

The Days
of the
Seventh
Angel

Book 6: The Seven Laments

Study Notes
on the

Book of Revelation

by

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Volume 6 (of seven volumes)

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The reason for the use of an older version is two-fold: The first reason for the author, at least; is lifetime familiarity. The second is that the *King James Version* is very “literal,” and therefore seems to honor more consistently than some, word uniqueness, something especially important in the study of the *Apocalypse*. Any version, however, can be used to profit in this study.

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Introduction

This is the sixth volume of a series of studies on the book of Revelation. If the reader is unacquainted with the first books a few recommendations are necessary from the author's perspective before one enters into this study. It is the hope of the author, of course, that any reader will start with the first volume, inasmuch as it lays the foundation for positions that are established in the subsequent studies. Order in studying the Revelation is very important. But if this specified order cannot be observed I would like to offer a few comments.

First is that this is not a professional work, nor does it pretend to be. Human error will often find its way into this document. For these I indulge the reader's patience as the editing procedure continues.

Second, this is not intended to be a commentary on every verse or topic in the book of Revelation. The purpose of this writing as stated at the outset is quite different than this. The focus of these pages is not to be a comprehensive commentary, in that many others have done a more exhaustive and better job of that already. *The aim is to concentrate on troublesome passages or concepts that in the author's opinion are overlooked by other commentators or that are missed by many students of the book.*

Third, this book is not written with the general public in mind. Anyone is more than welcome to examine the following pages, but

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this work is written primarily to Seventh-day Adventist Christians who I believe need to have a better self-understanding of the awesome messages to found in the last-day book of Revelation.

Reading the following pages presupposes also an understanding of the principles of proper prophetic interpretation (hermeneutics) covered in the original books. A full treatment is included later in this volume. If the reader is not familiar with the other volumes, particularly the beginning ones, he or she is strongly encouraged to read these first before reading further in this book.

May God prepare us all to understand the meaning of the times in which we live, and to understand the message of prophecy. The days are here when the voice of the seventh angel will be heard. His trumpet is about to sound, when the mystery of God will be finished as he has declared by his servants, the prophets. Babylon has now reached to her prophetic maturity. It is time to “come out of her, my people.” The fulfillment of the things in this very prophecy will come “quickly” and “suddenly” upon us and upon the world. We must prepare to meet the Bridegroom. Let us go at once to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Revelation 17----What it Meant to First Century Christians

The problem with so many interpreters of the book of Revelation is their obstinate insistence upon only one system of interpretation (i.e. preterism, futurism, historicism, idealism, etc.). The claim thus hailed and proudly defended is that one particular track, whichever is favored, must be held to unflinchingly in order to be consistent. But this so effectively blocks them into one narrow alley that they are sometimes blinded to the full significance of the passage. Of no passage, perhaps, is this truer than the passage---Revelation, chapter 17.

Being myself, for all practical purposes an historicist, I would naturally make every effort to see Revelation 17 exclusively as a demonstration of unfolding events over the entire Christian dispensation, or at least from the time of Daniel until today. First, I believe this to be essentially true. However, I would like to tender the case that Revelation 17 cannot be understood effectively---or at least completely with one limited viewpoint. Historicism, at least in a restrictive sense is not enough.

While the charge that this gives the prophecy an ambiguous plurality, or a wax-nose, is hereby totally expected, I nevertheless ask the reader to wait out the jury on this matter. Let us attempt to explain in the pages following how all the true modes of interpretation might be explained consistently as they are applied to this famous and difficult passage.

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When we speak of “futurism,” I simply mean it in the purest sense; that some prophecies have an eschatological fulfillment. I do not mean what is generally known as Futurism according to the popular “dispensational” scheme. Likewise, when speaking here of preterism I am not necessarily speaking of viewpoints found in most critical works on the subject, or the popular and almost secular genre of commentary; that teach that prophecy in its predictive or even inspired element is virtually impossible. As a result, prophecy is thereby limited to being merely a description of events contemporary or accomplished in the writer’s time. What we wish to propose is that true preterism would recognize that some of the things written in the Revelation were not for the future ONLY, but that they had meaningful and immediate application in the days in which they were written---such as the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Lastly, in speaking of historicism in the *restrictive* sense, we are referring to prevalent idea among historicist interpreters that prophecy can have only one valid fulfillment. This is definitely too narrow, and puts God along with His purposes in giving the prophecy, in much too small a box.

Four Walls, Four Windows

Suppose that you are staying in a simple square house with four outside walls. Unfortunately, you are confined to your quarters and so do not go outside much. Now it happens that you are very interested in the flight and habits of geese as they fly south for the winter. Old-timers from your area tell you that every fall as these geese go south they typically follow a certain routine. You wonder if it is really true and you would like to verify it and see it for yourself.

The geese they report are first spotted coming from the north, usually at sunset, flying in a certain order. Then, when they get near your farm some circle and land in a pond west of the house.

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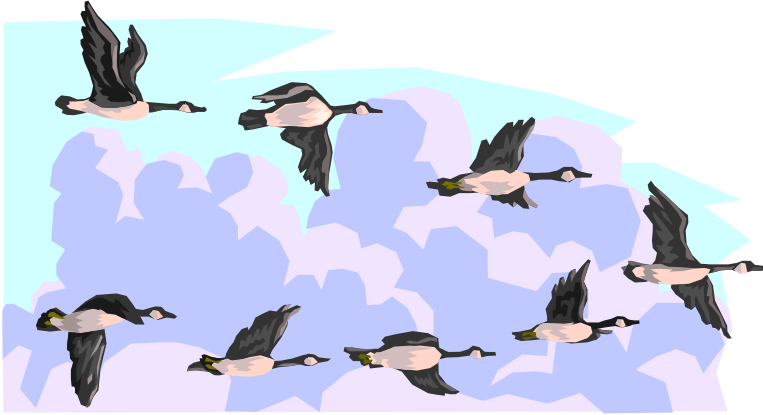
However, *other* geese split off and land at another pond east of your house. A third group do not stop where the others do at all, but continue right over your house and land in a field farther south of your house. After several hours of feeding, resting, perhaps even squabbling among themselves, new lead geese are elected by the flock, and the groups finally conjoin above your house the next morning at dawn, and fly off toward the southern horizon.

Now to get a complete and accurate picture of all these movements and happenings you need to be able to watch these geese from several vantage points or at least the right vantage point. But let us say you are confined to your house.

Now if you stay at only one window and look out of it, how will you watch the full spectacle of these geese and what happens to them? If you choose only a window toward the North you will no doubt see the geese coming. This fits part of the description that the old-timers told you. But as soon as they come overhead you can no longer see what happens. They may first disperse to various locales, engage in the typical activities, change formations, and so on. You might even assume, (if you are hard of hearing!), that the story is effectively over, or that all the birds passed on by to the South. You might think what *you saw* was the significant part of the story. Or you might determine that what the older farmers told you then was only partly true. You can only be sure of the portion that you verified with your own eyes out that first window.

This is much the position of the avowed Preterist. He looks at the beginning of the whole scene of history, but his faithless bias allows him only to accept the initial version of the story. Real prophecy is not possible, he says. The rest of the activity, which most certainly will unfold, becomes to him as mere fancy or general ambiguity. He has to explain it according to his limited view. And we purport because of this he will never find complete resolution.

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Now as an “exclusive” historicist, let us say, you take up a position that tries to see in a more linear fashion. This can be represented as one of the “side” windows of the house (East, of course!). You are not inclined to focus upon the approach of the geese in the first window on the North. You are more interested in the unfolding of events, and how it affects your current world. Therefore, though confined to your house you might even attempt to have a somewhat comprehensive view. But you simply cannot see all events predicted by the neighbor farmers from your eastern window. You

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see the arrival of some of the geese. You watch them closely, and see the activities of the geese at the pond on your side of the house. But if you didn't initially notice carefully enough the developments out the first window and above you, you may have missed the fact that other groups of geese went to the West and others passed on to the South. But through the day, you watch intently, and catalogue mentally every possible detail in the Eastern direction. You are so busy seeing all the action out your small window that you perhaps miss important details from the past, and the future that would inform you more comprehensively as to the phenomenon before you. You may be at the best central point in which to view *most* of the action, but being preoccupied with what happens in your own purview, you tend to look at the scene as totally directed toward your current world. And it is slightly confusing because while many details make perfect sense and relate to the old-timers story, others *do not* because you are not looking out all windows at once.

Now, if you are the *idealist*, or the philosophical reader seeing only broad spiritual lessons in things, you might be represented as looking out another window on the West. You are not interested in the fact that there have become now three flocks of geese coming out of the North, or that they are making very definite movements and interactions and changes. In fact, you may become so blinded by the beauty of the setting sun that you don't really care about this limited view or inadequate information. Keeping track of the geese is too much trouble. You are simply so mesmerized by the beauty of the scene and the great spiritual morals you can draw from it that you refuse to recognize the real things taking place around you in all directions that could help you understand your purpose or destiny. You explain and spiritualize about the meaning of what you see as if it were only a passing dream.

Now as a future looking (only) interpreter, you might tend to look out *only* at the Southern window. You ignore the accurate testimony of history, the circling, the lead changes, the splintering of the

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groups of geese, and so on. You don't care to recognize where the geese you see in the field came from. You think your picture is complete enough, or will be in time. You didn't look out the other windows. Your attempt to understand what is about to take place will not be properly understood except in certain aspects. It will in some ways equate with the old-timers description but never entirely. You are looking off into the endless Southern horizon waiting for certain things to happen that may have already happened or are even now happening right over your head. The future, uninformed by the past types, will never make complete sense to you then as the drama unfolds. You really need to look back through the history of the whole scene to recognize and understand correctly the whole phenomenon transpiring before you.

Of course, the whole point of this contrived and imperfect story is that no one will understand the whole saga of prophecy unless they carefully look out all the windows. The true interpreter must, by necessity, live in a lookout on top of the house where he can see every way. In fact, he needs to leave the limited confines of his house. He needs to shed the cloistering effect of those walls, climb the nearby hill and view with fascination the entire drama. I suggest that only when this is done will the description from the prophets of old make complete sense and include all the data.

Only what I might term a "comprehensive" historicist will see the entire picture correctly. He not only notes what is happening, but also what has happened, and what will happen. Neither will the true historicist insist that prophecy can have only one valid fulfillment. By placing this absurd wall about the prophecy he places limits upon God's comprehensive purposes in giving and directing the prophecy to every age. While there must be some restrictions to keep one discipline or another from manufacturing endless opinions and fulfillments, an understanding is available and possible which generally will satisfy the demands of the prophecy.

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How John's Contemporaries Looked at Revelation 17

Hard-line historicists, as well as those who see prophecy exclusively in terms of the future, are especially faced with challenging difficulties in the passage in question. The interpreter who holds that the import of Revelation 17 has been completely fulfilled in events of the past--- such as those of the Roman Empire in the first century AD--- have enigmas as well.

For instance if one is inclined to a *futuristic* mode only, we read in Rev. 17:10 that there are seven kings, five kings are fallen, one exists at the present, and another short-lived one will come in the future. If these are literal kings, with a human age limit, it is necessary to suppose that much of what is being described would have to happen (according to this verse) in a time somewhat contemporary to the writing of the Apocalypse. Historically, if the term "kings" means "kingdoms," it is possible to work out some scheme, but this still requires that John the writer lived in the same political kingdom as we do some 2,000 years later. This is hard to explain. If John was living in the time of the sixth kingdom, then what kingdoms account for the previous six? The prophecy of Daniel 7, from which the figure of the seven-headed beast originally comes, gives us clearly four kingdoms, so John was in that case living in the fourth. The fourth kingdom, Rome, changes into another "kingdom" perhaps, in the form of papal Rome centuries later. But this could only be the fifth. Finally, if we have advanced now to the time of the seventh kingdom it can hardly be because it continues only a short space. Therefore the sixth kingdom is found in both John's day and ours.

These anomalies are only the beginning of what could form many arguments to require that the prophecy of Revelation 17 has to have had at least had some contemporary meaning for the early Christian century. There has to have been a then-current application for this

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prophecy. This is why John is told that he is being shown the things “which are” AND “the things which must take place after this.”

But preterists, idealists, futurists, and historicists all make crucial mistakes in reckoning these passages. Let us attempt to harmonize these one by one and hopefully it will be seen that this tremendous prophecy can be understood when all legitimate modes of interpretation are properly represented.

Seven Heads

First let us discuss the whole problem of the seven heads.

First, we know that these seven heads are successive, at least to a degree. This is proven by the expression: “five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come.” Second the number seven is particularly used to demonstrate “succession” over “time.” The seven days of the week, the sabbatical years and jubilee cycles, all are examples of judgment or opportunity over probationary and earthly “time.”

Historical expositors over and over again try to apply these seven heads as seven successive world kingdoms.

Examples are:

1. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Papal Rome (Uriah Smith, etc.)
2. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Papal Rome, United States, Anti-Christ Alliance
3. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Papal Rome, Communism, Anti-Christ Power (or U.S., or some other last day institution).

There are at least two problems with these examples:

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Two Problems

1. The interpretation ignores Daniel 2 and other prophecies which see no worldly imperial power past Rome.
2. The interpretation ignores the fact that Rev. 17 does not say that the seven heads are seven successive kingdoms, but that they are rather “kings.”

Problem #1

The prophecy of Daniel 2 is one of the clearest and most easily understood prophecies of the Bible. It is the ABC of Bible prophecy. Its general outline is very broad in scope. But it has more detail and appropriateness than is generally realized.

In summary, Daniel 2 outlines the history of nations from the time of the neo-Babylonian empire to the *eschaton*. It starts with the Babylon’s head of gold, moves on down to the two arms and breast; Media and Persia; the belly and thighs of brass, Greece; and on to the obvious two-legged phenomenon of eastern and western Rome. These bodily representations largely present themselves broadly proportionate to the duration of their dominance. The long legs of Rome lasted for many centuries.

The vision focuses on the coming *eschaton*. But significant is the observation emphasized in the prophecy that there are *divided* feet and toes (10?) of iron and clay. Now, what is said of these toes—made part of iron and part of clay—is this one fact: “They shall not cleave one to another.” The lesson is that after Rome THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE GLOBAL OR WORLD POWER!! Then why do expositors insist on making the seven heads last until the *eschaton*? They invent philosophical ideologies and make them to stand in as “nations” (i.e. “communism” or “atheism” or “anti-christ.” Etc.). Now the ten horns do continue more distinctly down through history and reoccur actively in the prophecies, as we shall see, but the seven

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heads are largely exhausted as visible and active contemporary powers even by the time of the apostles as we also will observe.

It is therefore inconsistent to teach that there are fifth, sixth, and seventh world powers coming down to our age when prophecy and history tells us just the opposite.

Problem #2

In addition, the vision of Revelation 17 does not clearly equivocate that the seven heads are successive “kingdoms” over the entire history until recent centuries. Daniel, and then John (thinking of the middle ages; Rev. 12, 13), and now John again in Rev. 17 (*eschaton*), both see basically the same relatively unchanged beast. He has seven heads in John’s day. Ten horns in John’s day. Four great powers had come by John’s day and these same ones are represented in the beast of Revelation 13. No new great empires are represented. In the later development of the horns and the crowns placed on them, and in the appearance of a rider on the beast is where the only anomalies lie. As time progresses, the horns gather to themselves crowns, or dynastic kingships. But otherwise there is little substantive change.

What happens is that the great and terrible beast metamorphoses as history transpires. First it is a lion. But with Persia it takes on characteristic bear features. Then with Greece comes the leopard-like look and spots. Then by the time Rome comes on the scene the beast is quite bizarre having seven heads. Then out of these heads, already existent, EMERGE horns. Then other changes take place: three of these horns are plucked out by the roots and another bold horn comes forth. This same horn persecutes God’s saints and lasts for 1260 years.

So far the metamorphosis occurs within the body of the beast (world powers in opposition to God). But with the appearance of the great

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harlot a certain discontinuity is evident from all that has gone before. She is not “attached” to the beast and she does not emerge from the “history” beast. She is supported by it and works in league with it, though. This distinctive phenomenon will receive further comment a little later.

Seven Heads Already Established By The Beginning of the Christian Era

Therefore we are led to the important observation that the seven heads are not necessarily to be expected to supply “kingdoms” beyond the four the book of Daniel clearly identifies.

As John Paulien astutely observes, there are seven heads accounted for in Daniel 7 and forward. Babylon supplies one head, Persia supplies one head, Greece supplies four heads, and Rome supplies the final and seventh head. (Cf. Daniel). Therefore the beast is complete in terms of heads by the time John writes the Revelation. This fact will be important to carefully observe as we continue.

Varied Uses of the Conjunction “kai.”

So much depends on proper translation of the original text. It is nearly impossible to interpret such difficult passages as Rev. 17 without knowledge of the original language. Translators indeed must make a choice on how to translate a text. But their choice must not always be accepted as the final word, especially when other possibilities are possible grammatically and interpretively.

Therefore we have a translation given us, which says of the ten horns: “And the ten horns are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet.” This commits the interpretation to a future fulfillment ONLY. But “kai” can also be translated “even” and “also.” Some translators so translate “kai” in verses next to this one,

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but not this one. The nuance that is chosen can make an incredible difference in interpretive possibilities.

For instance, in this case, if we translate the verse as follows (“also” rather than “and”) and we will see a significant difference:

“*Also* the ten horns are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet.”

The above translation represents the slightest of change in wording yet a serious difference in how we might look at the passage. What this now admits into consideration is that even at the time that the angel interprets to John the vision that the carefully worded statement demands a dual application. If the ten horns are also ten kings that have received no kingdom as yet, it necessarily implies that there are in addition ten contemporary kings! The angel is telling us that this passage can be looked at either of two ways: The ten horns are ten kings AND they are also used to represent ten kings which ARE YET TO COME or are going to continue.

This understanding of the variant translation of key conjunctive words such as “kai” is very important, therefore, to the entire case.

Understanding the Passage in the Light of the Days of the Apostles

With the above considerations let us examine how the prophecy was fulfilled to the early apostles and to the post “Christ-event” saints.

Many today tend to look at these passages through “history-colored glasses” and not consider adequately how matters would have appeared to the people in the days the Revelation was given.

What many expositors do is jump initially to the city of Rome as the primary fulfillment of apocalyptic Babylon. They forget that the

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early Christians were not “Roman Christians” but rather “Judeo-Christians.” The center of apocalyptic hopes and historical Yahwistic religion was not the city of Rome, but rather the city of Jerusalem.

Peter sends greetings from the saints in “Babylon.” (1 Peter 5:13) But where was this “Babylon?” Peter was a Jewish apostle, and his work largely centered in Palestine and its environs. Daniel’s prophecies focused on the disposition of the Jewish state and the Jewish people. Babylon in any early Christian’s eyes would have been Jerusalem, not Rome.

Jerusalem fits the faithless harlot, the proud and solicitous whore described in Revelation 17. In prophecy a woman represents a church or nation. The church of God was at that time not centered in Rome but in Jerusalem, which God had made to be the center of the nations and to rule “spiritually” over the world. This is largely the theme of the entire prophetic message of the Old Testament. God wanted Jerusalem to be a faithful woman, drawing the wealth of kings and nations to Palestine, to be a light to the Gentiles, and to be the moral center of the world. But alas, over and over, she instead became a wanton and evil harlot; selling and despising the beauty and glory God had given her. She was in the final outcome to be destroyed by the very ones she had made illegitimate alliance to. She became lost in idolatry and unfaithfulness to her true husband, the Lord of Hosts. This happened in the Old Testament era and was happening again.

Says Isaiah, “How the faithful city has become a harlot!” (1:21) There are numerous passages assigning adulterous faithlessness and idolatry to Jerusalem.

But one might object on the basis of other anomalies in the 17th chapter. Isn’t Rome the city that is on seven hills, etc?

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The answer is yes, Rome is. But Rome is not the only city known for sitting on seven hills.

The writer, Ellen White, makes an interesting observation in her very first vision, which is indicative to me that she was given information whose veracity is amazing and could hardly have been invented by her. In her vision she writes of the New Jerusalem. Ahead she sees Mt. Zion, surrounded by **seven** other mountains. Children are seen flying to these and picking the never-fading flowers (EW 18).

Jerusalem too was believed to be built on seven hills. Another evidence of this is the word “Zion.” Now lexically, the word “zion” probably means barren or bald. But *zion* is also a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and since in Hebrew letters are also numbers, *zion* is the number seven. In fact the digit appears in shape very much like the number seven. Mt. Zion would therefore be interpreted as the “mountain of seven” or “the mountain in the midst of seven.”

Seven mountains pertaining to Jerusalem are vaguely referred to in apocalyptic and pseudepigraphal writings: (research pending)

What About the Ten Horns and the Seven Heads?

Remember that Daniel’s beast had ten horns. Horns are symbols for powers or governments, and ten is a symbolic number for political completeness and fullness. The Roman state is first represented by this beast with the seven heads and ten horns. It has seven heads because it is the result and maturation of the kingdoms that have gone before it and out of which it springs forth. Rome itself was the cumulative product of the glory of Babylon, the prowess of Persia, and the Hellenistic culture of Greece. It was an empire, the collation of numerous nations and people bound together by the *Pax Romana*.

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Jerusalem and Judea were not a “corporal” part of the Roman Empire itself, but by the time of Christ (and even before) it was governed and supported by Rome and was under the auspices of the empire. So naturally it would not be represented in Judeo-Christian thought as a “horn” growing out of the Roman organism. It was somewhat separate. Yet it had commercial and political intercourse with the Roman state. It had Roman procurators and governors at times. Even the Herodian line of kings were puppets of Rome, and the alliances thus formed were illegitimate and mercenary. The woman riding the beast (Roman state) is quite appropriate therefore for this illicit affair that eventually turns very sour. Even Jesus’ tormentors, though zealous Jewish subjects who hated Rome, validated their illicit alliance with the Roman state when they said, “We have no king but Caesar.” It was a love/hate relationship, well described in the story of Revelation 17.

Bible prophecy, though, is most interested in how God’s people fare and how his purposes are being wrought out for them. Thus secular powers are only mentioned because they impact and affect the welfare of God’s people on earth. This is another argument that the woman, though not a “part of the beast” yet being in relationship with it, is a very good representation of Jerusalem and the (unfaithful) Jewish state.

The seven mountains are ALSO seven “kings.” Commentators offer a complete jungle of meanings for this description. But they can never find a decent end to the tangle, or for that matter a consistent start. This is because they focus only on Rome and because they try to make seven kingdoms out of four. But the primary meaning in the vision is “kings” and not “kingdoms.”

But the beast does have seven heads, which are ALSO seven “kings.”

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Preterists offer various lists for the seven kings of the great and terrible beast:

(These taken from G.E. Ladd, *Commentary on Revelation*, p. 228)

Augustus (27 BC to 14AD)

Tiberius (14-37 AD)

Caligula (37-41)

Claudius (41-54)

Nero (54-68)

Galba (68)

Otho (69)

Vitellius (69)

Vespasian (69-79)

Titus (79-81)

Domitian (81-96)

Other lists start with Julius Caesar. And this would seem like the proper thing to do, though some Roman historians, (Tacitus, I believe), prefer to start with Augustus as the first full-fledged emperor. But Julius Caesar was really the first “father” of Rome and the father of the title “Caesar.”

Some also start with Caligula, the first “persecuting” emperor as such. This is so Domitian can be the sixth and reigning emperor reigning when John writes the Revelation according to the traditional date. (This, of course, ignores the three short lived reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who were in power only a matter of months. They were full-fledged emperors, so this creates a difficulty in how to reckon them.)

But prophecy offers us a ready solution to this dilemma when we recognize that the primary fulfillment includes the desolation and destruction of Jerusalem, the impure city. It became impure and subject to judgment because she rejected the Messiah and because

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she tolerated the shedding of the blood of saints and prophets, and she carried on illicit relations with her neighbors. Revelation 17 can be primarily seen as an apt description of the “abomination of desolation” or the desolation sacrilege spoken of by Jesus and Daniel. The early Christians were in expectation of this immediate fulfillment.

Starting with Julius Caesar, there are six legitimate emperors to the time of Nero. After the dissolution of the three unsuccessful emperors we come to Vespasian, who “continued a short space” until Jerusalem was destroyed--during his reign.

But what about the three short-lived emperors? Does not the book of Daniel say that three horns would be “plucked up by the roots?” This is exactly what happened. Their root did not take hold or produce. Therefore in reality there were not, in one view, ten kings or emperors, but seven. Therefore, this explanation sounds more and more like Revelation 17 sounded to us at the beginning.

This also argues for a Neronian date for the writing of the book of Revelation addressed in another place (ca. 68). (Cf. my chapter “The Date of the Writing of the Apocalypse” in Vol. 1).

We think it very possible that this at least in general represents the primary fulfillment of this prophecy for the early Christian nation. It was an indication of the nearness of Jesus’ prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem but it was also an indication that further fulfillment was also awaiting (Thus Matthew 24 also, etc.).

“The seventh is also an eighth”: If a little horn pushes out three of the ten horns, the sum at the end is not seven horns, but eight, because the “little horn” is an additional horn. In addition, eight is the number of new beginnings and continuation. Thus the seventh king would not be the last, but was himself the eighth, or was to give way to an eighth who would continue on until the ultimate

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dissolution of all things. This was, of course, the very case with the Roman emperors that continued after Vespasian: namely Titus, who was the son of Vespasian, and the general who actually took Jerusalem in his father's place. Titus later became emperor, and was literally of the seven (even of the "seventh;" son of), followed by Domitian, Trajan, and so on.

As predicted in both Daniel and Revelation, and particularly by Jesus himself in Matthew 24, Jerusalem, the city raised up by God to reign over the nations, was turned on by her former alliances; in fact, she rebelled against them, and thus incurred their anger. She was burnt with fire. The ten-horned beast power (Roman empire) collaborated to eat her flesh and punish her because blood and every impurity was found in her. She had lifted up her hand with Rome against the "Prince of Princes" and must meet her woe. Dreadful was her fall.

We must remember now, however, that this is merely a primary fulfillment and not the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. It becomes a type of the eschatological Babylonian beast. But like the house with windows on each side, we must look out every window to get the full picture. And without the "type" we cannot rightly understand the "anti-type." Next we will look at this prophecy, over the broad sweep of history and further unveil this marvelous mystery.

Footnote: Some have suggested that the seven heads are Judean kings, the Herodian line in particular. One writer finds seven "Herods." While this view might have some merit, it ignores the influence of Daniel, the original source of the symbolic "heads," who clearly identifies and gives us seven heads that relate to much larger figures and world kingdoms such as Neo-Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The Babylonian Church of the Christian Era

The Historical View of Babylon

Identification with Papal and Pagan Rome

It is not necessary to argue the case that for centuries, beginning in the early Christian era, that Rome, especially in its papal manifestation is identified as apocalyptic Babylon. The reason is apparent. Rome fulfills more than any other historical power the identifying characteristics of Babylon:

1. Position upon the famous "seven hills." (Seven mountains, 17:9)
2. Authority in reigning over the kings of the earth (17:18)
3. Responsibility for the martyrdom and blood of millions (17:6)
4. Propagation of erroneous doctrine and "spiritual" fornication (17:2,4)
5. Blatant sins in the papal claims and the "magnifying himself above all," and the equation of the papacy and its acts with "the man of sin." (2 Thess. 2:3,4)
6. Correlations of the papal office with the number of a man: 666.
7. Practice of changing times and laws (Daniel 7:25; 11:37), etc. etc.

This has been the consistent view for centuries, at least among Protestants, and before this from many others of those groups and individuals opposed to Rome's policies. Of particular significance is that even Catholic writers in certain instances have made this same identification. Usually, however, they apply it to pagan Rome. But the general view has been that Rome, in both phases, papal and pagan (historical prophecy essentially merges them into one) fulfills the prophecy of the great harlot of Revelation 17-19.

Ellen White appropriately reiterates this position:

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The woman (Babylon) of Revelation 17 is described as "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness:...and upon her forehead was a name written, " Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots." Says the prophet: "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Babylon is further declared to be "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:4-6, 18. **The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome.** The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared "drunken with the blood of the saints" as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with "the kings of the earth." It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. (GC 382)

Therefore, in Rome, is found a striking fulfillment recognized by the Reformers, by Protestantism, and by many prophetic voices. But the fact also emerges that Rome is not alone in wearing the designation "Babylon," For the very same writer makes other comments regarding this. For some, this has been fuel to exploit the idea that Ellen White is contradicting herself:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 124

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would accept God's standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days.

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The Great Controversy, p. 383

Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome's example of iniquitous connection with "the kings of the earth"--the state churches, by their relation to secular governments; and other denominations, by seeking the favor of the world. **And the term "Babylon"--confusion--may be appropriately applied to these bodies**, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting creeds and theories.

Babylon has daughters and these are an extension of herself, because they practice the same spiritual fornication and falsehood in the Christian world. This describes perfectly what history has revealed.

But it would seem that it is equivocating to say that the Roman church *is* Babylon and then in other places teach that it is Protestantism and the conflicting creeds and sects that constitute Babylon. In the 1888 edition of The Great Controversy Ellen White wrote:

Babylon is said to be "the mother of harlots." By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. **The message of Revelation 14 announcing the fall of Babylon**, must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the Judgment, it must be given in the last days, therefore it cannot refer to the Romish Church, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, in a message that is yet future, the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith. GC 382,383 (1888 edition)

Upon review of this, "W.W. Prescott asked how 'Babylon' in Revelation 14 could apply to Protestantism when 'Babylon' in Revelation 17 applied to Roman Catholicism. . . . To eliminate any possible misunderstanding, Ellen White added the word 'alone' to her 1911 edition of the book. The

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key sentence now reads, 'Since the message follows the warning of judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries.'

Prescott was delighted with the added word and said so at the 1919 Bible Conference." (R. Olsen, *101 Questions on the Sanctuary*, p. 52)

The purpose of prophecy, as we have stated earlier, may be much broader than has been customarily taught. What appears to stand as contradiction, may not be at all contradiction, but rather the opening of new vistas of understanding. When interpretations can be offered, even dual in nature, that consistently find answer both in the fulfillment of history and in the beam of prophetic light, it is not wise to sacrifice one at the expense of the other. If they fit, and they have prophetic testimony to support them, they should be considered carefully. It is again suggested that by understanding certain prophetic variances in light of the "time-adjusted viewpoint" of prophecy; taking in consideration at least a dual prophetic fulfillment; one may find these difficulties greatly diminished.

The Contemporary Identity of Babylon

Revelation 17:1

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show the judgment of the great harlot who is seated upon many waters."

Having seen how Babylon was understood by first century Christians and then later by Christians through the Middle Ages it is time to investigate the modern meaning of the symbol, "Babylon." The identifying factors are presented as follows:

Identifying factor #1

She is seated upon many waters.

The first hint of cosmic dimensions is the geographical location of this kingdom. It is positioned much water. The preposition "epi" can mean with an accusative several things.

[“epi” can be translated: on, upon, in, against, over, to, for, around, about, concerning; toward, among (rarely)]

The best determination is that the prepositional force calls most likely here for the translation; "upon," or "in the midst," of much water.

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When we are told there is a significant kingdom positioned in the midst of much water, we should in modern times be required to think *world scale*. Verse 17:15 virtually gives away the meaning of the waters, which represent the nations of the world.

The characteristic mistake of most expositors is to ignore the principle of the "local" to "worldwide" in eschatological prophecy, and therefore limit apocalyptic Babylon to either a resurgence of the old local Babylon or to the preterist pre-occupation with the ancient city of Rome. However, modern times have brought new forms, and the world geographical and political alignments are changed in the new world. We would expect prophecy, if it is truly prophecy, to recognize these changes. Unfortunately, most expositors become so enamored with the specific Biblical locales (the movement of Zionism, and literal Jerusalem, for instance) that they close their minds to the geopolitical reordering that has occurred over the intervening centuries.

Using the type, Babylon of old, the prophecy of Revelation 17 simply asks us to search for a counter-type in modern times. Babylon of old was surrounded by rivers and moats that were the highways of commerce and trade unparalleled, no doubt, at that time. The simple demand of prophecy is to begin by identifying a world-class nation, a nation that is prosperous and commercial whose geographical position upon much water affords her the super-highways of trade and commerce.

Any nation in our modern world could be said in a sense to be in the midst of the other nations, but only a few nations have the geographical position of literally being among the greatest waters of the world. We know that the largest bodies of water on this globe are the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. We also know that modern Babylon according to Chapter 18 would have to have noteworthy seacoasts and harbors to traffic the great list of merchandise and

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cargo that the merchants of the earth are in the last moments of history no longer able to sell.

Few great nations or landmasses could fit this description as well as the Americas and specifically the United States of America, one of the few world-class nations, which has seacoasts on two separate oceans and is skirted by much water. America is laid out "from sea to shinning sea." But there are other countries that are situated on much water. So far one cannot exclusively identify the great harlot. But the reader is asked to keep the foregoing point in mind.

Identifying Factor #2

She (the harlot) commits fornication with the kings of the earth.
(A king represents a kingdom under him Rev. 10:11; 17:15 etc.).

Now when a woman commits "fornication" or practices immorality and prostitution; what does this represent?

It is true that an admixture of false beliefs and systems in the religious realm has often been the meaning drawn from this, and rightly so. But secularly and geographically there are dimensions left ignored. Those publicly practicing immorality are not usually too concerned with religion. But please give attention to what significance the Bible itself gives this metaphor and figure of "fornication."

However, even before this, consider what a harlot does. She simply trades her services for money. She sells herself for money. Harlotry is a business transaction. It is commerce; trade. She uses her own "natural resources" to become rich.

Of paramount importance is the very root meaning of "harlot" or "immorality." The root is *πορνέω*, meaning literally, "TO SELL." Isaiah 23:16-18 is an essential passage for understanding Revelation

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17 and 18. It is similar to Revelation 18, except the prosperous kingdom of Tyre is the subject and not Babylon. In the previous verses the ships that trade with her wail and are in anguish over Tyre because of her downfall. Starting in verse 14, it says:

"Wail O ships of Tarshish, for your stronghold is laid waste. In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years. like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as is the song of the harlot: Take a harp, go about the city, O forgotten harlot! Make sweet melody, sing many songs that you may be remembered."

At the end of the seventy years, the Lord will visit Tyre, and she will return to her hire, and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. Her merchandise and her hire will be dedicated to the Lord; it will not be stored or hoarded, but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who dwell before the Lord."

Amazingly, in this context, harlotry is not really considered the immoral thing we know it is. In fact it may surprise the reader to notice that it almost seems moral, especially when the harlots wages are "dedicated to the Lord!!"

The point is simply this: Harlotry in this context is considered neither moral nor immoral, but is rather a symbol of commerce and trade between nations. It is not primarily good or bad, but simply the business of trade. Therefore we find that another identifying factor is that modern Babylon is in at least one sense a great "commercial" nation or group of nations.

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Identifying factor #3

She is "great." The fact that the harlot is designated as "great" would quickly exclude several contenders from consideration. We look for Babylon to be among the greatest powers in the modern world. In fact she is the greatest according to the final verse of chapter 17, in that she reigns over the kings of the earth.

Identifying Factor #4

The woman is seen in the wilderness.

Webster's Seventh Coll. Dict.: "wilderness 1a: A tract or region uncultivated or uninhabited by human beings."

Now we find a very narrow and specific qualification that should cause the expositor to see flashing lights and illuminated arrows. For though the woman is in the midst of the nations she does not arise out of them the same as others. She rises independently in the uninhabited regions, yes, she rises "out of the earth" (Rev. 13).

Identifying Factor #5

She is seated upon a scarlet colored beast.

This beast we know to consistently be through out the book symbolic of the Holy Roman Empire, for no other power fits all the characteristics revealed in Revelation 13. It is consistently the Roman Empire, empirical and papal.

HOWEVER ONE MUST NOTE: The woman is corporally SEPARATE from the beast, and is not a horn or appendage rising from the former world powers. *This is important* and ignored by

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most students of this prophecy. The beast has the seven heads, ten horns, scarlet color, and blasphemous names as the first beast of Revelation 13. Both the first beast of Revelation 13 and the beast of Revelation 17 rise out of the bottomless pit. But the woman is materially different from the beast itself.

Both beasts disappear for a time and come back. Vs. 8 of Revelation 17 simply describes the "healing of the wound," described in Revelation 13. In this scenario (eschatological application) the harlot SITS on the beast. That is, the beast "supports" and "works in league" with her. Some might say that only the city of Rome could be meant by sitting on seven hills. But the present reference may be read as simply pointing back to the original figure John saw in the wilderness with the beast the woman sits on, namely, the Roman power. This is consistent. What is here described is a complementary relationship between the two. One carries the other. And by looking back to the first and second beasts of Revelation 13 we find the same complimentary relationship; in this case the second beast copies the first in forcing the inhabitants of the earth to bow to her dogmas. The woman submits to the direction in which the beast is going; yet the beast responds to the wishes of the woman who in a fashion steers it. This is an exact representation of what is expected in the latter days according to prophecy, where the second beast will enforce the will and direction of the first beast.

Identifying Factor #6

The woman is dressed and bedecked luxuriantly.

This, I now suggest, is another clear reference to the United States of America. The United States is by far the most affluent nation on the face of the globe, when singled out from other smaller rich nations because of its international and global position.

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The list of wares in Revelation 18 is incredibly telltale as regards a country who lives in relative luxury and security. "How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously."

Identifying Factor #7

Eschatologically, one must recognize, the woman cannot be Rome (only), for if the beast is Rome or the Papacy, and the ten kings eventually ally themselves WITH the beast AGAINST the woman (vs. 12,13), Rome cannot fight itself. **The nations of Europe**, "the ten kings" apparently make war on not only Apostate Protestantism, but more specially the stronghold of Protestantism--the United States of America. It appears God gives them power to accost this nation. This factor is then, that the woman cannot in an eschatological sense be Rome itself.

Identifying Factor #8

The woman reigns over the kings of the earth. This specifies a nation, which has world dominance, but not absolute empirical power, for other nations still have kings or governments, to which the adulteress relates. This describes almost perfectly the position the United States takes in her foreign policy even today as we write. The turning of the nations of the earth against the United States has already begun in some places and will be completed when the actions she enforces upon the whole world become more apparent and precipitate. But even today those very ones to whom the United States have aided and given favors to, strangely hate her and demonstrate against her.

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Identifying Factor #9

She is secure and arrogant.

She says, "A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see" (18:7). Only the nation, The United States, it seems, could be heard saying such a thing, for this is a perfect description of the attitude of Americans secure within their own shores, separate from the conflicts of the powers of earth.

Identifying Factor #10

She makes all nations drink of her wine.

According to prophetic testimony, it is the United States as the leading representative of Apostate Protestantism that causes the nations to imbibe and swallow her deceptions and to court her religious and political views. It is absolutely essential for consistency to see the United States as Babylon if one looks with logic and forms a syllogism based on the following quotes:

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false Sabbath, the people of every country will be led to follow her example." (6T 18)

"She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:6-8). How is this done? By forcing men to accept a spurious Sabbath." (8T 964)

"The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part." (6T 352)

"Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world." (6T 395)

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“The prophecy of Revelation 13 declares that the power represented by the beast with lamb-like horns shall cause "the earth and them which dwell therein" to worship the papacy--there symbolized by the beast "like unto a leopard." The beast with two horns is also to say "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast;" and, furthermore, it is to command all, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to received "the mark of the beast." [2 REV. 13:11-16.] It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamb-like horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy.” (GC 578, 579)

“When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.” (5T 451)

“The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.” (GC 588)

“God denounces Babylon "because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This means that she has disregarded the only commandment which points out the true God, and has torn down the Sabbath, God's memorial of creation. 7BC, Vol. 7, p. 979.” (Letter 98, 1900)

Identifying Factor #11

She (Babylon) is drunk with the blood of saints.

How?

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The answer comes in the following quote in referring to the third plague: "By condemning the people of God to death they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their own hands." (GC 628)

Conclusion:

It is inescapable to make direct and certain identification of the United States of America as "modern" Babylon. She stands as the NATIONAL symbol of Babylon just as in Revelation 13 she is recognized as a NATIONAL power rising out of the earth. However, it is also necessary to see Babylon as "Apostate Protestantism" in a RELIGIOUS sense just as the second beast in Revelation 13 is in places pointed out to be "Apostate Protestantism," a RELIGIOUS power likened to a false prophet (Rev. 16:13).

FURTHER NOTES

- “I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven, preparing for the fulfillment of some important event. Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, "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." The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to the loud cry.” EW 277.

As pertains the list of luxuries in chapter 18:12-14:

- “Only three countries in the world annually produce more wheat than they consume: The United States, Australia, and Canada.” (B. Graham, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, p. 153)
- “Sixty percent of us in Europe and America are overweight. We Americans weigh a billion pounds too much. We spend an annual \$15 billion on diet formulas and \$22 billion on cosmetics. Those expenditures alone would be the difference between life and death to those who will starve to death worldwide next year.” Ibid., p. 151.
- U.S. residents in 1980 spent 3.2 billion on their dogs, \$20 billion on tobacco and 42.8 billion on alcoholic beverages.” (“Wealth,” file item, source unknown)

In the U.S. in 1992, the number of pacemakers fitted for cats: 800. (This is no doubt presently increased. This is only one example of the affluence and privilege available in the United States of America). *Leadership*, date unknown, ca. 1994, p. 89.

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- In the chapter in *Early Writings* entitled "The Sins of Babylon," is this interesting comment already fulfilled in a certain way by the civil war. What is notable is the ready association of the United States with Revelation 18:

“Professed followers . . . heartily engage in this enormous and grievous sin, and deal in slaves and souls of men. . . . God will restrain His anger but a little longer. His wrath burns against this nation and especially against the religious bodies that have sanctioned this terrible traffic and have themselves engaged in it. . . . God's anger will not cease until He has caused this land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of His fury, until he has rewarded Babylon double.”

The Woman in the Red, White, and Blue

The Woman in Revelation 17 is dressed in particularly interesting apparel.

Says the text:

“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 the abominations and filthiness of her fornication:” Rev. 17:4

“And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed with linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!” Rev. 18:16

The woman is pictured with more than one garment; a luxurious principal garment; and then extra and colorful outer coats or outer garments to represent her affluence.

(1) She is dressed first in fine linen. Linen is always white in the Apocalypse (Rev. 15:6; 19:8,14).

(2) She is also arrayed in scarlet. Scarlet can be only one color: Red.

(3) In addition she is wearing “purple.” Purple could vary in shade; but on cloth, especially in ancient times, it would appear “blue.” (Actually it varied from red to dark blue, thus: “blue, purple, and scarlet.”)

The Woman in the Red, White, and Blue

These three colors arranged upon many banners and insignias are very familiar to most of us. Red, White, and Blue are the colors of the western nations, especially the United States.

The woman is also “decked,” or adorned with precious stones. Precious stones, especially white ones, are equated in other places in Revelation with “stars,” because they have brilliant, shining, gem-like qualities.

It is not difficult to associate these symbols with the American flag.

There are also great similarities between the biblical Tyre from which certain of these particular symbols and allusions are drawn, and later economic powers, namely Rome found in the center of the Mediterranean world, and now the United States in the center of the entire world. The prophecy of Tyre in Ezekiel 27:7 mentions the same colors; white linen, blue, and scarlet that were her “sail,” pictured, as it were, her *flag*. The relationship between Revelation 17 and 18 and the oracles against Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28) IS definite.

The Numerical Value of the Woman of Babylon

The name as given for the woman of Babylon in Revelation 17:5 deserves further attention.

The first distinction is that the name has SEVEN principle words:

- Mystery
- Babylon (the)
- Great
- Mother (of)
- Harlots (and the)
- Abominations (of the)

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- Earth

The second distinction is that when the Latin numerical values are applied to the letters as written in the Greek tongue (and the conjunctive words are omitted) a significant value is determined:

The conjunctives (and, of, the) are not really part of the name but are added for the purpose of making the name easily readable. This is as would be expected.

The name written is:

μυστηριον, βαβυλων η μεγαλη,
5 1 5, 50 50

η μητηρ των πορνων των

βδελυγματων της γης.
500, 50, 5

δ= 500 **500**

λ= 50 (3X) **150**

υ= 5 (3X) **15**

ι= 1 **1**

Total= **666**

- **Since the mystery name comes in the context of the Apocalypse this numerical derivation can hardly be coincidence.** (Otherwise it could be).

The Woman in the Red, White, and Blue

Observe also that the great immoral woman is riding the very same “beast” as Revelation 13 and has its similar characteristics: i.e.:

- Her mount, the beast, has blasphemous names
- The beast has seven heads; ten horns
- She (the woman) persecutes the saints
- She consorts with kings of the earth (Rev. 13=a political power).
- She elicits awe (“wondered after, etc., cf. Rev. 13)
- The beast rises from the “abussos” (Rev. 17) or the *bottomless* “sea” or “deep”(Rev. 13).

Therefore it seems apparent that the details of the case argue that any modern interpretation of these passages must include that dominant world power known as the United States of America.

The Sins of Babylon

A recurrent theme in the book of Revelation is the inroad of sin and falsehood on this earth, especially as it is promoted by the false apostate powers that be.

It is and always has been an unpopular task to expose sin for what it is. Readers quickly skip over the phrases identifying the sins of Babylon. They apprehend them only in a general sense. They are seldom identified specifically.

While the focus of every Christian should be on Christ, and not on sin, it is important to recognize what particularly are the sins that God hates in this generation. Especially when the Apocalypse in several places attempts to identify them very specifically. While it may seem audacious to charge others of particular sins, these errors must be understood for what they are by those seeking refuge in Christ if they are to be forsaken and forgiven. In identifying these sins, the charge is first reckoned to every human being; that there is not one perfectly righteous human being anywhere. Everyone is included and everyone must account for himself.

But the work of reform must be carried out. The exposure of these sins is the last great and fearful work of the church of God. It is being greatly neglected for fear of reprisal or for the fear of being misunderstood. But to neglect this work will place part of the responsibility for the blood in Babylon's cup squarely in the hands of those who do not warn others of the impending disaster that will come as a result of these sins. The work of revival and reformation is really a life-saving work, and when entered with the right attitude and spirit it can contribute to the salvation of millions.

The final message to be given to this world is "Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partakers in her sins, and receive not of her plagues." The voice of stern rebuke, the exposure of the sins in

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“Israel,” is a task given to God’s remnant people. While there is a wrong way, and a right way to this, there will never be an easy way, acceptable to all. Yet it must be done.

Today, the sins of Babylon have already become heaped as high as a mountain. But who is crying aloud, and sparing not? Tame and innocuous messages proceed from the pulpits of America and beyond. Listen to them. Sin is no longer considered sin by most. Some even doubt there is such a thing! This is, of course, sheer absurdity, because sin is anything that hurts and destroys. One look at our troubled society with its hate, crime, and deviancy proves it exists in great abundance. *The Revelation* assures us that it yet exists and that to continue in openly practicing it will prohibit entrance to the Holy City. There will not enter into it anything that defiles, or that loves falsehood. Murder, immorality, deception, theft, fierceness, and hatred will most certainly exclude the great majority.

What are the sins of Babylon? A summary follows:

The Denial of God’s Existence

One of the greatest sins of modern times is the denial of God, his sovereignty, his law, and his power. God’s authority, and his law are freely trampled upon by even Christians.

God the owner, and creator of this world and every human being upon it, is not clearly acknowledged as its owner and its God. The name of God is written everywhere upon the creation, but God has been effectively removed from his position by the blasphemous claim that this world evolved over long eons of time out of a primordial soup or as the result of an accidental “big bang.” As rightful property owner, God has been dethroned from his position by the notion that the universe came as the result of a big, random, explosion. To the shame of a vast number of Christians, this

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outrageous and unsubstantiated claim is believed and propagated by even them. The leader of the largest Christian denomination has openly blessed the supposed reasonability of the evolutionary hypothesis, in direct contradiction to the claims of the Bible. Such a stand should have effectually ended for all time the credibility of Christ's supposed vice-gerent on earth; but such incidents pass with hardly a murmur from professing Christians.

References to God have been removed from our government, our schools, and our laws. While issues of religion must necessarily be removed from the administration of the secular state; this does not mean that God cannot be acknowledged publicly or that his existence should be discounted. God should be acknowledged openly by every president, senator, and church leader, for he is the source every nation's strength and livelihood, the owner and custodian of this planet, and the giver of every good and perfect gift. Unbelief, directed toward him, is the first and greatest of all sins committed by this generation. Fearful will be the result of this grand and blasphemous apostasy.

Idolatry and Fashion

Idolatry is another sin that has never been expunged from the Christian realm. It has most recently taken the form of human idolatry, where human beings are worshipped, called "stars," and honored almost as gods. But it is still idolatry nonetheless.

Most troublesome is that the church itself tolerates the same practice of deifying human beings or exalting their position. The leader of all Christians in this is the Roman Father, elected as Christ's representative and given titles of outright blasphemy. No human being should ever assume the role and make the claims made by the Roman Catholic communion of their leaders. It is totally unacceptable.

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The most amazing aspect of this is that this ostentatious and blasphemous show is tolerated without murmur by much of the Christian world. Without raising an eyebrow, Protestants are no longer “protesting,” and readily acknowledge the very claims of the papacy, when they should turn away in shock at its outrageous presumption. In direct contradiction to the simple gospel of Christ the ornate and blasphemous parade continues from country to country without hardly a word of dissent.

Protestantism patterns itself after the Papacy in that even the humblest cleric attaches to himself the title of Reverend, Right Reverend, or other such clerical titles. Such a practice is prohibited in the Bible they preach from, and is in itself counter-Christian. TV evangelists and faith healers act ostentatiously, and received adulation and applause in the name of Christ but rarely in the spirit of Christ.

Many women (even men) appear on the set with glittering (sequined) dresses and excessive jewels fastened to their persons. How can this be appropriate? Satan himself was known to have every precious stone as his covering. Normally, this was not itself wrong. However, glittering, it went toward attracting to his beauty, and to himself (Ezekiel 28:13). It is associated with his very system and his demise. How inappropriate for Christians to mimic him and seek to draw attention to their persons when they should be attracting others to God!

A Christian woman should look beautiful, but why is it that one can now turn on the television and consistently pick out the “Christian” woman as the one most adorned and plastered of all women; with the *largest* earrings, dangling in a ridiculous fashion, if not rather perilously swinging from her overburdened ear? What, can really be the purpose of this? Is it in any way modest, and self-effacing?

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The practice of human idolatry, and spiritual idolatry is rampant. These sins and others of similar nature will receive in time a fearful retribution, for in thus representing Christ they wrongly represent his character and nature.

The commandments clearly warn against the use of images held for the purpose of worship. While there is legitimacy for the use of scenic pictures in worship that directly represent what God has created for our enjoyment and for his glory; but ornate substitutes, in the form of images and icons are strictly forbidden by the Scriptures. The excuse given for the placement of images in churches is that this iconography enhances and facilitates worship of the true God. However, the commandment prohibits even the “making” of these things for the purpose of worship, because they actually serve to cheapen, especially to outsiders, the sense of God’s transcendence and apartness. The over use of certain symbols and amulets by all Christians, even crosses, in some cases approaches a form of idolatry forbidden by God for pure and excellent reasons.

Another form of idolatry can be found in the materialistic pursuit of gain and riches carried on unabashedly by Christians who God has blessed, but who lavish it upon themselves. This is also a very great sin, and every man and woman will someday have to give account of his or her stewardship before God. Many heads will be hung in shame for the lives and opportunities lost in appropriating for themselves what God intended to go for gospel work.

Vain Worship

Another great sin practiced more and more by apostate systems of Christianity is the use of spiritual exercises and forms of worship that are vain or that are not authorized by God. Spurious forms of worship have come in that allow for almost any expression, and are much like the unacceptable offering of Cain.

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A shift has entered Christianity. In an attempt to avoid the cold formalism that has prevailed in the church for centuries, a warmer, more casual form of worship has emerged. While this was needed and is in many ways refreshing, it has now gone too far in thousands of modern churches.

The shift has exalted “feeling” and “expressiveness” to the point that it is now dominated by the loud, the sensual, and the seeming miraculous. Outbursts of “pentecostal” sincerity or impassioned preaching are followed by hand raising, clapping, “spirit slayings,” “tongues,” and fanatical behaviors are practiced that would never be performed or accepted in the presence of any other important personage or authority. Things are not done “decently and in order.” It should be obvious to most that much of this behavior is actually from “another” spirit. It is an embarrassment to Christianity, and people of world use it as a reason to turn from and avoid Christians; and to laugh and scoff and their strange antics. Their attitudes are justified and the name of Christ is blasphemed among the Gentiles.

Worship has now shifted from an attitude of waiting and reverence to a performance, or even a spectator sport. There are seminars on how to conduct worship. It has become something that you “do,” as if it were an alternative form of entertainment; like going to a football game. “Come, now is the time to worship,” the song says. While it is desirable to worship and there is a need to praise God, coming to God should spring forth more spontaneously, and from a reverent heart, and should be more than rehearsed or artificial entertainment. It seems that worship is now primarily giving God what we enjoy to show, and tell him, and less listening to what he wants to tell us. This emphasis or imbalance can lead to selfish and vain worship.

The tool molding all these aspects together is the use of contemporary and other popular styles of music. Any form or style of music is now considered acceptable. God is not consulted about

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what he wants. Worshippers choose instead what they want, assuming that a loving God will accept their sincerity. “Christian rock,” a dissonant term in itself, is used freely in worship. At one time such a din would never have been considered as acceptable music for a church, but now it is considered an acceptable alternative in many if not most churches. It suddenly has become “right” because the youth prefer it! This is strange thinking.

Jarring and screaming sounds, inordinate percussive rhythms, lewd and swaying motions, are all normalized in a church setting. Who is behind this perversion of music is obvious, but churches have a numb stupidity about its danger. There is no longer any distinction between Christian music and music of the world. The words, often claimed to be the redeeming factor, become a non-issue because they cannot be heard against the crashes and the explosions, or because the performer would rather “eat the microphone” than pronounce the words clearly. Even if the words are discernible, in too many cases they are often shallow, breathy, self-centered lyrics; or performance-oriented musical scores, designed to physically or emotionally excite the hearer and elicit applause for the performer. Instead of this showy exertion, the performer should rather be as quiet and transparent as possible so that the glory will go to God who is the real subject of worship.

Vain worship in a thousand forms discredits God’s name and character. The moaning, crooning, showy demonstrations are not the way of heaven. It is probably true that heaven actually registers many worship services with disgust, and many outwardly religious Christians who now receive the applause of men at the same time actually receive the disapproval of heaven. Jesus said that “in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” The same goes for human substitutions in the area of worship. Man should not bring just any offering to God, even though he may be sincere, if God has clearly instructed that it cannot

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receive the approval of heaven in that form. It is very much like Cain's offering.

Alarming to a great extent is the loose and familiar use of God's name, and the name of Jesus. The words flippantly and easily roll off the tongue. They are used repeatedly and lightly even by ministers in the pulpit in prayer and conversation. The words are used so easily and repeated so often in a prayer that it is obvious that regardless of the sincerity of the believer, it is apparent that he has no idea whatsoever of the greatness and transcendence of his God. The word "Lord" is used in jokes and anecdotes as if the Savior was the buddy next door. Irreverence in its many manifestations is one of the greatest sins of our age. Greater than many realize are the sins of Babylon.

Sabbath Breaking

The violation of the Sabbath is another of the great sins of Babylon. The lack of respect for God's holy day is almost complete. Even Sunday churchgoers observe but the worship hour, in direct contradiction to the "entire day" principal inherent in the commandment.

One of the early American presidents was arrested for riding his horse near his home (the White House or its precedent) on a Sunday. Things have slid a long way since then. At least at that time there were some compunctions about how the Sabbath should be honored. Today, however, people are seen casually shopping in their Sunday best (and in many cases not even their best anymore). The day designed by God for spiritual refreshment is selfishly appropriated for almost any activity or purpose.

Football games are scheduled to begin at such a time that one can take in the game without missing church. Worship is compartmentalized as something you do for an hour on Sunday

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rather than a way of life through the day, and particularly during special hours that God asks for. Other matters are allowed to take priority.

While the day will come when laws are made to respect a Sunday worship day, even this will be in error since it is not the day that **God** blessed, sanctified, and made holy. Lipstick on a pig still leaves us with a pig. Sunday will never be a day that represents the Creatorship of God or the completion of Redemption in Christ. It is a man-made institution, *created* by man. It can never then represent the true Creator. God is jealous for his sacred Sabbath, and he will yet stand up for it.

Laxness Toward Violators of Authority

Another sin predicted by the apostle Paul for the last days is the general disobedience of youth toward the elderly or toward authority in general. At no time in history is there less respect for all authority, religious and secular as in our present day. Because the Law of God is dismissed as having any direct modern application, indeed it is said that we are no longer beholden to it; even Christians participate in crimes of all kinds, almost to the same degree as the worldling. Thousands of youth have left their childhood faith because they see the double standard practiced by their parents, religious leaders, teachers, and mentors. "If they can do it, so can I," they say.

With no restraints placed upon them, and no penalties promised, the youth turn to sex, drugs, gangs, and perverted music. The family as God designed it essentially does not function; there are but few times in the modern era when the family meets together in an orderly fashion to eat, share, and worship.

One of the sins particularly mentioned with the fall of Babylon is the sin of sorcery. While there is probably a broader definition for this

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practice, the inference to sorcery is really a reference to the abuse of drugs and harmful substances. The Greek word is “pharmakeia,” from whence we get the word “pharmacy.” Anciently, the alchemist concocted drugs and poisons, and their hallucinogenic or sedative qualities were associated with sorcery or magical powers. While Babylon practices “spiritual sorcery” in her religious and secular policies, she also is guilty of the abuse of actual drugs. The United States consumes countless drug formulas and markets probably the majority of these as well. Entire store chains are really “drug” stores. While there is a positive use of drugs, and pain-killers are a wonderful blessing in the case of surgery and trauma, there is a great problem of addictive abuse of drugs. Not only youth, but adults in all walks of life indulge in an inordinate amount of these harmful substances, and crime, murder, accidents, dementia, and mind disorders are the result. People are being poisoned by the unwise, and even sometimes professionally prescribed use of these substances. Unfortunately, even the church is not wholly innocent in regard to the enormous problem of alcoholism and drug abuse.

The lack of respect for authority is one of the great sins that the apostle Paul said would characterize the people of the last days. His prediction is in perfect accord with the current conditions in our nation and world. Fearful will be the final fruit and consequences of this great sin.

The Devaluation of Life

A great sin which the Creator God abhors is slaying of countless infants, never called what it is really, instead known to the modern earth dweller as “abortion,” “choice,” or “planned parenthood.” Some liberal, mainline churches in America and the world have been weak on this issue.

While there may be situations in which the stewardship of life is given to human beings, for the most part the right to life has been

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greatly abused and tolerated, and is carried out recklessly, impulsively, and secretly. When this is done simply to avoid the consequences of another sin, it becomes wrong. There are devastating emotional, social, and moral consequences that should be related to the person considering such a step but this aspect is conveniently ignored or minimized. While conservative religious extremists exaggerate this issue at times, in calling it outright “murder,” there is a place where it does become in many aspects at least a certain degree of murder. The stand by some fundamental churches on this issue is commendable, yet they are usually in practice inconsistent on which commandments are to be honored.

The toleration of Christian churches for the abuse of the body temple with drugs, smoking, narcotic drinks, and alcohol is another, only slower form, of murder. Temperance is a Christian virtue, but is not clearly required of millions of so-called Christians. While personal condemnations towards the pitiable people helplessly caught in the grip of these vices should never be uttered, the habits themselves should be clearly explained as moral digressions, and warning should be given to youth and all others before they are thus destroyed by a slow, insidious, death toward both soul and body. Some churches even use the church-after service, or religious gatherings, to imbibe in certain carcinogenic poisons condemned and avoided by even responsible and informed atheists and agnostics. In this case, who then is the most consistent, and who is the most sanctified?

Immorality

The book of Revelation is perhaps the most direct of all Bible books in its condemnation of immorality. Several times it is repeated in the final chapters that the immoral, the whoremongers (those who seek out prostitutes or commit fornication or adultery), the impure, the filthy, the fornicators, and all such perversions will be excluded from the heavenly kingdom. Nothing could be clearer. God is not

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being harsh or cruel in excluding such, but those who remain in this condition willingly are criminals and lawbreakers in his eyes, and there cannot enter into the kingdom any such thing that is defiled, selfish, and uncontrolled.

Particularly singled out are those practicing homosexuality and lesbianism. “Dogs” in biblical times had three meanings: literal dogs (the animal); foreigners or aliens, and male prostitutes. All such creatures were considered unclean. Revelation is not however referring to animals-- but people. “Dogs” are included in the list of the immoral and the idolaters and sorcerers, and all such are banned from the heavenly realms.

It is troubling, if not marvelous beyond expression, to hear the modern commentary on the Bible’s view of homosexuality. Often it is heard said that the Bible, when properly understood does not condemn homosexuality. This is nothing but absurdity and blind ignorance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible is absolutely clear on this issue, and leaves no question. God himself labels it an “abomination,” a word that denigrates the practice in the strongest terms available in the Hebrew language. Paul the apostle several times indicates that such cannot inherit the kingdom of God. There are countless reasons why this sin is particularly hideous, perverted, and destructive. It is a simple fact, (and not just the idea of narrow religionists) that there will be no practicing homosexuals in heaven. They cannot enter there. It cannot be.

But the objection asserts itself, that homosexuals cannot help their orientation and that they were even born even in that state, and that they should be regularized in the eyes of others because of their homosexual orientation. Supposing this is true, it changes nothing as to their moral responsibility or their destiny. Just because one has even the strongest heterosexual urges or orientation does not give that person the right to commit adultery or to covet inordinately. Just because a serial murderer has the urge to kill does not give him

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God's, or man's, permission to do so. Self-control is a necessary fruit of the Spirit.

About the most unbelievable of the signs of apostasy in the modern world has been the acceptance of open and avowed "practicing" homosexuals in the office of the priesthood or in high clerical office. Even the world stands aghast, and thousands are leaving such communions because the credibility of their spiritual authorities is almost totally lost when such clear Biblical standards are abandoned and even condoned by church leaders.

In many cases the homosexual tendencies have manifest themselves in the abuse of children. Even the secular world wishes to take action against child-molesters, and sometimes does. Meanwhile, the Christian world ironically promotes those who would be perpetrators of this same evil as clerics and priests! This is an incredible circumstance indeed!

While all such people deserve our love and acceptance as persons, it should be made placidly clear that God condemns this practice, and all other sexual sins of like magnitude. The church has erred in that it has not stood against this evil, and more particularly has not worked to help people find deliverance from these things through the Gospel. Such problems, no matter how difficult or ingrained can be overcome by the cleansing blood of Christ, and by the pure and spotless Lamb. There are many testimonies to this effect.

The Violation of Self-hood and Property

The commission of many of Babylon's sins is in many ways nothing else than the sin of theft. Immorality and adultery is taking for oneself a privilege that belongs to either someone else or which takes from the personhood of another person. The demand for gratification by the immoral person, or the desire for harmful substances leads to stealing and often taking the rights and property

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of others. These violations are becoming more and more common because restraints are not enforced in childhood, and restrictions are violated repeatedly. Yet the criminal is given tame consequences by parents and by the legal system for his crimes. With few deterrents when it counts, the communities of the world become the hapless victims of repeated violations by these lawless persons, who are free, unrestrained, and out of control.

A very inhumane violation of life committed by the United States and other nations was the practice of slavery. This evil practice brought untold horror and pain, and has already reaped a terrible reward (The Civil War). In effect, the lives and rights of the slaves were stolen from them for the selfish benefit of their captors. This sin has not yet reaped its final punishment.

The Propagation of Falsehood

Dishonesty appears at every turn. Presidents and politicians receive little reprisal for being caught in an absolute lie. The legal profession encourages the denial of guilt. Celebrities pad their images. In many cases, such persons are still admired and retain their position. This condition of things is not only disgusting, but is indicative of the moral degeneration of most of the world today. Truth should matter above all things, especially to those in the legal system.

The Revelation is specific about this sin. Not only those who “create” the falsehood are condemned to remain outside the city, but also those who “love the falsehood” are arraigned with the guilty. This is an amazing statement. Classed with murderers, idolaters, and the immoral, are those who “love” or “cling to” a lie.

This statement has a spiritual import. Spiritual truths held by the apostles and by all the faithful down through the centuries have been

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discarded by the popular churches in favor of modern or unbiblical doctrines. They are the doctrines of devils.

The chief of these false doctrines include the teaching that man's soul in death is immortal. The Scriptures clearly teach that only God "only hath immortality" (1 Tim 6:16), yet this lie propagated by the serpent in Eden is setting up thousands for spiritualistic delusions. It also leads millions away from Christ because it is tied to the doctrine of eternal torment, another odious and inconsistent error.

The pure invention of "secret rapture" theology has nearly taken over Christendom. While there is no proper Scriptural support for this doctrine, people adhere to it with alarming alacrity. They "love it" more than they love the truth. It is a hideous delusion, and many people will discover this after it is too late. They did not care enough for the truth to investigate candidly whether such a doctrine can be substantiated by Christ's word. Preachers proclaim this assumed doctrine from the pulpits. Blood will be on their hands in the judgment day, indeed their tongues will consume away in their mouths for the propagation of this and other falsehoods that are touted as truth.

Of course included in the propagation of falsehood is the proliferation in these days of other aberrant religious movements such as the "new-age movement," "eastern religions," and other movements that have direct ties to the promotion of "spiritualistic" ideas and tenets. Spiritualism, as represented in these demonic counter-inventions to true apostolic Christianity, very much play a part in the end-time showdown coming upon the world. This Babylonian sin, like the others, will receive its reward in the plagues promised toward those who love such deceptions.

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Materialism (The Idolatry of “Things”)

Another sin of incomprehensible magnitude is the sin of selfish materialism. The sin of Babylon is magnified in that while she commits it, she at the same time boasts of her wealth that she has lavished upon herself. How much she has lived gloriously and deliciously. This means that her affluence is her downfall.

Now while God does not condemn riches in themselves, the love of them is indeed the root of all evil. Covetousness is among the greatest of all sins, yet it is the one least recognized and preached about. God delights that his servants enjoy the pleasures of life, and acknowledge him as the giver of these blessings. But riches are never to be stockpiled for oneself, but are merely entrusted to the rich man to bless and share with others. However, the Christians of America, in particular, are guilty of endorsing a gospel of prosperity, the profit of which is used chiefly for oneself.

While in many countries the gospel is yet unheard, many Christians are treasuring up palatial homes and vacation property, boats and recreational vehicles, country club memberships, and luxuries of most every kind. No one speaks a word about the unfair economic injustice this creates. While one should not promote pure Marxist socialism, yet Christians especially should be observant of the wants and needs of others and should feel a greater responsibility toward the world's problems than they do. Many people with affluence are sometimes generous, but few sacrifice to the point that it in anyway inconveniences themselves.

Until the gospel is given to the world, it is fundamentally wrong to hoard up treasures and inordinate luxuries for oneself. The Laodicean problem is that materialism blinds a person to his own spiritual ineptitude. The Laodicean says, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” He has no need (or so he thinks). But does no one else have need? Millions are starving

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every year. Can the truly spiritual person happily sit in the lap of luxury while his brother dies in want? Indeed the Laodicean Christian has a great need, to see his own selfish nature and replace it with the beneficent faith and love of Christ.

Summary

In essence, the sins of Babylon, listed above, are then a simple outworking of the customary trampling down of the *Ten Commandments* that God has written. Godless idolatry, vain worship, dishonesty and falsehood, the crimes of immorality, abuse, and theft are but breaking the laws God set up for the happiness and well being of man. These laws cannot be broken without dire consequences to the human race.

All of these sins of Babylon will bring a terrible judgment upon the apostate Christian world, particularly the United States of America. Fearful will be her “day of infamy.” The fat and prosperous church will not be exempt. The call is to come out of her, before it is too late.

It is not the purpose of this expose’ to castigate or to pharisaically condescend blame toward anyone or anything. It is not the intent to perform a tirade against everything evil, or to deny every pleasure. The purpose is to draw attention to the need to prepare spiritually for the events that are certain to transpire as the days of the seventh angel come upon us.

It is a call and a warning to the sinners in Zion to repent and find refuge from the storm. It is call to everyone, rich and poor, free and bond, to prepare themselves for the coming Christ. It is a loving plea for all to examine themselves lest they remain in doomed Babylon, and partake of her sins, and receive of her plagues. “Come out of her, my people” is the warning. The cry is to come out of the

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danger areas both literally and spiritually. Prepare, then, O Israel, to meet Thy God!

Coming Out of Babylon

Selected Remarks Regarding the Leaving of the Cities

Note of Explanation

This chapter is added, not to include any new information, but to remind the reader of the absolute seriousness of this counsel. An attitude now exists, and is printed openly in church publications, that the counsel to leave the cities is probably an exaggeration and is meant for selected individuals. This lethargic, soothing attitude is puzzling, if not perilous.

The concept promoted by those who wish to ignore the sensational requirements of this counsel is that it is claimed to be impossible for Christians to share the gospel with those who we do not live and work among. The sentiment floats about, clothed in such terms as “incarnational ministry,” or similarly labeled “witnessing models,” that this is the way Jesus worked; that he lived directly among the people he wished to reach and warn.

While this all sounds very wonderful, and in a large measure makes practical sense, it is also largely counter-counsel. A closer look at Jesus’ methods show that he himself modeled an approach of working from outposts. He does not ever stay in Jerusalem, but resides in Bethany, and commutes daily. While he worked energetically for the cities and villages, he generally resided in rural settings. Like all things in his life, there was a reason and a purpose.

Very soon entire cities will be laid waste as the target of disaster and malevolent design. Those who ignore the counsel will not be spared these holocausts, regardless of their motives. They will often be tragically lost to the cause of God. However, if they are working after God’s design, from the outside, they will be miraculously spared in many instances; because while working to save the lives of their fellow man they are also heeding the larger counsel to live

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rurally.

The time for reaching the cities is now, it is true. But also the time for residentially leaving the cities is now. In places where it is still possible, and for some this time may be long past, let God's people listen to these warnings and then act, at the peril of their lives and salvation, with definite, prudent, plans.

The warning to "come out of Babylon" is more than a "spiritual" warning alone. The airy philosophy customarily adopted and taught by Adventist spokesmen about a "spiritual coming out only" has unfortunately led many to ignore the practical warnings given on this subject. Spiritual reformation is clearly the most important part of this message, no doubt, but those who claim to be God's people should also embrace the practical reformation through strict adherence and preparation.

A Summary of the Reasons to Leave Large Cities As Soon as Possible

There are actually several good reasons to consider such a call largely forgotten or ignored by many Adventists:

1. The awaiting, imminent destruction of the cities
2. Degenerate moral influence
3. General safety
4. Freedom to worship without interference
5. Access to pure food and water
6. A salubrious environment for ourselves and for our children
7. The impossibility of doing so later

All of these reasons, and more even than these reasons, should motivate God's people to prompt action. Terrorism, for obvious reasons, will most likely will target population centers. Fire and sulfur, already on its way to many of these places should provide

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motivation enough. Earthquakes, fire, flood, hurricanes, tornados, and the like, potentially would leave millions homeless, without food, water, and shelter in metropolitan areas; while the same powerful forces in a rural setting would affect but a few. Gathering human beings into bundles only makes a more convenient target for terrorism and disaster.

While there is sin in Wamsutter, Wyoming, the cities of America and the world are truly becoming places of concentrated crime and vice. God's people, by a mere glance at the billboards, advertisements, and proffered entertainment should be able to see this. The natural world, designed to make us think of God and his works, is almost totally replaced by asphalt, neon signs, and artificialism. These things do have an effect. When people are jammed closer together, laws must necessarily proliferate. In the end, freedoms are lost. Law enforcement, lost in the hopeless jungle of humanity cannot keep up with the perpetration and the violations of these laws.

Many reason to themselves that they will leave when matters become worse, but not now. The flaw in this fallacious reasoning already appears in many forms. When people in the Los Angeles riots of a few years back were asked why in the world they didn't leave they said, "we wanted to, but we were unable to." When tragedy strikes, the exits are usually blocked.

In many places, while God's people have been happily locating within the limits of large cities, the laws of the counties and states have changed. Satan has stolen the march on many families who had opportunity to secure country property. The state and county governments, in the interest of checking urban sprawl, have made it nearly impossible to secure small acreages. One must buy at least twenty acres or more at exorbitant prices. This creates a practical impossibility for medium income families to find private acreage they can afford today.

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While one must not propose rash moves, and sudden re-locations in many cases, nevertheless, we must ask are God's people focusing on these necessary changes for their future? Often they are not. But when prayer and attention are given to these matters, perhaps even yet God will help those wishing to make a change. While this will require some sacrifices, it is a frame of mind that should pervade every home and institution.

Those now living in small towns or suburbs probably should not be considered as "living" in the cities. Yet the question asked should not be whether or not one is within the limits of a city or town, but what would be the consequences if the place one is living suddenly became the focus of a disaster, or the target of any repressive measure. Personally, many are concerned with the proximity of neighbors and their worldly children who have great influence and interaction with the children of Christian or Adventist families. It seems that places should be sought with these things in mind. We cannot physically prepare for the time of trouble except in this one aspect, to secure property at a distance from the large cities.

Is the Counsel to Leave Babylon Only Counsel to "Spiritually" Leave Babylon?

This is searching and important question.

While the counsel to come out of Babylon has been primarily taught to refer to the leaving of "spiritual" Babylon, that is, the false churches and the spurious and false doctrines of Christendom, it is also important to teach that it is referring to the literal removal of God's people; their homes and their work headquarters from metropolitan districts. This writer believes this is part of the final "loud cry" message and should not be ignored. It is the practical side of the message.

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Such a call will be considered by most to be a form of extremism. And so it is today labeled by many who are in a position that requires them to warn the people of these things. There remains an attitude of soothing assurance and ease about this subject. The notion is propagated that it is entirely permissible to remain in populated centers, and that there is no specific and immediate danger to God's cause by remaining in these places.

While this attitude is puzzling in light of the many reasons offered us in the counsel, it should really not be surprising at all. It has been clearly predicted and it has several historical precedents.

The most striking precedent is perhaps the scenario on which the whole "coming out of Babylon" call is based. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah the call went out to captive Israel that the seventy years of captivity had expired and that it was time to return to the promised land, the land of Canaan. God worked in a providential fashion to prepare the way for Israel to return, and raised up prophets, priests, and authorities to lead the band of captives home.

A strange scenario, however, emerged from this circumstance. A few, zealous Jews, responded to the call to return and quickly prepared for it. But they were indeed a few. The vast majority, by this time settled and at ease in Babylon, *ignored* the call, and to God's consternation desired to remain in their land of captivity. They could not be budged or persuaded to leave no matter how urgent or attractive the promise. A "Laodicean" stupidity came over them, and they would not be moved.

God through his prophets speaks candidly about this frustrating circumstance. It was like the climber in Yosemite National Park who when reached by other climbers, who had risked their lives to rescue him, refused to be rescued.

The circumstance in Babylon was both a literal one and a spiritual

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one. The primary problem was spiritual. They did not care enough for God and his plan to follow his direction. This led them to literally and physically stay where God could not uniquely bless them.

The typological necessity of physically leaving the cities occurs many places in the Scripture. Lot's wife is the classic example. Lot's fated sojourn near, and soon within Sodom, ended tragically. If Lot had not tarried, he would not have lost his wife and most of his family, to the destruction that followed. Yet the real mistake of Lot was not that he didn't move fast enough at the end. The real mistake was that he allowed himself and his family to become too involved there in the first place. Jesus' words ring truer today than ever, "Remember Lot's wife."

The same attitude existed in Egypt, when Israel, miraculously led by God, experienced the Exodus. God wanted them in a place where they could have their freedom and could obey his laws (esp. the Sabbath) without outside interference. But the Exodus from Egypt did not come easily. Israel should have been glad to be "free at last," but history instead describes a long saga of murmuring and complaining to Moses (and the Lord), pining after the flesh-pots of Egypt, refusing to "really" leave the city. In it all the greatest miracle was not the manna, the parting of the Red Sea, the stunning victories, or the fearful plagues, but that God, somehow, got the people, "kicking and screaming," *out* of Egypt!

The same phenomenon apparently occurred just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. Some refused the wide-open opportunity God created, through circumstance and prophetic warning, to leave. Essentially no one survived, physically or spiritually, the terrible ordeal that followed.

The word's "get out" mean "get out." God is not bluffing. Already Seventh-day Adventists have unnecessarily lost their lives in

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metropolitan places because they have ignored this counsel. God would likely have spared them if their work were done according to the plan he has set forth. However, they have not been spared to the cause, for the purpose of giving a wake-up call to those who linger, for their understanding on this issue. God will not bless plans that are made to center our homes and work in the cities. I repeat, He will not. Pray now, and watch earnestly for Divine signals. Then move out as directed, quickly and in earnest. This is the best recommendation on the subject. Even if nothing dire ever happens in the places from which you have moved you will still have made the better choice.

Leaving the Cities

“Out of the cities, is my message at this time. Be assured that the call is for our people to locate miles away from the large cities....” (*Last Day Events*, p. 95; MR 1518, May 10, 1906)

“The Lord calls for His people to locate away from the cities, for in such an hour as ye think not, fire and brimstone will be rained from heaven upon these cities....” (*Ibid*)

“The time is near when the large cities will be visited with the judgments of God. In a little while, these cities will be terribly shaken.” *7 Testimonies*, p. 83.

“Erelong there will such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues. This is the light given to me.” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903

“If in the providence of God we can secure places away from the cities, the Lord would have us do this. There are troublous times before us.” *2 Selected Messages*, p. 359

“This experience of the Israelites was written for the instruction of those who should live in the last days. Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon the dwellers of the earth, the Lord calls upon all who are Israelites indeed to prepare for that event. To parents He sends the warning cry...Get out of the large cities as soon as possible.” *6 Testimonies*, p. 195

Coming Out of Babylon

“For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country (places) where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce.” *Country Living*, p. 21

“A great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.” *8 Testimonies*, p. 28

“During the night season I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God’s appointed means, and get away from the cities. . . Some were loitering, making no determined efforts. The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. . . Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. . . God will reveal from point to point what to do next.” *2 Selected Messages*, p. 354.

“Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together”. . . *Country Living*, p. 10.

“We are not to locate ourselves where we will be forced into close relations with those who do not honor God. . . A crisis is soon to come in regard to the observance of Sunday. . . And we are to be careful not to place ourselves where it will be hard for ourselves and our children to keep the Sabbath. If in the providence we can secure places away from the cities, the Lord would have us do this. There are troublous times before us.” *Country Living*, p. 20

“The time is fast coming when the controlling power of labor unions will be very oppressive. . . Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies.” *Country Living*, p. 9, 10.

“Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions...” *Country Living*, p. 9.

“Purchase a little piece of land, where you can have a garden.” *Country Living*, p. 17

“Parents should get as suitable a place as their means will allow. Though the dwelling may be small, yet there should be land in connection with it, that may be

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cultivated...God will help His people to find such homes outside the cities.” *Country Living*, p. 24.

“Light has been given me that the cities will be filled with confusion, violence, and crime, and that these things will increase till the end of this earth’s history.” *Last Day Events*, p. 110 (7T 84, 1902)

When God’s restraining hand is removed, the destroyer begins his work. Then in our cities the greatest calamities will come.” *Ibid* (3MR, p. 314–1897)

“I have seen the most costly structures in buildings erected and supposed to be fireproof, and just as Sodom perished in the flames of God’s vengeance so will these proud structures become ashes. . . . The flattering monuments of men’s greatness will be crumbled in the dust even before the last great destruction comes upon the world.” *Ibid* (3SM 418–1901)

Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it is becoming more and more evident that those who remain in them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their soul’s salvation.” *Last Day Events*, p. 119 (CL 9–1907)

“Remember Lot’s wife.” Luke 17:32

“O that God’s people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost given to idolatry.” *Last Day Events*, p. 111 (Ev 29–1903)

“The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments.” (*Ibid.*)

No Precipitous Moves

“There is need, great need, of this work being done, and now. Those who have felt at last to make a move, let it not be in a rush, in an excitement, or in a rash manner, or in a way that hereafter they will deeply regret that they did move out...Should some move hastily...and be brought into discouragement, they will reflect, not upon themselves for moving unadvisedly, but upon others who, they will charge, brought a pressure to bear upon them....Let everyone take time to consider carefully; and not be like the man in the parable who began to build, and was not able to finish. Not a move should be made but that movement and all that it portends are carefully considered—everything weighed....
...Look most earnestly to God, the One wise in counsel....The sure promise is, He will direct thy paths. He is infinite in resources.” *Country Living*, p. 25-28.

Coming Out of Babylon

Working From the Suburbs

“As God’s commandment-keeping people we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.” Last Day Events, p. 96 (Ev p. 77,78; 1899)

“The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by God’s people living in them but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming on the earth.’ Ibid (2 SM, p. 358–1902)

“For years I have been given special light that we are not to center our work in the cities. . . .”
Ibid (7T 84–1902)

“Yet Lot could have preserved his family from many evils had he not made his home in this wicked, polluted city. All that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them even if they had lived in a place some distance away from the city.” Ibid (Ev 78–1903)

“The work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with blinding force.” 2SM–142

Eschatological Focus in Revelation 17-19

Having therefore determined in previous chapters the modern identity of Babylon the Great we can now turn to the meaning of events expected to transpire in the remnant of history. We have looked at how a first century Christian might have looked at Revelation 17. We have briefly made note of how Babylon can be identified in the intervening centuries of the Christian era. But there remains one final unfolding of the drama during the final remnant of time.

Prediction can only be approached in general terms and of course with great caution. However, certain facts are evident, and by proper identification of the woman who rides the beast, and the proper identification of the beast and other symbols, a picture of the immediate future emerges.

The Players in the Geo-Religio/Political Endgame

There are several players and principalities that engage during the earth's last great conflict as presented in Revelation 17. Who are these and what roles will they play?:

1. The Beast power
2. The Babylonian power
3. The Ten Horns
4. The King of King and Lord of Lords
5. Those with the King of King and Lord of Lords
6. Satan, and the forms of Spiritualism
7. Other False Prophets (Mohammedism, etc.)

The Beast Power

The interpreter can only be consistent in identifying the Beast with the same power that it always has been through history. When prophecy makes it possible, the same consistent identity should be strictly adhered to. The Beast is consistently the Roman Power.

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However, by the time of the last days the Roman Empire exists only in its civil/religious phase as manifest in the Papacy. There really can be no other responsible interpretation. There is truly only one power that fulfills all the specifications of the beast power in Revelation 13 and that is Rome. The truth of this is made so plain that none need to err. This beast, with the exception of the woman in league with it, is exactly the same beast as appears in Revelation 12 and 13. In fact, there is no real material difference between Revelation 13 and Revelation 17. Both are pictures of two worldly powers in league with each other and supported by one another.

In the eschatological scheme, there is harmonious consistency to see the two powers prominent in Revelation 13 (The Papacy and Apostate Protestantism) as the same two powers appearing in Revelation 17. Unfortunately, few, if any, significant expositors preserve this consistency.

The Babylonian Woman

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the woman who sits on the beast fits very accurately the position and characteristics of fallen Christian religion, especially apostate Protestantism and the nation where it has prospered in recent years. That nation is the United States of America. No other country like the United States can claim to be the global leader in Christian thought, commerce, affluence, and power. In previous prophetic schemes the woman can be identified with the city of Jerusalem, the city of Rome and with the Papal power. But in the last days, when the papal power becomes the usurper of the Roman state's position, then the woman takes on a new and advanced identity.

Therefore the woman and her daughters in the eschatological scheme is chiefly representative of Protestantism and Christian religion in America.

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The Ten Horns

The ten horns EMERGE out of the Roman power and through history they simply mature into the later nations of Europe and Africa. The interpretation that they were the barbaric tribes of Europe, the Franks, Lombards, Anglo-Saxons, etc., is entirely sound.

Identifying a *particular* ten tribes is not necessary though; in fact, it in part defeats the purpose intrinsic in the number ten which more particularly denotes political and judicial completeness. Arguing over which particular ones are valid could result in leaving out some that actually should be retained; and vice-versa. There is given no particular way in the prophecy to exactly identify the ten. But the general number of ten allows latitude for the interpreter to see in history the rise and fall of nations and the development of multi-political divisions. History has indeed brought to the fore nations that started as small horns and then matured into monarchies wearing the diadems or crowns. Therefore the ten horns remain as the nations of Europe and the surrounding areas where Christianity was centered for many centuries.

The People of the King of Kings

The persecuted people of God are not featured prominently in these passages, but the purpose of the whole passage is to show how God will deliver the church from her long-time enemies. The called, the chosen, the faithful, are the faithful “with” the King of Kings, Jesus. They share in the victory that God works on their behalf. The people of the King of Kings are the remnant described in Revelation 12 who keep the commandments of God and have a Christian faith.

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Demonic and Other False Forces

Tied to Revelation 17 is the context of the seventh plague. Armageddon and the Fall of Babylon (essentially the same) are very much a part of Revelation 17. The seventh plague speaks of the fall of Babylon, and Revelation 17 and 18 describe it in detail.

In addition we have noticed thematic ties between the trumpets and the plagues. In the fifth and sixth trumpet history has found fulfillments that involve the Mohammedan aggressions and incursions. Many now laugh at the historical interpretation of these trumpet passages as applying to the Muslim influence in Europe during the Middle Ages. But no power fits better the text of the fifth and sixth trumpets as this false prophet that falls like an evil star into the Christian world. The Christian world is not free from the Moslem factor today, in fact, it is more of a factor than ever before with literally millions if not billions of Muslims in many countries of the world, especially amongst the kings of the East. It is entirely possible that the Moslem world, spurred on by demonic hordes, will again be a part of world events. I believe that it is safe to teach that this will indeed be the case and that we can predict this with certainty. How this specifically plays out we will not attempt to explain here. But please note, the Muslim world will be involved as part of the forces of Spiritualism.

Satan is also represented in the inroads of Spiritism and its science, and its influence in many forms in the present world. It is the spirits of demons and the influence of spiritualism, which will unite the false powers of earth in the last conflict. Satan is directly behind every false religion.

So what will be the general outline of events in this eschatological setting? This we will outline in general:

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The Eschatological Saga of Revelation 17

Here is what I believe at this point may be expected.

First the United States and the forms of Apostate Protestantism are to rise to worldwide prominence. This has already occurred and continues as a trend.

Second, the beast power, the papacy, is to experience a revival of strength and influence geo-politically. This too is also the case already, for the greatest geo-political, civil/religious organization upon the globe is the Roman Catholic Church. It has contributed to the fall of atheistic communism, and has worldwide respect and worship. All the world is “wondering after the beast.” This is a simple fact.

Prophecy says the *beast* of Revelation 17 will enter into an illicit alliance with the *great whore*. We know from prophetic counsel that the United States will reach across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power.

The chief way in which this will ultimately be done is in the forging of a Sunday law and a global economic boycott to all who will not honor the Sunday law.

For what occasion the United States will promote its national Sunday law we are not clearly told. Whether this law will be brought about as a result of crisis or because of religious revival we are ignorant. However, it is very likely that a crisis of particular magnitude will occur that will demand for religious reasons a revival of a pietism. This could well be the trigger necessary. Particular statements suggest that *natural disasters* landing on Christian nations and in particular, America, will be the catalyst for calls toward religious reform. It is possible these will happen on the

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day of the sun, and be interpreted as direct signals from the Almighty that Sunday worship reform is necessary.

The United States will first promote legislation that will contain a Sunday clause. Second, the nation will seek to force upon the world through economic sanctions the Sunday law. What will be the result of this? In the end, this wine of intoxication will turn sour in the stomachs of the kings of the world. They stand afar off, because they can no longer enter into fornication (commerce) with the whore. Perhaps the world approaches economic collapse, or perhaps the United States is blamed for the particular natural disasters or other world and economic problems because of her policies. Whatever, by the time she attempts this move to push a universal Sunday law, *Michael* will stand up. The cup of this nation's woe will be full before God and he will remove his protection from it. "National apostasy will be followed by national ruin."

The Kings of the Earth (Europe, Africa, and Asia), or the Kings of the East, will then "hate" The Whore. This sentiment toward America is already being felt today (2001) and we have noticed it for years. It is a direct fulfillment of prophecy. And yet the complete fulfillment of it awaits the maturity of the making of an image to the beast (Sunday observance).

In Revelation 17 it is clear that the beast (papacy) and the ten horns finally turn against the woman and enter for a short time in league with each other AGAINST THE WHORE. This fact is not given due attention by prophetic interpreters.

Many identify the Papacy with the woman; therefore they immediately determine that the Papacy or Vatican City will fall at the hands of the European states. But the ten horns are in league with the BEAST against the whore. Will the Papacy (the beast or Rome) turn against itself??? Will it enter into league with the

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nations of Europe against itself? This makes no sense. Why would the beast help to destroy its own capital city?

In addition, how can merchants be in despair for not selling their very specifically listed luxury merchandise (Revelation 18) to the puny Papal States? What does the Papacy have to do with flour and wheat and oil, and four-wheeled carts? This is not their interest. It was of interest in the glory days of the Roman Empire. But today it is not.

What will occur, I believe, is that the United States by her religio/political policies will provoke the anger of the nations and that they will come against her. This nation, in the almost final plague will receive punishment from the nations of the world. God will judge her like he did to Babylon of old. He raised up kings from the East to be his agents in administering the punishment. In this same way God will use literally kings that live to the East of America to play the role of *Cyrus* in bringing down Babylon. This event is precisely what is known as the Battle of Armageddon.

Literal Vs. Spiritual

It has become popular to interpret the latter part of Revelation 16 as a “spiritual” conflict and not a literal one. This all seems so reasonable, because spiritual issues are indeed behind all these movements.

Unfortunately, however, there has been an over-reaction by many against “literalism.”

For instance, if Armageddon, the sixth plague, is only a “spiritual” battle or attempt at a battle only---then the rest of the plagues are also only “spiritual.” They don’t literally happen. Likewise, with this kind of reasoning, the coming of Christ is also primarily “spiritual.” Then there is no literal, visible, return. Yet Ellen White

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says the plagues are literal and the coming is literal. More significantly, this is the teaching of Scripture.

The problem with this “spiritual” “cop-out” is that it does not recognize the “direct association” principle in interpreting symbols that we have discussed from the beginning of this study. In addition, it does not recognize the way in which God has worked in past history:

When Israel sought to leave Egypt under Moses there was a severe “spiritual” battle between the Pharaoh and God. This was behind the whole thing. (Cf. PP and its relation to the Great Controversy). Yet God is not *visible* in the plagues and the battle. HE WORKS THROUGH HUMAN AGENTS and earthly circumstances. Satan does the same thing. There are symbolic serpents, beasts, and powers; all through which he speaks. But these symbols represent real nations, visible beings. In the same fashion God works. Therefore, while the battle is *spiritual*, it is also identifiable through human events.

The Loud Cry Message

The message that is to go forth as the last warning message is that “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” The statement is presented in the Scriptures as a prediction (Isaiah). In vision the prophet sees a news reporter coming on a horse reporting that Babylon the great city has been defeated and destroyed. Likewise, in these last days this same message will go forth.

The focus of the message is on spiritual reform, and therefore true “righteousness by faith” is what is underlying the whole message. But the “literal” message is that the United States and the popular churches in their apostate condition are doomed unless they repent.

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There is a call to keep the commandments of God including the Sabbath and to embrace the faith of Jesus (righteousness). This I believe is the message we are to be giving to the world today.

The giving of this message, “preaching the Sabbath more fully,” brings a backlash and a result, however. Part of the result is “false revival.” Just as Jezebel reacted to the reform of Elijah on Carmel so will God’s people be subjected to threatened persecution by the state. The idolatrous sun-worship religion will ultimately carry the day and God’s people will be forced to flee. They will be blamed for the trouble coming upon the nation and the world, yet Sunday legislation will appear to the popular churches and the state to be the answer to worship reform. God’s people will be separated from Babylon; and finally a decree threatening their very existence will in time be enacted. The plagues will then be falling upon the earth; the nations of the world turn upon each other (Rev. 17), and the battle of Armageddon will be quickly interrupted by the coming of the King of Kings to deliver his people (Rev. 19).

The Seven Heads of the Beast

Where are we in the eschatological timeline? The seven heads of the papal beast have a modern counterpart since the healing of the deadly wound of 1798 to 1929:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Pius XI | Pre-1929 to 1939 |
| 2. Pius XII | 1958 |
| 3. John XXIII | 1963 |
| 4. Paul VI | 1978 |
| 5. John Paul I | 1978 |
| 6. John Paul II | 1979 to 2005 |
| 7. Benedict XVI | 2005-- |

Eschatological Focus in Revelation 17-19

We are now living in the time of the seventh “king” and he is not a young man. The seventh king continues for a short time. Then apparently the Lord comes. The last and final attempt against God, the “eighth” king, will come in the form of Satan’s final assault upon the holy city at the end of the millennium. But he will go to perdition, or better translated, “utter and final destruction.”

It must be that the days of the seventh angel are truly upon us. Soon the Lord God Omnipotent will reign. Soon he will gather his beloved to their heavenly home.

The Seven Lamentations

(For the following chiastic scheme I am indebted to Mervyn C. Maxell, *God Cares*, Vol. 2, pp. 462, 463 (quoted))

Accordingly one finds seven songs, all except the last, which have the qualities of a dirge, and are sad:

Rev. 18:1-19:10

A Mighty voice of an angel: "**Fallen is Babylon!**"

B Heavenly voice: "**Come out of her, my people.**"

C Lament of the kings: "**Alas! alas!**"

C' Lament of the merchants: "**Alas! alas!**"

C'' Lament of the seafarers: "**Alas! alas!**"

A' Voice of a mighty angel: "**So shall Babylon. . . be thrown down.**"

B' Heavenly voice: God's people rejoicing at Babylon's fall.

Revelation 18 provides a list a cargo and merchandise that have many interesting characteristics. This list is often skipped over as "filler" material. However, this list has purpose in identifying modern Babylon and indicating the nature of last-day events.

The List of Wares Identifies Modern Babylon:

Rev. 18:12,13 ----The merchandise of.....:

gold, and
silver, and
precious stones, and of
pearls, and
fine linen, and
purple, and

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silk, and
scarlet, and all
thyine wood, and all manner (*aromatic citron wood; spotted wood*)
vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of
most precious wood, and of
brass, and
iron, and
marble, and

cinnamon, and
odours, and (*perfumes*)
ointments, and (*cosmetics, oils*)
frankincense, and
wine, and
oil, and (*olive*)
fine flour, and (*refined, white flour*)
wheat, and
beasts, and (*cattle, etc.*)
sheep, and
horses, and
chariots, and (*spec. "redwn" the four-wheeled cart*)
slaves, and
souls of men. (children, i.e. slaves)

The twenty-eight (4X7) items of merchandise above are significant for the reason that they include luxury items, things that only an affluent nation would import and consume in quantity. The items, though typical of ancient economies are surprisingly modern as well. Without exception the principle type of merchandise in each case fit almost equally well in modern times. In the few cases where the item is not really the same as today there is a modern equivalent. Why is the four-wheeled chariot, for instance, specifically mentioned, when the two-wheeled variety is not?

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Some laugh at the possibility of seeing in this a reference to automobiles. But the correspondence this author believes was intended by the prophetic eye of God. Now I don't believe that the apostle saw automobiles in vision, he thought carts for transportation according to the modes of his day. But the articles mentioned are all used today in greater quantity than ever before, and in similar forms.

Nationally speaking, there can be only one country of the world that could be charted as being or having been the leading importer of the luxuries and necessities in this list: That is the United States of America. Without supplying figures, one with any modern knowledge at all, will easily concede that the chief consumer when considering one single country of these things is America. Households in America commonly have two and three car garages, and the food and the meat of animals is consumed in enormous quantity. Household goods are so plenteous that auctions, yard sales and flea markets are held to manage their over-quantity. America has dealt with merchants for everything from slaves to jewelry. All things dainty and goodly, everything that the soul has lusted after, is available. However, by reason of her costliness (affluence), Laodicean Babylon, sitting like a queen, is really in a miserable state.

For when America pushes her commercial and political ambitions to the place where she puts an unwelcome strangle-hold on the world, including the authoring of world policy which demands Sunday observance at the cost of economic sanctions; when she by her laws tramples upon the rights of conscience, and these actions bring trouble on the world for which she will be blamed, world-sympathy will turn against her and Armageddon will follow.

“A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God’s people will be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin.”

---Ellen G. White

Advent Review and Sabbath Herald

12-18-88

Revelation 19—The Wedding and the Coming of the Bridegroom

The Wedding

The subject of the first part of chapter 19 is the wedding of the Lamb. It is at this time that Jesus lays off his priestly robes, for the privilege of further atonement is past, and he puts on his kingly garments to come and claim his bride. The celebration and mood is easy for anyone to understand and follow when reading the account.

The Coming of the King of Kings

The picture of the coming King of Kings is a picture of the second coming of Christ. The focus is on the “approach” of the *parousia*. The immediate passage is chiasitic in structure and the descriptions are seven-fold. Following are some notes aimed at helping the reader to more fully understand the passage:

- When the dual name of Jesus, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords," is written into Aramaic, and when each consonant is given numerical value, the sum totals "777"---symbolic of perfection. P. Shehan quoted in Robert F. Wall, New International Biblical Commentary; Revelation, p. 241.
- Merrill C. Tenney, Interpreting Revelation, Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, 1957, finds that "Lord of Lords" is a Hebraic expression translated from Deut. 10:17. (p. 107)
- The name on the vesture and thigh I explain as this:

The key is the antecedent to the vesture or $\mu\alpha\tau\iota\omicron\nu$, garment. It is always assumed that this is the rider, who, as Jesus, is the central figure. However, the actual passage first pictures the HORSE.

According to a Syriac variant (quoted here from R.H. Charles who merely cites the variant, Vol. II., p. 137) the word for the garment is not the "himation" but a "himaton," there in the plural/genitive, " $\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$." The variant lacks the

Revelation 19—The Wedding and the Coming Bridegroom

diminutive iota, which should indicate a larger and more general garment. This could be the horse's blanket then and not the rider's garb, which has already been mentioned in the previous verses as "soaked" in blood. Would not every king have the horse blanket, often seen in medieval times with royalty, knights, and nobility? It's doubtful that the Kings of Kings would ride a horse minus the typical regalia.

This then could answer the question of where the name is written; for plain to see is the embroidered name emblazoned over that part of the blanket that covers the horse's thigh for the pronoun "his" agrees in case with either the "masculine" horse "hippos," or the masculine rider.

Why the Angel in the Sun?

(Revelation 19:17-21)

The reason is because there are two scriptural causes given for the slaying of the wicked at *Christ's coming*. This coming is presently being described in the appearance of the figure on the white horse accompanied by the armies of heaven (starting in the immediately previous verses):

The wicked will be slain by:

1. The sword of his mouth (Rev. 19:15,21)
and . . .
2. The **brightness** of his coming.

2Ths. 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Isa. 11:4 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.

*Matt. 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.** (also Mk 13:26; Luke 21:27)*

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The actual coming of Christ will be incredibly bright and glorious. It is usually described thus: (Rev. 1:7, 6:16, 10:1, 2, etc.)

- The sword of his mouth, of course, is the powerful word of God (See notes on Revelation 1). When God speaks things instantaneously are created. When he speaks and so chooses, things are instantaneously destroyed.

The Context of 2 Thess. 2:8

The subject of the first twelve verses of 2 Thess. 2 is about deceivers, false apostles, Satan, and the "man of sin" (2:3,4). Also included are those "who received not the love of the truth" (2:10), and who falsely worked "with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2:9).

In Revelation 19:17-21) it is these very ones who are indeed destroyed. The beast and 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" (19:20). Thus the "man of sin;" the beast, and the great deceivers described by the apostle Paul (particularly the false prophet), and all those who loved not the truth are destroyed.

According then, to the bi-sectional parallels in this section, we have in Revelation 18:1 a bright angel. Then in the other half of the section, we also find a bright angel, this time a destroying angel representing the brightness and wrath of God.

The Importance and Purpose of Prophecy

To begin with, prophecy comes from God, who is our only reliable guide and sovereign. Any message directed toward humanity from the most important person in the entire universe should be considered important for this reason alone.

But prophecy is more. It essentially proves the existence of God and like His creatorship sets him apart from every other power or creature.

It rests on the premise that God can know the future and that this sets him aside as the true God. He says:

- “I am God. . . declaring the end from the beginning.” Isaiah 46:9-11
- “I have declared the former things. . . . and they came to pass.” Isaiah 48:3

The phenomenon of predictive prophecy is one thing that even God claims proves his existence and power. It is an important evidence of our faith, and should be used to validate our faith in God and to teach others about him.

What is Prophecy?

Prophecy is the product of inspiration that is delivered through a prophet. Prophecy is particularly the words and message of the prophet.

What is a prophet?

1. A prophet (Hebrew: *nabi*) is literally “one who forth-tells.”
2. Particularly a prophet in the biblical sense is one who “speaks for God.”

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3. A prophet in the technical sense is not one who merely makes predictions, but one who speaks all the counsel of God.

What is the Purpose of Prophecy?

Prophecy is used by God for many reasons:

- To prepare men and women to live with knowledge and understanding in their world.
- To attract men and women to the seriousness of this probationary time
- To inform us as to the meaning of the future
- To increase faith in God

1) First then, prophetic materials are useful in making men and women aware of their purpose in this world and helps them face the future with hope and confidence. The first purpose of prophecy is make God's words and warnings meaningful and relevant to the Christian who reads them. Prophecy makes the Word of God relevant to any person living at any particular age of this world's history. Says the prophet Amos:

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7

2) The second purpose of prophecy is to call men to moral preparation and repentance. The ultimate purpose of prophecy is to draw men and women to God. Its purpose is therefore moral.

“He sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord. . . .” 2 Chron. 24:19

“Believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chron. 20:20

3) The third purpose is the inform us of the future:

The Importance and Purpose of Prophecy

“There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known....what shall be in the latter days.” Daniel 2:28

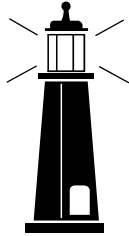
4) Another purpose of prophecy is to increase our faith. Jesus told his disciples:

“I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.” John 14:29

The Source and Certainty of True Prophecy

God, of course, is the source of all true prophecy.

- “For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21.
- “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in the dark place, until the day



dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:21

The Characteristics of Prophecy

Prophecy then is a light in darkness. It has several aspects that make it an essential and valuable to the last day Christian.

- It is sure and certain
- It is wise to heed it
- It will light our path as we see the “day” approaching

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Apocalyptic Prophecy

In the book of Revelation prophecy is in the form known as “apocalyptic” prophecy.

Apocalyptic prophecy is preoccupied with unveiling the future. It has an eschatological focus, dealing with last day events. The chief examples of apocalyptic prophecy in the Bible are the books of Daniel, Revelation, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and certain passages such as Matthew 24.

The characteristics of apocalyptic prophecy include:

1. A focus on the contest between good and evil.
2. The use of code words, signs, and symbols.
3. Perspective with a future focus.

Ten Essential Principles of Interpretation

It is time to review and reiterate the biblical rules for understanding prophecy. If these rules have been read and digested before, the reader may choose to move forward in the study. However, if these rules have not been studied before this, the reader is strongly encouraged to look carefully at these. It is always tempting to skip over such chapters of any book. However these principles are so important to understand!

The Bible supplies certain rules and conditions for the interpretation of prophecy. Thousands of students ignore or violate these and go straight into determining the meaning of the text with no consideration of the safeguards and keys to proper interpretation. As a result there come numerous opinions and various interpretations and ideas. Arguments result, and uncertainty prevails about the true meaning of the text, and it becomes subject to everyone's private interpretation.

This confusion is unnecessary and in many ways can be avoided. There may always be diverse ways of looking at the Bible's grand truths, but God intends that there be unity of thought about the general meaning of his Word. He wants his people informed and he wants everything to be done decently and in order. He challenges the student of the word to be a careful, skilful workman, rightly dividing the word of truth. There can be no uniformity of understanding unless every true student of prophecy uses the same biblically prescribed tools to build his structure of understanding. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

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1. The *Direct* Use of Symbols

The book of Revelation is almost entirely made up of symbols. It is written in “sign language.” Correctly understanding these symbols is the key to understanding the book. *Symbols are abbreviated code objects or expressions that represent realities beyond themselves.* However, there can be no ultimate agreement on what these symbols stand for without establishing rules for symbolic application as well as knowing how to properly apply corroborative evidence from other interpretive data.

Apocalyptic literature, or prophetic literature is a specialized type of literature. It has its own particular characteristics and in some ways is interpreted differently than the rest of the Bible. *Apocalyptic* stands for a classification of literature that reveals hidden truths, for the word “Apocalypsis,” (Revelation), means to unveil or reveal something. Apocalyptic literature has unique characteristics:

1. There are many symbolic representations, such as beasts, and strange figures.
2. There is a particular focus on the conflict between good and evil. In other words there are two distinct sides to the story. Theologians refer to this concept as “dualism.”
3. There is distinct *determinism* in an apocalyptic work. In other words, there is a predicted outcome to the story. There is the working up to a climax, and a resolution where one side wins. There is a purpose implied in the description or story, and the author seeks to make his particular point through the mysterious narrative.
4. Often apocalyptic literature is pseudonymous, in other words the author is not identified. In many of the extra-biblical apocalypses, the author will pretend to be Enoch, Abraham, or some ancient personage. It is known usually that they aren’t really the true

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author, and so the work turns out to be fictitious. Because the books of Revelation, Daniel, Zechariah, Ezekiel, and others have many similarities to other such apocalypses, critics have often questioned their authenticity.

But the canonized biblical books are not of the same class as the extra-biblical apocalypses and theologians have made a great mistake in classing all apocalyptic as similar in scope and quality. Because a counterfeit dollar bill is made to look similar to a real one, does not make the true dollar bill a fraud. In the same way, the books of Daniel and Revelation are books of canonical quality and have authors of clear identification. While prophetic and apocalyptic in nature they are genuine works demanding our consideration and study.

The most important aspect required when understanding and elucidating apocalyptic prophecy is the consistent and specified use of symbols. This matter must be addressed precisely and carefully.

1. The Direct Understanding of Symbols

Apocalyptic symbols, I feel, should be understood on the basis of what one might call the principle of “direct association.” That is, they are not as some suppose elusive and ambiguous generalities with merely a “spiritual” or “philosophical” application. They are instead definite indications of real powers, temporal or heavenly objects, beings, or systems. They do have valid spiritual or secondary applications, of course. But enough reality should remain present to ensure that the prescribed truth is not spiritualized away into nothingness.

The principle might be further defined as the “once-removed” principle. The prophetic purposes, as it were, are pictured in a symbolic fashion that is *one* step away from the reality they

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represent; yet at the same time they are in actuality symbols that stand for real beings, events, and governments.

- For example; prophetic "Babylon," should not be seen as *literal* Babylon, which is the *same* and veritable entity, and therefore not a symbol at all. Co-identity is *too* direct.

Babylon, then is a code name or symbol for something else. But to apply the "direct principle" as stated above, the symbol "Babylon" indicates a *real, religio-political government*; like perhaps, historical Rome. This is only one step removed, and makes the symbol "Babylon" a symbol for the "Roman Empire," or whatever reality the other indicators determine it to be.

But to say that Babylon is symbolic "only," or that it is *only* a fictitious designation for "evil," "spiritual corruption," or "false religion," relegates it to a further dimension and renders it quite general and indefinite. It becomes very ambiguous, and not very informative or useful.

By moving away from directness of application, such a large aperture of understanding opens that almost any interpretation is accommodated. This is where most commentators leave us. The abuse of the principle of *direct association* is why opinions vary so much over interpretation of the Revelation. The importance of honoring this principle then cannot be over-stated. Blurring the realities to which the symbols point compromises the meaning and purpose for the message sent in the book. Most commentators in the interest of being objective greatly violate this principle and render the book almost entirely meaningless and only darkly relevant.

Prophecy employs many pictures and symbols. Examples are such things as wild animals, horns, trees, water, etc. If we don't understand what is meant by these, one can quickly go down the

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wrong track. The greatest violation to prophecy is the misinterpretation of symbols.

There are many examples of how interpretations vary causing the whole meaning of the prophecy to change. Roman Catholics believe that the woman standing in the sun in Revelation 12 is the Virgin Mary, especially because of the *Fatima* visions. Others do not believe this to be the case---for good reasons. Some think the beast is a future antichrist, an evil person who will come at the end of time. Many religionists believe the 144,000 to apply to themselves or to literal modern Jews. Evangelists teach that Armageddon is a plain in the Middle East where all the powers of the earth will meet for battle. Various interpretations are popularized for the seven heads and ten horns of the beast. These are only a few examples, but the meaning of Revelation, for instance, almost totally resides in the interpretation of these few symbols.

Why are symbols used?

- They are used to preserve the prophecies themselves.
- They are used to attract interest to their content
- They are used to clothe truth with power and simplicity

Symbols then are code objects or expressions that represent realities beyond themselves.

Rule #1

The first rule is that symbols in prophecy stand for definite and specific realities immediately related to the symbol.

For instance, one commentator tells us that the pale horse in the seals represents “atheism.” How can one derive “atheism” from a pale horse? Why not a red, or black one? Therefore, to avoid digressing on this particular interpretive issue, the point is that the reader must find a more definite and direct application that can be

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verified, and is directly applicable to whatever a pale horse was intended to represent.

Babylon appears in the prophecy of Revelation. How does one identify it? Is it the Antichrist? Is it Hitler? As one can see there must be a clear, definable process for understanding the symbol.

Some wish to make *literal identification* out of a *symbol*. In other words Babylon is Babylon, the Euphrates is the Euphrates, and so forth. But in this case Babylon is not a symbol at all. And is there to be a literal Babylon in the last days?

- The Bible teaches clearly that literal Babylon would be no more (Isaiah 13:19-21). Therefore it cannot be literal Babylon for then it would not be a symbol.

But if one applies the principle of direct association, or the “once-removed” principle a more responsible interpretation will be reached.

- Old Babylon was a literal, global, religio-political power that dominated God’s chosen people and from which they later came out from.
- Therefore, “prophetic” Babylon should be a modern religio-political power that attempts to dominate and overcome God’s people and from which God calls his modern people to come away from.

An example of a power that fits this scenario and is verifiable in other ways is the Roman Empire in both its pagan and advanced papal phases. Such an interpretation honors the direct association principle and is a more responsible interpretation when all things are considered.

The mistake of many is to guess at or supply their own interpretation, which for other students of prophecy is arguable and

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indefinite. Popular commentators tell us that Babylon is Nero, or atheism, occultism, falsity, secularism, or the like. However, while such characteristics fit Babylon in a secondary sense, the primary meaning must first be established. Ambiguous generalities blur the specific prophetic purpose and instead of unveiling the mystery rather deepens it.

By applying the direct association principle to such things as the:

- the angel at the altar (Rev. 8:3),
- the angel with foot on the sea and land (Rev. 10),
- and the serpent (Rev. 12),

one can usually arrive at consistent meaning for understanding the rest of the book. Secondary or “spiritual” interpretations are important and valid. But they can lead to confusion and ambiguity if the prophecy is limited to it.

Rule #2

Let prophecy interpret its own symbols first in the immediate context and then broadened if necessary to include all the rest of reliable Scripture.



Examples of prophetic self-interpretation are:

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Water

Water stands for people and nations.

- “The waters...are peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Rev. 17:15

Beasts

Beasts stand for nations.

- “These great beasts... are four kings, which shall arise out of



the earth.” Daniel 7:17.

The Testimony of Jesus

The testimony of Jesus=the prophetic writings.

- “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Rev. 19:10.

Rule #3

When going outside of the immediate context one should usually consider more than one text or reference when interpreting the symbol. One must consider all the data.

For example “Trees and Foliage” show up in Revelation and other places. What do they represent? Do they represent the wicked or the righteous?

If one goes to Psalm 1 the righteous are likened to a tree by the water. “He shall be like a tree.”

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But in other places a tree is compared to a wicked nation.

The fig tree in Matthew 21:18-20 obviously represented the corrupt Jewish nation. The heathen king Nebuchadnezzar is represented by a tree in the prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 4:10).

Therefore, *more data* in the immediate and the larger context must be considered before jumping to a conclusion on what trees represent in prophecy.

Rule #4

The symbol must be consistent with history of religion and how it relates to the world in which it interacts:

Examples of this are identifying the beast or Antichrist with single world figures like Hitler, Napoleon, Hussein, or any such personage or power. In essence, the moral purpose of prophecy, a matter considered later on in this study must be honored. This will limit how secular events are considered in prophecy, and narrow the possibility of interpretation.

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Rule #5

Rule number five is to pray repeatedly for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This rule goes for all prophetic interpretation. The promise is that “He [the Spirit] will guide you into all truth.”

This is, of course, the most important rule of all interpretation and is underestimated by students of prophecy. It must be that the student must plead with God for understanding until his opinion becomes an unassailable conviction. This is a very real process and works for any student. The student with a heart toward truth and holiness will be rewarded with understanding far beyond the greatest theologians on these passages. Willing to submit to God’s purposes, passages will open to the understanding and the reader’s heart will thrill with the import of these symbols. The student must pray and continue to pray lest he finds his way down a wrong track.

To summarize these rules for direct association of symbols:

1. Interpret according to the direct association principle.
2. Consult the immediate context first
3. Gather support from the larger and more comprehensive context with *several* verses or references.
4. Interpret in light of broad historical, religious, and political movements in a consistent fashion.
5. Pray for the Spirit’s guidance.

Examples of Typical Symbols in the Prophetic Books are suggested as follows:

- Winds= Strife, and trouble (Jeremiah 25:31-33; 49:36,37; 4:11-13; Zechariah 7:14.
- Heads= Superpowers; dynastic kingdoms; governments (Rev. 17:3,9,10)

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- Horns= Powers or kings EMERGING from a greater power (Daniel 7:24; 8:5, 21,22; Zech. 1:18,19; Rev. 17:12; 5:6).
- Sword= Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Hebrews 4:12)
- Seal; *sfragiv*= Mark of Approval (Romans 4:11; Rev 7:2).
- Mark; *caragma*= Mark of Disapproval and Slavery (Rev. 13:17; 14:9-11)
- Woman= A Church
 - Pure woman: Jer. 6:2; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-27 (True Church).
 - Impure woman: Ezekiel 16:15-58; 23:2-21; Hosea 2:5; 3:1 (False Church).
- Mountains= Political or Religio-political powers (Isa. 2:2,3; Jer. 17:3; 31:23; 51:24, 25; Eze. 17:22,23; Dan. 2:35).
- The Sun= The glory of God, his character or everlasting gospel (Psalm 84:11; Mal. 4:2; Matt. 17:2; John 8:12; 9:5).
- White Robes= Righteous character (Rev. 19:8; 3:5; 7:14).
- Day= Literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

In conclusion, there are hundreds of symbols, and understanding these symbols is the most important aspect of proper prophetic interpretation. Ever so much rides on how they are reckoned. Following are some further key symbols used in prophecy. The meanings are given to challenge the reader to apply for himself the direct meaning, and to see how important it is to properly apply the meaning to symbols.

Key Symbols:

- white hair=eternal nature
- eyes of fire=All knowing and searching gaze

oil
wine, wine of wrath
grass

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blood
hail
fire
altar
thunder & lightning
Armageddon
falling stars
moon
wounds
clouds
lion
lamb
serpent
pillars
Jews
loud voices
forehead
hand
Babylon
Gog and Magog
brimstone
foundations
sea
bottomless pit
smoke
boats

Symbols come in many forms. Numbers are also symbols, and their symbolic value is usually more important than their mathematical value. All this must be understood while working an interpretation. The next section addresses the meaning of numbers and their direct symbolism.

Numbers in Prophecy

“There is a sacred significance in numbers. . . not fanciful; but proceeding from the very nature of things, well settled in the Scriptures, and universally acknowledged in all the highest and deepest systems of human thought and religion.” ---- Joseph Seiss

One

One is the source and parent of all numbers.

In the Scripture one is first cause or beginning (Deut. 6:4).

1

equated with God who is the of all creation (Mark 12:32;

“One” appears prophetic



scores of times in prophecy with significance.

Two

Two represents basic relational and reflexive completeness. . . .

2



Marital or unified oneness is usually intended when two is used; thus the idea of a mutual and corresponding helper fit for one another.

--Two stands for perfection of equality and balance; per a scale; or feet, hands, horns, etc.

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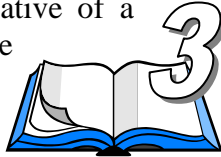
Three

Three represents corporate or familial completeness. . .

--The Trinity are three in one; a strong triangle.

--Three is indicative of a family; the product of two.

--Two and three are what constitute a church; for it says “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

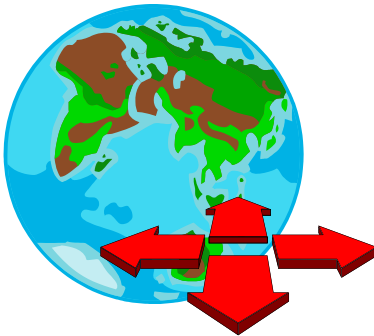


Four

Four is the universal number.

It represents spatial and dimensional completeness; it is especially used in conjunction with this earth.

It connotes physical completeness.



There are:

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- Four directions
- Four seasons to complete the cycle of the year
- Four winds
- Four quarters of the earth
- Four living creatures that represent creation
- Four rivers went out from Eden
- A Foursquare city appears—thus includes all

Five

Five represents progress; yet incompleteness; It is particularly associated with prolonged waiting:

In the fifth seal of Revelation, the martyrs are encouraged to endure a little longer.

In the fifth trumpet there is five months of prolonged torment.

In the parable told by Jesus of the ten bridesmaids, there are two groups of five, who **wait** for the



bridegroom.

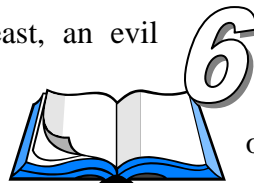
Six

Six represents man in his evil and imperfect condition. Six falls just short of the perfect seven:

In the sixth seal, or vial, or trumpet the judgment is directed toward mankind, especially the wicked.

Six is the number of the beast, an evil earthly power administrated by a man.

The crucifixion of Christ



occurred on the sixth day.

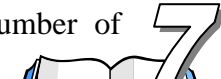
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In many cultures, and for many centuries Friday, the sixth day was considered the common day of execution.

The great image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king has its dimensions listed in multiples of six.

Six represents Satan, evil men, and general evil on this earth. It represents a condition that is almost complete, but tragically short of the divine ideal. It is the “almost” number of man, who was made in the image of God (on the sixth day), but is lower than God and the angels. It is the “human” number.

Seven

Seven is the number of  dispensational fullness; it relates to time and temporary completeness:

Examples are very numerous:

The seven churches are represented as fulfilling historic time throughout the Christian dispensation. It is more than a number of perfection and righteousness for the evil beast of Revelation too has seven heads.

Seven is the number of complete succession over probationary time.

It is a cyclical number and represents the weekly cycle till it reaches its final Sabbath rest.

There are essentially no sevens in Revelation 21 and 22. This is by design. It is not therefore the number of perfect and final completeness, but of probationary completeness.

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Eight

Eight is the number of resurrection and new beginnings:

The eighth week.



resurrection of Christ was on the day of Passion Week; it began a new

Noah and his family were eight souls. It is appropriate for he was preserved in the ark to make a new beginning for this earth.

A newborn child was circumcised on the eighth day.

David was the eighth son, who made a new beginning for Israel, taking over from the unfaithful Saul.

Nine

Nine probably has but is included the reader will be able to



no prophetic significance, here because if it is left out, blame this author with not count!

Sometimes the number nine has been equated with the work of the Holy Spirit; for example, nine fruits of the Spirit are mentioned in Galatians 5:22,23.

Ten



Ten is the number of judicial and political completeness:

The beast of Revelation has ten horns; therefore

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this represents governmental completeness.

Ten is the number of law. There are Ten Commandments; and these are the basis of judgment.

The faithful are often tested for ten days, or for some multiple of ten. It is the judgment number. When judgment occurs ten thousand times ten thousands holy wait on the court.

The ten virgins in the parable therefore represent the church under judgment.

Eleven

Eleven has no distinctive significance except in being eternal twelve.



prophetic
one short of the

Twelve

Twelve is the number of final and eternal completeness:



There are twelve gates, foundations, fruits, months, etc., in Revelation.

In fact in Revelation 21 and 22 there are probably twelve twelves---

Twelve is the number of God's kingdom and God's people.

Combinations of numbers are also significant:

666 is the ultimate and powerful human evil, multiplied.

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1,000; ten times ten, represents the ultimate judgment number.

Seventy times seven (7X10X7) would represent judgment (10) over a block of probationary time (7). This is why the Jewish nation before the time of Christ was given 490 years, seventy times seven, to “get their act together.”

Combinations of the numbers four, ten, seven and others at times can have prophetic significance, though one must desist from carrying their significance too far as some have done. Corollary information from the context can often indicate if the number significance is intended.

Conclusion:

Therefore we have summarized the symbolic significance of numbers that occur for a reason in prophecy. It is part of the interpretation of prophecy to include the significance of these numbers.

Numbers and Symbols must find consistent resolution according to their associated meanings and their precise biblical understanding. When this is done, prophecy will reach purer understanding and a meaningful, informative result.

The Ten Essential Principles----(Continued)

2. The Use of Cycles and Parallel Structures

The book of Revelation is organized in cycles similar to the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. In fact Daniel and Revelation must be studied together. It is a parallel prophecy. The obvious sequential arrangement of such sub-sections as the churches, seals, trumpets, and plagues indicate a cyclical arrangement. Though there is a movement from historical sections in the first of the book to eschatological sections in the latter part of the book, the use of these cycles should restrain those who would conclude that the book is to be interpreted only as "continuous" or "straight-line" from beginning to end. Recognition of unique patterns, repetition, mirroring, and recapitulation are important in the scheme of interpretation.

3. The Law of Heavenly Counterparts

In many instances in Bible prophecy there is a principle operating which many do not recognize but that is very important.

The principle is that for certain earthly events or objects there is also presented a corresponding heavenly reality.

The heavenly object or activity is the truest and highest figure, while the earthly object or activity is a shadow. This principle appears in places outside of apocalyptic prophecy. Jesus told his disciples, "What is bound on earth, is also bound in heaven. . . ." What he meant in part is that heaven intends to work in concert with the earthly church. Heaven and earth are corresponding counterparts.

An Old and New Testament example of this is the sanctuary or temple of Israel. There was a heavenly sanctuary after which was designed an earthly sanctuary that was built first in the wilderness of Sinai. "For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with

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hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself; now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24

In Revelation 14:6-12 three angels are seen flying in the midst of heaven. But are they literal angels? In actuality earthly angels or “messengers” give the eternal gospel. Heavenly angels are pictured as “angel actors;” counterparts to the people on earth who proclaim the messages.

A third example is when John sees in Revelation a woman standing in the heavens. Her child is threatened by a great red dragon (Rev. 12:1-3), which identified as Satan, the Old Serpent. In Revelation 13 a similar beast is clearly identified as a power out of the nations that persecutes the saints. How can this terrible beast represent both Satan and the false power that works at his command?

It is clear when the principle of heavenly counterparts is used: Satan, the dragon (a heavenly being) works and speaks through the apostate empire (and earthly power) to persecute and tempt, just as Satan worked and spoke through a literal serpent in Eden. Therefore both applications apply because they are seen as earthly and heavenly counterparts.

A fourth example is the angels to the seven churches. Are they heavenly angels or earthly angels? Says one Bible writer: “God’s ministers are symbolized by the seven stars, which he . . . has under special care and protection.” (E.G. White in *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 581)

Further examples that occur in the book of Revelation are stars, angels with various tasks, the twenty-four elders, and living creatures. The kingdom of heaven that Jesus taught in essence used this principle. Revelation ends with a heavenly Jerusalem that is the heavenly counterpart to the earthly Jerusalem.

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There are many counterpart symbols in prophecy. By realizing their usage, whole passages reach resolution and understanding when otherwise they would often remain a puzzle. Recognizing them is important to the whole process of interpretation.

4. The Use of Synonymic Parallels

The systematic recognition of “synonymic parallels” this author considers to be for the most part an original contribution to the study of the book of Revelation. Through their agency many interpretational windows are opened. In many instances they become a key to understanding the use of symbols and provide one of the reasons that certain prophetic images are expressed in the way they are. *Synonymic parallels* also prove to a certain extent the literary unity of the book and show that it is a harmonious work and not a collection of dislocated documents arranged by a careless editor. They prove the general organization of the book.

“Synonymic parallels” are basically symbols and ideas that are thematically related. In effect they are “word-cousins,” that recur and repeat throughout the book. This author does not insist that these parallels as catalogued in the following pages are all correctly understood in every detail; because to initially discover them can be painstaking and difficult. Editions have occurred at regular intervals as passage after passage opened to greater understanding. But the presence of these parallels are too numerous and too symmetrical to be accidental.

Breaking the book into sections one can find these parallels present in every section. *The exact same word or object is not used particularly*, but a **synonym** or similar object is used. Synonymic parallels are “word-sisters” that unify the document and tighten the range of interpretation.

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- For instance, a dual, two-dimensional object shows up in each section, or in each half of a given section. In the first half of the first section (the Churches) we find mentioned a "two-edged" sword. In the second half, we do not find a two-edged sword, but we do find a town expressed as a "double" town; *Sardeis (plural)*, meaning "two sards," indicating the upper and lower town. This pattern goes through out the book. After this appears a yoke or balance, a horse with two riders, a right foot with a left foot, two candle stands, two wings, two horns, etc. etc. Often when these parallels are tallied at the end they number 7, 14, or some multiple of seven.

- The symbol or word is usually is so well chosen that it has multiple nuances that contribute to an additional thread or theme of thought. To illustrate, one can take the same two-edged sword noted above. Not only is this sword a symbol denoting duality, but also we know that a sword is made of iron. Likewise in every section is found something made of iron. The complimenting half of the churches section mentions a "rod of iron," and so forth through the book.

- The same symbol (a sword) is used again for something sharp, or with a sharp point. Consequently we find later in the book other things, strategically placed, with sharp points. Sickles, horns, scorpion stingers, machete's, reeds, lion's teeth, etc.

Amazingly, one can easily find between 100-200 such parallel ideas that relate directly to other sections in the book, all within the space of a few verses each time! These parallels largely explain the appearance of many strange figures; such as a woman clothed with the sun and having a crown of twelve stars, with child, etc. For interest a more complete scheme of parallels and synonyms are thus provided in volumes four and seven. In these volumes several thought lines are identified. Any student is welcome to take them further. I have found that by searching for an apparently missing symbol in one section often brings about a clearer understanding of an already ambiguous or enigmatic expression in that place or

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another. These parallels are always in a state of addition and edition. I have often felt my heart strangely warmed as I have traced these in my meditation and memorization of the marvelous Apocalypse. A grasp of biblical Greek and Hebrew has been an enormous and rewarding tool in this endeavor.

Appearing also in this study is what are called “bi-sectional” parallels. These are really the same as synonymic parallels but are limited to demonstrating these parallels in the opposing halves of a given section. These isolate the comparison to a specific subsection such as the churches, seals, etc. The pattern is found to be only roughly chiasmic, but as sure as the sun is in the sky, a corresponding parallel appears in each section. I feel that recognition of these parallels is an absolute must for responsible interpretation.

5. The Control of Prophetic Testimony

The author takes more seriously than some the control on interpretation given through the biblical prophets and by the ministry of Ellen G. White. Many wish to point out that dependence upon such writings as hers is forbidden, and the writings are not to be openly used in biblical exegesis. The claim is made that the recommendation of Ellen White herself was to largely ignore her writings when studying the Bible in a technical fashion. Indeed it was the admonition of Ellen White to depend on the Bible and the Bible only, and not to depend on her. However, to take this position at face value is not the complete picture.

Some insistently point out that Ellen White herself referred to herself as a "lesser light," and that we should not lean on her for understanding for many of the theological problems presented in the *Revelation* and other Bible books. To them the term “lesser light” means some form of degraded inspiration. They are anxious to make observations relative to her humanity, her limited understanding, her borrowing of ideas and terms, and the liberal

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editing of her writings by those in charge of them. A favorite observation by such expositors is that she is "devotional" writer and not a "theologian."

These observations all seem credible and reasonable to the hearer and reader at first. But this author after examination of such reasoning finds this position untenable and inaccurate.¹ These assertions contain a degree of truth. But taken at face value they still represent puzzling and inconsistent thinking.

Now the author does not believe that Ellen G. White knew all there was to know on these subjects, or that she never made human errors, or that she didn't grow in her understanding over the years of her ministry. But he does believe that her comprehensive testimony is significant enough that it cannot be ignored when doing

¹ E.G. White, 9 MR, pp. 198, 199:

The Danger of Undermining Confidence in the Testimonies—"The enemy has made his masterly efforts to unsettle the faith of our own people in the testimonies, and when these errors come in they **claim to prove all the positions by the Bible**, but they misinterpret the Scriptures. They make bold assertions, as did Elder Canright, and **misapply the prophecies** and the Scriptures to prove falsehood. And, after men have done their work in weakening the confidence of our churches in the testimonies, they have torn away the barrier, that unbelief in the truth shall become widespread, and there is no voice to be lifted up to stay the force of error. This is just as Satan designed it should be, and those who have been preparing the way for the people to pay no heed to the warnings and reproofs of the testimonies of the Spirit of God will see that a tide of errors of all kinds will spring into life. **They will claim Scripture as their evidence**, and deceptions of Satan in every form will prevail."--Letter 109, 1890, p. 5. (To W. C. White and J. E. White and wife, Dec. 6, 1890.)

8MR, p. 320:

"All these truths are immortalized in my writings. The Lord never denies His word. Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, **but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.**"

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interpretation. In fact, in many cases the answer that has been particularly elusive is often miraculously provided by what is called even in the Revelation, the "Spirit of prophecy," as if it were fortuitously known that help would be needed for that particular difficulty. It is a tenable biblical position that a later prophet can by God's design be instrumental in unlocking a sealed prophecy that was given in the past.

On the opposite hand there are also some, who claim to take a conservative view of the prophetic gift, yet who still take preposterous positions or foster new interpretations that on closer examination contradict the testimony of inspiration. In this they go way beyond the prophetic control. This I believe is equally dangerous ground, and generally leads to erroneous conclusions anyway.

The consistent position, I believe, is to regard a prophet as one who has an above average understanding of God (theology), and whose words carry such a high degree of probability, that even in the face of seeming impossibility it is unsafe and irresponsible to take numerous positions that do not harmonize with the prophet's words. Picking at the process of how the prophets testimony was formed, or at the human condition of the writer is wholly and almost totally irrelevant. Either, they are a prophet, or they are not. Either they are inspired fully or not. The expositor is free to ignore the testimony or to disbelieve it. But absurdity results when one seems to take a neutral or halfway position.

It is not unthinking or irrational to take the position that the inspired writings are to be trusted *and utilized*, even as they are, far beyond those of any so called "theologian" or "competent scholar." The author finds it safer to dismiss anything, no matter how attractive or reasonable, if it contradicts the testimony given to the church. Having read hundreds of books and documents on the subject has led me to believe that most commentators know so little about the

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actual meaning of Revelation anyway; because they have not this control or assistance. And then, I ask, why should we, to some degree, appeal to *them* for answers?

6. The Law of Time-Calibrated Fulfillments

This is basically the law of multiple fulfillments. This misunderstood prophetic tool has been too quickly discarded by hundreds of students and commentators. Just as frightful has been the abuse of this method. The author begs the reader to think this through clearly and not dismiss it because of the bias and blindness of many historicists, or because of the license and evasions of futurists. Without an understanding of this principle much of the prophetic book is lost to understanding or relevance. A proper understanding of this principle then is paramount (Cf. Volume 2, chapter 1).

The principle rules that control these fulfillments are:

1. There must usually be permission from another inspired writer to apply a passage in this way.
2. Further fulfillments should not be entertained when the passage or context of the passage already identifies the symbol for the reader.

With these careful restraints, the use of further fulfillments can be very helpful, and in some cases essential for current application to each generation.

7. The Control of Contextual and Literary Examination

Especially the golden rule of context cannot be over emphasized. In addition, the careful use of lexical, contextual, grammatical analysis is essential. The historical/critical method has its place. But the basic rule of immediate biblical context is most essential in all phases. For example, it can place such a place as "Armageddon,"

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at least typologically and geographically, where it belongs and not where millions have irresponsibly put it. The consideration of immediate context within the book of Revelation itself is generally of more value than the influence of other biblical books or extra-biblical sources. The rule of context means that each passage is first investigated with regard to its immediate context and then broadened only if necessary to the rest of the Bible. Only with such restraints does the Bible rightly become its own interpreter.

8. The Use of Biblical Sources

It is well established that the book of Revelation is a mosaic of Old Testament passages and allusions to those passages. The proper understanding of each source passage and each allusion is necessary to properly understand the book. The Revelation may apply the Old Testament passage in a different way, but the accurate understanding of the primary text largely elucidates the further meaning. It is also important to realize that the understanding of Revelation is more directly tied to the Old Testament scriptures than is commonly admitted by the historical-critical school, who try to put too much emphasis on the political and historical situation of the secular Roman world. The understanding of the *Apocalypse* is more clearly based in the Scriptures and in Judaism than in the understanding of Gnosticism, Mysticism, Hellenism, and the literature and times of the New Testament period. These are helpful but not as crucial as one time thought.

9. The Universal Scope of Unfulfilled Prophecy

Of paramount importance in the interpretation of prophecy is the realization that a New Testament filter is imposed on all prophecy that broadens local places and concepts to *universal* proportions. Those in Christ are the new “spiritual Jewry” and not the racially restricted “Israel”(Gal 2:28,29). Symbols and places must be seen through an enlarged and principled understanding, broadened in

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scope and application. The violation of this rule has largely created the “dispensational” fiction that has taken over Christianity. It is so important to prophetic understanding to realize this principle that excellent books have been written to restore a correct understanding that respects the clear biblical guidelines. Every honest student of Revelation should read them. Among the best of these I believe is that written by Dr. Hans LaRondelle; “*The Israel of God in Prophecy*.”² There are others available works valuable in this regard also.

“In applying Israel’s covenant promises to the Christian dispensation and the future age, the New Testament extends them to believers in Christ of all races and enlarges the promised land to the whole earth, thus removing every ethnic and geographic binding, even when Hebrew terminology and Middle East imagery are retained.” ---Dr. Hans LaRondelle—(class notes)

10. The Moral Purpose of Prophecy

The purpose of prophecy is “moral” in that it is intended to inform and motivate God’s church on earth. *Therefore secular events are portrayed and considered in prophecy only when they have direct and relevant connection to God’s purpose and involvement in human affairs.*

Everywhere we are met with interpretations that make Hitler the beast, or which take exclusively secular events and tie them to prophetic passages. Monstrous “Bible-code” predictions or fanciful Nostradamus-like oracles are conceived which have no validity because this rule is ignored. The prophecies of the Bible are intended to inform the church and to bring meaning to the

² Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*. Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion. Vol. 13 (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1983).

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pilgrimage of the Christian. All prophecy must be interpreted responsibly in the context of the history of religion and in the encounter between the human and the divine. As a result, the New Testament and the *Revelation* is then “Christo-centric” and not “world-centric.”

Appendix A

George Washington's Vision

Much of America's early period has been recorded, but other segments, perhaps equally as important, are obscured by time. Such is the case with a story that first appeared in December, 1880, in the *National Tribune* and has been debated ever since. This paper, now known as the *Stars and Stripes*, tells a tale that critics would prefer to relegate to the realms of fantasy, while others, believing that the birth of the United States was in direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy, see in it a warning for the future. Reprinted in the *Stars and Stripes* issue of December 21, 1950, it is a stirring account of a vision revealed to George Washington of the future developments of America.

"The last time I ever saw Anthony Sherman was on the fourth of July, 1859, in Independence Square," writes Wesley Bradshaw, publisher of the *National Tribune*. "He was then ninety-nine years old, and becoming very feeble. But though so old, his dimming eyes rekindled as he gazed upon Independence Hall, which he had come to visit once more.

"Let's go into the hall," he said, 'I want to tell you of an incident in Washington's life--one which no one alive knows of except myself; and if you live, you will before long see it verified. Mark the prediction, you will see it verified.'"

This is Sherman's tale as Bradshaw recorded it:

"From the opening of the Revolution we experienced all phases of fortune, now good and now ill, one time victorious and another conquered. The darkest period we had, I think, was when Washington, after several reverses, retreated to Valley Forge, where he resolved to pass the winter of 1777. "Ah, I have often seen the tears coursing down our dear commander's care-worn cheeks, as he would be conversing with a confidential officer about the condition of his poor soldiers. You have doubtless heard the story of Washington going to the thicket to pray. Well, it was not only true, but he used to pray in secret for aid and comfort. And God brought us safely through the darkest days of tribulation.

"One day, I remember it well, the chilly winds whispered through the leafless trees, though the sky was cloudless and the sun shone brightly. He remained in his quarters nearly all the afternoon, alone. When he came out I noticed that his face was a shade paler than usual, and there seemed to be something on his mind

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of more than ordinary importance. Returning just after dusk, he dispatched an orderly to the quarters of an officer, who was presently in attendance. After a preliminary conversation of about half an hour, Washington, gazing upon his companion with that strange look of dignity which he alone could command, said to the latter, "I do not know whether it is owing to the anxiety of my mind, or what, but this afternoon, as I was sitting at this table engaged in preparing a dispatch, something in the apartment seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld standing opposite me a singularly beautiful being. So astonished was I, for I had given strict orders not to be disturbed, that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the cause of the visit. A second, a third, and even a fourth time did I repeat the question, but received no answer from my mysterious visitor except a slight raising of the eyes.

"By this time I felt strange sensations spreading over me. I would have risen but the riveted gaze of the being before me rendered volition impossible. I assayed once more to speak but my tongue had become useless, as if paralyzed. A new influence, mysterious, potent, irresistible, took possession of me. All I could do was to gaze steadily, vacantly, at my unknown visitor.

"Gradually the surrounding atmosphere seemed to fill with sensations, and grew luminous. Everything about me seemed to rarify, the mysterious visitor also becoming more airy and yet more distinct to my eyes than before. I began to feel as one dying, or rather to experience the sensations which I have sometimes imagined accompany death. I did not think, I did not reason, I did not move. All were alike impossible. I was only conscious of gazing fixedly, vacantly at my companion."

"Presently I heard a voice saying, "Son of the Republic, Look and Learn," while at the same time my visitor extended an arm eastward.

"I now beheld a heavy white vapor at some distance rising fold upon fold. This gradually dissipated, and I looked upon a strange scene. Before me lay, spread out in one vast plain all the countries of the world---Europe, Asia, Africa and America. I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and America the billows of the Atlantic and between Asia and America lay the Pacific. "Son of the Republic," said the same mysterious voice as before, "Look and Learn."

"At that moment I beheld a dark shadowy being like an angel, standing or rather floating in mid-air between Europe and America. Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of each hand, he sprinkled some upon America with his right hand, while with his left he cast some over Europe. Immediately a *mist* arose from these countries and joined in mid-ocean. For a while it seemed stationary,

Appendix A—George Washington's Vision

and then it moved slowly westward until it enveloped America in its murky folds. Sharp flashes of lightning gleamed through it at intervals, and I heard the smothered groans and cries of the American people. "A second time the angel dipped from the ocean and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the ocean in whose heaving billows it sank from view. "

'A third time I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, Look and Learn." I cast my eyes upon America and beheld villages and towns and cities springing up one after another until the whole land from the Atlantic to the Pacific was dotted with them. Again I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, the end of the century cometh, look and learn."

"And this time the dark shadowy angel turned his face southward. From Africa I saw an ill-omened spectre approach our land. It flitted slowly and heavily over every town and city of the latter. The inhabitants presently set themselves in battle array against each other. As I continued looking I saw a bright angel on whose brow rested a crown of light on which was traced the word "Union." He was bearing the American flag. He placed the flag between the divided nation and said, "Remember, ye are brethren." "Instantly, the inhabitants, casting down their weapons, became friends once more and united around the National Standard.

"Again I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, Look and Learn." At this the dark shadowy angel placed a trumpet to his mouth and blew three distinct blasts; and taking water from the ocean, he sprinkled it upon Europe, Asia and Africa.

"Then my eyes beheld a fearful scene. From each of these continents arose thick black clouds that were soon joined into one. And through this mass there gleamed a dark red light by which I saw hordes of armed men. These men, moving with the cloud, marched by land and sailed by sea to America, which country was enveloped in the volume of the cloud. And I dimly saw these vast armies devastate the whole country and burn the villages, towns and cities which I had seen springing up. "As my ears listened to the thundering of the cannon, clashing of swords and the shouts and cries of millions in mortal combat, I again heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, Look and Learn." When this voice had ceased, the dark shadowy angel placed his trumpet once more to his mouth and blew a long and fearful blast.

"Instantly a light as of a thousand suns shone down from above me and pierced and broke into fragments the dark cloud which enveloped America. At the same moment the angel upon whose head still shown the words "Union" and who bore

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our national flag in one hand and a sword in the other, descended from the heavens attended by legions of white spirits. These immediately joined the inhabitants of America who I perceived were well-nigh overcome but who, immediately taking courage again, closed up their broken ranks and renewed the battle. "Again, amid the fearful noise of the conflict I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, Look and Learn." As the voice ceased, the shadowy angel for the last time dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it upon America. Instantly the dark cloud rolled back, together with the armies it had brought, leaving the inhabitants of the land victorious. "Then once more I beheld the villages, towns and cities springing up where I had seen them before, while the bright angel, planting the azure standard he had brought in the midst of them, cried with a loud voice, ""While the stars remain, and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Union last." And taking from his brow the crown on which blazoned the word "Union," he placed it upon the standard while the people kneeling down said, "Amen."

"The scene instantly began to fade and dissolve, and I at last saw nothing but the rising, curling vapor I at first beheld. This also disappeared, and I found myself once more gazing upon the mysterious visitor, who, in the same voice I had heard before, said, ""Son of the Republic, what you have seen is thus interpreted. Three great perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful for her is the third. But the whole world united shall not prevail against her. Let every child of the Republic learn to live for his God, his land and Union." With these words the vision vanished, and I started from my seat and felt that I had seen a vision wherein had been shown me the birth, the progress and destiny of the United States..."

(Quoted From Rene Noorbergen, *The Death Cry of an Eagle*, pp. 20-25.)

Appendix B

North and South

Pope John Paul II: “The Poor Will Judge the Rich North.”

Edmonton, Alberta---

“The judgment spoken of in today’s Gospel is constantly being prepared and is already taking place,” Pope John Paul II warned Canadians.

With his voice close to rage, the pope claimed that rich northern nations of the world threaten global peace with an “imperialistic monopoly of economic and political supremacy at the expense of others.”

John Paul’s remarks may have been aimed at the world credit crisis, which has forced wealthy lending nations to tighten economic controls over poor nations unable to repay multibillion-dollar loans.

The pope declared that “the balance of good in human history must increase,” and promised harsh judgment from Christ against nations and individuals who fail to make amends for the world’s economic imbalance.

Referring to Christ’s words in Matthew’s Gospel, “As you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me,” the pope continued.

“In the light of Christ’s words, this poor south will judge the rich north. And the poor people and the poor nations---poor in different ways, not only lacking food, but also deprived of freedom and other human rights---will judge those people who take these goods away from them.”

---In “The World Times,” Loveland, Colorado, January 1985, A-13.

(This article is cited for interest and not to suggest any particular statement of truth from it. For prophetic students it has interesting correlation to Daniel’s “king of the North.”)

Appendix C

Because of its informative and appropriate material the following article is quoted verbatim from the terse writing of Clifford Goldstein, *Advent Review*, Dec. 1, 1991.

Superpower: America in Prophecy

Once the sand of Operation Desert Storm settled, the United States came out on top of not only Iraq but the world. Whereas just a few years ago pundits were bemoaning America's decline, they now regard the United States as the world's premier political and military heavy-weight.

Time called America "the world's sole remaining superpower."¹ Charles Krauthammer, writing in the *New Republic*, said that "there is no prospect in the immediate future of any power to rival the United States."² And Yassir Arafat, responding to America's new status, called Washington, D.C., "the new Rome."³

The New Rome! Why? Because old Rome was the unrivaled superpower of its age, and America is now in that position.

Arafat's symbol, of course, immediately evokes the Adventist interpretation of Revelation 13, in which America---the lamb-like beast with two horns (verse 11)--appears about the time the papacy received its temporary wound, the 1260-year period ending in the eighteenth century."⁴ Though this beast starts out with gentle, lamblike qualities, reflecting the peaceful characteristics of religious freedom in America, it soon speaks "as a dragon," exercising "all the power of the first beast before him" (verse 11,12) and even giving power to the "image of the beast" (verse 15). Who is that "first beast before him"? Rome! And America is now. . . the new Rome?

These commentators unknowingly said that for the first time in its history, the United States is set to fulfill its prophetic role.

False Alarm

What's exciting is that just a few years ago alarmists were decrying America's demise. "Johnny can't read," "Johnny can't write," "Johnny can't fight" were the warnings. Japanese and German students were smarter, better educated, and better trained than American kids, and thus the nation was declining. Capturing the sentiment of economists, historians, and political scientists who were warning

Appendix C—“Superpower—America in Prophecy”

of America’s decline, author Paul Kennedy in the *Atlantic Monthly* repeated the quip “Rome fell, Babylon fell, Scarsdale’s turn will come.”⁵ John McLaughlin, in the *National Review*, asked, “Is America going to the dogs?”⁶

Now in the aftermath of the Gulf war, talk of America’s demise has proved premature. The United States has been losing its economic edge, no doubt, but that didn’t stop it from leading the coalition against Saddam Hussein. Marks and yen, in and of themselves, don’t automatically translate into geopolitical power. America, despite its economic woes, has assumed a leadership role not only of the West, but almost all the world.

When, for example, a Marxist coalition overthrew the government of Ethiopia, whom did both sides ask to mediate? America. When Boris Yeltsin, the first freely elected Russian leader in a thousand years, took office, where was the first place he visited? America. When the Baltic States began their breakaway from the Soviet Union, from whose constitution were their leaders quoting? America’s. When Kuwait was invaded, whose military led its liberation? America’s. To which nation has Gorbachev looked to save his country? America. No wonder a National Public Radio correspondent called George Bush the “president of the world.”

This trend began even before the Gulf war, which didn’t make the United States the new world leader; it simply revealed that, after the collapse of Communism, America already was.

Thus, writes Krauthammer, we now have “a highly unusual world structure with a single power, the United States, at the apex of the international system.”⁷

America of the Pioneers

The United States’ unrivaled superpower status “at the apex of the international system” fits perfectly into the Adventist scenario of the last days. By identifying the lamblike beast of Revelation 13:11 as the United States, our pioneers basically predicted that at some point America would have to become the world’s dominant political and military power. Otherwise, how could it enforce “the mark of the beast” upon the world? What’s especially remarkable is that their interpretation was initially made when America was hardly a world power, much less the *dominant one*.

In 1851 J.N. Andrews wrote the first Adventist article identifying Protestant America as this beast power.⁸ In the 1884 edition of *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White named America as that beast as well. “The image to the beast,” she wrote,

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“represents another religious body clothed with similar power. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States.”⁹

If this interpretation, in which America would enforce the mark of the beast upon the world, seemed implausible even three years ago, how did it appear in the mid-1800s, when the big powers were still the Old World ones---Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and England? In 1851 America had a peacetime military of about 20,000 men, about one tenth the combatants at Waterloo alone. In 1814 (less than 40 years before Andrews wrote his article), the British burned Washington, D.C.; in 1876 General Custer’s 7th U.S. Cavalry Regiment was wiped out by Sitting Bull’s braves. Thus, 25 years *after* Andrews’ prediction, only eight years *before* Ellen White’s, America was still fighting Indians. *And this was the nation that was going to force the world to make an image to the beast?*

Not until World War I did the United States become an international force to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, even in 1933, when Hitler became führer, the United States had only the sixteenth-largest army in the world---smaller than those of Spain, Turkey, even Poland. After World War II America enjoyed unrivaled supremacy, but not for long, because the Soviet Union soon challenged it everywhere, including space. In the 1950s Americans panicked because the Russians were orbiting satellites over their heads while, as Tom Wolfe wrote in *The Right Stuff*, American “rockets always blew up.”¹⁰

Once the Soviet Union did become a superpower on par with the United States, it was hard to see how America could ever fulfill its prophetic role. If because of Soviet military might the United States couldn’t kick the Communists out of Poland, how could it ever enforce a particular brand of religion upon the world?

Now, of course, everything has changed. The Communists are on the run in Moscow, not to mention Poland. Despite the victory of the reformers, the Soviet Union is in a political, military, and economic meltdown, which makes it dependent upon the West, especially the United States. As a result, America is in a more powerful position to exert geopolitical influence everywhere.

“America,” wrote correspondent Jim Hoagland in the *Washington Post*, “would now determine all major global events.”¹¹ “If the new world order means anything,” writes Krauthammer, “it is an assertion of American interest and values in the world.”¹²

Appendix C—“Superpower—America in Prophecy”

Speaking Like a Dragon

America certainly has good values worth asserting, lamblike qualities such as democracy and religious freedom. Unfortunately, according to prophecy, the nation will speak like a dragon, and instead of asserting these positive values, it will force an apostate religious system, “an image to the beast,” upon the world.

Of course, great changes still need to happen before this nation fulfills its prophetic destiny. America’s precarious financial situation cannot be ignored either. Nevertheless, America’s ascension as the new, unrivaled superpower fits a major piece of the prophetic puzzle squarely into place. It is an unmistakable sign of the second coming.

But before Christ returns, those who “keep the commandments of and the faith of Jesus”(Rev. 14:12) need to prepare for “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”(Dan. 12:1). And because the Scripture predicts this nation will “cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast...be killed”(Rev.13:15), God’s people need to prepare for religious persecution as well.

America is not called “The New Rome” for nothing.

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²Charles Krauthammer, “The Lonely Superpower,” *New Republic*, July 29, 1991, p.23.

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⁴For more details, see *The Great Controversy*, pp. 433-450.

⁵Paul Kennedy, “The (Relative) Decline of America,” *Atlantic Monthly*, Aug. 1987, p. 33.

⁶John McLaughlin, “Is America Going to the Dogs?” *National Review*, July 31, 1987, p. 22.

⁷Krauthammer, p. 23.

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⁸J.N.Andrews, “Thoughts on Revelation XIII and XIV,” *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 19, 1851.

⁹Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 278.

¹⁰Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*, Bantam Books, New York, 1984, p. 201.

¹¹Jim Hoagland, “of Heroes. . .,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 29, 1991.

¹²Krauthammer, p. 26.

Appendix D

The Name of the Papal Head

Some distinction has made that the official personal name of the recent pope, John Paul II adds to 666. All of what to make of this we probably do not know. It is possible that there are other pope's names that calculate similarly. Actually many names thus calculate 666. The aging (ca. 82), John Paul II, is the sixth pontiff since 1929. The fact is, simply, that it computes without unnecessary stretch of the rules:

YOHANNES PAULUS SECUNDOS

I₁OANNES PAU₅L₅₀U₅S SEC₁₀₀U₅ND₅₀₀OS

It would be no surprise to find that some official name of the present pope, Benedict XVI also so adds, but the public name given us does not seem to so compute.

Recent investigations tell us that the oft cited *Vicarius Filii Dei* designation does not in fact appear on the pope's mitre. This may be true. However, it must be said that the title, *The Vicar of Christ*, or God, appears broadly in Catholic literature and in literature referring to the Catholic See.

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The Importance and Purpose of Prophecy (91)

1. When considering prophecy what makes God unique?

2. What is prophecy? _____

3. List at least three purposes of prophecy, or in other words, why does God give us prophetic materials?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Name at least two distinct characteristics of “apocalyptic” prophecy?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The Ten Essential Principles of Interpretation of Prophecy (95)

5. Review and be able to list the ten cardinal rules for interpreting Revelation’s prophecies as provided in this book:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

6. What is meant by the “direct” use of symbols? Explain.

7. Why are symbols and symbolic language used rather than just stating the facts?

- _____
- _____
- _____

8. At least five rules for interpreting symbols are presented in this book. Fill in the blank to complete these basic principles:

1) Symbols are intended to stand for _____ and _____ realities beyond themselves. This is the _____ association principle.

2) Prophecy should be allowed to interpret its own _____ in the _____ context first.

3) When going outside the immediate context one should usually consider more than _____ text or reference when interpreting the symbol.

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4) The symbol must be consistent with _____
and how it relates to the world in which it interacts.

5) _____ for divine enlighten-
ment.

9. For interest pursue or provide probable meanings for the following symbols:

- White hair _____
- Fallen stars _____
- Forehead and hand _____
- Boats _____
- Lion _____
- Jews _____
- Grass _____
- Blood _____
- Hail _____
- Feet on land and sea _____

10. Give the significance of the following numbers in prophecy:

One _____

Two _____

Three _____

Four _____

Five _____

Six _____

Seven _____

Eight _____

Ten _____

Twelve _____

Seventy _____

_____.

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11. When a word or idea repeats itself throughout the document it is thought to be in parallel. The synonyms that repeat intentionally throughout the book of Revelation can be called _____.

12. For interest trace some of the following examples of these:

- Something held in the hand
- Something seen in mid-heaven or the sky
- Something that is “in the sea”
- Something making a loud, sharp sound
- Something made or composed of stone

(Catalogue at least seven objects or ideas)

13. True or False. God often sends a later prophet to unlock or explain the message of a former prophet. (Circle)

14. In your opinion can certain prophecies have more than one fulfillment? _____
_____.

15. What is meant by the term “moral purpose of prophecy?”

16. (Fill in the blank) One of the golden rules of all biblical interpretation is to interpret in light of the _____.

17. The Books of Daniel and Revelation should be understood:

- a) According to their cyclical structure
- b) According to their “straight-line,” “beginning to end,” structure.

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Explain your answer: _____

18. What principle teaches that prophecy in modern times needs to be understood in terms of enlargement and universalization of symbols that were primary and more local before.

Revelation 17 and What it Meant to First Century Christians (6)

19. Review the major four or five systems of interpretation.

- Historicist _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

20. Is there only one legitimate system of interpretation?

21. Could Revelation 17 make sense to a first century Christian? Explain why or why not?

22. In the prophecy of Daniel 2 how many “world” kingdoms appear down to the feet, which are part iron and part clay?

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23. How might one account for the seven “heads” on the great and terrible beast? _____

24. What do “horns” represent? _____

25. How are “horns” different than “heads?”

26. What city best represented “Babylon” in the early days of the Apostles? _____.

27. Who was the first Roman emperor to directly persecute Christians? _____.

28. Jerusalem fell during the reign of Emperor _____.

The Babylonian Church of the Christian Era (26)

29. List at least five identifying marks that equate pagan and papal Rome as “Babylon.”

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

30. What other modern apostate system also fulfills the description of Babylon?

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_____.

31. In view of what principle is it possible to see that “Babylon” can apply both to the Roman system and the other apostate system noted above? _____

_____.

The Contemporary Identity of Babylon (30)

32. What does it mean to be “seated upon many waters?”

_____.

33. What changes have taken place in political and geographic look of our modern world?

_____.

34. How does this affect the word of prophecy?

_____.

35. What principle must be respected in looking at prophecies for the last days? Do the symbols represent more than “old world” powers and places? _____

_____.

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36. What is the biblical meaning of a harlot, or harlotry, when applied to economic measures? _____

_____.

37. What is the significance of the woman and beast seen in the WILDERNESS?

_____.

38. What power is consistently presented as “the beast” in the book of Revelation? _____

_____.

39. Is the woman physically “part” of the beast or is she a separate power who works in league with the beast?

_____.

40. The woman riding the beast is dressed in purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and is adorned with pearls and precious stones. What is the meaning of this?

_____.

41. What national power according to prophecy will be foremost in forcing other nations to follow her example?

_____.

42. Can “Babylon” be both “Apostate Protestantism” and the “United States?” _____. Why, or why not?

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43. Why is the list of wares given in Revelation 18 typical of a secular nation, more than of a “church?”

The Sins of Babylon (46)

44. List at least five “sins of Babylon” alluded to or directly mentioned in the book of Revelation:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

45. Essentially what do these sins represent a violation of?

Coming Out of Babylon (64)

46. Is the coming out of Babylon more than a spiritual call?

47. How can this call be applied in our modern context?

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48. How are the cities to be worked? _____
_____.

49. Give at least two examples of what happened when similar counsel was ignored in past history:

Eschatological Focus in Revelation 17 (74)

50. How does prophecy present some of the players in the endgame of this world? List some of the symbolic players:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

51. The ten horns are symbolic of what powers?

_____.

52. What powers are represented with the number ten in other places and prophecies?

53. What does “ten” represent in this case? _____

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54. Is it consistent to see the woman and the beast as the same power when in the end the beast and other powers turn against her? _____

55. How can last-day events be seen as both “literal” and “spiritual?” Should they only be seen as “spiritual?” How can this enigma be solved? _____

56. In your opinion what is the “loud cry” message in Revelation 18? _____

57. Is there a way of interpreting the “seven kings” of Revelation 17 as applying to modern spiritual leaders?

58. Who could be the “sixth” Roman leader?

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The Seven Laments (84)

59. What country is the chief consumer of the items represented in the list of Revelation 18? _____

60. How many songs, or lamentations are found in Revelation 18?
_____.

Revelation 19—The Wedding and the Coming of the Bridegroom (88)

61. Why is the angel pictured “in the sun?”

62. Revelation 19 is largely a picture of what “heavenly” event?

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Notes (Continued)
