truths. According to 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, a foundation built with precious stones (truths) will endure the fire (God's Word). When describing the city of God, the Church of God, Revelation 21:19 says, "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones [truths]." Then Revelation 19:8 tells us that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Yet, Matthew 7:6 warns, "Give not that which is holy [truths] unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls [truths] before swine . . ." Revelation 17:4 lets us know that Babylon was "decked" with these. She is deceitfully "decked" with truths to serve as an attraction, to allure men. She wants them to drink of her cup, become drunk, commit fornication, and become bound.

In our text, notice that the list begins speaking with truths, but it also intermingles those with **"all manner vessels of most precious wood" (verse 12)** and **"chariots" (verse 13)**, which are things that are man-made. In other words, truths are intermingled with man-made things, and even with **"beasts" (verse 13)**. That is part of Babylon's deception. She holds the truths forward and says, "If you want truth, look; I have it!" Then for those who are less than honest, she says, "If you want man-made, worldly things, I have those!" This ability to mix truth and error empowers and enables **"Babylon"** to enslave souls in sectarian bondage. However, when the "fire" of the message comes forth and **"judgment"** is poured out, her power is removed; her power is broken! That is the beauty of our text. When truth is revealed, the hold of her teachings and practices **"are departed from thee, . . . and thou shalt find them no more at all" (verse 14)**. Thank God, truth enables people to not be deceived by those things!

Notice in our text that in the list of **"merchandise,"** the **"souls of men"** are placed dead last (**verse 13**). Everything else is placed ahead of the **"souls of men."** That is truly the way it is in the realms of false religion. Also, notice that right before the **"souls of men,"** it lists **"slaves."** The Greek word for **"slaves"** is *soma*, which literally means "a body." In the ancient world, the slave market was called in the Greek *somateporas*, which literally means "the place where bodies are sold." By placing **"slaves"** and **"souls of men"** together, our text portrays that Babylon's operation is the same as the ancient slave market.

The famous scholar William Barclay said this: "The idea here is that the slave is sold body and soul into the possession of his master. He is no more human than the livestock in the farm." That is the way **"Babylon"** views **"souls."** People are just chattel, or property, to serve Babylon's purposes and increase her wealth. Thank God, when **"judgment"** came, **verse 14** says that the **"fruits . . . are departed."** The "fire" of truth consumes Babylonian falsities and exposes her baseless condition. As **"souls"** were able to see the truth, the truth made them free (John 8:32). It brought a people out of bondage and into the freedom of truth, and it will do the same yet today. The fiery message of truth looses Babylon's fetters, just as it did for the three Hebrew boys (Daniel 3:20-25). They went into the furnace all bound up, but the fire did not hurt them; and the "fire" will not hurt the saints today. It just burned up

the bonds that Babylon had put on them and loosed them. They came out free, and while they were in the fire, they were able to enjoy the presence of Christ.

I trust you can see the truth concerning the commiseration for Babylon. This is why these "**kings of the earth**" (the heads of denominational systems) and "**the merchants of the earth**" (the sectarian ministry peddling Babylon's wares) were mourning. The truth exposes those conditions. It looses a people's Babylonian fetters and lets them come leaping and shouting home to Zion. When this occurs, they can, as the songwriter wrote, "*worship God aright.*"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART FIVE

The Commiseration for Babylon – Part 2

Revelation 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 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.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

"The Merchants" Lament

In these verses of our text we see the continued commiseration for Babylon. **Verse 15** speaks of the "**merchants** [the ministry of Babylon] . . . **which were made rich by her.**" Ezekiel 27:26-36 deals with all of the fineries of the flesh on which they feed. The "**merchants**" took advantage of all of Babylon's benefits. Many people out in the realms of false religion are in it for a big business, for a vocation; it is a way to amass wealth. Yet, according to Isaiah 56:10, they are blind "watchmen." They are not qualified to minister for the spiritual benefit of man; they are not capable of meeting the needs of the souls of mankind. What good is a watchdog if it cannot bark, if it cannot warn you? Isaiah 56:11 says that "they are greedy dogs which can never have enough." We could spiritualize that and say that they never have enough people. They always want more and more people and more and more influence, and certainly, the financial aspect is a reality as well. Sadly, many are "greedy."

Notice that though Babylon's ministers took freely of the benefits, when judgment was put on that system, they tried to distance themselves. **Verse 15** of our text says that they stood "**afar off.**" It is amazing how their selfishness caused them to immediately try to dissociate themselves when judgment came. Likewise, when the rottenness of a particular organization is exposed, you hear such remarks as: "Well, I don't go along with everything they do" or "I'm not really a part of it." They take the name, follow the practice, and support the system; then, when judgment is laid on it, they try to claim that they really do not belong to it. Why is that? **Verse 15** tells us that it is "**for the fear of her torment.**" They are fearful that if they clearly support what is being exposed, judgment will be put on them as well. However, just merely trying to distance themselves does not cause them to be delivered. They must take a clear stand and come out of Babylon to be delivered. First Corinthians 15:33 says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." That verse in The Amplified Bible says: "Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character." If you associate with organizations that are corrupt, they will corrupt you. That is why the call in Revelation 18:4 is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers." If God witnesses truth to someone's heart and shows him that he needs to come out of Babylon, yet he continues to stay there, he will become a partaker. That evil association will corrupt him over time.

Verse 15 tells us that the "**merchants**" are "**weeping and wailing.**" Although these are words of strong emotion, yet the "**merchants**" are not honest-hearted. They are not "**weeping and wailing**" over the *condition* but over the *consequences*. It is not over Babylon's spiritual state but her substantial loss that they are mourning; that is where their sorrow lies. They will no longer be able to operate freely. Babylon has been exposed; people can now see her for what she is.

How Was Babylon "Clothed"?

When the judgment is so fierce, when the fire is so great, notice what the **"merchants"** try to accent. **Verse 16** says, **"And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"** They begin to try to accent the truths that they supposedly have. It is like false religion saying, "We believe the Bible; we have the truth." They trot out the things that they do have, trying to deflect judgment. As soon as the **"merchants"** were lamenting over the terrible condition, they started talking about how she was **"clothed."**

Let us examine the symbols in **verse 16**. What is the **"fine linen"**? Speaking about the bride of Christ, Revelation 19:8 says, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The **"merchants"** are saying, "We have good people here; they love God." I do not doubt that, but the call to them is to "Come out." The **"purple, and scarlet"** are royal colors. Speaking of Christ at the time of His seizure, prior to His Crucifixion, Mark 15:17-18 tells us, "And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!" Purple was a color kings wore. That word *purple* is the same Greek word that is used for purple in our text. It is the word *porphura*, which was a red-blue color. That is why Mark referred to it as "purple," and Matthew called it "scarlet" (Matthew 27:28).

Remember that Babylon said in Revelation 18:7, "I sit a queen." She professed royalty and a right to reign. She professed to be the bride of Christ. False religion will tell you that the church is a mystical body. They say that part of it is in this sectarian organization, part of it is in that sectarian organization, and part of it is over in another sect; but they are all part of the body of Christ. However, truth will expose them to be false.

The **"gold, and precious stones, and pearls"** (**verse 16**) represent truths that Babylon puts on display to allure souls and deceive the hearts of men. These are truths that we should build *into* our experience and build our experience *upon* (1 Corinthians 3:12), but let us become a little more specific. Let us first look at the **"gold."** Song of Solomon 5:10-11 says: "My beloved [speaking of Christ] is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold . . ." Protestantism (or Babylon) is trying to make it look like Christ is really the Head of their organization. However, that is nothing more than a facade which she decks herself with; there is no truth in it. Christ is not there in His presence and power. He is not recognized and owned as the head of any sectarian organization.

Let us look at the **"precious stones."** Revelation 21:19 says, "And the foundations of the wall of the city [the wall is salvation; the city is the church] were garnished with all manner of precious stones." Then it enumerates twelve stones. Those twelve stones correlate with the twelve stones that were in the old Levitical high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:17-20). They represented the twelve tribes of Israel or the people of God. These stones represent the people of God, and that is what makes up the church. Song of Solomon 5:14 continues, "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires." The precious stones are likened to Christ's hands and His belly, or the body of Christ, which is the church.

In Matthew 7:6 Jesus instructed us, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine . . ." The **"pearls"** are things that are holy; they represent truths. The picture being drawn before us in **verse 16** of our text is of Babylon's ministers trying to accent the positive things, the things that Babylon is **"clothed in,"** or **"decked with."** Just as soon as the judgment, or the truth of God's Word, is put on her, they begin to point to all of the truths that they do have.

Revelation 17:4 also says that Babylon "was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." However, that verse also shows that in reality she is just dressed for deception. All of those external things that she put on display were merely to attract men to her cup, to get them drunk, and to cause them to commit spiritual fornication. In our text, Babylon is **"clothed in,"** or **"decked with"** (**verse 16**), these symbols of truth; but it is only an external facade. It is a deceptive disguise to cover her true condition.

What is Babylon's condition? Second Timothy 3:4 uses the word "traitors." Babylon is a traitor to the truth. A *traitor* is someone who once stood for something and then turned against it. That is exactly what created Babylon: reformers who once had the light of truth, and then they turned against it. That verse also lists "heady" and "highminded." Rather than allow Christ to be the Head, men head up those organizations. That verse continues, ". . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Again, Ezekiel, Chapter 27, speaks of all of the pleasures, all of the fineries of the flesh that Babylon caters to.

We read in 2 Timothy 3:4 of people who are described as "Having a form of godliness . . ." This portrays how Babylon is "**decked,**" or "**clothed.**" It is just a form. The truths that she so readily puts on display are always depicted as externals. They have never been internalized to where they have changed her nature. Babylon was "**decked with**" so much that she was gaudy, as "the attire of an harlot" (Proverbs 7:10). That was certainly what she was attempting to do with the truths that she put on display. False religion is full of supposed good works. They have some of the truths that they supposedly adhere to out in the forefront. It is an external display to attract men so they will drink of the cup. When they become drunken and lose their proper judgment, they will be partakers and begin to commit fornication, or join up with that organization.

When the evening-time message began to be heralded, judgment came. God poured some truth out and exposed Babylon and made it clear. Isaiah 28:17 tells us, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." Why did the prophet use the particular metaphors of the "line" and the "plummet"? Those are building tools. If you have a line and a plummet, you can build straight. The message of truth makes things straight. It restores to view a city that "lieth foursquare" (Revelation 21:16). The line and the plummet will not cut any corners and will not make it crooked. The Apostle Paul warned to take heed how we build on the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10). The foundation (Jesus Christ) was laid in the morning time. Men have done many things to try to concoct other ways to build, but the line and the plummet will build a city "foursquare," a building that can stand the shocks of God's eternal Word and the shocks of eternal judgment.

Truth brings out the plumb and the line, and it shows what is straight. When you lay down something that is straight, it automatically shows everything that is crooked. You do not have to study all of the falsities to know what is false. Some people have gotten off track when they tried to study false religion. The enemy caused them to believe, "I need to study this so I will know that it is false, and then I will know how to refute it." When they read the literature of false organizations, a spirit took hold of them and carried them off into it.

We are told that when treasury agents are trained how to detect a counterfeit bill, they are not given counterfeit bills, but they study the real thing; they study the original. They get familiar with it, intimately, so they can tell that anything not like it is false. That is what we should do: study the original, the truth. The message of truth makes things straight. When the truth was revealed concerning Babylon, the effectiveness and the hold it had on honest hearts was forever brought to nought. **Verse 17** of our text says, "**For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.**" Babylon's power of falsity was brought to "**nought**"; it lost its grip.

I was raised in a sectarian organization, and I can remember when I came to the truth. I had my name on their roll book. I had gone down the aisle and been voted in. I had my letter there, but when I came to a knowledge of the truth, the Bible told me that God keeps the roll book (Psalm 87:5-6). The way into the Church of God is through the new birth. Then, Hebrews 12:23 says that your name will be "written in heaven." The Lord is the church secretary; He keeps the Book, the Lamb's Book of Life. When I understood that precious truth, I went over to the pastor's study. I wanted to talk to him and tell him to take my name off the roll book. He was not there; so, I left him a letter. A neighbor, who was one of the deacons at that congregation, came over to talk to me. I told him about how I had gotten saved and how I had come to a knowledge of the truth, that my name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Therefore, I did not need my name on man's book, and I wanted my name taken off their roll book. He just looked at me so strangely. That was something he had never heard before. He said, "Well, I hope you do well," and I suppose they took my name off the roll book.

When the message of truth comes straight and plain, it brings Babylon's power "**to nought**" (**verse 17**). When truth comes straight and plain, it forever breaks the power of Babylon's ability to hold people by their falsities. The light of truth frees mankind from the darkness of the falsities of error. Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth [the Word; John 17:17], and the truth shall make you free." An understanding of the Word of God will free people from falsity.

The chorus of the song "Light Breaks at Last" by D. O. Teasley says: "*Light breaks at last! Hallelujah to God! Darkness is past, let us shout it aloud: From the mountains and hills let us gather the few Who will stand for the right, and dare to be true.*" Verse 2 says: "*Long years have we dwelt in confusion and strife, And groped where contention and error were rife; But now we have found what we sought for so long, That the people of God unite in one throng.*" That is the message.

"For in One Hour"

In **verse 17** of our text, again John employed the **"one hour"** time symbol. That expression is mentioned three times in Revelation, Chapter 18. In verse 10 it is equated with judgment on Babylon, and **verses 17 and 19** speak of the effect of that judgment: the words **"come to nought"** (**verse 17**) in The Amplified Bible are rendered as "destroyed (wiped out)." Truth will destroy falsity. Truth will wipe out Babylon's hold on people. It will wipe out the ability for those deceitful words to make merchandise out of people.

The **"one hour"** symbol depicts the time that judgment is to be poured out on Babylon. Let us go back into prophecy to see it more clearly. In Daniel, Chapter 5, we find the account of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, and his drunken feast that some scholars say lasted for months. Daniel 5:2-6 tells us: "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels . . . They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

"In the same hour [here is the **'hour'** figure] came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." Swift and severe judgment was being brought on Babylon.

What caused this judgment to occur? Daniel 5:1 says that Belshazzar "drank wine." This is also depicted in Revelation 18:3, which says that "all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." He drank of Babylon's cup, and he came under the influence of Babylon's mind. When Belshazzar became drunk, four things happened. First of all, it clouded his thinking. Up to this point, he had never entertained the idea of taking the sacred vessels and bringing them into a drunken feast, but then his mind became clouded by Babylon's wine. Second, it affected his judgment. Third, he used God's vessels improperly. Fourth, he invited judgment.

The fingers that Belshazzar saw in Daniel 5:5 were the same fingers that wrote in the dust when the scribes and Pharisees accused a woman of being caught in the very act of adultery (John 8:6). They were the fingers of Jesus. When He had finished writing, the Word of God was there. Daniel 5:25 records, "And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." The Word of God came on the scene with judgment.

Verses 26-28 continue: "This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Verse 30 goes on to say, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." That was the end of the Babylonian Empire. Daniel, Chapter 5, is a very vivid picture in type of what we see happening in the Revelation when the people drank of Babylon's cup. It clouded their thinking, it influenced their judgment, it caused them to act improperly concerning God's vessels (His people), and it invited swift judgment. The Word of God came on the scene and ended their rule, their power. When the sixth-seal ministry began heralding these truths, Babylon's power was broken right then.

In Daniel 5:4 notice the pagan deities being worshiped in Babylon: "the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." They are the same ones that modern Babylon is depicted as worshiping symbolically when the sixth-seal brethren brought God's Word (Revelation 9:14). Revelation 9:20 says, "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." Modern Babylon (or spiritual Babylon) is engaged in the worship of false things as much as the old Babylon was. One is just as pagan as the other.

The **"hour"** is mentioned when the evening time commenced. It was "after three days and an half" (Revelation 11:11), or after the three hundred and fifty prophetic years of Protestantism (1530 to 1880). Revelation 11:13 says, "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city [speaking of Babylon] fell . . ." Also, in the evening time, Revelation 14:1 tells us that "a Lamb [Jesus Christ] stood on the mount Sion [the church]." The church had come back into visible view. Christ was back in His rightful position as the Head of the church. Revelation 14:7 says that "the hour of his judgment is come," and Revelation 14:8 says that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Judgment was being poured out on Babylon. So the **"one hour"** in our text represents the time when judgment is poured out on Babylon: half an hour in the sixth seal and half an hour in the seventh seal.

Verse 17 of our text introduces us to **"every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea."** In reality, these are the same as the **"merchants"** in **verse 15**, because they both engage in

the same practice. **Verse 17** says that they "**trade.**" **Verse 19** says that they were "**weeping and wailing,**" and they "**were made rich.**" The same is said about the "**merchants**" in **verse 15**. Thus, the seamen also represent the false ministry and hirelings of Babylon.

Ships represent a ministry. Proverbs 31:10 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" This is speaking symbolically of the church. Verse 14 says, "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar." A true ministry goes to a far country, they get the message from God, and then they bring it to the souls of men. However, our text is speaking of a false ministry, a fallen ministry. They engage in commerce in Babylon. Although the seamen and the "**merchants**" both represent a ministry, a separate symbol is employed, depicting another truth. **Verse 17** lets us know that the seamen "**trade by sea.**" **Verse 19** says that they had "**ships in the sea.**" The first beast, the system of papalism, came "up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1). Protestantism made "an image to the beast" (Revelation 13:14), or became papalism's mirror image; they became just like the system they had been protesting against. In the eyes of God, those in Babylon "**trade,**" or deal, in Protestantism just as they do in papalism. The expression "**trade by sea**" depicts her universal outreach.

It is amazing how many people can see Catholicism clearly, but they have a sympathy for Protestantism. However, in God's sight, there is no difference or distinction in the condition, conduct, or consequences of the two. Revelation 19:20 states: "And the beast [papalism] was taken, and with him the false prophet [Protestantism] that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast [their indoctrination], and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

In our text **verse 18** speaks of "**the smoke of her burning,**" just as it did in verse 9. This expression reveals why the judgment was unleashed on Babylon. Revelation 8:3-4 says: "And another angel [Christ performing the high priest's office on the Day of Pentecost] came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer [only the high priest could do this]; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints . . ." One thing that smoke represents is the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 6:9-10 tells us: "And when he had opened the fifth seal [this second segment of the Protestant Era; 1730 to 1880], I saw under the altar [under Christ] the souls [or merely the people] of them that were slain for the word of God [a consecrated holiness people], and for the testimony which they held: And they cried [a portrayal of prayer; Psalm 61:1 and Psalm 102:1] with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'judge and take vengeance'] our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The Protestant beast came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11), and that is what they wanted judgment put on. They had a heart that was pure, and they were desiring what true holiness desires: unity with God's people everywhere. They were crying (or praying) that judgment be put on the system that had built sectarian walls and divided God's people. They sent up "smoke of the incense" (prayer), and God sent down "**the smoke of her burning**" (judgment).

Praying and Rejoicing

Verse 20 of our text says, "**Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.**" *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, ". . . because God judged your judgment on her." The judgment was an answer to the prayers of the saints. Honest-hearted saints wanted judgment on Protestantism so sectarian walls could be broken down and people could get free and come to the truth and enjoy fellowship and unity.

Revelation 6:10 serves to instruct us yet today. If we desire to see honest-hearted people set free from Babylon's clutches and come leaping and shouting home to Zion, we need to pray more. We need to pray with a greater burden for those who are "my people" (Revelation 18:4). God still has people in the realms of sectarian religion whom He wants to bring out. He wants them to be able to see the light of truth and come out of that system. To see the message have the impact and the effect it should, we need to pray and cry in a greater way, just as the souls who were "under the altar."

"**Smoke**" also represents the glory of God and the presence of God. Isaiah 6:1-4 tells us that the "house was filled with smoke" when God's glory appeared on the scene. Likewise, Revelation 15:8 tells us that "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God." When the saints get under a burden and pray that God will move, His voice (or

message) will be sounded out with the presence and anointing of God. Then His glory will be manifested, and honest hearts will see the truth. Saints play a very active role in "Come out of her" (Revelation 18:4). Yes, a man must preach the message and the Spirit must give the call, but the saints must carry the burden. The saints must pray and petition God to move. As we get to **verse 20** of our text, they are also the ones who are to stand as witnesses and confirm the truth when ones hear the truth.

Verse 19 of our text tells us that those who operate the systems of men "**cast dust on their heads.**" That symbolizes two things. First, it is a symbol of their sorrow and their mourning. (Read Ezekiel 27:30-31.) Second, it is a portrayal of their fallen state, of how they are under the headship of the earthen systems of man. "**Dust**" is of the earth; to put dust on your head is to put the dust in a superior position. Isaiah 47:1 says, "Come down [she is fallen], and sit in the dust [on the low level of the beggarly elements of this world], O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne [you are no queen, you are not reigning, you have no victory], O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate."

Verse 5 goes on to say, "Sit thou silent [she has no legitimate response to truth], and get thee into darkness [that is her condition], O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms." Verses 14-15 continue: "Behold, they [those who labor in Babylon] shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame [in other words, there is no way that they can get away from the irrefutable truth of God's Eternal Word]: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee." When the judgment of God's Word goes forth, it is repent or perish. Jesus said in Revelation 2:16, "Repent; or else." Those who operate Babylon have sorrow over the consequences. In their fallen state, they are still bound under the headship of the earthen organizations of men.

Revelation 18:20 is a great contrast to **verse 19**. It is admonition that is good yet today. **Verse 20** says, "**Rejoice over her, thou heaven** [not the celestial heaven, but those in 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2:6), those who have come to truth, those who saw Babylon's condition and fled from its ranks] . . . **for God hath avenged** [or judged] **you on her.**" The admonition for God's people to rejoice is given throughout the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 32:43; Jeremiah 51:47-48).

Our rejoicing over truth is vital. It pleases God, and it portrays our victory. It also provides honest hearts with a manifestation of the presence of God, so they know where to come. When they come into the assembly of the saints, the message may be very unfamiliar. They may begin to question the veracity and truth of it; but when they see the many witnesses rejoice and sound their assent to it, that is a compelling force and a convincing agent. That works as a confirmation to drive the truth home to those honest hearts.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses . . ." The truth needs many witnesses today. In this age of cynicism with so much disappointment because of the hucksters and charlatans in false religion, people are naturally skeptical. The message of truth is so radically different from anything they have ever heard before that they are probably already somewhat prejudiced against it. They may have been told that the Church of God is a cult and many other things. So, when they come in and the message is being heralded and the Spirit of God witnesses to it and the glory of God (the "**smoke**") fills the assembly, that is when the witnesses need to come into force and amen the message. God will use that as a convincing agent, helping people to know where to come.

It is one thing to hear the call to "Come out," but ones also need to know where to come in. Deuteronomy 6:23 says, "And he brought us *out* from thence, that he might bring us *in* . . ." God not only calls a people *out*, He calls a people *in*. Isaiah 62:10 tells us, "Go through, go through the gates." The words "go through" are used twice because one has to go through the gates of Babylon to get out and then go through the gates of Zion to get in. The truth will reveal the condition of Babylon so ones will come out, and then God's people will have to show them the true church so they can come in.

Ephesians 4:13 states, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . ." God wants His people to come in to a visible, working unit of the body of Christ, a local congregation where truth is being heralded. God is against the business of being isolated. He wants His people to be where a congregation is, where their soul can be fed. If they are isolated, they need to do either one of two things: move to where a congregation is, or ask God to help them raise up a congregation where they are.

Joel 3:13-14 tells us: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe [this Scripture has a prophetic setting in the sixth seal; Revelation 14:15]: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." There are souls whom God wants to reap to the precious truth. The saints play a vital role. Our rejoicing and witnessing to the truth can serve as a convincing factor to those "in the valley of decision." May God help us to rejoice as we ought. First Corinthians 13:6 tells us that charity "rejoiceth in the truth." The Lord can and will use our rejoicing to confirm the truth to honest hearts. When we come into a service and the Word of God is being sounded forth, we should not just be passive listeners, but we should be active participants.

Nehemiah 8:5-6 says: "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands." They witnessed to the truth. Likewise, we need to be active participants and witness to the truth. Then it will help those who are in the valley of decision to see the truth. May God help us to get under a greater burden to pray and cry out to God for Him to move in such a way that we can see precious souls reaped where they can get free from Babel's bondage and come leaping and shouting home to Zion.

Revelation 18:1-20 depicts the first segment of the evening time, the sixth-seal period of time (A.D. 1880 to 1930). They had a glorious message, and it is yet glorious today. In the next segment, we will consider the seventh-seal period of time (1930 to the Consummation, or the end of human history), which is depicted in verses 21-24.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART SIX

The Concluding Condition of Babylon – Part 1

Revelation 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The Time Frame Is the Seventh Seal

The prophetic time setting in these verses has changed and advanced. The "angel" in Revelation 18:1 was the sixth-seal ministry (1880 to 1930 A.D.), which began to herald the evening-time message: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" (Revelation 18:2). In our text we are introduced to "**a mighty angel**" (verse 21), following in succession to the "angel" that was depicted in verse 1. The "**mighty angel**" represents the seventh-seal ministry (1930 A.D. to the Consummation).

How do we know that we have advanced in this narrative from the sixth seal to the seventh seal? Earlier in this chapter, Revelation 18:6 says to "Reward her even as she rewarded you." Let us consider the expression "even as." The Protestant Era consisted of two periods: the Lutheran Era (1530-1730) and the Wesleyan Era (1730-1880). It took in the fourth and fifth periods of the Gospel Day, and the evening time is also composed of two periods. Thus, the expression "even as." Protestantism had power and preached in two periods, and the evening-time message has power and preaches in two periods. Verse 6 continues, ". . . and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." The word "double" is spoken of in this verse no less than three times. One cup of judgment was poured out in the sixth-seal period of time, and the second cup of judgment is being poured out in the seventh-seal period of time.

We also found that judgment is to be poured out for "one hour" (verse 10). Half of that hour was in the sixth seal, and the other half is in the seventh seal, prophetically speaking. Part of Revelation, Chapter 18, occurred in the sixth seal, and part of it relates to what is occurring in the seventh seal. The tenor of our text substantiates that the time frame has advanced to the seventh seal. Revelation 10:7 says, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [the seventh-seal ministry], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'completed']" The seventh-seal period of time is a time of fullness, of completeness. It is a time when God is finishing the mystery, making truths known that have been hidden. Our text portrays the judgment completed, and it shows Babylon's concluding condition. Notice how the phrase "**no more at all**" (verses 21-23) is used repeatedly. That certainly denotes finality.

Verse 21 says, "**And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea . . .**" This expression is reminiscent of the pronouncement of judgment on literal Babylon, letting us know that spiritual Babylon is the antitype of literal Babylon. In Jeremiah 51:60-64 we see a prophetic expression that is very close to the description given by the Revelator in our text. The type is very clear. Verse 62 says that "none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast." This is a clear depiction of God calling *all* of His people out. When the Final Judgment scene closes on Babylon, all the saints will be out, and every honest heart will be converted. Babylon will be desolate. Verse 63 is also a type of the spiritual reality of our day. God is always faithful to send His Word first. God sent a messenger with a message. Then verses 63-64 have a definite note of finality, just as the antitype in our text.

Babylon Entices and Entraps

Verse 21 of our text speaks of "**a great millstone.**" There are at least two reasons why this particular symbolic expression is employed. We are speaking of spiritual Babylon, the spiritual confusion and false religion that have saturated our world. Judgment in this seventh-seal period of time is going to be fierce. Truth will be laid out straight, plain, and swift. In Matthew 18:6-7 Jesus said: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" This truth is of such paramount importance that it was recorded in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

To understand the two reasons that our text uses "**a great millstone,**" let us consider Matthew's account. Jesus spoke of "whoso shall offend." The word *offend* in that verse comes from the Greek word *skandalizo*. It is a form of the word from which our English word *scandalize* comes, and it means "to entrap, to trip up; entice to sin, apostasy, or displeasure," according to *Strong's Greek Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

Revelation 18:2 describes "Babylon" as a "hold" and a "cage." Babylon acts as a trap. Jeremiah 5:26-27 says: "For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich." They become rich off their deceitful teachings. Babylon's erroneous, false teachings are a trap to catch men. People who are in Babylon's "cage" are held captive by her false teachings. For example, Pentecostalism makes people feel, "If you say anything against speaking in tongues, you have blasphemed the Holy Ghost!" They hold people in a "cage" by fear. Roman Catholicism holds people in fear of speaking against popery, the church hierarchy, or the teachings of the church. These organizations hold people in fear with their teachings, entrapped by the deceitfulness. Babylon does indeed trap. It is the greatest offence to the cause of Christ and the welfare of men and women's souls.

Does Babylon entice people to sin? That is another definition of the word *offend* found in Matthew 18:6. Revelation 17:5 says that "upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS." A harlot entices one to commit fornication with her. Proverbs 7:10 says, "And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart." She began to seduce him. She said in verse 18, "Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning." She wanted to get him in her bed to commit fornication; that is what a harlot does. Verses 26-27 tell us: "For she [the harlot] hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Fornication, whether physical or spiritual, is sin, and it leads to death and hell. Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death." Babylon is the greatest offense to the cause of Christ and the welfare of the souls of men.

Babylon decks herself (Revelation 17:4) on the surface with supposed truths to allure and to attract so that ones will partake of her cup. Then, they will become drunk on her wine, their judgment will be affected, they will lose their sensibilities, and they end up committing spiritual fornication by joining the organizations of men. Revelation 18:3 tells us that "all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her." When ones get a real experience of salvation and are born again, they become a member of God's church. Psalm 87:5 says, "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." According to 1 Corinthians 12:18, God wants to set that member into a visible local unit of the body of Christ. However, there are "harlots" out there working to seduce those who have a real experience and bring them into their ranks of sectarian religion.

First Corinthians 6:15 warns, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." You are not to take your experience and join it up with a sectarian organization. That would be joining the member of Christ to a harlot body. Verses 16-18 continue: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication." That is not only talking about physical fornication, but it is also talking about spiritual fornication. Do not take the members of Christ and join them to a sectarian organization, a harlot body that does not have a husband. Babylon does not take the vows; she will not be true to Christ and His Word. She offends the little ones. She entraps them and entices them to sin.

Revelation 18:21 goes on to say, "**Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down.**" Why is there such a fierce response and such strong judgment? Exodus 34:14 states, "For thou shalt worship no other god [those who join themselves to the religious bodies of false religion are not worshiping God; they are worshiping the

dragon, the beast, or the image]: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." The judgment is so fierce because Babylon is seducing the servants of God whom God loves and wants to be His bride. The judgment is so fierce because God is jealous. Nahum 1:2 says, "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance [just as in **verse 21** of our text] on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies."

The Apostle Paul penned in 2 Corinthians 11:2-4: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband [Christ] that I may present you as a chaste virgin [the bride of Christ, the church] to Christ [the husband is Christ; the church is to be the chaste virgin, the bride of Christ]. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." That is false religion; they have another spirit, and they preach a whole other Jesus and a whole other gospel than what God's Word portrays. They are out to seduce and entrap souls, inducing them to sin and then holding them with falsities.

When Proverbs 7:27 describes the harlot's "house," it speaks of "hell" and "death." The spirit that gave rise to the Protestant beast (Revelation 13:11) is a spirit of compromise. It produces "Death" and "Hell" (Revelation 6:8). Does "Death" and "Hell" certainly occur? **Verse 24** of our text says, "**And in her [Babylon] was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth** [or by this earthen system of religion]." Remember, Proverbs 7:26 says that "many strong men have been slain by her." Certainly, there were martyrs, but let us look at our text symbolically as intended. The spirits behind Babylon cause spiritual fornication to take place. Then some of these "little ones" whom Jesus spoke about in Matthew 18:6 were "offended." They were the prophets and saints. The false teachings in Babylon caused them to be slain spiritually; in other words, to lose out and to die lost. Lying prophets can affect true prophets. That is why God's people need to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Do not have any association or affiliation with Babylon or its activities whatsoever. All of its activities are designed with a spirit behind them to induce ones to drink of her cup.

In 1 Kings, Chapter 13, we read of a lying prophet affecting a true prophet. A man of God went to Bethel to rebuke Jeroboam in accordance with the will of God. He was a true man of God with a message, and God used him in a mighty way. He was given specific instructions how he was to go (just as you and I have been given specific instructions on how we are to go). However, when the "old prophet" (verse 11), a false prophet at this juncture, came down, verse 18 says: "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him." Anytime someone brings a message that contradicts God's Word, he is giving you a false message, and false religion does lie. Verse 19 continues, "So he went back with him . . ." Because of the influence of a false prophet, he overstepped what God had told him, and he went back. False religion will cause ones to overstep what they know to be true, because they are so enticed and allured by the deceitful words of a false prophet.

What was the end result? Verse 24 goes on to say, "And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him." The prophet was "**slain**," just as our text says (**verse 24**). Verse 26 continues, "And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD." This is a vivid picture of how the false prophets of Babylon, through their false teachings, twist and turn the Word of God. They are motivated by devilish spirits that have impacted good saints of God over time, causing them to compromise. Then they end up "**slain**" (**verse 24**). This is why the judgments God puts on Babylon are severe.

They "Shall Be Found No More at All"

Another portrayal depicted in **verse 21** of our text, speaking of "**a stone like a great millstone**" being "**cast . . . into the sea**," is a picture of Babylon sinking. Babylon is plunged beneath the surface in such a way that she no longer has an impact on the saints or the honest hearted. Jeremiah 51:64 tells us, "And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise . . ." **Verse 21** of our text continues, ". . . **Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.**" When a ministry proclaims the message of truth, Babylon's effectiveness is forever vanished and goes out of view.

Why was a "**millstone**" employed in our text? For what was a "**millstone**" used? Isaiah 47:2 says, "Take the

millstones, and grind meal." *Meal* is what bread is made from. For example, cornbread is made from cornmeal. Bread stands for doctrine in the Scriptures. In Matthew 13:33 Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal . . ." Leaven was injected into the meal. Leaven stands for false doctrine (Matthew 16:6, 12). Our text shows that the effectiveness of Babylon's false doctrines, which she grinds out, is being destroyed.

In the times in which the Bible was written, normally there were two millstones, one on top of another. The meal was put in the middle, and the stones ground out the meal. The turning of the millstones was very noisy and very distracting. That is just the way false religion is. They get very noisy, they fill stadiums, and they go through all types of false rejoicing. Their activities can be very distracting, but when a true ministry begins to expose the truth, Babylon's noise, clamor, and effectiveness are gone. They are "**found no more at all**" to dupe and deceive the honest hearted. They will continue to exist, but their effectiveness on God's people or honest hearts is forever ended.

The expressions employed in **verses 22 and 23** of our text were very familiar to a Hebrew. John, the one who received the Revelation, was a Hebrew. These expressions are used throughout the prophetic writings. They were common expressions that were reflective of God's judgment. Let us survey some of them. Isaiah 24:8-10 says: "The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down [what a clear type that is]: every house is shut up, that no man may come in." Jeremiah 16:9 states, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride." Also, Jeremiah 25:10 says, "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle." Then Ezekiel 26:13 tells us, "And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard."

Let us look at the symbolism employed in our text. **Verse 22** lists "**the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters**" together. The "**trumpeters**" represent the preaching, or the message (Revelation 8:6; Isaiah 58:1). Ezekiel, Chapter 33, talks about a watchmen blowing a trumpet, and verse 7 lets us know that blowing the trumpet is receiving the word from God's mouth and preaching it. When **verse 22** of our text says that "**trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee,**" this reveals that there is no longer a divinely-inspired message of truth being sounded out in the darksome courts of Babel. There was a time when "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand" (Jeremiah 51:7), but it is no longer.

Because Babylon no longer sounds out a divinely-inspired message of truth, the trumpet no longer makes a clear sound; it is making an "uncertain sound" (1 Corinthians 14:8). That causes the "**pipers**" to lose their effect on the people. Matthew 11:17 reads, "And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced." There is no power in Babylon's message; all they have is "a form of godliness" (2 Timothy 3:5). The truth exposes that the trumpet is not being sounded in Babylon; they truly have no song. The true praise is gone. That is why **verse 22** says that "**the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all.**" There is another aspect to these expressions. When Babylon is exposed by the truth and the saints realize that the message is not being sounded out there, then Babylon loses her hold on the true saints who hold these positions, and they come out of her.

There was a time (before ones understood the clear light of God's Word) that when Babylon's "**pipers**" piped, they danced. When Babylon piped, "You can't live without sin; everyone sins more or less every day," they danced, or responded accordingly. They lived without any victory. However, when truth came, all of a sudden they realized that they were hearing an uncertain sound. The certain sound (truth) told them, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21); they could see straight paths for their feet. Thus, Babylon's "**pipers**" did not have any power over them and could not hold them anymore.

Matthew 11:17 goes on to say, ". . . we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." In Revelation 18:9 when judgment was poured out on Babylon, the kings of the earth lamented for her. However, when people who have honest hearts hear the truth poured out on Babylon, they do not lament as do her kings and her merchants. They rejoice and come leaping and shouting home to Zion! They are glad to get out of the cage and be free.

When the truth exposes that the message in Babel's courts is not being sounded out and God's people "Come out" (Revelation 18:4), Babylon is left without their "**harpers, and musicians.**" Psalm 137:1-4 says: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required

of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?" The **"harpers"** could not harp, and the singers could not sing down in Babylon.

When the saints heard the truth and came out of Babylon, they brought their harps with them. Revelation 14:1-3 tells us: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion [Jesus Christ back in His rightful position as Head of the church], and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name [God, the Church of God] written in their foreheads [not *on*, it was *in* their minds]. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps [they were rejoicing in their freedom]: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song [it is a song of experience, a song of victory] but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth [earthen, man-made religion]." When the saints came to Zion, they had a song, and they had their harps.

Revelation 15:2 states, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass [the Word of God] mingled with fire [under the anointing of the Spirit]: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand [in Psalm 137:1 they were sitting, but the Word of God gives you power to stand] on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." They were able to praise God. Victory automatically produces praise; they go hand in hand.

The **"musicians"** in verse 22 of our text are now in Zion. They are **"heard no more"** down in Babylon, because those who are anointed of God have moved out of Babylon and up to Zion. Praise God for truth! Psalm 87:7 tells us, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there [Zion, the Church of the Living God; verse 5]." Babylon does have people who go through a form; they have entertainers and professionals, but they do not have the Spirit. God is calling out those who do have the gift of the Spirit.

The "Craftsmen" Have the Gifts of the Spirit

To understand who are the **"craftsmen"** spoken of in our text, let us read about the building of the Old Testament tabernacle in the wilderness. Exodus 35:30-35 says: "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work." In these verses we see craftsmen and all types of crafts.

Exodus 36:1 continues, "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise- hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded." Verse 8 says, "And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made" These craftsmen took the instructions from the Word of God that Moses received, and they built all of the articles of "the sanctuary" and "the tabernacle." The verses in Exodus serve as a type. The **"craftsmen"** in our text are those who were gifted by God with special talents, abilities, and gifts for different aspects of the work. When they heard the Word and received instruction of where and what they were to build, they left Babylon and came to build in Zion.

First Corinthians, Chapter 12, speaks of spiritual gifts to edify and to build up the Church of God. Verse 4 says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Verse 7 says, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." In other words, to profit the church at large. Then Ephesians 4:7 states, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." When the message of the evening time came forth and the **"craftsmen"** began to come out, it was impossible for Babylon to build anything, because they did not have anyone to build it with. I am talking about a spiritual work; they still have a form, and they can build physical buildings and go through literal motions. However, for the **"millstone"** to be heard, for their doctrine to be effective, it takes a people with spiritual gifts (**"craftsmen"**) to embrace it and go to work.

When the saints who had spiritual gifts realized that Babylon did not have the true meal, but was full of leaven, they ceased building up sectarian organizations. In the song "Jesus Is Calling His People," D. O. Teasley penned these

words: *"Now in Mount Zion they're building anew."* They were building in Babylon, but when the fiery message of truth came and burned up their works, they were saved by fire. (Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.) They saw that what they were building up had no Bible foundation; so they made their exodus out of Babylon, and now they are building in the Church of God. Some have already come, others are coming, and there are others who will come until Babylon is completely emptied of all saints and all spiritual gifts.

In Ezra we can find a type of the evening time. The people of God had been in Babylonian bondage for seventy years. After Babylon was overthrown and the Medo-Persian Empire took over, the people were allowed to go back to Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1-3 says: ". . . the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem . . . Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem . . ." Ezra 2:1 tells us of the ones who "came again unto Jerusalem." This first excursion out of Babylon is a type of the sixth seal when the first call went out. Ezra 3:1 lets us know that "the people gathered themselves together as one man." This is a picture of the restoration of the message on the church, the message of unity. Ezra 6:14 says that "they builded, and finished" the house of God.

In Ezra, Chapter 7, we find a second excursion, when those who filled special positions and had special talents went back to Jerusalem. This is a type of the seventh-seal period of time. Verse 1 lets us know that there was another king, so it was a later point in history. Verse 6 tells us that "Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses." Then Ezra said in verses 27-28: "Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem . . . and I gathered together . . . chief men to go up with me." This is a picture, in type, of the **"craftsmen"** in **verse 22** of our text: men who had special abilities. It is a picture of those who have the gifts of the Spirit.

The operation of the gifts of the Spirit is what builds up the church. God is calling His people out of the ranks of Babylon, so that they will no longer be building up something that is false. When Jesus comes back in His Second Advent, there will not be a single **"craftsman"** or **"musicians"** or **"harpers"** or a single saint left in Babylon; they will all be home in Zion. Our text shows a vivid picture of how the Lord has a message (and a ministry to herald it) to empty Babylon of all the saints and their talents in this seventh-seal period of time. I am glad we live in a day "when the seven thunders" are uttering their voices (Revelation 10:4). This is the day that "the mystery of God should be finished" (verse 7). We are living in the fullness of time. God is revealing His truth as never before. May God help us to "walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN—PART SEVEN

The Concluding Condition of Babylon – Part 2

Revelation 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

God Will Empty Babylon's Land

As we continue to consider the concluding condition of "**Babylon**," we find that God is emptying everything good and godly out of "**Babylon**." As we progress to the seventh-seal message, commencing with **verse 21**, we find that the message becomes even more forceful and more pointed: "**Babylon**" is being "**thrown down**." In other words, she is losing her lofty position in the minds of men as truth is being revealed. Isaiah 35:10 says, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion [the church] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." This is why **verse 22** of our text tells us that the "**harpers, and musicians, and . . . pipers, and trumpeters**" and the "**craftsmen . . . shall be heard no more at all**" in "**Babylon**." They are leaving the darksome courts of Babel and are coming leaping and shouting home to Zion.

Isaiah 51:11-14 states: "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exilē hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail." The message of truth sets people free from the bondage of sectarian religion. It sets them free from the fear and the bondage in which those teachings engulfed them. Then the redeemed of the Lord can come home to Zion.

As we progress to **verse 23** of our text, the exodus is so dramatic and complete that "**the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee**." As the saints exit, "**Babylon**" will be left with no "**light**." **Verse 23** proceeds to make a ringing declaration that "**the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee**." What a note of finality there is to these words! This reveals the state of "**Babylon**" at the end of time. The message of our day, the seventh-seal period of time, is a continuation of the sixth-seal message, but it is to be heralded with much more force and finality. After this, time reels into eternity. There is no more time after the seventh seal; thus, the need of "**Babylon**" being "**thrown down**." It takes a forcible message to reveal the true conditions of the deceptive day in which we live.

Before time concludes, the seventh-seal message will be fully effective. Honest hearts will come to the truth. Isaiah 55:10-11 tells us: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be [it will be effective] that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The seventh-seal message has been effective, it is being effective, and it will continue to be effective. In John 3:21 Jesus said, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Honest hearts walk in all of the light and truth they have. When they see more light, when they gain

additional understanding, they will walk in it. They are the ones who come out of "**Babylon.**" We see in our lesson text a very vivid depiction of the truth that God is emptying every saint out of "**Babylon.**" When Jesus comes in His Second Advent, there will not be one saint left in "**Babylon.**"

Jeremiah 51:1 says, "Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind." According to John 3:8, the wind represents the Spirit. In the Old Testament, David sought the Lord whether he should go up against the Philistines. The Lord told him that when he heard the rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees, he would know that He had gone before him (2 Samuel 5:24). The rustling in the mulberry trees was the wind, representing the Spirit.

Jeremiah 51:2 says, "And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land." These "fanners" represent the ministry. Speaking of Jesus Christ, Matthew 3:12 tells us, "Whose fan is in his hand." Revelation 1:16 tells us that Jesus "had in his right hand seven stars," which according to Revelation 1:20, "are the angels [or the ministry of the church throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day]." Fanning is done by the ministry. The Spirit of God is raising up a ministry that will empty out "**Babylon**" with a message. When "**Babylon**" is exposed by the "**mighty angel,**" it loses its exalted, lofty position in the minds of men.

The Time of the Harvest

The Scriptures take natural realities to depict spiritual truths. In the day of Jeremiah, the people were predominantly an agricultural society. They did not have modern tools and equipment, but they had oxen that treaded out the grain. The ox is also a type of the ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18). As the oxen treaded, they put the pressure on, and the sheaves broke down to separate the wheat from the chaff. Next, the reapers would come with winnowing fans, and they would scoop it off the threshing floor and fan it. The wind would carry the chaff away, but the wheat would fall back down to the floor. Afterwards, the wheat was gathered into the barn. The wheat has substance to it, but the chaff does not. In a lot of places, people looking for a pastor say, "Oh, we need someone who is a good mixer." No, they need someone who is a good separator. Part of the role of the ministry is to be a fanner, one who separates the wheat from the chaff. Sometimes they need to put the Word out so fiery that the chaff is burned and the wheat is gathered into the barn. The wheat represents people who respond to the message of truth and are gathered into the true church.

Jeremiah 51:2 tells us that the fanners "shall fan her, and shall empty her land." That is emphatic, and it is positive. Ezekiel 12:25 says, "For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD." Jeremiah 51:2 will be performed. Someone may say, "I know people in Babylon who are never going to come out." Well, if they are sheep (or wheat), they will come out. If they do not come out, it is because they are not wheat. If they were once wheat, and they failed to heed the call of God when He showed them light, their spirit changed, and they went from being wheat to chaff; they went into darkness and lost their experience. God said He would empty Babylon's land.

Matthew 3:12 says, "Whose fan is in his hand [Christ's ministry is in His control], and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The "fire" is the Word of God (Jeremiah 23:29). The message burns up the chaff. However, truth does not burn up the wheat, because the saints are walking in all of the light that they have and are thirsting for more.

Christ is gathering His wheat, or His saints, "into the garner" (Matthew 3:12). The word for "garner" is the same Greek word recorded over in Matthew 13:30 and rendered as "barn." It is the Greek word *apotheke*. It is the word our English word *apothecary* comes from; it means "a repository." *Funk & Wagnall's Standard Desk Dictionary* defines *repository* in this manner: "A place in which goods are or may be stored." The repository in those verses is nothing more than a picture of the church. The church is God's repository, or storehouse, for truth. An apothecary works in a pharmacy. What do they have stored in there? They store all types of medicines in there, so when people need them, they have them on hand.

Malachi 3:10 states, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house . . ." We realize that in the Old Testament they literally brought in meat and animals, but in the New Testament that principle, that moral law, is still the same. God wants the tithes brought into the storehouse. Why is that? So the pastor does not have to spend his time out in a civil endeavor. So he can spend more time studying and getting the meat from God to feed the saints. Psalm 87:7 says, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs

are in thee." Where are they? Verse 5 tells us they are in Zion, the church, God's repository for the truth. *The Amplified Bible* says, ". . . all my springs, my sources of life and joy are in you, city of our God."

Matthew, Chapter 13, records seven prophetic parables, which correspond with the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The Parable of the Tares, the second parable, corresponds with the time period from A.D. 270-530. The tares were sown in this period of transition from light to darkness. The true ministry wanted to deal with them right then, but Jesus said in Matthew 13:30, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Notice how Jesus gathers the saints together. Verse 39 tells us that "the reapers are the angels," or the ministry. Jesus uses His ministers to separate the wheat from the tares.

When do the reapers separate? Matthew 13:30 tells us that they do this "in the time of harvest." The time of harvest was not in A.D. 270-530. The wheat and the tares grew "together" through the Dark Ages and through the dark and cloudy day. There was no clear, visible church. When is "the time of harvest"? In Revelation 14:1 Christ assumed His rightful position as Head of the church, and Mount Zion came back into visible view; the message on the church was restored. Song of Solomon 8:5 says, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" Revelation 14:15 states, "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." That is speaking of the evening time. That is when the "harvest" began. That is when the reapers separated the wheat from the tares and gathered them into the church, God's repository of truth.

Our lesson clearly reveals to us that when Christ returns, "**Babylon**" will be emptied of every saint; there will not be one saint left. **Revelation 18:23** irrefutably validates this glorious truth, stating, "**And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee.**" Again, notice the note of finality. What does "**the light of a candle**" represent? When Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world," He was addressing His disciples (Matthew 5:1-2). It was not the multitudes who were "the light of the world." The word *disciple* comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means "those who are committed to following the discipline of Jesus Christ."

Matthew 5:14-15 continues: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill [the Greek word is *oros*, meaning a mountain, representing Mount Zion] cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." The Greek word for *candle* is the same one used in our text. It is the Greek word *luchnos*, which means "a portable lamp." It was referring to an oil-fed lamp. As a matter of fact, *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*, *Englishman's Greek New Testament*, and *Nestle Greek Text* all render both Matthew 5:15 and **Revelation 18:23** as "lamp."

What does this "**light**," or "lamp," represent? Isaiah 62:1 tells us that the lamp represents salvation. That is why we, as God's people, "are the light of the world. The experience we have produces the light; it is not us alone. Why does the "**light of a candle**" in our text "**shine no more at all**" in "**Babylon**"? It is because God is calling everyone with salvation out. Those who are referred to in **verse 23** of our text as "**the bride**" are being called "out of her" (Revelation 18:4). Philippians 2:15 tells us, ". . . ye shine as lights in the world." That is why the "**light**" is no longer shining down in "**Babylon**."

Look again at the words that Jesus spoke in Matthew 5:15. He said, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel [or something man-made], but on a candlestick [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'lampstand']." Revelation, Chapter 1, tells us that the lampstand represents the church. Revelation 1:20 says, ". . . and the seven candlesticks [in the Greek, lampstands] which thou sawest are the seven churches." There are seven because there are seven periods in the Gospel Day. However, when Zechariah saw it, he saw one New Testament church (Zechariah 4:2).

"The Voice of the Bridegroom"

"**Babylon**" will ultimately be left in complete darkness. Those with "**the light**," an experience of salvation, are all leaving her. **Verse 23** of our text continues, ". . . **and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.**" This is the first and only employment of the word "**bridegroom**" in the Revelation. It is also the first mention of the word "**bride**." Thus, we are introduced to a new symbol in the Revelation. Although the word "**bridegroom**," or its Greek counterpart *numphios*, is not used anywhere else in the Revelation, the Greek word for "**bride**," *numphe*, is introduced in **Revelation 18:23** and then mentioned expressly in three succeeding

places: Revelation 21:2; 21:9; 22:17. Also, it is implied in Revelation 19:7 ("his wife"). This introduces us to the concept of the bride of Christ.

Let us identify what these symbolic representations actually are depicting. The "**bridegroom**" represents Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:14-15; John 3:28-29; 2 Corinthians 11:2). The symbol of "**the bride**" represents "the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9; Revelation 19:7-8). The "**bride**" is the saints, or the church, but she is not just any saints. Colossians 1:12 talks about "the saints in light." The "**bride**" of Christ is composed of saints who are in light. Those who have "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). When the Apostle wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:2 that "I am jealous over you . . . I have espoused you . . . that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," he was writing to "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1). What is "**the voice of the bridegroom**" (verse 23)? In John 5:24 Jesus talked about hearing His Word. Then in verse 25 He refers to His Word as hearing "the voice of the Son of God." Christ's voice, His Word, is no longer going to be heard down in "**Babylon**." They have denied Him by not allowing Him free course and right-of-way. When His Word is not allowed, His presence departs, because Christ is the Word personified. You cannot divorce Christ from His Word.

Christ's "**voice**" will no longer be heard in "**Babylon**," and the saints who comprise the church will all be out as well by the time of the Consummation. The expression "**the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee**" is a picture of the results of the judgments of God. Let us view some prophetic Scriptures that are the results of judgment. Jeremiah 7:34 says, "Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate." Jeremiah 16:9 says almost the same thing. Then Jeremiah 25:10 tells us, "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle." These are many of the same expressions found in our text.

There is good news. Although the "**voice**" of Christ ceased in "**Babylon**," the "**voice**" is heard in Zion. Jeremiah 33:6-11 states: "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first [in the evening time there is some building just as in the morning time]. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

"Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place . . . The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD." Verses 14-16 continue: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness." All of those things that have been called out of "**Babylon**" are found in Zion, the Church of the Living God. When you find truth and walk in the light of it, you will find peace. Truth will cause those who were held captive to be loosed from their captivity and to be able to return to Zion.

Babylon's "Sorceries"

As Revelation, Chapter 18, closes out, the penman reiterates why the judgment that verse 10 speaks of is so severe and why God will empty "**Babylon**" of all of the saints. **Verse 23** goes on to say, ". . . **for thy merchants** [or the ministry in Babylon] **were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations** [or denominations] **deceived.**" The Greek word that is translated "**sorceries**" in that verse is used only three times in the entirety of the New Testament. It is in our text in **Revelation 18:23**; it is in Revelation 9:21, referring to the sixth seal; and it is a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:20, where it is translated as "witchcraft." The Greek word for "**sorceries**" is *pharmakeia*, the word our English word *pharmacy* comes from, and it means "medication." The

practice being referred to in the Revelation is the use of drugs or potions to cause sensibilities to be dulled, so the sorcerer can deceive his audience.

In **verse 23** we can clearly see that the charge is deception. Babylon's deceptive practices and false teachings invited this severe judgment. Malachi 3:5 tells us, "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress . . . and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts." The judgment is severe, on Babylon's "**sorceries**" particularly, because she deceives souls. The sad result of that is found in **verse 24**. **Verse 24** of our text says, "**And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.**" Let us get past literalism; this is symbolic. It is teaching us that "**Babylon**" has used potions and has drugged ones who were adhering to her teachings. Their sensibilities were dulled by her false teachings and the low level of earthly living. "**Babylon**" has made them feel that what was being offered was truth and deceived them. She is a false earthen system of religion, and she has caused people to lose their experience. "**Saints**" have been "**slain.**"

When Proverbs, Chapter 7, talks about the harlot (Babylon in type), verse 26 tells us that "many strong men have been slain by her." Verse 27 speaks of "hell" and "death," just as the spirit working behind Protestantism, the pale horse in Revelation 6:8. That is why our text in **verse 24** talks about "**in her was found the blood.**" It is not literal "**blood,**" but it is guiltiness. She is guilty because those who once had an experience were "**deceived**" by her, and then they were "**slain**" by her; they lost their experience. Nahum 3:1-6 says: "Woe to the bloody city [Babylon in type]! it is all full of lies and robbery [she robs people's experiences by her lies]; the prey departeth not; The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the pransing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses [why?]: Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts [she gives people drugs or potions that lead them into whoredom], that selleth nations [or denominations] through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock." Remember in Revelation, Chapter 18, "**Babylon**" is a gazingstock that the merchants and the kings are looking on as the smoke of her burning rises.

I know people who have been genuinely saved in "**Babylon.**" It was not because of "**Babylon,**" but it was because of their own honesty at that point in their life. They were saints of God, they loved the Lord, and they loved what truth they understood. However, as they stayed in that harlot system and kept drinking of her cup, it affected their thinking. It drugged them. Then they believed her lies, such as: "You sin; we all sin; no one can live a holy life. Well, if you have it, you cannot lose it; once saved always saved." They were filled with lies until they lost their experience. The thought of witchcrafts and sorceries also reminds us that Protestantism is nothing more than a more deceptive form of paganism. When the Protestant beast arose, Revelation 13:11 says that "he spake as a dragon." The dragon is a symbol of paganism.

Proverbs 15:3 tells us, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Also, Jeremiah 32:19 says, "Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." We see that vividly described in Revelation, Chapter 18. The encouraging truth is that the Lord is faithful to His people. He has a faithful ministry with a message, and He will have a faithful ministry until time reels into eternity. Through the message, His Spirit will call a people out and together until He empties Babylon's land.

As it was in the morning time, it will be in the evening time. The Church of God is in full view. However, there is a vivid distinction between the morning and the evening. Haggai 2:9 tells us, "The glory of this latter house [or the evening-time church] shall be greater than of the former [the morning-time church] . . ." It will shine resplendently with a beauty and a glory that exceeds the morning time seven times. Isaiah 30:26 says, "Moreover the light of the moon [the Old Testament] shall be as the light of the sun [the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days . . ." Thank God, when time concludes, we will have the fullness of the light of seven days! What a glorious day in which we live. And God has greater things on the horizon. The songwriter penned: "*Brighter days are sweetly dawning. Oh, the glory looms in sight.*" As we proceed through the seventh-seal period of time, God is going to bring a stronger message and have a mightier ministry. God will empty "**Babylon**" out. The church is going to be more glorious than anything has ever been in the annals of human history. Glory to God!

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART ONE

The Converse of the Commiseration or the Chorus of the Church

Revelation 19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The Prophetic Time Period of "His Judgments"

As we begin a new chapter in the apocalyptic account, the scene has dramatically changed. The preceding chapter portrayed the commiseration for Babylon, but here we see the converse of that. Instead of bewailing and lamenting because of God's judgment, we find rejoicing. Our text portrays the original hallelujah chorus of the church. (*Funk & Wagnall's Desk Dictionary* defines *chorus* as "a simultaneous utterance of words, cries, etc. by many individuals." It does not necessarily have a musical connotation.) The chorus was comprised of many individuals uttering words.

When John penned, "**And after these things . . .**" (verse 1), that does not mean that there was a prophetic succession in the time setting. Because the rest of that verse says, "**I heard a great voice of much people in heaven,**" many of the Reformation brethren, and even early seventh-seal brethren, taught that this text was a portrayal of what will occur over in Heaven. However, we must be reminded that the Revelation speaks in symbols. We must remember that our Scripture text is housed in a larger series. It is part of what is known as Series Five, which began with Revelation 12:1. Of the eight chapters in Series Five, six of them deal exclusively with the evening time. Chapters 14 through 19 each begin with the prophetic time setting in the sixth seal, and then they conclude with the time setting being in the seventh seal. When John wrote "**after these things,**" he was relating the sequence in which he received the vision. It was not a prophetic time sequence in this instance.

"**People**" were rejoicing in our text because, as **verse 2** tells us, "**true and righteous are his judgments.**" In what prophetic time setting has the term "**judgments**" been constantly utilized in this series? Revelation 14:7 tells us that "judgment" on Babylon has come, and that happened when the sixth seal commenced (verse 1). Revelation 15:4 says, ". . . for thy judgments are made manifest." That was after ones "had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (verse 2), which was in the sixth seal. Revelation 16:7 says, "I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." This phraseology is almost identical to our text. That verse occurred when the third vial was poured out, which was also in the sixth seal. Revelation 17:1 and Revelation 18:10 speak of "judgment" on Babylon, again in the sixth seal. The prophetic time period for "judgment" in all of these verses was the sixth seal, the period when preliminary judgment began. Also, to substantiate the time frame, **verse 3** of our text speaks of Babylon's "**smoke.**" That was introduced in Revelation 18:9, and that prophetic time frame was the sixth seal. Revelation 19:1-10 has its prophetic time setting in the sixth seal (1880-1930), and verses 11-21 portray the seventh seal.

Revelation, Chapter 19, begins by portraying the same prophetic time setting with which Chapter 18 began. God is just letting us view the positive side. While those who would not "Come out" (Revelation 18:4) were commiserating over Babylon's exposure and her fate, God heard the cries of the souls under the altar (Revelation 6:9-11). They were the saints in the fifth seal who were praying and seeking for unity and for the earthen system of religion to have judgment put on it. When God got a people in place, He opened the sixth seal, and "there was a great earthquake" (Revelation 6:12). He began to rearrange things. As the song writer penned, "*He hath loosed the fateful*

lightning of His terrible swift sword" because "His truth is marching on."

Although ones were lamenting, there was a people rejoicing. This happens in worship services all of the time. People will come in, and God's judgment (His Word) will go out and show them what they need to do. However, if they are not ready to do it, they will go out sad and sorrowful. The person sitting right next to them, who embraces truth, could be shouting and rejoicing. Right while one is getting *blessed*, the other one will be getting *blistered*. It all has to do with the spiritual condition you are in and the position that you take. If you do not like the spiritual position that you are in, move. You can move from a position of commiseration to a position of rejoicing.

Almost every religious commentator has written that **verse 1** of our text, which speaks of "**heaven**," will transpire over in the eternal realm. However, we must remember that there are three heavens in the Scriptures: the firmamental heaven (Genesis 1:7-8); the celestial Heaven in which God dwells (Ecclesiastes 5:2), and the ecclesiastical heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-2). The third heaven is an uplifted or exalted spiritual position, a place of "visions and revelations," a place where ones can receive understanding of spiritual truths. Ephesians 2:6 says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." That is the "third heaven," and that is where our text occurs.

"Judgments" Produce Victory

Verse 1 of our text speaks of "**much people in heaven**." Brother D. O. Teasley wrote a song entitled "Jesus Is Calling His People." He penned in verse 4, "*For in Jerusalem city today Thousands are gathering, do not delay.*" He was not speaking of old literal Jerusalem, but he was speaking of the church (Hebrews 12:22-23). He was attesting to the fact that "thousands" were gathering. That is the "**much people**." Notice the rejoicing in our text. They were rejoicing because they responded to the message of Revelation 18:4, which states, "Come out of her." That is how they got to this heavenly place. They were rejoicing in being set free from religious confusion, man-made bondage, and sectarian teachings. What did the "**people**" say "**Alleluia**" about? They were rejoicing because of "**Salvation**" from sectism (the sin of division) and worldly worship. If they would have stayed in sectism, they would have lost their "**Salvation**." They would have become "partakers of her sins" (Revelation 18:4).

"**Salvation**" produced "**glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God**" (**verse 1**). This is a cry of victory. Revelation 15:2 shows them standing "on the sea of glass," or on the Word of God. It tells us that they "had gotten the victory over the beast [papalism], and over his image [Protestantism], and over his mark [the indoctrination]." Verse 3 says that they were singing "the song of Moses," the song of deliverance. They came leaping and shouting home to Zion; they were singing songs of victory. What produced the victory? **Verse 2** of our text says, "**For true and righteous are his judgments.**" God's "**judgments**," the Word of God (Psalm 119:43, 160), produced the victory. It produced victory then, and it will produce victory today. A lot of people are trying to shut the preaching out, but the preaching is where the victory comes from; you cannot sing it in.

Verse 2 of our text continues, "**... for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication.**" Revelation, Chapter 17, tells us that "**the great whore**" is "BABYLON," or religious confusion. When understanding came, when the message was preached, a people came out of Babylon. Babylon promotes spiritual fornication. She is referred to as a "**whore**" because she has illicit relations without the benefit of marriage. Christ is the Head, the Bridegroom, but she does not want to come under His Headship; she does not want to submit to Him. So ones came out of Babylon, and they came home to Zion to be a part of the bride of Christ. That produced rejoicing.

Deuteronomy 32:43 tells us, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." When God puts judgment on everything that opposes Christ, honest ones will flee the ranks of Babel; and that will produce some praise. What produced the "**glory**"? It was the same thing that produced the victory: God's "**judgments**." First Peter 4:17 tells us "judgment must begin at the house of God," and 1 Timothy 3:15 tells us that the house of God "is the church of the living God."

Verses 1-3 of our text portray a victory over the work of the enemy, victory over "**the great whore**," or all the systems of false religion. This rejoicing is reminiscent of the victory recorded in Revelation 12:10, when God's people were rejoicing in the morning time over the victory over the dragon, the first opposing force to the morning-time church (paganism). In our text we see verified the timeless veracity of the words of Christ when He said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by

any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). As they had power over the enemy in the morning time, and they rejoiced, we have power over the enemy in the evening time, and we rejoice. In the evening time, we see a picture of rejoicing (Revelation 7:9-12). It occurred when the blood-bought band assembled together in the presence of God. (The presence of God is found in the Church of the Living God.)

In our Scripture text, we see the faithfulness of God in hearing the prayers of His people. **Verse 3** says: "**And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.**" The "**smoke**" was a result of the prayers of the saints (Revelation 8:3-4), those souls who were under the altar (Revelation 6:9-10). It was the prayers that caused Babylon to "be utterly burned with fire [the Word; Jeremiah 23:29]" (Revelation 18:8). This produced her "smoke" (Revelation 18:9). Revelation 18:18 speaks of "the smoke of her burning." This is what produced the rejoicing. The words "**for ever**" let us know that for the remainder of human history, Babylon's condition will be revealed. She can no more hold in her clutches the souls of mankind to be duped and deceived without the truth going forth and giving them an opportunity to come home to Zion. Speaking of Babylon in type, Isaiah 34:10 says, "It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." This lets us know that the light of God's truth will never again be obscured. God will have a visible church until time reels into eternity, and Babylon will no longer be able to deceive the masses with impunity.

What Comprises the Much "People"?

In **verses 4-6** of our text, we see the depiction of a very vital truth, one that was lost sight of since the morning time. **Verse 1** speaks generically of "**much people,**" but **verse 4** begins to speak specifically of who comprised this "**much people.**" Then **verses 5-6** speak of additional voices. There are many included in this rendering that are giving an "**Alleluia**" cry. **Verse 4** speaks of "**four and twenty elders.**" The word "**elders**" is a representation of the ministry (1 Peter 5:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:17). There are at least two reasons why there were "**four and twenty**" of the "**elders.**" The first reason is because twenty-four is a multiple of twelve, and twelve is the biblical number of completion. The second reason is because it is the antitype of the type of the old Levitical priesthood. Aaron was the high priest, and his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were the priests. First Chronicles 24:4 says, "Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar [sixteen plus eight is twenty-four] . . ."

Verse 7 tells us, "Now the first lot came . . ." In other words, there were so many priests that they could not all serve at the same time, so they had to take turns. They went by course, and they were divided into twenty-four courses (verse 18). When Luke wrote of John the Baptizer's father, Zacharias, being in the temple, it was time for his course to serve in the temple. He was "of the course of Abia" (Luke 1:5). The twenty-four courses of priests represented the *entire* Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament. The priests were the type, and the "**elders**" are the antitype, or the reality in this New Testament dispensation.

The twenty-four courses of priests were "for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God" (1 Chronicles 24:5). First Corinthians 14:40 states, "Let all things be done decently and in order." If things are going to be done "in order" someone has to keep order. That is why the sanctuary, the house of God or the church, needs a governor. That is why God has pastors. If someone gets out of order, Paul admonished, ". . . reprove, rebuke . . ." (2 Timothy 4:2). We cannot let just anything go on. We believe in liberty of the Spirit, but that does not mean that the church becomes a free-for-all. It is the pastor's responsibility to keep order.

In **verse 4** of our text, we read that "**the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down.**" In other words, they were all on the same level. This is a portrayal of the ministerial equality that was restored in the sixth seal. No more are God's people subject to papal or sectarian hierarchies. They do not have to submit to popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, district superintendents, boards, committees, or man-made headquarters. Jesus said in Matthew 23:8, "But be not ye called Rabbi [or master]: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

We are not to use the titles: Doctor, the Right Reverend, the Most Holy, or His Eminence. We are all brethren. Verse 9 continues, "And call no man your father upon the earth [Roman Catholicism is full of that, and Jesus said not to do that]: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." God's people are all brethren; that is ministerial equality. One of the first things that began to work in the morning-time apostasy, which gave rise to the papal beast, was a spirit of preeminence. Men wanted to have more authority than other men. John wrote of this in 3 John 9-10. At that

time an hierarchical system of religion was beginning to develop, a system of preeminence and excommunication.

As we proceed further in our text, notice who else is depicted: **"the four beasts" (verse 4)**. *The Englishman's Greek New Testament* renders the word **"beasts"** as "living creatures," the same ones we studied in Revelation 5:8-9. They are the redeemed of all ages. One truth that had been obscured since the morning time was God's order in the church. **Verse 4** of our text shows us that it has been re-established. A God-called ministry, the **"four and twenty elders,"** was revealed again. It was lost sight of publicly during the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy days of man-rule. In those days, they had hierarchical systems built on pride and ambition and ego, rather than on God's eternal Word. Without a God-called ministry with a message, there would not be an **"Alleluia,"** or anything to rejoice over.

Let us look at the expression of **"Alleluia."** It is a Hebrew word that was actually brought up and set into a Greek context; it is transliterated. It only appears four times in the Bible, and all four are in our text. The word **"Alleluia"** means "praise ye JAH!" Jah is one of the names of God. The caption of Psalm 68 says, "To the Chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David." This was not a song anybody could play; it was only for the best. Verses 1-4 state: Let God arise [that is exactly what He did in the evening time], let his enemies be scattered [and they were]: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God [the fire of God's Word melts everything that is false]. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice [that is what we see in our text]. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH [which means 'self-existent'], and rejoice before him."

We are to "rejoice before" God, because we are getting back to the self-existent God. We are getting back to "that which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). We are getting past the creeds and the systems of men. God does not need human organizations; He just needs a people who will listen to Him, take His truth, and rejoice in it. The message, God's **"judgments,"** enabled those in our text to have **"Salvation."** That is what they were rejoicing in, which kept them from being deceived and ending up as one of the slain in Revelation 18:24. That earthen system of religion's deceptive teachings took those who at one time had **"Salvation,"** and it slew them. It took their experience away from them.

Thank God for those who are rejoicing and saying, "Alleluia, praise ye JAH, praise the self-existent One, praise the One who has helped us to see that we do not need man-made systems, man-rule, and man-made doctrines!" We can have the self-existent One; we can have God and His truth. Then, as we walk in the truth, our **"salvation"** is maintained. The message produces **"glory, and honour, and power."**

A Restored Ministry

Verse 4 of our text shows a picture of a restored ministry: **"the four and twenty elders."** With them were **"the four beasts,"** or the redeemed. Whenever there is a true ministry with a message, the redeemed will start appearing. The message will produce them. **"The four and twenty elders"** were introduced in Revelation 4:4. They were "clothed in white raiment ['the righteousness of saints'; Revelation 19:8]; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." These are symbols. There are not going to be literal crowns over in Heaven. God help us to get past songs about mansions, crowns, and streets of gold; those are all symbols. What are the crowns? Philippians 4:1 says, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown . . ." The crown is the people. Also, 1 Thessalonians 2:19 tells us: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." The ministers were not wearing gold crowns on their heads over in Heaven. This was happening in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

A crown rests on your brow, and on the forefront of the mind of every God-ordained pastor is his people. Revelation 4:10 tells us that they "cast their crowns before the throne." Every pastor does that. Every time they get down and pray, they take the people in their congregation and cast them before God. They cast each one "before the throne." Revelation 4:4 lets us know that the **"four and twenty elders"** were the closest thing to God; their seats were "round about the throne." Someone may say, "I don't believe that." Well, if the pastor is not any closer to God than you are, why do you not preach? He is between you and God in the sense that he is God's spokesman. He gets the message at God's mouth. That was lost sight of through the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day, but in the evening time, it has been restored.

We see the **"four and twenty elders"** throughout Revelation, Chapter 5, portrayed at the institution of the plan

of God. That is when God rolled back the curtain of eternity past and showed His plan and how it was going to be implemented. In the council halls of eternity past, He was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). His plan was formulated before He ever made a man. The appearance of them in our text shows that they were getting us back to the original. They were used of God to deliver a people back to the self-existent One, the One who did not need the creeds and organizations of men that bind up God's people and keep them from following Him.

"The four and twenty elders" also appear in Revelation 7:11, in the evening time. We see them again in the evening time in the sixth-seal period of time in Revelation 14:3, and they are still working in this seventh-seal period of time. Revelation 11:15-16 tells us: "And the seventh angel sounded . . . And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God." I repeat, this reveals that God's order has been reestablished in the church. We do not look to a hierarchical system; we do not look to a man-made headquarters. Somebody may ask, "Where is your headquarters?" It is where the Head is. Christ is the Head of the church, and He is in Heaven; so the headquarters is in Heaven. When this order was reestablished in the church, it produced a people. Essentially, the **"four beasts,"** or the redeemed, appear in all of the same places as the **"elders"** do. (There is one notable exception in Revelation, Chapter 6.) We either see them at the institution of the Gospel Day or in the evening time.

Where God's order is honored, it will be effective. It will produce a people, and it will produce **"Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power."** Verse 6 of our text tells us, **"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters . . ."** Revelation 1:13 and 15 tell us whose **"voice"** this is: "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man [Jesus Christ; Matthew 16:13] . . . and his voice as the sound of many waters." Christ's **"voice"** is being heard in our text.

Coming on the heels of **"the four and twenty elders and the four beasts"** were a people who were able to hear the **"voice"** of Christ. Remember, His **"voice"** is no longer heard in Babylon (Revelation 18:23). However, where God's order has been reestablished in the church, the **"voice"** of Christ can be heard, and His presence can also be discerned. Where the truth is and the presence of Christ is, there will be praise. It will produce a visible church in the evening time, one where **"the Lord God omnipotent reigneth"** (verse 6), where God has free right-of-way. It will produce the Church of the Living God. Later on, the sixth-seal movement lost ministerial equality. When they lost that, they also lost the **"voice"** of Christ and the presence of God. Thus the necessity for the seventh seal.

One reason Christ's **"voice"** was portrayed as **"the voice of many waters"** (verse 6) is because **"waters"** represent people (Revelation 17:15). Verse 1 of our text tells us that there was **"much people,"** letting us know truth was effective when the sixth-seal brethren began to herald it. Glory to God, it is still effective today! Isaiah 12:6 says, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion [why?]: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Those in our text were rejoicing while the "kings" and "merchants" were commiserating. When verse 2 speaks of God's **"judgments,"** it clearly establishes the prophetic time frame of this passage as the sixth-seal period of time. Then verses 4-6 reveal to us that God's order was reestablished in the church, which produced a people and praise. It provided God and Christ a position and a place that had been denied since the morning time. Thank God, wherever truth is sounded forth in its fulness yet today, it will still produce the same thing.

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART TWO

The Marriage of the Lamb

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Christ Is Married to the Church

The verses in this passage of Scripture text center around the words "**the marriage of the Lamb is come**" (verse 7). The earlier verses of Chapter 19 reveal where God's order was reestablished in the church. Verse 6 closes out with the exclamation, "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* interlinear says, "Lord, the God of us, the Almighty." The Greek word for *Almighty* is *pantokrator*, which literally means "the One who controls all things, the One who has all things in His grip." This reveals the positive aspect of the sixth-seal restoration: "the Lord God" is again provided with a place, the church, where He has full control.

The expressions employed in our text ("**his wife**" [verse 7] and "**granted that she should be arrayed**" [verse 8] and "**the marriage supper of the lamb**" [verse 9]) are all drawn from the Old Testament. They are Old Testament Hebrew imagery. In fact, many of the expressions in the Revelation are drawn from the Old Testament. It is important to understand that "**marriage**" is used as a portrayal of the intimate relationship between God and His people. There is no closer human union than the marital union where the twain become one flesh. God chose to use that with which we can readily identify to show the relationship between Christ and the church. This appeared first as an Old Testament concept. God said that He would "betroth thee [His people]" unto Him (Hosea 2:19). Isaiah 54:5 declares, "For thy Maker is thine husband." Then Jeremiah 3:14 states, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you." The concept of God being "married" to His people has been incorporated into the New Testament as well. Ephesians 5:31-32 tells us: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Paul was using the marital union as an analogy to explain the depth of the relationship of "Christ and the church."

In our lesson text, we see that "**the marriage of the Lamb**" (verse 7) produced gladness and rejoicing. Many people place this text in the eternal realm, but we have already established the prophetic time frame for these verses (the sixth-seal period of time). The "**marriage supper**" is not a future event. Think of the ramifications if this "**marriage**" has not yet taken place. If it has not occurred, then we are not married to Christ, we are not His wife, nor are we of His family. We would be prohibited from legally having an intimate relationship with Him; so, we could not produce children (converts). This type of thinking flies in the face of the entire scheme of New Testament Scripture, as well as Old Testament prophecy.

As Christians, are we married to Christ? Is it a present reality? Was it a present reality when the New Testament was ushered in? Let us consider some Scriptures penned in the first century (the morning time). In Romans 7:4 the Apostle Paul made it very clear that we are "married" to Jesus Christ, and because of that, we are fruitful; we bring forth children. Revelation 21:2 says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This occurred in the morning time, when the church was instituted on the Day of Pentecost. Verse 9 speaks of her as "the Lamb's wife." You are not a wife until there has been a marriage.

Because of the work wrought by Jesus Christ, Ephesians 2:19 states, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Christ set up housekeeping. He has

a bride, He has a wife, and we are part of that household. Ephesians 3:1-15 lets us know that we are part of God's family. If **"the marriage supper of the Lamb"** has not come, how could these Scriptures be?

When Isaiah prophetically envisioned the church, he penned in Isaiah 66:8: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day [that one day was Pentecost]? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." When the church appeared at the beginning of this series (the beginning of the Gospel Day), she appeared as an expectant mother (Revelation 12:1-2). Paul referred to her as a mother, as well. Galatians 4:26-29 tells us: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren [speaking of old literal Israel] that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

We are the children of God, because we have been born again. How did that occur? Well, how do a father and a mother produce children? Song of Solomon 1:16 says, "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green." What is the imagery that Solomon is employing? To be very candid, the church must get in bed with Christ and have an intimate relationship so she will be fruitful. That is what the green bed represents—fruitfulness! That is what produces the children. If there has not been any marriage, we must ask, is Christ a fornicator? Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Fornication is sin; having marital relationships without the benefit of marriage is sin. Christ certainly is no fornicator, and there are not any fornicators in the church (1 Corinthians 6:9).

The Hebrew Marriage Custom

Our text clearly states in **verse 7** that **"the marriage of the Lamb is come,"** present tense. It is a present occurrence. To understand it, we must understand the Old Testament Hebrew custom of marriage, which was to purchase a bride. Although an abhorrent concept and practice to our western culture today, that was a common practice in eastern societies. The Scriptures show us that "Jacob served seven years for Rachel" (Genesis 29:20). That was the price. Concerning Dinah, Genesis 34:11-12 reads: "And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife." Furthermore, in Ruth 4:10 Boaz said, "Moreover Ruth the Moabitess . . . have I purchased to be my wife . . ." Likewise, Christ purchased His bride in His First Advent. Acts 20:28 tells us that "the church of God" was "purchased with his own blood."

In the Hebrew custom of marriage, there was a time of espousal, prior to the marriage proper. Matthew 1:18 tells us that "Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together." That was incorporated in the old Levitical Law. Deuteronomy 20:7 states, "And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her." In the same manner, there was a time between when Jesus would build His church (the espousal) and when He presented it to Himself on Pentecost (the marriage proper).

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, ". . . I will build my church." That was future tense when He uttered these words; He had not built it yet. Then Ephesians 5:27 tells us, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." That verse is not speaking of the Second Advent. Jesus is going to present it to God on that day (1 Corinthians 15:24). He presented the church to Himself on the Day of Pentecost. That is when "John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride" (Revelation 21:2). The church came down in the person of the Holy Spirit infilling the saints in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

In the Hebrew custom, after the ceremony of marriage, there followed a feast of seven days if the bride was a virgin. The husband took her on the first day, and she became his wife. Then there were seven days of feasting (just as there are seven days in the Gospel Day) in the bride's home (on earth). At the end of the seventh day, the groom presented the bride to his father. Let us read of this Hebrew custom being observed in the Scriptures. In Genesis 29:27 Laban told Jacob to "Fulfil her week" after he tricked him. The center reference actually says, "seven days' feast." We can see it more clearly in Judges. Samson told his father and his mother in Judges 14:2, "I have seen a woman in Timnath . . . get her for me to wife." Verse 10 says, ". . . Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do." Verse 12 lets us know that there were "seven days of the feast."

According to the custom, intimate relations began the first day of the seven days of feasting. It is crucial that we understand that. It proves that the "**marriage of the Lamb**" took place in the morning time, because children started being produced. When we understand these truths, they dispel all the falsities. Genesis 29:21-23 tells us: "Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her." *The Amplified Bible* says that he "had intercourse with her." That was on the first night of the feast. Also, according to the custom, at the end of the seventh day of the feast, the bridegroom conducted the bride with great pomp and splendor to his father's house. Then another reception was held after the door was shut. We can see that in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:10). That is portraying the end of time, when Christ delivers up the church to the Father.

The Book of Matthew gives great clarity and understanding of these truths. Matthew 22:1-10 reads: "And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

In verse 2 the "certain king" is God, and "his son" is obviously Christ. In verse 3 God "sent forth his servants," and that refers first of all to the prophets, including John the Baptizer. Then verse 4 tells us that He again "sent forth other servants," and those are the Apostles. Verse 7 says that "the king [God] . . . sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." That happened under the Roman Prince Titus in A.D. 70—the desolation of Jerusalem. Speaking of that, Luke 21:20 says, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

Notice, Matthew 22:4 says that "I have prepared [past tense] my dinner." This is not at some future point in time; it had been prepared when the servants were instructed to extend the invitation in A.D. 33. Verse 4 also says that "all things are ready," which is clearly present tense. Verse 10 lets us know that "the wedding was furnished [past tense]." People came to "**the marriage supper**" in the morning time of the Gospel Day. The invitation in verse 4 was "come unto the marriage." The Greek word for *marriage* in this verse is the same Greek word that is used in our Scripture text. It is the Greek word *gamos*, which means "marriage festival, wedding banquet, marriage feast, several acts of feasting." Thus, the seven days of feasting began in the morning time at the bride's house, this earth.

"The Marriage Supper" Is Spiritual

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:21, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." How do we know they were "partakers of the Lord's table" in the morning time? Our Scripture text lets us know in **verse 9** that the meal consisted of "**the true sayings of God**," or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "the words of God." That is what was being served. Are the Words of God edible? Job, in the depth of his extremity, said in Job 23:12, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jeremiah 1:9 reads: "Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." Furthermore, Ezekiel 3:1-3 tells us: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll [or scroll], and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." After Ezekiel ate God's words, verse 4 says he was able to "speak" with them. Then Psalm 119:103 exclaims, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

In 2 Samuel 6:13 David "sacrificed oxen and fatlings." That is the same thing the dinner was composed of in

Matthew 22:4. These were sacrificial animals. Jesus gave a parable to show that the sacrifice was going to be served at this dinner. Our sacrifice is Christ. Hebrews 9:26 tells us that Christ "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Also, Hebrews 10:12 says, "But this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Jesus said in John 6:54, "Whoso eateth [present and continual tense] my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." What was He talking about? John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh." We must eat and continue to eat the Word of God. His blood represents His Spirit. Deuteronomy 12:23 says that "the blood is the life," and Romans 8:10 tells us that "the Spirit is life." We must partake of His Word and His Spirit continually.

In Revelation, Chapter 19, there are two gatherings and two suppers. Either we are gathered to the one with "**the Lamb**," where **verse 9** tells us that we eat "**the true sayings of God**," or we will be gathered to "eat the flesh" (verse 18). If we do not heed the Gospel call and gather where "**the Lamb**" is, we will be gathered by the spirits of the enemy to another gathering. At the gathering portrayed later in this chapter, we will be fed "flesh" (man-made things, man-made teachings, and earthly things). This is very serious. It was a Judaistic thought, picked up while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, that looked for a future golden age to come. That is what is portrayed as the supposed famous Messianic banquet. I have been in religious bookstores where pictures are hanging on the walls, portraying a big banquet table set with golden plates and golden utensils. This supposedly is "**the marriage supper of the Lamb**." However, it is not a literal supper.

Romans 14:17 tells us, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [it is not literal; it is not physical]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "**The marriage supper**" is a spiritual supper. The Psalmist David said in Psalm 23:5, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies [he was talking about divine sustenance]: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." He was not talking about literal tables and literal cups, but he was talking about spiritual realities.

A prophetic portrayal of the evening time, commencing in the sixth-seal period of time, is found in Ezekiel 34:12-16, which says: "As a shepherd [Christ] seeketh out his flock [the church] in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered [they were scattered in the dark and cloudy day]; so will I seek out my sheep And I will bring them out from the people . . . and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost . . . I will feed them with judgment [the Word of God; Psalm 119:43, 160]." God fed them when He gathered them out of sectism; this is a spiritual "**supper**."

"The Marriage Supper" Is Now

When Jesus was at a Pharisee's house, Luke 14:15 says, "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat [future tense] bread in the kingdom of God." Then Jesus turned right around and let him know in verses 16-17: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are *now* ready." That Pharisee was representative of the people in Judaism of that day—looking for a future age to come. Jesus let him know that what he had been looking for was here when He said, "all things are *now* ready."

Revelation 19:7 says that the Lamb's "**wife hath made herself ready**." What readied her? **Verse 8** tells us that she was "**arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**." "**Righteousness**" is what readied her. Isaiah 61:10 says, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." She received the "robe of righteousness" when God gave her the "garments of salvation." That is what made her "**clean and white**." When did the Lamb's wife, or the church, receive the "garments of salvation"? Second Corinthians 6:2 states that "in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." She became a prepared bride when "the day of salvation" began in A.D. 33.

In the Old Testament, the thought of "**the marriage supper**" was a symbol of the day of Christ. Isaiah 25:6-9 says: "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of

the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations [or over all of the denominations]. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day [the Gospel Day], Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

The question arises, if the "**marriage supper**" in our Scripture text began in A.D. 33, why does **verse 7** say "**is come**" in the sixth-seal setting (A.D. 1880-1930)? Remember, the feast lasted seven days, or throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day. We already saw that the saints enjoyed it in the morning time. In the Dark Ages, though the church was underground and out of public view, they were still being fed. Revelation 12:6 says, "And the woman [the church] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they [the Word and the Spirit] should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Christ spoke to the Pergamene Age (the height of the Dark Ages; A.D. 530 to 1530) and said in Revelation 2:17, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna . . ." They were underground in the catacombs and caves, but they were still partaking of the "**supper.**" They were eating of this "**supper**" during the dark and cloudy day, as well.

In the Parable of the Leaven, which was in the sectarian era (A.D. 1530 to 1730), "a woman [Babylon]" hid leaven in "three measures of meal" (Matthew 13:33). God's Word was not being offered pure, in the sense of the false teachings that had been mixed in, but there was enough to sustain them. Then in A.D. 1880 the church came back into view. Song of Solomon 8:5 says, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" When she came back into public view, "**the marriage supper**" came back into public view also. Christ is displaying the church in all of her purity, "**arrayed in fine linen, clean and white**" (Revelation 19:8).

Just as there was a call to "come out" in Revelation 18:4, there is a call in our text. **Verse 9** says, ". . . **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" In order to eat "**the true sayings of God,**" one must hear the call. You cannot find this "**marriage supper**" served in Babylon. There is still a famine in Babylon. Amos 8:11 tells us, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD." You must obey the call and go to where the bride of Christ is located to enjoy this "**marriage supper of the Lamb.**"

In the Hebrew custom, when invitations to a great wedding feast were sent out, the time was not stated. When everything was ready, the servants were sent out with a final summons to tell the guests to come. The Gospel Day of seven periods is the final summons for mankind. At the end of the seventh day, the Bridegroom will come and take the bride home to His Father's house. That is the place of permanent dwelling (eternity, Heaven). We are in the final of the seven days now. While false religion is awaiting a feast, the people of God have enjoyed it for nearly two thousand years. John was so moved by what he heard and saw that he "**fell at his feet to worship**" (Revelation 19:10). That is how glorious this message is. He was told to "**worship God.**" This should inspire us to "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2). Let us put on the message, eat the Word of God, and live it out.

The last phrase of **Revelation 19:10** says, ". . . **for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**" These truths were prophetic when John received and recorded them, as was most of the Revelation. We must receive "**prophecy**" through the Spirit. When we do that, Jesus is the One testifying of the truth to us (John 16:13-14 clearly tells us this is so). Psalm 29:11 says, "The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace." There is no greater peace than walking in the truth of God's eternal Word. Let us take hold of these truths in the midst of a sin-darkened world, in a world confused by the false teachings of Babylon. It will produce praise and a desire to "**worship God.**"

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART THREE

The Seventh-Seal Vision of Christ

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Heaven Is Opened

We must recognize that we are approaching the conclusion of Series Five. The symbolic expressions in this final chapter are built upon the expressions and the truths introduced in the preceding chapters. In order to rightly divide our text, we must compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13). **Verse 11** of our text begins, "**And I saw heaven opened . . .**" Again, these verses are not speaking of God's celestial Heaven. We know that from a whole host of factors. For example, **verse 13** speaks of "**a vesture dipped in blood,**" and we know that there is no "**blood**" in the eternal realm. Also, Revelation 19:14 mentions "armies . . . in heaven . . . upon white horses." There are not going to be horses in God's Heaven; thus, we must dismiss the thought of literalism. We are dealing with figurative expressions, or symbols. Certainly, false teachers and those who have not been privileged to have an understanding of these truths have taken these Scriptures in a literal sense. They have relegated them out to some point in the eternal realm or to the Second Advent of Christ. Therefore, when our text talks about "**heaven,**" it is talking about "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

Where else do we see the expression "**heaven opened**" employed in the Revelation? Revelation 11:15 (corresponding with the seventh-seal period of time) tells us that "the seventh angel sounded." Verse 19 states, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven . . ." In other words, in the seventh-seal period of time, the presence of God in the church is open for all men to see. Then Revelation 15:5 says, "And after that [after the preceding verses, which were during the sixth-seal period of time] I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." Again, the prophetic time setting is a depiction of the seventh-seal period of time. Also, Revelation 4:1 tells us that "a door was opened in heaven." This is where the Revelator saw the plan in its original state, ready to be implemented. This reveals to us that the seventh seal is a full restoration to "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). God is moving us back to the original. We need to understand that the sixth-seal brethren did not have the full light; complete understanding had not yet been given. However, as we move into the seventh-seal period of time, it is a time when "**heaven [is] opened.**"

This shows that the prophetic time setting in our text has advanced from the sixth seal to the seventh seal, just as it advanced in Chapters 14 through 18. In **verse 11** John saw "**a white horse.**" The "**white horse**" was first introduced in Revelation 6:2, depicting what occurred in the morning time (another evidence that the seventh-seal period is designed to take us back to full morning-time restoration). I might add that we are not to full restoration yet. There is still too much taint from the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day that lingers. Christ is working to help us gain understanding and receive victory. That is why there is a seventh-seal period of time.

Zechariah spoke of the "**white horse,**" along with the other horses, in his prophecy (Zechariah 6:1-3). Zechariah 6:5 tells us that the horses represent "the four spirits of the heavens." In other words, they are the religious spirits that work in the ecclesiastical realm. Horses also were articles of warfare, denoting militancy (Zechariah 10:3). If we put these two expressions together, we see that horses are militant, religious spirits. Each one of them is out for the conquest of the souls of men and women. At the onset of the Gospel Day, John saw "a white horse" (Revelation 6:2). The coloration of the horse denotes its spirit. The Spirit that was working at the commencement of the Gospel Day was the Holy Spirit. White denotes righteousness and holiness (Revelation 19:8). In our text Christ is shown to be supported and upheld by the Holy Spirit. He advances and journeys by the Holy Spirit.

The "**white horse**" is a distinct contrast to the unclean spirits that produced the systems of men. Revelation, Chapter 6, speaks of three more horses. Verse 4 shows a "horse that was red," a color that denotes sin (Isaiah 1:18), specifically the sin of unbelief (John 16:9). That spirit gave rise to the great red dragon, the first opposing force to

the morning-time church. Next, verse 5 talks about "a black horse," which was the spirit of apostasy that gave rise to the papal beast. Then we find "a pale horse" in verse 8. Zechariah called it "grisled and bay" (Zechariah 6:3). In other words, it is a mixture, a spirit of compromise: truth and error, light and darkness. That is what produced the system of Protestantism. In our lesson text, we are receiving a renewed vision of the Holy Spirit and Christ. **Verse 11** says that **"he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True."** (This expression is also found in Revelation 3:14, when Christ introduced Himself in the seventh letter.) **Verse 13** tells us that **"his name is called The Word of God."** These figures indisputably refer to Christ.

Let us identify the symbolic representations of Christ in the words **"Faithful and True."** The original Greek word for **"Faithful"** is the word *pistos*, which means, "absolutely to be trusted and relied upon." The word **"True"** in the original Greek is the word *alethinos*, which has two meanings: "never deals in falsehoods" and "genuine, real." Christ is ultimate truth and reality. Our text is showing us a renewed vision of Christ. This was also depicted in Revelation 10:1-2, which states: "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open." These verses take place in the seventh-seal period of time because all seven seals are loosed and the "book" is completely "open." The "book" was portrayed as sealed in Revelation 5:1. Revelation 5:4 tells us that John "wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." Then verse 5 lets us know that Jesus Christ "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." In Revelation 5:7 "he came and took the book," and in Revelation 6:1 He began to open the seals. The "book" was in Christ's hand, and it was still in His hand in Revelation, Chapter 10.

A Renewed Vision of Christ

Revelation 10:2 says that Christ "set his right foot upon the sea [the apostasy that gave rise to papalism], and his left foot on the earth [the compromise that gave rise to sectism]." In other words, they had to get a fresh vision that Christ was still standing and the message was still standing right where it always stood, even though the Anderson Movement's stand on false religion was changing. They had to have a renewed vision before the seventh angel sounded in verse 7. Sadly, at the end of the sixth seal, a terrible compromise occurred. Jeremiah 8:14 says, "Why do we sit still?" Why were there places where you could actually hear the shouts and the praises of God before you saw the campgrounds, but today they just sit still; you never hear a shout in the camp? What produced that condition? Jeremiah 8:14 continues, ". . . for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD."

How did the ones at the end of the sixth seal sin? James 4:17 tells us, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The ministry did not warn the people; so blood was on their hands (Ezekiel 33:8). The older brethren began to pass away, and the ones who remained had less influence. The younger men wanted a movement like other movements. (They were like the Israelites of old who wanted a king so they could be like all the other people.) They formed a college, because they wanted an educated clergy. They wanted to be socially acceptable. Therefore, they had to start taking off the sharp edge of the message. They could not continue to thrash Babylon and call a people out. Then they could not preach that division was sin.

At the end of the sixth seal, the Anderson Movement became an organization that worshiped the beast's image. Revelation 19:20 says, "And the beast [papalism] was taken, and with him the false prophet [Protestantism] that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast [the indoctrination], and them that worshipped his image." The latter group in that verse are the ones who picked up sectarian spirits and became just as sectish in their worship as sectism. Because there was a compromise, because they had taken on religious spirits, today you cannot tell the Anderson Movement apart from any other Protestant sect. That is why the opening of the seventh seal was necessary. A fresh vision of Christ was needed. The Movement had touted itself for so long as "the church." They were holding people in fear that if they left it, they would be leaving the true church. However, that Movement is the one which left the church!

Let us look at the particular portrayal of Christ in our text as it reveals much truth to us. **Verse 12** tells us that **"on his head were many crowns."** Notice that the word **"crowns"** is in the plural. In Revelation 6:2 Jesus' "crown" was singular. What does that hold for us? Isaiah 62:3-4 tells us: "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God . . . thou shalt be called Hephzibah [which means 'my delight is in her'], and thy land Beulah [or married, talking about the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife]." The **"crowns"** repre-

sent a people. Philippians 4:1 says, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown" Oh, be careful of the sectarian taint! Every time ones read "a crown," they think it is something over in Glory; but that is not what these verses are talking about. First Thessalonians 2:19 also says: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye [a people]"

The "**many crowns**" in our text indicate that Christ was gathering a second remnant (Isaiah 11:11) and was raising up a seventh-seal ministry ("**eyes . . . as a flame of fire** [a ministry; Hebrews 1:7]"; **verse 12**) to carry on the torch of truth into a new period of time. One of His "**crowns**" was the people in the morning time (Revelation 6:2). As the Gospel Day progressed, Christ had a victorious people in every era. That is why He has "**many crowns**" now. God has always had a people, and He always will have a people. The question is, will you and I remain a part of that people? Christ will always have a church, and He will be victorious over every foe. First Corinthians 15:25 tells us, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." He has had overcomers in every age, and provision has been made for complete victory in our day, the seventh-seal period of time.

Verse 13 of our text goes on to say that "**he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.**" This is commonly thought to be the blood of Christ, but let us pick up prophecy and see what it reveals to us. Isaiah 63:1-4 says: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. [Are you beginning to get a picture of Who this is talking about? Who is 'mighty to save'?] Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." These verses clearly reveal the "**blood**" stained on Christ's "**vesture**" in our text was not His blood, but according to Isaiah 63:3, it was "their blood," the blood of His enemies, showing that He is victorious over all of them.

Verse 13 of our text continues, ". . . and his name is called **The Word of God.**" The Word of God (Christ), carried by the Spirit of God (the white horse), has brought victory over every foe in time past, and He will still bring victory today. Because of the genuine truth, Christ has brought a people victorious through apostasy, through compromise, through the Dark Ages, through the dark and cloudy day, through the evening-time compromise, and right on into the seventh seal. That is why He has "**many crowns**" (**verse 12**). What is being portrayed in our text is the vision that the church needed before the angel cried in Revelation 19:17.

Verse 11 lets us know that "**in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**" Again, let us look into prophecy for a greater understanding of that verse. Isaiah 11:1-4 states: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." This lets us know that Christ's judgment is not physical judgment, but rather, it is spiritual judgment. Likewise, we are not in a physical warfare, but a spiritual warfare.

Jesus taught in John 7:24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." What is righteous judgment based on if it cannot be based on the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear? Matthew 7:1-2 tells us: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." What judgment are we going to be judged by? Jesus said in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him" Righteous judgment is the judgment of God's Word. That is what we are judged by, and that is what measure is to be meted. That is what He is making war with—righteous judgment, the Word.

Christ Is "The Word of God"

Christ is particularly spoken of as "**The Word of God**" (**verse 13**) because He was reminding them where the victory was. Remember, these people were coming out of a sixth-seal, compromising condition. There was uncertainty; some had been affected and their vision impaired by what they had been associated with and exposed to. Many of those who became seventh-seal ministers were men who had been sixth-seal ministers. God was ushering

in a new period of time and issuing a fresh call. In order to have a fresh revelation, they needed to be reminded of where the victory was. They had gotten away from it, and in essence, He was saying: "Remember where the victory is! Remember what produced the '**many crowns**'! Remember '**The Word of God**'!" Regardless of what their victory was, in every age the source of their victory was the same. The victory lies in standing on the "sea of glass" (Revelation 15:2), or on "**The Word of God.**"

When any individual or people collectively get away from "**The Word of God,**" they are going to move away from victory. Those in the sixth seal were moved away from victory. Thus, Christ was trying to bring them back to "**The Word of God.**" They needed a renewed vision in A.D. 1930, and we need a fresh vision of Christ as "**The Word of God**" yet today. We cannot lay down the truth of God's Word without laying Christ down; they are inseparable. People today are trying to put a divorce between Christ and His Word, but Christ *is* "**The Word.**" They are One and the same. There was a deceptive spirit of compromise working at the end of the sixth seal. Yet, Ecclesiastes 1:9 tells us that "there is no new thing under the sun." That spirit of compromise, which worked in the dark and cloudy day and produced Protestantism, was what caused the Movement to become an image to sectism. And it is working today. It made people in the Movement feel they could lay parts of the truth down and yet still have Christ. However, we do not love Jesus Christ a bit more than we love His "**Word.**" When we lay down one, we lay down the other.

Today, we have a religious world all about us that has little regard for God's "**Word,**" but they want to tell you how much they love Jesus. That is rank deception! John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 continues, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Verse 17 goes on to say, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "**The Word**" is Jesus Christ! John 14:23 says, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." His presence is totally contingent upon whether we keep His words or not. As long as we keep His words, we keep His presence. However, when we begin to cut corners on "**The Word**" and leave "**The Word,**" we are leaving the presence of God.

Now in the seventh seal, we need to get past the trend the Anderson Movement has taken. We need to get past following men, get past organizational structures, and get back to the blessed old Bible. How do we receive "**The Word of God**"? How do we obtain the understanding to be victorious in this great warfare? **Verse 12** of our text tells us that "**His eyes were as a flame of fire.**" We were introduced to this symbol in Revelation 1:14. (Revelation 2:18 also speaks of it.) So what does the expression "**a flame of fire**" represent? Hebrews 1:7 says, "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." God uses His ministers to bring people the understanding of His "**Word,**" so they can have victory and be Christ's crown. The "**white horse,**" or the Spirit of God, works through those "**eyes**" that are "**as a flame of fire,**" or the God-called ministry.

We live in a time when independent spirits are working. Some people do not feel that anyone should have the rule over them. However, we need to understand that the ministry is Christ's "**eyes.**" Someone may say, "I don't believe that." Well, why are they called "overseers" (Acts 20:28)? God, using His ministers, reveals several truths to us. First, Christ does not work independent of His body. You cannot separate Christ from His body. Christ works through us, the church (1 Corinthians 12:27), to achieve victories. Second, His ministry are His "**eyes.**" They are the watchmen on the wall. They are to take "the oversight" (1 Peter 5:2). Third, Christ's "**eyes**" are part of Him and His body. They are guided by His mind, not by the organizations of men or by any human consensus. My eyes are controlled by my mind, and so are yours, and so are Christ's.

In our day a spirit of ecumenicalism is working. We will see that vividly described in Revelation 19:17-19. It is to produce a false unity, a unity based on something other than "**The Word of God.**" It is a deceptive move. Even around the camp of the saints, its tentacles are reaching. That is why we need a fresh vision of Bible unity. Ephesians, Chapter 4, gives us two aspects of unity, and they are both crucial to its realization. I have mentioned this before. Ephesians 4:3 says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit . . ." The first thing that is absolutely essential is everyone must have the same spirit or they will never be able to reach unity. You cannot unify unlike spirits. "The unity of *the* Spirit" is a prerequisite.

Second, "the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13) can only be built on "the faith," or the truth, not on some man-made union that lays down truth to lock arms and produce an artificial unity. When the song writers of "The Church's Jubilee" wrote these words, "*We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood-washed one,*" it was not because they

were advocating locking arms with Babylon. It was because they were encouraging saints to reach out and help people "come out." This is the same manner in which we can get people out of a system that has laid down truths because they were controversial: reach out with a "come out" message. Many people were hung up on Anderson and loyalty to a place, but truth is not based on a place. It is based on a person: Christ, **"The Word of God."**

Two truths shine out of our text: Christ does not work independent of His Word, and He does not work independent of His people. In the following verses, we will see where great victory has been wrought in the period of time in which we live, and that greater victory lies ahead. However, to achieve this victory, the brethren at the beginning of this period had to get their eyes off the Anderson Movement and get a fresh vision of Christ. In Revelation 3:18 Jesus instructed our day to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." The enemy is attempting to impair our vision, and he is giving many people all over our land a very misconceived vision of Christ. The spirit of the age is trying to view Christ independent of His **"Word."** We must understand that He *is* **"The Word of God,"** and He is victorious *by* **"The Word of God."** **"The Word of God"** will continue to enable you and me individually and the church collectively to have victory in our day. Through Christ's Word, His Spirit, and His ministry, He is preparing and producing a victorious, reigning people.

We live in a time when the same spirits that caused the Anderson Movement to become sectish are trying to reach their tentacles into the camp of the saints. People want to empower trustees, boards, and committees when the only ones Christ has empowered are His **"eyes,"** the **"flame of fire,"** the ministry. If we will realize this renewed vision of Christ, we will be able to continue to be the Church of God. The brethren in A.D. 1930 and in the succeeding times did a glorious work. They gathered a people, a second remnant, together on **"The Word of God"**; and it produced victory. The enemy wants to move everyone away from the source of victory, but we do not have to "give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). He belongs under our feet. We can go forth as they did in the morning time and do a great work for God in this seventh-seal period of time.

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART FOUR

The Armies and Their King

Revelation 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

"Armies" and "White Horses"

This portion of John's vision is both awesome and inspiring. We have found that beginning with verse 11, there was a progression and advancement in the prophetic time setting to the seventh-seal period of time. There was a compromising condition toward the end of the sixth-seal period; so they needed a fresh vision of Christ. In order to produce a seventh-seal ministry and people, ones had to follow the Word of God, which was upheld by the Spirit of God (Christ on the white horse; verse 11), rather than follow the leadership of a fallen movement. In **verse 14** of our text, we see a people who grasped and embraced the truths of the preceding verses: **"the armies which were in heaven followed him."** Thank God, when this fresh revelation was given, there was a people willing to embrace it and follow Christ. When Jesus gave the explanation of The Parable of the Sower, He said in Luke 8:15, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." In every age God has had a people who had "an honest and good heart." When they heard the Word, they kept it; so they brought "forth fruit." The reason there is not more fruit is because many people are either not hearing the truth or they are not keeping it.

Our text substantiates the truth that Christ will always have a people who will follow Him. They have a heart that the Lord desires. They have "truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6). They are the people Jesus spoke of when He said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Jesus will always have a people. The challenge that remains for you and me is to remain a part of those people by hearing His Word, keeping His Word, and following Him. In our text the honest-hearted people followed Christ right into seventh-seal light. **Verse 14** says that they **"were in heaven,"** which lets us know that they were in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). They were **"clothed in fine linen, white and clean."** We saw that expression in verse 8, speaking of the bride, the Lamb's wife. They were saints of God. They were also being upheld by **"white horses,"** or the Holy Spirit. They maintained their purity by listening to the Holy Spirit, walking in the light, and progressing with the truth.

Notice that our text speaks of **"armies"** in the plural and **"white horses"** in the plural. In the morning time, Revelation 6:2 refers to "a white horse" in the singular. Then Song of Solomon 6:10 tells us, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun [just as Revelation 12:1, a portrayal of the morning-time church], and terrible as an army [singular] with banners?" The symbols for the evening-time church are plural, but the symbols for the morning-time church are singular. Let us consider the morning-time church. Acts 1:15 lets us know that there were about an hundred and twenty assembled in the Upper Room prior to Pentecost. Then Acts 2:1-4 tells us that on the Day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. That is when the church was instituted and the hearts of men were changed. Acts 2:14 tells us that Peter began to preach. Verse 41 says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Next there were about five thousand added in Acts 4:4.

Certainly, the morning time was a wonderful and glorious time, but think of it in the big scheme of things. There were approximately 8,120 people in the church out of the whole world. That is not a very large number, comparatively. That is why Song of Solomon 6:10 referred to the morning-time church as "an army" in the singular. Now, in the seventh-seal, our text speaks of **"armies"** and **"horses."** In other words, the church is composed of multitudes who are upheld and conveyed by the Holy Spirit. This should encourage and inspire us. Though the enemy continually attempts to convince us that we are small and ineffective and that people do not want the truth, he is a liar (John 8:44). John envisioned the evening-time church as "a great multitude, which no man could number"

(Revelation 7:9). Haggai 2:9 says, "The glory of this latter house [the evening-time church] shall be greater than of the former [the morning-time church]" We have truth not only in one region of the world as they did in the succeeding days after Pentecost, but we have truth all around the world. The church is not just "an army" as it was referred to in the morning time, but our text refers to it as **"armies."**

"Armies" and **"horses"** denote militancy in the Scriptures (Zechariah 10:3). Our text is letting us know that in the seventh-and-final period of time, the church is again militant, as it was in the morning time (Revelation 6:2). We are out for the conquest of men's and women's souls. The saints are the soldiers who comprise these **"armies."** In 2 Timothy 2:3-4 Paul told the young minister Timothy: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." We sing a song that says, *"I've enlisted in the service till I die."* When we get a real experience of salvation, we change kingdoms. We become a soldier, and we are engaged in a warfare.

What is the warfare over? Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:18-19: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." The warfare is over the faith. It is a spiritual warfare, not a carnal warfare. The prophecies, or the Word of God, help you to have victory in this warfare. First Timothy 6:12 tells us to "Fight the good fight of faith." Again, the battle is over the faith. However, we are not to just be on the defense; we are to conquer the souls of men for Christ and truth. Ephesians 6:11 talks about "the whole armour of God." Not only does the armor have defensive applications, but it also has "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (verse 17). That is our offensive weapon. We use it to engage in conquest.

"A Sharp Sword"

Our text reveals how the church effectively accomplishes victory in this final period of time. **Verse 15** says, **"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."** The church is victorious because of her Captain! Likewise, Joshua was victorious because of the Captain. Let us take a look at that account. Joshua 5:13-14 tells us: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?" Then Joshua got the battle plan right from the mouth of the Lord. The Captain was Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:9-10). Theologians call this a "Christophany," a pre-Christian era appearance of Christ.

Joshua 6:20 continues, "So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." The people followed the instructions of the man of God, conveyed to them by the Word of God. Then, when the trumpet sounded and they shouted, the enemy was defeated.

The **"sharp sword"** in **verse 15** of our text was introduced to us in Revelation, Chapter 1. Revelation 1:16 says that "out of his [Christ's] mouth went a sharp twoedged sword," which is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Then, in Revelation 2:12, Christ revealed Himself to the Pergamene age as "he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." **Verse 15** of our text tells us that Christ would **"smite the nations"** (or denominations) with that **"sharp sword"** (the Word of God). In this seventh-seal period of time, Christ has a message right from His mouth, and a people behind it, that is smiting denominationalism. Thus, people can see the truth and flee the darksome courts of Babel. The message of truth reveals the errors and the sin of sectism and division. When the Word of God smites it, it can no longer stand; it has to crumble.

The phrase **"smite the nations"** (**verse 15**) is reminiscent of when the Stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands smote the image in the feet in the Book of Daniel. Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was in Daniel, Chapter 2. The metallic image was a prophetic time line. The four metallic substances were a revelation of the four succeeding world empires: Babylon, Medio-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Right when Rome (the feet of the image) was in power, the Stone, Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-11), came and smote it. Daniel 2:34 says, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands [a symbolic picture of the virgin birth; man did not have anything to do with it], which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." The image

could no longer stand. Our text is letting us know that the image of false religion, of Protestantism, just as the image Nebuchadnezzar saw, could not stand before God's Word. Truth caused it to be smitten. Truth puts Babylon on a low, earthly level where she belongs.

Let us look at some Scriptures which show us that "**nations**" represent denominations. Ezekiel 34:11-13 says: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day [the Protestant Era]. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries [or the nations], and will bring them to their own land . . ." Isaiah 2:2 tells us, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations [the various denominations] shall flow unto it." Then Jeremiah 29:14 states, "And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

The Old Testament Babylonian captivity serves as a vivid type of the New Testament Babylonian captivity. Our text reveals to us that the "second . . . remnant" (Isaiah 11:11) is allowing the voice of Christ, the Word of God, to be sounded forth again, delivering people from sectish bondage. That includes the sectarian organizations of Protestantism and those who have become sectish, such as the Anderson Movement. Toward the end of the sixth-seal period of time, the message on Babylon was not sounded forth as it once had been; therefore, Christ renewed the message.

"A Rod of Iron"

After the "**sharp sword**" has had its effect, **Revelation 19:15** proceeds to say that Christ "**shall rule them with a rod of iron.**" The "**rod**" merely represents another aspect of God's Word. Micah 6:9 says, "The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod . . ." The Lord's voice was crying, and then he was told to "hear ye the rod," revealing to us that the "**rod**" is the Lord's voice, the Word of God, because words come out of a voice. Then Micah 7:14 says to "Feed thy people with thy rod." This is symbolic because people cannot be fed with a literal "**rod.**" We find in Jeremiah 3:15 that "pastors . . . shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The charge Paul gave Timothy was to "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). That is where knowledge and understanding come from. That is the "**rod**" which feeds the saints of God.

Why does **verse 15** have both "**a sharp sword**" and also "**a rod of iron**" to symbolize the Word? It takes a sharp, piercing message to sever the cords that hold people in bondage to the systems of men. People need to be cut loose because Babylon, in all of its forms, takes a real hold on them. Babylon entangles them; so they need "**a sharp sword.**" Then there is the "**rod.**" The Greek word for "**rod**" is *rhabdos*, and it is the same Greek word used in Hebrews 1:8, which is translated twice in that verse as "sceptre." *Strong's Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines it as "a baton of royalty." The "sceptre" is how Christ rules His people. Our obedience to God's Word proves our love and allegiance to our King. To remain a loyal subject in His kingdom is to submit to His rule.

In Esther, Chapter 4, the decree had gone out that all the Jews should be slain. Mordecai had charged Esther to approach the king. Esther answered in verse 11, "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live." The "sceptre" determines whether it will be life or death. After ones are subjects in Christ's kingdom, members of His church, it is according to how they regard the "sceptre" as to whether they live or die.

Prior to stepping off the stage of action, Moses reiterated the truth to the people. In Deuteronomy 30:14 he said, "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." The only reason God gives us understanding of His Word is so we can do what it says. Verse 15 continues, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." That is all contingent on the Word, whether we obey it or not. Verses 19-20 state: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice . . ."

After ones have let "**a sharp sword**" sever them from Babylonian entanglement and they have come home to

Zion, God has a rule. He wants them to submit to His rule, yield to the **"rod."** That enables them to have victory. It enables them to break from the man-made, worldly things that are in their lives. When they have come out of Babylon, it does not necessarily mean that all of the Babylonian things have been destroyed. There are traditions and teachings that they may have brought along with them which the **"rod of iron"** has to break up.

Revelation 2:27 says, "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." Also, Psalm 2:9 says, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." A potter would make a vessel out of clay; clay comes out of the earth. So, the **"rod of iron"** will break up the earthen, man-made things in our lives, things we may not even realize are there until we are shown the **"rod."** We need to let this **"rod"** rule over us. A **"rod"** is straight, and it will show everything that varies from it. It is designed to enable us to have a straight, solid experience. It will help us to see what is false. Many people do not have an understanding of holiness when they first come to the truth. They have been taught that holiness is an impossibility, that everyone must sin; so the **"rod"** has to show them that God wants them to make straight paths for their feet. In Ezekiel, Chapter 1, the "four living creatures," or the redeemed of all ages, went "straight forward" (verse 12). They each had "straight feet" (Ezekiel 1:7). That depicts walking straight, or a holy life.

There are those who retain the thought of inbred, or original, sin. They think that one goes into sin because of an Adamic nature. Thus, the **"rod"** has to show them that all of us "have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). The root of all sin is selfishness, not Adam, not Eve, not anyone else; it is ourselves. There are a lot of other falsities being carried over from prior periods. People have been taught that the devil was an archangel in Heaven who rebelled. Then a war started, and he was kicked out. All of these falsities have to be routed out by the **"rod"** of truth.

There are people out in Babylon who have good experiences. They are born again, but they have never heard any standards of holiness preached. God has to start washing away "the filth of the daughters of Zion . . . by the spirit of judgment" (Isaiah 4:4). God has to lay down the **"rod"** and put out judgment to clear away some "filth." The saints in the morning time ruled over paganistic teachings and traditions by the **"rod."** Revelation 12:5 tells us, "And she [the church] brought forth a man child [or converts], who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." In the same way the **"rod"** broke down false paganistic things in the morning time, it breaks down false Babylonian things today.

Christ Is Setting His People Free From Denominations

In our Scripture text, we clearly see that Christ, through the seventh-seal message, is working to loose a people. **Verse 15** goes on to say that **"he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."** That is how His **"vesture"** became dipped in the blood of His enemies in verse 13. Depicting the seventh seal, Revelation 14:19 says, "And the angel [the ministry] thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." It was not the vine that was cast into the winepress. *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* tells us it was "the fruit of the vine." The whole point of harvesting grapes is to separate the grapes from the vine.

The "vine of the earth" represents the religious system of Protestantism, that came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11). Revelation 14:18 speaks of "clusters." The clusters are holding the grapes; they are all the religious denominations in Protestantism. The burden is to get the grapes (the people) loose from the clusters (the particular denominational systems) and away from the vine (the system of Protestantism) and into the winepress. Therefore, they will lose their individuality and become part of a larger body, the body of Christ.

What does a **"winepress"** do? All of the grapes go in as individual grapes, but once they come out, you cannot tell them apart. They have all become one. That is what truth will do. It will take individuals who are bound by the systems of men, cut them loose, and put them in the **"winepress."** They will no longer be individuals in various systems of religion anymore, but they will all flow together as one body, the body of Christ, the Church of the Living God! First Corinthians 12:18 tells us, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

Verse 15 of our text says that **"he treadeth."** The message is designed to put the pressure on. Jesus has gotten tired of the way conditions are, so He has put His foot down. Revelation 1:15 says that Christ's feet are "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Ephesians 1:22 tells us that God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." The message must tread, it must put the pressure on; so ones

lose their individual identity. Isaiah 2:2 says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days [the Gospel Day], that the mountain of the LORD'S house [the church] shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills [the mingled hills of Babylon]; and all nations [those out of all various denominations] shall flow unto it." They are flowing uphill to Zion. They flow because they have been put through the "**winepress**." Judgment has been put on them. They can now see that they should not just be individuals fending for themselves, doing the best they can, but they must be a part of the one Body of Christ.

"The fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" in **verse 15** of our text is judgment preaching. That is what brings a people together and causes them to be unified. The vials of "the wrath of God" in Revelation 15:1 contained the judgments of God. They caused God's judgments to be "made manifest" (verse 4). Isaiah 1:27 tells us that "Zion [representing the New Testament church] shall be redeemed with judgment." We live in a time when many do not want to hear judgment preaching, but Zion is "redeemed with judgment." That is how God sets people loose from Babylon and how He keeps them loose. The message will be effective if people have a fresh vision of Christ, follow Him, and allow Him to work. It will be fruitful, just as it is portrayed in our text.

Verse 16 tells us that "**he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written.**" It is "**written**" on "**his vesture**" for visibility; so it could be clearly seen. Why is it "**written**" on "**his thigh**"? Let us look at the covenant Abraham made with his servant, when he desired to secure a bride for his son. Abraham is a type of the Father, his only son is a type of Christ, the bride is a type of the church, and the servant is a type of the Holy Spirit. Genesis 24:9 tells us, "And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter." That is how they made a covenant; he put his hand under his master's thigh. In the seventh seal, the church is being secured for Christ as a part of the covenant.

Let us read when Jacob wrestled with Christ, another "Christophany." Genesis 32:24-28 says: "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob [which means supplanter or trickster]. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

There are types portrayed in those verses. Verse 24 says that he "wrestled," a type of conviction. Next Christ asked, "What is thy name?" in verse 27, a portrayal of confession. Then He said in verse 28, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel," a picture of conversion. In the process of this conversion, verse 25 says that "he touched the hollow of his thigh." So the "**KING OF KINGS**" (**verse 16**) has made a covenant whereby man's nature can be changed. Man can now become a part of the bride, the Lamb's wife. In the seventh seal, this message is still fresh and powerful. Thank God, He has renewed His covenant! Christ is "**KING OF KINGS**" in our text because every saint walking in the glorious light of truth is a "**KING**." Revelation 1:6 says that Christ "hath made us kings." Revelation 5:10 says, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

The seventh seal is a glorious and victorious day! Christ, through His truth and His people, is clearly visible and on display. The Greeks cried in John 12:21, "Sir, we would see Jesus." That is still the heart cry of every honest heart. They do not want to see the religious organizations of men; they want to see Jesus. Colossians 1:27 says "Christ in you"; that is where He is. Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed unto Daniel in Daniel 2:47, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." Christ is "**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**," because He has revealed "secrets," or truths. Revelation 10:7 lets us know that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [or completed]." In our day Christ is revealing things that have been kept secret since the world began in order to produce a glorious church and a victorious people.

A fresh vision of Christ produces a people who will follow Him. Truth will loose the grapes from the earth's vines and allow them to enter the "**winepress**," so they will flow up to Mount Zion! May God help us to be a part of those who enjoy these wondrous victories. Truth will always do what it was designed to do. Let us take hold of it and "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1), so we can see a glorious work wrought in our day.

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART FIVE

The Gathering of Men

Revelation 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

An Angel Standing in the Sun

In these verses we see portrayed before us a picture that is both alarming and informative. In the previous verses (verses 11-16), a fresh vision of Christ has been given, and people are portrayed as flowing up to Mount Zion (verse 14). In **verse 17** of our text, the **"angel standing in the sun"** is a clear depiction of the seventh-seal ministry, which was needed, because at the end of the sixth-seal period of time, the ministry began to silence up on the message and picked up religious spirits. Thus, the need for a renewed vision of Christ. This ministry is **"standing in the sun,"** or in other words, taking a position in the light. **"The sun"** obviously portrays brilliant, blinding light, but let us look deeper than that. Malachi 4:1-2 says: "For, behold, the day cometh [future tense, the Gospel Day], that shall burn as an oven [it will be brilliant and bright]; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise . . ."

It is a brilliant day because of the intensity of the **"sun."** The expression "Sun of righteousness" is a Messianic prophecy, figuratively speaking of Jesus Christ. *Webster's Twenty-First Century Dictionary* defines the sun as "a star of the solar system." In 2 Peter 1:16-19 the Apostle Peter penned: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty [Peter was an eyewitness on the Mount of Transfiguration; Matthew 17:1-5]. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." Jesus Christ is this "day star." When He made His First Advent, a new day dawned.

Matthew 4:16 says, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Jesus Christ is that "light." Matthew described the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-2, writing "his face did shine as the sun." In Revelation 22:16 Jesus called Himself "the bright and morning star." Jesus is the "day star" and the "Sun of righteousness" because the "sun" is nothing more than a "day star."

Our text lets us know that this ministry is one with Christ. They are **"standing"** in the light of Christ, **"the sun."** Romans 13:12 states, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." Verse 14 tells us to "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Putting on "light" is putting "on the Lord Jesus Christ." Every period of time has had its own particular level of light. Light is understanding (Psalm 119:130). God has given people in every age understanding for their day.

Isaiah 30:26 says, "Moreover the light of the moon [the Old Testament; in the Jewish day, night came first (Genesis, Chapter 1)] shall be as the light of the sun [the New Testament], and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." So in this seventh seal, the light of the **"sun"** will be "sevenfold," more brilliant than any other period in the history of mankind. The **"angel standing"** in the "Sun of righteousness" reminds me of the words of our former President Harry S. Truman. He said, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." God has a ministry that can stand in the heat; they are **"standing in the sun."**

Notice that the **"angel"** in **verse 17** of our text **"cried."** In this instance, crying denotes preaching. Matthew 3:1 and 3 tells us: "In those days came John the Baptist, *preaching* . . . The voice of one *crying* in the wilderness . . ."

. " The **"angel"** in our text was preaching a message: **"Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."** This **"supper"** is in contradistinction to the "marriage supper of the Lamb" in verse 9. The saints who gather to the "marriage supper" are eating the true words of God. However, the **"supper"** in our text is another gathering. We know it is another **"supper"** because of what is being served: **"flesh" (verse 18)**, or something earthly.

Verse 18 starts out with **"kings," "captains,"** and then **"mighty men."** Second Corinthians 11:3 speaks of "the simplicity that is in Christ." Christ and His Gospel are so simple that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). However, men's teachings have confused, complicated, and convoluted the simple message of Christ to where people do not understand what God requires. The first truth revealed in our text is that there is a return to the simplicity of the Gospel. In the morning time (the dawning of the Gospel Day), Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). That is very simple. There are only two positions mankind can occupy: either with Jesus or against Him, either gathering or scattering.

Two Gatherings

In the inaugural message of His public ministry, Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Once again Jesus made it very simple. There is either a broad way or a narrow way. Then He reduced all of mankind to one tree or another, stating in verse 17, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." You are either in one position or in the other. That is "the simplicity that is in Christ."

In our text, which takes place in this final time period, there are two gatherings, two suppers, and two tables, just as there was in the morning time. First Corinthians 10:21 says, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils [it is either one or the other]: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." There are just two positions: either "the marriage supper of the Lamb" or the **"supper"** where **"ye may eat the flesh."** During the dark and cloudy day, there were many positions (many organizations of men) in which the saints were scattered and involved. God's people were scattered, because they were not **"standing in the sun."** The **"sun"** was not shining in its full strength. However, in the seventh-seal period of time, there are not many positions anymore; there are only two.

The second truth revealed in our text is that truth polarizes. Light has been turned up so intensely and truth is shining forth so clearly that there will be no neutral position. We saw the same polarization in previous chapters of this series. Revelation 16:13 speaks of "three unclean spirits like frogs," which are working to gather people against truth. Then Revelation, Chapter 17, tells of the eighth beast, which is a consolidation of all of the enemies of truth throughout all of the ages. It is moving to polarize people and gather them against truth. In the day and time in which we live, people are going to be either gathered into the camp of the saints or gathered into the eighth beast. There is no in between.

We need to have a firm hold on the light and make sure we stand in it. If we do not walk in the light, darkness will come upon us (John 12:35). There are a lot of people who were gathered with the camp of the saints, but today they have been gathered in with the eighth beast. Just because we are in one camp today does not mean we will remain in that camp. We must continue to stand in the light of God's Word. Revelation 20:7-9 says: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan [or the dragon, paganism] shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog [papalism] and Magog [Protestantism], to gather them . . . And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints . . ." Again, there are only two gatherings. If we do not keep pace with the truth, we will be gathered with the enemies of truth. The enemies of truth make strange bedfellows. People who have had no use for each other, who will hardly speak to each other, will lock arms together when they get cross-grained with truth. It is because they both share a kindred spirit. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were both sects of Judaism, but they were at opposing poles on their doctrinal positions (Acts 23:8). However, when it came to fighting truth, they were able to lock arms, coming together against Jesus (Matthew 16:1).

The third truth revealed in our text is that the enemy is a supreme counterfeiter. Second Corinthians 2:11 says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." The Greek word for devices is *noema*, and it means "thought-out plans, schemes, or devices." We are dealing with an intelligence. The devil is

behind every one of these false systems of worship. It is not happenstance that they have been raised up; there is a master schemer with a well thought-out plan behind them all. The reason we are seeing the development of the eighth beast is because the enemy is a supreme counterfeiter. The message of our day is a message on "the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13). Thus, the enemy is working to produce a false unity to deceive the souls of men. The only unity God will produce is a unity based on the faith. True Bible unity is built on truth. Laying down or compromising the truth to get along is not *unity* but *union*. It takes more than getting people together to have true Bible unity.

Unity is not something physical. True Bible unity is born of the Spirit and based on knowledge of God's truth. We must first all have "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3). If you do not have "the Spirit" and I do not have "the Spirit," there can be no further unity. If we have "the Spirit," then we will have an ear to hear what the Spirit says. He will lead us into a knowledge of the truth and bring us to "the unity of the faith." Satan has transformed himself "into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14), producing a counterfeit unity. Isaiah 5:20 says they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness."

The false unity of Babylon is produced by an ecumenical spirit. Nehemiah, Chapter 4, gives a vivid type of it. The Israelites had come out of Babylonian captivity and made the excursion back to Jerusalem. They were rebuilding the wall (the evening-time message in type) and were lifting up the message of salvation, (Isaiah 26:1). Verse 6 says, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together [true unity] unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." If people are going to get saved and have unity, if the wall is going to be built and joined together, it is going to come from a people who have "a mind to work." It will not come from a people who let everybody else do the work. Verses 7-8 continue: "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped [the vision of the church was being restored], then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together [a type of the eighth beast] to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." False unity is designed to hinder the truth.

The Supper's Menu—"the Flesh"

Before we examine the contents of this meal, notice who partakes of it. **Verse 17** is addressing "**all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven.**" Again, this "**heaven**" is not speaking of God's Heaven but of the ecclesiastical or spiritual realm. What are the "**fowls**" that eat of this "**supper**"? Revelation 18:2 says that "Babylon the great is . . . a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The word "*bird*" in that verse is the same Greek word that our text renders as "**fowls.**" It is the Greek word *orneon*. This lets us know that these "**fowls**" are what inhabit Babylon.

Matthew 13:3-4 says: "And he [Jesus] spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up." Let us look at some of the symbolism employed in this prophetic parable. *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* actually says "*the sower*" instead of "*a sower.*" Matthew 13:37 tells us this is "the Son of man," who is Jesus (Matthew 16:13). Luke 8:11 tells us what the seed is: "the word of God." So, Christ faithfully sowed the Word of God. Matthew 13:4 goes on to say that "some seeds fell by the way side." Proverbs 14:12 tells us, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The way of religion seems right; that is the "way side" ground.

Matthew 13: 4 lets us know that "the fowls came and devoured them up." Verse 19 explains what these "fowls" are: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked *one* [the word *one* is italicized, it is not in the original; therefore, the 'wicked' are plural, just as the word 'fowls' are in verse 4], and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." Who are "the fowls," or "the wicked"? Psalm 50:16-17 says: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." The "fowls" are false preachers, false prophets, and false religious leaders, those who will not take the truth.

Let me give you an example of exactly what Jesus was talking about. At a funeral service of a dear saint of God, a man of God sowed the seed by preaching the Word. In the audience, there was someone who was involved in religion. The seed disturbed and troubled him, because the message was doing its work. Afterward, he went to his pastor in false religion and said: "I was up to that funeral, and the Church of God preacher said you must live holy. Now, I've been taught all of my life that nobody can live holy; all sin more or less everyday." The seed disturbed his ground, but he went back to the way of religion. So, the fowl told him: "Oh, don't let that bother you. There is none righteous, no not one." The fowl snatched that seed and took it away.

These "**fowls**," false preachers, are the ones who are being gathered with the enemies of truth in our text. They inhabit Babylon. They eat the "**flesh**." They feed on fleshly, man-made teachings, not the true sayings of God provided at the marriage supper. They will not respond to the call of truth. The message sends them to their own table. However, the Gospel will not leave them untouched. Psalm 69:22 states, "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap." Jeremiah 50:16 says, "Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land." When people will not take the truth, it will send them back to their own land with people of kindred spirits. Psalm 106:15 says that God "gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

The gathering in our text takes in all of the false prophets and dishonest leaders who will not take truth. "Every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2) is what comprises the army that opposes truth in Revelation 19:19. This again vividly portrays there are only two positions in which to stand. As we move toward the end of time, the line of demarcation will be more clearly visible. You will either be part of the true Church of God or part of the eighth beast.

In **verse 18** of our Scripture text, the picture of "**eat the flesh**," in overview, is imagery drawn from the Old Testament. It represents the results of the judgments of God. It portrays what is left for a people to partake of when they have refused to yield to the will of God. Ezekiel 39:17-21 tells us: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty . . . Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men [pretty much the same expressions as in our text], and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them."

Isaiah 49:24-26 says: "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away [the honest hearts who respond to the message will get loose from Babylonian captivity], and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee [the dishonest, sectish leaders] with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."

Zephaniah 1:7-8 tells us: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel." They will not put on Christ's apparel; they want to wear their "own apparel" (Isaiah 4:1). They have exalted positions in false religion. Those are the ones who are being called to this "**supper**"; they are the ones who are going to eat "**the flesh**."

In **verse 18** of our text, notice that each of these items is the "**flesh of**" men, with the exception of "**horses**," because they denote a partaking of a militant campaign. Remember, we are dealing in symbolism. This is not literal cannibalism; it is a spiritual portrayal. In John 6:51 Jesus said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jesus equated His "flesh" with bread. Verses 52-54 state: "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat [they were literalists, just as false religion today]? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." Jesus was talking about eating the Word because John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh." Jesus went on to say in verse 63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [or makes alive]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Christ's flesh is also referred to as "bread" (John 6:51), and it is the Word of God (John 1:14). Likewise, the "**flesh**" in **verse 18** of our Scripture text is talking about the Word, in some form. Matthew 16:6-7 says: "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread [thinking literally]." Jesus had to remind them how He fed the multitudes. Then in verse 12 they understood that they were to beware of "the doctrine" not "the leaven" of bread. False doctrine, or the misrepresented Word of God, is the "**flesh**" that our text talks about—man-made teachings.

In 2 Peter 3:16-17 Peter said: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [*wresting* means twisting, turning, getting it to say something it is not designed to say], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Wrestling the Scriptures is the error of the wicked. The wicked, or "**the fowls**," devour the seed. They confuse it, convolute it, and mix corruption in it. It dupes and deceives and misleads the masses.

When we look a little further in our text, it talks about "**the flesh of kings . . . of captains, and . . . of mighty men**." There are variations of false doctrines and teachings that they feed themselves on in Babylon. Many of them are highly exalted among men; that is why they are denoted as "**the flesh of kings**" and "**captains**" and "**mighty men**." However, they are all eating at the same trough! Whether it comes from "kings . . . captains" or "mighty men," the common element is that it is all of "**the flesh**." It is all, as Galatians 1:7 declares, "some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

The "**supper**" in our text consists of corrupt bread, or the corrupted Word of God (the many false doctrines). Isaiah 4:1 tells us, "And in that day [the Gospel Day] seven women [false religion in every age] shall take hold of one man [Jesus Christ], saying, We will eat our own bread . . ." False religion wants a "profession," but it does not want a "possession." They want to eat their own doctrine, but it is corrupt. Hosea 4:6-10 states: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD."

These people did not want to walk in the light; they did not want to take the message. The Protestant Era and the Anderson Movement both rejected knowledge. They did not want any more light and understanding; they felt they had attained. They thought they had it all. So they sat down on it, and when that occurred, they lost what they had. When light kept progressing, they were left in darkness (John 12:35). As they "increased," or grew bigger and more successful, "so they sinned against" God. Then they ate up the "sin," or the false doctrine. Corrupt teachings do not produce holiness, victory, or a separate and distinct people.

Hosea 10:13 states, "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity [that immutable moral law in Galatians 6:7]; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." Their bread, their "**flesh**," or their "**supper**" consists of "lies." The "**mighty men**" in Babylon teach things that allow people to have their own way. The teachings gratify the selfish interests of "**the flesh**." That is why Babylon is growing by exponential numbers.

Isaiah 28:15 says, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." They have made an agreement: they have learned the catechism or they have been christened or they have been confirmed or they have been baptized. As long as they have gone through some religious act, they think that they are all right, because a "**fowl**" has fed that to them. They do not think that they have to be the least bit concerned with hell. They have a refuge of lies.

These people are hiding behind so many falsehoods. If you ask them if they have been saved, they might say, "I was baptized when I was eight years old" or "I joined the church" or "I shook the preacher's hand." However, God is faithful. In our day the Sun is shining in His strength, sevenfold. God is showing people the truth of His Word and the moves they need to make. If they reject that knowledge, they are going to end up taking in sin, eating the lies that are being produced.

Isaiah 53:6 tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." The root of sin is selfishness, and false religion is backed by "spirits of devils" (Revelation 16:14) that appeals to selfish, fleshly desires. The very first peril listed in 2 Timothy 3:2 is this: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves." Then, every other one of the things enumerated is an outgrowth of selfishness. These people do not want to submit to God's way. Second Peter 2:10 tells us they despise the government that God has put in place, because "Presumptuous are they, selfwilled." They want their own way. That is why people shop for religion as they do for cereal, to pick the

brand they like, the one that tastes good to them.

Jeremiah 2:13 says, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." There are only two choices: the fountain of living waters (God's way) or broken cisterns (man-made substitutes). Our text makes that very clear. There are only two gatherings taking place. We either eat "the true sayings of God" (Revelation 19:9), or we "**eat the flesh,**" the corrupted Word. Galatians 1:6 and 2 Corinthians 11:4 both call it "another gospel," which is a perverted Gospel. The true Gospel produces victorious living, and the others produce dismal, deceived defeat with a religious profession. Jesus admonished in John 8:31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." *The Amplified Bible* renders it, "If you abide in My word (hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them), you are truly My disciples." May God help us to continue in His Word so we will not be gathered into the wrong camp.

CHAPTER NINETEEN—PART SIX

The Foes, the Fight, and the Finale

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

A Consolidation of Evil Foes

The closing verses of Chapter 19, the concluding portion of Series Five, are presenting the conditions at the end of this Gospel Day, the end of human history. We have already found that in the seventh-and-final period of time, there are only two gatherings taking place. Revelation 19:9 portrays the first gathering: "unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Then in verses 17-18 there is another gathering, "unto the supper of the great God," where they "eat the flesh." In **verse 19** of our text, we find that the second gathering takes on a more sinister tone. They are not just merely gathering together; there is a purpose behind their gathering. It is **"to make war."** As we begin to consider this passage of Scripture text, the first thing that we see is a reiteration of the unique nature of Series Five. Three of the eight chapters speak of this nefarious gathering. Revelation 16:13-14 speaks of "unclean spirits" gathering a people together. Revelation 17:11 tells of the eighth beast, which is an amalgamation (or gathering) of all of the foes of God's people throughout the ages. Then our text (**Chapter 19**) shows this gathering. We are in a time of gathering. Even Revelation, Chapter 20, which is a totally different series, mentions this gathering. Christ's foes were not successful individually. Thus, as time prepares to reel into eternity, the enemy of souls is working to throw everything he can against truth. He is working to consolidate an axis of evil.

The first thing we see portrayed in our text is the consolidation of the foes. It is a most deceitful and deceptive consolidation. God is amassing His people together on the Word of God, because true Bible unity is based on truth. Likewise, the enemy, being the counterfeiter that he is, has disguised his consolidation and made it appear to be a divine move. You hear thoughts being raised, such as: "Shouldn't we all get together? Wouldn't it be better just to all get along?" On the surface, those sound like palatable thoughts. When Satan tempted Jesus in Matthew 4:3, he said, in so many words, "Well, if You are hungry, just command that these stones be made bread." That sounded reasonable, but it was from the devil. Any unity that requires you to compromise truth is a false, devilish unity!

Let us identify some of the components of this consolidation. **Verse 19** of our text speaks of **"the beast,"** which is the religious system of Roman Catholicism (Revelation 13:1-2). **Verse 19** speaks of **"the kings of the earth."** The **"earth"** is a symbol of Protestantism (Revelation 13:11), and the **"kings of the earth"** represent the heads of the various sectarian organizations. In **verse 20** this system of Protestantism is referred to as **"the false prophet,"** as it was in Revelation 16:13. Then **verse 19** mentions **"their armies."** These **"armies"** are comprised of those who are following the **"beast"** (papalism), those who are in false religion (or **"the false prophet";** Protestantism), those **"that had received the mark of the beast"** (the indoctrination), and those **"that worshipped his image."**

In **verses 19-20** the same truth is portrayed that we saw depicted in Revelation 16:14, Revelation 17:11, and Revelation 20:7-8. It is an amalgamation of the forces of false religion. We must remember that all false religion is backed by devilish spirits. Those spirits are working for a common cause: to fight truth. We are past the age of sectism where firm denominational walls were between organizations. The enemy is working more deceitfully than he worked in times past. We are now embroiled in the age of ecumenicalism. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines the word *ecumenical* in this manner: "Its origin is from the Greek word *oikumenikos*, and it means 'of or from the whole world.'" Another scholar defines *ecumenical* as "the whole inhabited earth." *Ecumenism*, according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, means "the principles or practice of promoting cooperation among differing religious faiths." This ecumenical move takes in false religion "from the whole world."

What is false religion's common bond? How can such a diversified group come together with any cohesion? What

are they being brought together for? Our Scripture text says that they are **"gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse."** They are **"gathered"** to fight against Christ. Fighting against truth is not difficult to understand. If you have ever been in a room with several people from different religious orders and you mention living holy and being a separate and distinct people, watch how they gang up on you. One might be in papalism and the other one in Protestantism, but when truth comes, watch how they will lock arms and walk in lockstep to fight against it.

False religion is **"gathered together to make war."** They are working through state and local ministerial associations, local Gospel sings, singspirations, and many other activities to promote this false union and to support the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. The eighth beast is the World Council of Churches! It is a false union of the enemies of Christ with a common bond of fighting Christ, and there are those who, although not official members of this body, have imbibed its ecumenical spirit and operate in the same manner.

Each of the texts that show the amalgamation of false religion reveals the common cause as going into a fevered conflict against truth. In Brother F. G. Smith's book *The Revelation Explained*, Chapter 19, page 385, he wrote, commenting on our text, "They were gathered together for the purpose of overthrowing the Church of God and anticipated a complete victory in the Battle of Armageddon." They were not only consolidated for the purpose of eating the flesh, the false doctrines perpetrated by the various organizations, but also **"to make war."**

Revelation 16:16 tells us where they were gathered: "into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." We studied this extensively when we studied Chapter 16. This is a symbolic expression, drawn from Hebrew imagery. There is not going to be a literal battle in a thirteen-acre site in the Middle East, the place where many decisive battles were fought. In the Revelation the battle of Armageddon is a symbolic picture of a decisive spiritual battle. We are engaged in spiritual warfare today, but it will intensify until it culminates in a final, decisive battle.

Verse 20 of our text speaks of **"the false prophet** [the religious system of Protestantism] **that wrought miracles."** Those were not true miracles, because it goes on to say **"with which he deceived,"** and truth does not deceive. Speaking of the Protestant beast, Revelation 13:13-14 says: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." The same Greek word is rendered in verse 13 as "wonders" and in verse 14 as "miracles." Again, these were not true miracles, but they were deceptive works.

In the sight of people who did not have an understanding of truth, the "wonders" looked to be other than they were. Verse 13 says that "he maketh fire come down from heaven"; that is what Elijah, the true prophet, did. Protestantism is a **"false prophet."** It has tried to deceive people into thinking that it was a true religion. These "wonders" were *lying* wonders." The devil cannot give life, he cannot heal, and he cannot work miracles. It is all smoke and mirrors and deceptions. Second Thessalonians 2:9 says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." The Amplified Bible says, ". . . with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels—[all of them] lying wonders."

"Them That Worshipped His Image"

Notice the last component that comprised the consolidation mentioned in our text: **"them that worshipped his image."** This is not speaking of Protestantism. Our text already mentioned in **verse 20 "the false prophet"** (the system of Protestantism) and those who comprised it, **"them that had received the mark of the beast,"** or the indoctrination. The last one mentioned is worthy of special consideration. It is a portrayal of the product of the seventh-seal apostasy. It is referring to the people who profess to be Church of God people, but who have defected from truth and become an enemy of Christ. We not only are facing papalism and Protestantism, but we are also facing "Church of Godism."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul said, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." The "mystery of iniquity" that brought about the morning-time apostasy was already working when Paul wrote that verse. It caused a "falling away" (verse 3). Ones defected from truth, and that gave rise to a beast. Ecclesiastes 1:9 lets us know that "there is no new thing under the sun." That same spirit is causing an apostasy now in the seventh seal; the "mystery of iniquity" is causing a falling away among many. They are defecting from truth, and they are helping another beast to arise, the eighth beast.

What does the "mystery of iniquity" actually refer to? In The Amplified Bible 2 Thessalonians 2:7 says, "For the mystery of lawlessness (that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority) is already at work in the world." Third John 9 says, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." Diotrephes was rebellious against constituted authority. The Apostle John, the one who leaned on Jesus' breast, was banished to the Isle of Patmos and received the glorious Revelation and the one who was the only one of the original Apostles still living when he came back from Patmos. Diotrephes was so arrogant that he would not receive him. Verse 10 continues, "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Talk about a rebellious, lawless person!

The spirit of lawlessness is working in our day. There is a move sweeping our land in some circles against pastoral authority. They think the church should be governed by an eldership or there should be a board of elders in their congregation. That is nothing more than a resurfacing of the "mystery of iniquity," that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority. In Revelation, Chapters 2-3, Jesus addressed every one of the seven letters to the pastor, not to an eldership, a board, trustees, deacons, or anyone else! God has an order in the church, but in too many places, people are rising up against that order. Jesus prophesied of an apostasy prior to the end. In Matthew 24:11-13 He said: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity [the same Greek word that is in 2 Thessalonians 2:7] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Because of iniquity, or rebellion against constituted authority, the love of many of God's people has waxed cold.

Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth . . ." He did not say that they did not *know* the truth; he said that they did not *love* the truth. We have to keep our love for truth fresh and vibrant. There are those who once shouted the aisles, praising God, but today they are spiritually cold. Their love has been affected, because iniquity abounded, and we are not immune to that. The enemy is working a deceitful work to bring that lawlessness into the spiritual realm. People rise up against pastors and say, "Well, that's just your idea; I've got mine." They believe everybody's opinion counts; so their board of elders take turns preaching. That type of theology is incorrect. I heard of one place that has two pastors, supposedly. One is pastor until 5:00 p.m. and then the other one starts. So, I guess you have to look at your watch to know who to call. God is not in that. He gives one man a burden for a congregation.

Second Thessalonians 2:11-12 tells us, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned." They will be "damned" because they are under a "strong delusion" that God sent. They have picked up an ecumenical spirit, but they still profess to be "Church of God." They no longer see God's people as separate and distinct. They associate with those who have an ecumenical spirit and comprise the eighth beast. What a terrible delusion! Notice that verse 11 says that they "believe *a* lie," one lie. What lie is it that they believe that makes them "damned"? It is this lie: they think they are right when they are wrong. You cannot help someone who thinks they are right; there is no hope for them as long as they continue to think they are right when they are wrong. That was the lie that Paul was speaking of. They think they are standing for truth, while they are enemies of truth. What a strong delusion!

The seventh-seal apostates have been moved to a position where they have "**worshipped his image**" (verse 20). Remember, the word "**image**" means "likeness." Many of them look like Babylon and act like Babylon. They have picked up Babylon's spirits. They have become just like every other opposing religious system. Some have aligned themselves with the Anderson Movement and other sectarian bodies; they have been gathered right into the open arms of the eighth beast. Oh, how it behooves us to make certain we keep a passionate love for the truth!

"The Fowls Were Filled With Their Flesh"

After **verse 20** of our text enumerated several foes, notice how it brought it down to "**these both**," right down to two. In reality, regardless of the many supposedly Christian religious positions ones may think they stand in, it is either papalism or Protestantism. The phrase "**these both**" is referring to "**the beast**" and "**the false prophet**." **Verses 20-21** of our Scripture text say: ". . . **These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse . . .**" Who is the "**remnant**?" Revelation 16:19 tells us that "Babylon" consists of "three parts" (paganism, papalism, and Protestantism). Two were mentioned in **verse 20** (papalism and Protestantism), leaving only paganism. The

"remnant" is referring to paganism. People may wonder where Islam fits in. It is part of paganism, the dragon. It has the same spirit that the dragon has: unbelief. It manifests the same type of deplorable behavior. In the morning time, the dragon motivated pagan Rome to oppose the morning-time church. If ones did not bow to Caesar or burn a pinch of incense to the pagan gods, they would be killed in a grisly way.

We see the same type of spirit in modern Islam today. **Verse 21** of our text tells us that **"the remnant were slain with the sword,"** the Word of God. Then it goes on to say that **"all the fowls were filled with their flesh."** Recall that **"the fowls"** represent the false ministry in Babylon, and they are also people who inhabit Babylon because of their teachings. Being **"filled with their flesh"** reminds me of the children of Israel in Numbers, Chapter 11. Verse 1 tells us that "when the people complained . . . the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled."

Verse 4 reads, "And the mixt multitude that was among them [the same thing we face] fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" They were lusting to have their flesh gratified; they wanted flesh to eat. Then verses 31-34 state: "And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered [a gathering] the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted."

Those people did not want what God provided; they wanted to gratify the flesh. That brought the judgment of God. So it is in our text. **Verse 21** tells us that **"all the fowls were filled with their flesh."** They would not take the truth; they wanted the **"flesh"** (man-made teachings and doctrines). So it produced judgment as well. Whose flesh is **"their flesh"**? What **"flesh"** were the **"fowls"** filled with? **"Their"** stands for **"the remnant,"** or paganism (**verse 21**). As we come down to the closing of this chapter, the closing of the Gospel Day of time, we find that in reality what they are being fed is paganism. In the end they will be shown for what they really are standing for: paganism and falsity!

The first beast (papalism) in Revelation 13:1-2 has the characteristics of the four heathen kingdoms in Daniel, Chapter 7. The leopard stands for the Grecian Empire, the bear is the Medio-Persian Empire, and the lion is Babylon, all heathendom. Verse 2 tells us that "the dragon [paganism] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Papalism is nothing more than paganism with a supposed Christian garb wrapped around it. Then Revelation 13:11 tells us that the Protestant beast "spake as a dragon." When this system began to teach, it was just as paganistic as the old dragon. Although there may be many different orders, societies, denominations, and sectarian religious systems, behind every bit of it is paganism. It is all produced by unbelief.

As time comes reeling to a close, screeching to a halt, all mankind will either be eating the truth or eating paganism and falsity. You are either for Christ or against Him. There are just two positions to stand in. As this Series concludes, it shows the decided defeat of Babylon, the whole allied amalgamation. The enemies of Christ and truth will be exposed, deposed, and forever defeated! The finale of the fight over the faith will conclude with the vindication of truth. **Verses 20-21** tell us: **"These both were cast alive into a lake of fire And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth."** This portrays victorious truth upheld by the Holy Spirit. We have every reason to be encouraged. Regardless of what the natural eye may see, truth will be triumphant in the end. "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8).

Epilogue

As we conclude this volume, it has been singularly unique in describing conditions only in the evening time, the sixth-seal and seventh-seal periods of time. It has revealed the forces of the foes, the fight over the faith, and the fevered finale. These closing verses should serve to both sober us, because of the subtlety of Satan to attempt to gather us to oppose Christ and truth, and also to cause us to be encouraged and filled with praise. There has been a recurrent theme in the closing chapters of this volume, particularly Chapters 16, 17, and 19. Each of these portrays that the forces of the enemy are working "to gather" to foment "the battle of that great day" (Revelation 16:14). Chapters 17 and 19 speak of "these shall make war" (17:14) and "gathered to gather to make war" (19:19).

It is not the contest of the closing portion of the Gospel Day that is special or spectacular, it is the faith and the finale: "These shall make war with the *Lamb*, and *the Lamb shall* over come them." In our consideration of Chapter 17, we studied how this victory occurs, but I think it bears repeating that this *all* occurs while time is yet standing and Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This victory occurs in time, not eternity. Before time reels into eternity, the cause of Christ and truth and the church representing that truth will be vindicated and victorious! The overcoming power of the Lamb will be exhibited through the overcomers, the body of Christ, the Church of the Living God! Let us cry as the Apostle Paul did in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ . . ." Truth will be triumphant! We end this volume, as the Gospel Day ends, with victory and praise! "Be of good cheer!"