

The Berean Ecclesial News

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Upholding the Truth since 1923.

VOL. 5, NO. 7

JULY, 2002

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God Willing, The Berean Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

AUSTIN, Texas -- Memorial Meeting 11:00am in home; Exposition of Daniel Class, Thursdays at 8 P.M.; Bro. Jim Phillips, 14723 Single Trace, Austin, TX. 78728; phone (512) 218-0920

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Loving Greetings to all in Christ.

We were happy to join with those from the Lampasas Ecclesia, Houston Ecclesia, Edmonton Ecclesia and other parts of our Lord's vineyard at the May Hye Quarterly to witness the marriage of Bro. Mark Braune and Sis. Naomi Phillips. There were over 120 in attendance, including many of Bro. Mark's family and acquaintances.

Bro. Jerry Connolly performed the ceremony at the last minute, as our Bro. Wayne J. Wolfe was called away due to the tragedy of the death of his grandson, Justin Roberts, son of Bro. David and Sis. Donna Roberts. Our prayers are with them in their loss.

Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi will live in Buda Texas, about 10 miles South of Austin. We have enjoyed visits at our Memorial from Bre. Pat, Noah and Matthew Brown, along with Sis. Shiloh Brown. Sis. Sarah Brown is now a member of the Austin Meeting. We are enjoying their company and association on Sundays.

Love to all,
Bro. Jim Phillips

WORCESTER, Mass., 29 Ekman St., Worcester, MA 01607

Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Loving greetings,

Once again we have sad news to share. We report the falling asleep in the Lord of our Sister Viola Rankin of the Worcester ecclesia who fell asleep May 16, 2002. She was baptised into the Saving Name of Jesus Christ in 1925.

Sister Vi's wish was to remain alive to witness the return of Christ, but God in his mercy has allowed her to rest. We fondly remember her playing the piano for meetings and opening her home to all for ecclesial picnics and Bible classes when she was able. She was 90 years old and has not been well for several years. She now sleeps in Christ, awaiting the resurrection mom. May her sleep be short.

With Love to all the Brethren and Sisters,
Sis. Jessie Prentice

HENGOED, Wales, UK – Breaking of Bread, 11A.M.; Sunday School, 12:45 P.M.; Lecture, 2:30 P.M.; Wed. Bible Class, 7:30 P.M. in various homes; Elpis Israel Class, 1st Tuesday in the month in various homes – Bro. Phillip Hughes, 25 Hoel Y Gelli, FForchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid Glam., UK CF44 6LN; phone 170 4011 441 685 870254

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

Our last ecclesial news indicated that we were looking forward to the Spring Gathering we were holding in March (2002). That Gathering has come and gone! However, we still have the fond memories, and more importantly, the spiritual thoughts that our Brethren left with us *as a* result of their studies. The "Beauty of Holiness" as a theme was found to be both instructive, corrective and encouraging. Many subsequent exhortations at Hengoed have referred back to the lessons and thoughts established at that time. The importance of the subject was illustrated time and time again, as we were called upon to examine ourselves in the light of the Word. The meanings and ideas behind words such as beauty and holiness were brought to our attention, along with various examples and comparisons of holiness in the Scriptures. The theme culminated in the Sunday morning exhortation "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill"? The answer... "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." Psalm 15 was profitably expounded and prepared us for the partaking of the emblems.

The opportunity was also taken to allow the light of saving Truth to shine in the surrounding darkness by a public lecture in the area. Sadly no one turned in to "buy wine and milk without money and without price," but the brethren and sisters were greatly refreshed by the contemplation of the Kingdom when none shall hurt nor destroy in all Yahweh's holy mountain.

We were grateful to the Brethren who provided these words of encouragement to us, but were particularly thankful to all the brethren and sisters who made the trip over long distances to attend the Gathering and made it by their presence a wonderful time and a feast of good things. Above all, we were thankful to our Heavenly Father for providing the means and opportunity to meet in the way we did. His providential Hand was appreciated in the care provided during the weekend, and in the journeys that were engaged in.

While remembering the happy time we had around the Word of Yahweh, we are not unmindful of the sorrows and sufferings within the brotherhood. As recorded in Ecclesiastes, there is "a time to weep"; and the Apostle Paul wrote "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." The brethren and sisters of Hengoed were deeply saddened to hear of the tragic events that have affected the Lampasas ecclesia. Our thoughts and our prayers are with those who mourn at this sad time.

We were also saddened to learn of the falling asleep of Bro. Sommerville. The Hengoed ecclesia felt a close affinity with our beloved brother, even though distance made it impossible for personal contact. With other brethren and sisters, Bro. David and Sis. Ruth made the journey to the U.K. in the Spring of 1983. The purpose was to interview Brethren and Sisters who were subsequently to form the Hengoed Berean ecclesia. Bro. and Sis.

Sommerville very quickly found an affectionate place in the hearts of all 171

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the Brethren and Sisters here. Bro. Sommerville's work at that time was greatly appreciated, and his quiet and instructive wisdom was a great comfort – more than he could realise. We also benefited from his first hand experiences of the Jersey City Conference, and were instructed in the need to hold fast to the Truth, and beware of compromise. The following years were mainly made up of correspondence, which we believe, was of mutual benefit. Bro. and Sis. Sommerville are a great loss to the fellowship, and while "we sorrow not as do others," we pray that their example may be remembered and emulated as we wait the day of joyful reunion.

Our ecclesial news also has to refer to another sad event, as we record that Bro. Ariel Hopper is no longer in fellowship with us. He wrote a letter of withdrawal to the ecclesia in December (2001), and in personal conversation with him, he expressed that he felt unable to continue in the truth while having association with the world and its activities. He felt he was being a hypocrite in the light of the high and holy calling. We appreciated Bro. Ariel's honesty, urging him to reconsider his decision, and distance himself from the world of darkness and wickedness, remembering the crown of glory that is promised to those who hold fast. We called his attention to the nearness of the Master, and the Judgement Seat that we must all appear before. Sadly, we were unable to convince our young Brother to forsake the road he was taking, and we regret that he is no longer in fellowship. We hope and pray that he may repent and find his way clear to return to the fold, before it is too late.

The Brethren and Sisters express their love to all, as we wait for the day of consolation and comfort.

On behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia,
Bro. Phillip Hughes

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING July 22 - 28, 2002

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING Oct 19 - 21, 2002

Bro. Jim Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd., Northboro, MA 01532, 508-393-2874

The Parable of the Wedding Garment

"Friend, how cometh thou hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Brothers and Sisters, how fearful would these words be if they were spoken to us by the King, the host of the great feast! As bro. Pat said earlier this morning in the study class, "We do things that appear good to us, but may be viewed completely differently by God." An example of this is Paul persecuting the disciples with zeal for the law. In his own eyes he was 172 righteous and approved by God. However, if God's eyes Paul was

"kicking against the pricks". He was doing more harm to himself than to those against whom he fought. The same is true of the Scribes and Pharisees. They thought they were defenders of the Kingdom of God by opposing Jesus, when in reality, they were excluding themselves from it (when it shall be established). It was unthinkable to them that their actions had certain consequences, and it is the consequences that hold our interest today.

In this parable we see God as the king. He had spoken to the fathers and was angry with them for rejecting the invitation to the marriage of His Son. Is there a more joyous occasion than a wedding: and especially the wedding of a king's son? What better way to represent the characteristics of God's great purpose? *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."* (Rev. 19:7-9)

The invitation was first sent to Israel, chosen for God's purpose on a national level. Most of them did not accept the invitation for lack of understanding. They agreed to be the Lord's people and rejoiced in that, but they used it for their own glory. They approached God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him.

After a time of long patience, came a time when the invitation was extended to the Gentiles. Paul states, in Romans 11:11, *"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."* As Gentiles this is where our relationship to the parable comes into play. Before Israel's rejection to the message, we were outside God's purpose all together: strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel according to Ephesians 2:12. Until Paul's day, God suffered the Gentiles to walk in their own way and winked at their ignorance.

We are descendants of those barbarians who were without God, who had no hope in the world. Our forefathers had a form of hope... they had gods: but these were a matter of superstitious imagination. This is acknowledged by the Scriptures: for it is taught there is One Hope and One Salvation. By the hand of Paul, and his co-laborers, the invitation rejected by Israel was extended to the Gentiles, and therefore to us. These Gentiles will provide a considerable bulk of the people at the marriage feast.

Here we are this morning, an assembly of their descendants. We have not heard Paul speak in a living, breathing voice, but nonetheless, we have been invited. Almost 2000 years later, the invitation is being issued. Recently six more of Adam's race have responded to that invitation. May they (and we) be found with proper garments – white and clean – and invited to stay at the feast at the Lord's appearing.

Shall we be accepted as the King's guests merely because we have answered the King's summons? This is an important question, Brothers and Sisters. Shall we be chosen merely because we have been called? Surely not! When the king came in to see the assembled guests, he found one guest without a proper garment and said to him, "*Friend, how earnest thou hither not having a wedding garment?*" This shows something was implied in the invitation not mentioned at the beginning. The invitation was, "Come to the feast." The implication was, "Come in a fit state." The king's question (to this particular guest) shows that every guest (though freely invited from the highways) was required to come in proper dress for the occasion.

The man might have said, "I came because I was asked to come", but the king's question shows he regarded the acceptance as the acceptance of the implied condition.

What are those "implied conditions"? What is this "wedding garment"? We can gather the answer elsewhere in the pages of Scripture. As I quoted earlier from the Revelations, the guests are symbolized as a woman in white array; a bride in fine linen, clean and white. And we are told there, the "fine linen" is "the righteousness of the saints".

In this parable, we see an individual application. Each guest (or applicant to the feast) must possess an individual righteousness, without which no man shall enter the Kingdom of God. Most people, today, can't see this. They deceive themselves accepting this false premise: Believe in Jesus and you're saved, or Jesus died for your sins, so you are saved. And to add import to these false beliefs, they add: for "Christ is our righteousness".

Why wasn't Jesus the righteousness for the rejected guest? If a man comes before Jesus on the Day of Judgment without the righteous Fruits of the Spirit, the fate of that man (the rejected guest) will be to hear, "*Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*" The unprofitable servants shall be cast away. The idea that Christ's righteousness, alone, will save us is one of the countless corruption's of the churches today, and originated in the misapplication of certain elements of the Truth.

When an unbeliever comes to a knowledge of the Truth, he comes into a new relationship to God. He is responsible to God as a servant is to a master, and God will judge according to works. "*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*" (Matt. 16:27) and "*For we must all appear*" (and "all" must be qualified as to those who have come to a knowledge of the Truth) "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*" (II Cor. 5:10)

If we present ourselves to Christ without the raiment of righteousness that 174 is required, we will be rejected. No man can learn what this personal

righteousness is without the continual study of the Word of God — the Bible. Apart from this, anything less than this, would reduce the garment to a cheap ceremonial affair and out of harmony with the Spirit of God. For God puts much emphasis on persevering and doing well as qualifications for acceptance.

Most "students of the Word" make the mistake of supposing that the wedding garment stands for baptism, but a closer look reveals it does not. Remember, many immersed people will be rejected at the Judgment. Baptism is an espousal, a covenant entered into. Qualified people submitting to the act of baptism are brought into association with Christ, and become acceptable to God in their approach to Him. In other words, first the marriage invitation, and **then** (if all the conditions of the covenant are met — like the wedding garment) the wedding. Baptism is only the first step on the part of a believing sinner. The Pharisees, too, performed acts of obedience, but we are told, *"Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 5:20)

This righteousness is the righteousness typified by the wedding garment. It is the righteousness of the saints: the righteous character that is displayed in the deeds of the saints. It is the constant declaration of Paul that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

The lesson of the parable is sobering and wholesome. It shows us the acceptance of the Gospel alone will not suffice to save us. It shows us that there must be a clothing of the inner man (with all the principles, precepts, and affections the Spirit has so abundantly stored up for us in the Word) by purchasing a garment with the diligent reading of God's Holy Word. This is the composition of the wedding garment, without which we are 173 *"poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked."* This fact helps us understand the Spirit's invitation. *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."* (Rev. 3:18)

The parable would be incomplete without the guest with no wedding garment. It represents the class of the rejected, and a large class at that. We might get the impression only a few will be rejected, that nearly all are chosen because only one of the guests was expelled, except for the clear remark with which the Lord concludes: *"Many are called, but few are chosen."*

The day will come when the Lord will change the nature of weak, earthly, corruptible man to the nature he possesses — incorruptible, glorious, and immortal. This change must be considered the act of the marriage, after which there is a fullness of joy forever: a joy that is the appointed portion of the accepted guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And may it be said to us all, *"Blessed are they who come and are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."*

DANIEL — THE FOUR BEASTS (cont.)

" There were certain important particulars to be revealed in connection with the empires and kingdoms of the Metallic Image, which could not be suitably expressed through a symbol of the human form. It became necessary, therefore, to introduce other representations, that would admit of appendages more in harmony with them. Wild beasts were selected to represent dominions instead of parts of a metallic figure; and as there were four different metals, four different animals were selected. " [Elpis Israel p.328]

THE FOUR HEADED GRECIAN LEOPARD

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (Dan.7:6)

After the rule of the Persian Bear which came to an end in approximately B.C.334, Daniel's attention is drawn to the third Beast which was "like to a leopard." Along with the previous two strange animals that Daniel has seen, it has its own peculiarities. This beast had four wings and four heads, and as it corresponds to the third section of the metallic image, it is readily identified as the Grecian Empire.

The symbol of a leopard was a most appropriate one to depict the brazen coated Greeks. Leopards are among the fastest moving animals. They are wily, active and ferocious, attacking their unsuspecting prey with speed and agility. They can pounce 40 feet, and are tremendously strong, having been known to carry an antelope of 250 pounds up into the boughs of a tree. It is a very adaptable creature and can be found in different parts of the earth, from equatorial forests and mountains, to deserts and low-lying swamplands.

These natural characteristics of the leopard, are a fitting representation of the rapid movements and progress of Alexander's powerful army over various lands and countries of the civilised world. He ascended the throne of Macedon at the age of twenty. By the time he was thirty years old, he had conquered the civilised world! Just like the *swift* and powerful leopard, Alexander led his armies to victory in an amazingly rapid period of time, and over a widespread area. Capitalising on the use of the phalanx (the Greek and Macedonian battle formation of infantrymen which fought in close order, presenting long spears from behind a wall of overlapping shields), his conquests extended from Macedonia to India, and as far south as Egypt. This was a far greater dominion than that over which Babylon or Persia had ruled, answering to verse 6 of Daniel chapter 7 *"And dominion was given unto it. "* Or as it is recorded in Daniel 2 verse 39 *"it shall bear rule over all the earth".*

Alexander was a military genius, whose ability and determination on the field of battle was unrivalled. The Persian army was no match for his skill. As 176 a highly competent general, he knew how to inspire his soldiers, urging

them on to further victories. Even today, strategists study the tactics that he employed, and used so successfully in battle. His love of conquest was so great, it is said that he wept because there were no more countries to conquer!

However, where is his empire now? Where are all his achievements? Consigned to the history books! His was a glory that only lasted for a lifetime, and in Alexander's case, a short one at that. He died after an excessive night of revelry at the age of thirty-three. ("What *doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*" (Mark 8:36).

With his death, his empire very quickly came to an end. Four of his generals (Cassander, Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Ptolemy) took control of the dominion he had so skilfully obtained, dividing it into four parts, and Alexander's mother, wife, brother and son were subsequently murdered.

The four *heads* of the leopard represent the four generals who took control of the empire, (the body of the beast representing the empire before it was divided), and the four *wings* represent the "the four quarters of the heavens in which the four dominions were to be found" (The Book Unsealed page 10).

The following extract from Exposition of Daniel (page 12) will indicate the four divisions and their respective areas of influence:

"At the death of Alexander a long period of war ensued, which resulted (B.C. 301) in the establishment of the following kingdoms on the territory of the Kingdom of Men.

First Head - The kingdom of the south, comprehending Egypt, Libya, Arabia, Coele-Syria, and Palestine, under the Ptolemies.

Second Head – The kingdom of the north-west, including Thrace, Bithynia, etc., or the Thracio-Macedonian.

Third Head – The kingdom of the north-east, comprehending the rest of Asia inclusive of Babylon and its province; and extending beyond the Euphrates to the Indus. India beyond that river, though allotted to this head, revolted; so that the Indus became its boundary. This was the MacedoBabylonish kingdom of the Seleucidae.

Fourth Head – The kingdom of the west, embracing Macedonia and Greece."

These details are also symbolised in the eighth chapter of Daniel, where the Grecian Goat with "a notable horn between his eyes" (Alexander), is seen engaged in battle with the Persian Ram. The ram is "cast down to the ground and stamped upon" (verse7), indicating the victory of Alexander over Darius. Subsequently, Daniel sees the notable horn broken, and in its place four horns emerge, which equates with the four heads of the leopard we have been considering. Further details are revealed in that chapter which we will look at in due course, God Willing.

Before leaving this particular beast, it is also necessary to draw attention to the geographical positions of these four heads, being north, west, east 177

and south. In the quotation from Exposition of Daniel above, "north" and "south" have been emphasised in bold type. This is to indicate the importance of those particular heads. Bro Thomas makes the following important points which will be found to be enlightening and form the basis of future prophecies of Daniel and other connecting parts of the Scriptures;

"Of the four heads of the leopard and the four horns of the Goat, but two only figure in the prophecy of Daniel's book. The reason of this is, that the prophecy was not delivered to prefigure the history of the Gentiles; but to foreshadow how the international policy of some of them in its bearing upon Judah, the Holy land, and the saints, would at length create such a situation of affairs in the end, as would favour the execution of the divine purpose of demolishing the powers of the Gentiles in the establishing of the Kingdom of God..... the individual dominion of Alexander was the Belly (of the Image in chapter 2), and these two heads (of the leopard) also the two Thighs of brass; and therefore continuous with the iron Roman leg: so that the brass and iron limbs of the Image from hip to ankle represent the fourth form in its Graeco-Roman constitution. The two thighs and the two heads represent the kingdom of the South, and the Kingdom of the North-east. "

If the eleventh chapter of Daniel is read, it will clearly be observed that the subjects of the remarkable prophecy contained there are the King of the North and the King of the South. We are probably more familiar with the last few verses of Daniel 11, (in particular verse 39 to the end) than with the previous sections, as this is a parallel account of Ezekiel chapter 38. An examination of both chapters reveals that the **King of the North** in the concluding verses of Daniel 11, is the gog of the land of Magog of Ezekiel chapter 38. Russia is unmistakably the King of the North, who will invade the Middle East.

We have observed with great interest the stage being set for the final drama to take place between **King of the North** and the **King of the South**. The Second World War was really an east/west confrontation, with Europe being the theatre of operation. The "east/west" state of affairs continued with the cold war. However, in recent years, we have seen a change in the political geography. Desert Storm showed how quickly troops could be mobilised and stationed in the southern regions of the Middle East, and although the nations who lined up against Saddam Hussein at that time were not in their correct scriptural position, the years that have followed have seen a cooling off of the European attitude towards military action in this area of the world. The nations are moving into the positions Scripturally predetermined for them over two thousand years ago. The actions of the USA and Britain in Afghanistan show us how the Elohim are gathering the nations together, ready for the great day of El Shaddai.

Further profitable study can also be derived from looking at Zechariah chapter 6, where the prophet sees the vision of four chariots coming out from 178 between two mountains of brass (verses 1 to 8). These political

mountains are north and south of the Holy Land, and the connection with the two heads of the Grecian lion is easily established.

THE DREADFUL FOURTH BEAST

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly,; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." (Daniel 7:7)

The next beast, which Daniel saw in the (Gentile) night visions, was not named, although it is suggested to be a crocodile. The description of it, and the details given concerning it reveal it to be a most formidable creature. Daniel himself was perturbed by the vision, and was moved to exclaim *"I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful* (the word means to cringe, as in fear – due to its hideous appearance, and ferocious nature) (verse 19). The Revised Standard Version renders the verse *"Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrible."*

Daniel had good reason to be concerned about the nature and actions of this beast. He observed that it had ten horns on its head, and as he was watching, another little horn arose, which had eyes and a mouth. This "new" arrival plucked up three of the original horns that were before it.

Furthermore, he *"beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them"* (verse 21). No wonder Daniel wanted to know the truth about this beast. It was destined to prevail against his brethren and sisters!

There are numerous details in this seventh chapter relating to this fourth beast, which cover the period of time following the demise of Alexander's empire, to the "coming of the Ancient of days;" a period of over two thousand years. We will endeavour to gain an understanding of this terrible fourth beast, by itemising the particulars recorded in the chapter one by one. In this way, we shall be able to discern its development, career, and ultimate destiny.

The 4th Beast. This is the mighty dominion and empire of Rome. It is identified as such by the beast's "iron teeth", which is the fourth constituent metal in the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. In Daniel chapter 2, the image has legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay, and iron was a fitting symbol. Although not a valuable metal like gold, or silver, iron is extremely strong, as were the legions of Rome. The generals in the army were brave and skilful. The army itself was extremely well disciplined, and powerful. This was the nation of Deuteronomy 28, verse 49-50:

"Yahweh shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation officer countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young."

However, the beast not only represents the political power of pagan Rome, but as we proceed in examining its historical development (God Willing), we observe it as an ecclesiastical power, which was manifested after the days of the apostles.

To begin with however, it was pagan. Romulus founded Rome, 750 years before the birth of Christ. At least, legend places Rome's foundation at this time. Its progress and growth was not as fast as Alexander's, but it was far greater and lasted much longer. Originally, in the area later to become Rome, three tribes (the Sabines, the Latins and the Etruscans) united their forces, and formed a small state. Not much information is known about the kings who reigned there, but in B.C.509, the Romans drove out their king, and established a republic that lasted nearly five centuries. Under the republic, "Roman power extended until first the Western and then the Eastern Mediterranean became Roman lakes." (The Apocalypse and History page 24) Rome was to become the fourth world Empire!

Bro. Phillip Hughes

A Review of Revelation (1-14)

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

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

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

The Revelation portrays the age-old struggle between the Truth and the apostasy, which began in the Garden of Eden—the enmity, the true bride, and the false woman—Jerusalem and Rome. And the more we know about it and understand its true meaning, the more firmly we can keep separate and keep on the right side of the enmity—the very narrow way. This is a Roman world and all nations are drunk with the wine of her fornication. Let us not be among them. We particularly notice this at this time of the year, and the line of 180 demarcation is clear.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first seal (verse 1) opens with thunder—the assassination of the Emperor Domitian, who had banished John to Patmos. This seal covers 87 years, from 96 to 183 AD, described by the historians as the happiest years of human history—a period of peace and prosperity under five strong, capable, intelligent emperors devoted to public service and well being.

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

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

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

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

Verse 9 – The fifth seal—an entirely different picture. This concerns events within the household—the inside of the scroll. The souls under the altar that were slain for the Word of God, crying for vengeance against the oppressor. History records ten persecutions of the Christians by the pagan Roman emperors from Nero to Diocletian. And this was the tenth, the worst and the last, from 303 to 313-10 years. All who held religious meetings or 182 were found in possession of the Scriptures were to be put to death. All

who refused to worship the Roman gods could not hold office or have the protection of the law.

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

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

Chapter 7 – The sealing of the servants of God—going back to the inside of the scroll. Verse 1 – The angels hold back the four winds. These are the wind trumpets of chapter 8 – the barbarian invasions that were to destroy the Western Roman Empire centered in Rome. The barbarians were now providentially held back for a period of about 50 years, from 325 to 375 AD, so that God's servants could be sealed under these entirely new circumstances. The establishment of Christianity, so-called, and the rise to political power about 315 AD by the victory of Constantine was a tremendous change for the true people of God. There had to be a new sorting out and a new line up—a new feeling. Up to this point, Christians, real or pretended, were all one body in the eyes of the government, whether they joined the world and took the sword and entered politics or remained faithful to the Truth. But now there is a complete open and public cleavage. The worldly and nominal—the overwhelming majority—rise to power. The faithful brethren disassociate themselves from these and call upon all others to stand with them against the new imperial apostasy—to come out and be separate. The true brethren are the angel from the east (verse 2) who are to seal a symbolic 144,000 out of the tribes of Israel. This is spiritual Israel, which is now apostate—now raised to political power under Constantine. The faithful must be taken out of that formerly faithful, but now corrupt, body—the Laodecean state.

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

Chapter 8 – The seventh seal is opened. "*There is silence in heaven* (verse 1) *about half an hour.*" This was the last peaceful 14 years of Constantine's reign from 324 to his death in 337 AD, after he had completely obliterated 183

the pagan power and defeated all his opponents. The symbolic hour here being 30 years, and this is about half hour.

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

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

Verse 8 – The second trumpet—"a *great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became as blood.*" In 429, the Vandals, who had occupied Spain moved into Africa and within 10 years, by 439, had conquered much of North Africa, taking it away from Rome. Then they took to the sea, building a huge fleet, which totally dominated the western Mediterranean and pillaged all its coasts. Rome built a large fleet to try to stop them, but the Vandals completely destroyed it. Rome built another fleet, but the Vandals defeated them again. And in 455 they came by sea and 184 captured Rome, reeking such destruction upon it—such senseless,

wanton destruction, that their name ever since has stood for such kind of mindless destruction—vandalism. This was the burning mountain that made the sea blood.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 15 – Their period was an hour, day, month, and year. At a-day-for-a-year this is 391 years, if we take a year as 360 days as it usually is in Scripture; or 396 years, if we take a year as the exact 365 days. It's only a five year difference. Either way, it fits perfectly. The first leader who attacked the Eastern Roman

Empire captured Baghdad in 1055 and became supreme 186 beyond the Euphrates, that is, he ruled up to the Euphrates. He died in

1063. Figured either way, the time period measured back from the fall of Constantinople—a very specific date—starts within his short reign.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 3 – Two witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth, which represents affliction and mourning, for 1260 days: A downtrodden temple, sackcloth witnesses, and a period of 1260 years. Verse 7 – At the end of that period the beast kills the witnesses. Verses 8 and 9 – They lie dead but unburied in the street, or broad place, of the great city, rejoiced over (verse 10) by the followers of the beast. Verses 11 and 12 – After 3 V2 days they rise and ascend to heaven. Great fear falls on those who see them. Verse 13 – There was a great earthquake, and the tenth of the great city fell; seven thousand names of men are slain, the remnant gave glory to God.

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

1260 years from 312, when Constantine came to power, is 1572—the Saint Bartholomew Day Massacre of the Huguenots—the opening gun of a concerted war to stamp out parsonism in the Papal dominion. The Pope commanded a great jubilee and had medals made to commemorate the bloody victory of Catholicism over the Huguenots. France was the central scene of this war. France is *the street*, or broad place, of the great city. Rome being *the great city* (verse 8) and there was also *the tenth* of that city, that is the outstanding tenth, out of the ten divisions of the Roman Empire—the primary tenth. Ever since Charlemagne, king of the Franks in the ninth century, defended the Pope and reestablished his authority in Europe, France was considered the eldest son of the church—the chief or principle tenth of the great city. And in this period France fell; that is, fell as far as Catholic power is concerned.

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

There were two witnesses. This indicates a distinction—two classes. They were the true woman and the earth, which helped the woman. The Brethren of

Christ, who held the Truth and kept separate from the world, on the one hand, 188 and on the other all in the world, who for various reasons—social,

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political, or religious—opposed the Papacy and sought liberty. It is the latter class—the outer shell, which appears in history. The Huguenots were of the outer witness. They entered politics and war.

The witnesses were to lie dead three and one half days (verse 9). Peter Jurieu thought this would be 3 1/2 years, which is a natural assumption. But history reveals it to be 3 1/2 months of years. 3 1/2 months is 105 days, and the period of their death turned out to be 105 years, until 1790—the French Revolution, the greatest turning point of European history. The ministry of the Papacy and Rome, the great enemy in the Revelation, before and after the French Revolution are two completely different worlds. Again within three years of the French Revolution, in 1793 an English Bible student named Bicheno had the clue, and identified the 105 years from 1685 to 1790 as the death period of the witnesses. This is another very strong evidence of the soundness of the basic framework.

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

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

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

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

At Constantine's ascension the Donatists protested against corruption in the church and bishops in political power in the imperial court. The cry then was, "What have Christians to do with kings? What have bishops to 189

do at court?" Constantine naturally sided with the established church and persecuted the defenders. There was no freedom for Christ's brethren, just a change of persecuting dragons—from the pagan dragon to the papal dragon.

Chapter 13 – A beast rises out of the sea with seven heads and ten crowned horns. One head had been killed but comes back to life. On his head is the name of blasphemy. The dragon gives to this beast a place, power and authority. The whole world worships the dragon and the beast. The beast is given a mouth, speaking great things, blaspheming God. He is given power to make war against the saints for 42 months, which is 1260 days.

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

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

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

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

Verse 11 – *"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon."* The previous beast 190 (verse 1) had arisen out of the sea. When used in contrast, *the sea*

represents the Mediterranean area and *the earth* the inland portions of north Europe. Soon after Phocas, around the year 600, the Arabian invasions began, and the Eastern Empire lost Africa and the Mid-East. (Africa had been reconquered by Justinian.) Thus weakened, the Eastern Empire could not hold Italy against the new invader—the Lombards, who were anti-trinitarian and anti-papal Arians. But in the early 700's, a new champion of the Papacy arose in north Europe—the Franks. (Here is the beginning of the earth beast.) Between 750 and 800, the Franks conquered Italy and most of Europe. On Christmas day in Rome in the year 800, the Pope crowned the Frankish king Charlemagne as Roman Emperor. The deadly wound was now healed. The two-horned beast—Pope and Emperor—now began. This was thereafter the basic constitution of Europe for exactly 1000 years, until Napoleon by the vials of the 16th chapter destroyed the Holy Roman Empire in 1800 AD.

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

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

There is much exhortation in verses 4 and 5. The 144,000 are a very exalted and select multitude—those who in this life have overcome the flesh and given themselves wholly to God. They are, we are told, *virgins—that is*, no defilement with any thing to do with the apostate woman. That is their important identification. They follow the Lamb in everything they do. They have no guile; they are perfectly pure in heart. They are all without fault before the throne of God, because they have remained *in Christ* and are completely covered by his righteousness and repeatedly purified by prayer and repentance, so that they continually stand before God *perfect*, as they must if they are to be accepted. How dimly we realize the tremendous height of our calling!

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

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

Bro. G.V. Growcott

Cleanse Your Way

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to his Word. This should be the first thing that comes to us when confusion fogs our mind. The word of Truth, which alone is able to make us wise unto Salvation, is the only way provided for us to therefore get wisdom, and with all our wisdom, to get understanding. Wisdom will be the stabilizing influence in our life, if we seek it early.

The manna that was in the wilderness was available in the morning for the Israelites. If they didn't gather it promptly, it melted away and was not available for life sustenance for the rest of the day. By gathering it, and using it, it remained all through the day for them. If they tried to hoard it, like a relic or souvenir, it would breed worms and stink, by trying to leave it over for the next day. It was meant to sustain their lives.

Jesus, when expounding upon his being the living bread from heaven mentioned that his words were spirit and life. The word of God is as the manna was to the Israelites. There is a natural and spiritual application that can be applied here. If we neglect hearing and doing the word as nourishment to our future life, we may find that not seeking it daily can have it not available one day for us in the future. If we hoard it, without sharing it, we can easily have it becoming corrupt to us.

Let us find ways to share it with one another that we may be built up and nourished in the things that matter. Sinful flesh is fleeting and temporal. The words of spirit are forever, and will outlast this temporal life altogether. Let's strengthen the things that remain.

Bro. Pat Brown

ANGER

Brethrens and Sisters, let me draw you back a bit to Bro. Jim Sommerville's article in the Ecclesial News of March 2000 in which he gave a distinctive explanation of anger. He explained about the two types of anger i.e. righteous anger which is not sinful and anger found in God's people and the 192 other type which he referred to as sinful unrighteous anger. The kind of

anger that is aroused out of pride and our inability or unwillingness to suffer wrong and to humbly turn the other cheek.

I base my exhortation on the repercussions of the unrighteous anger that has depicted itself in most human life. This has been observed among nations of the world causing a lot of sufferings to innocent people and the world at large. These sufferings would be minimized if we adhered to the Bible teachings and strive to live by the Word of God.

Proverbs 16:32 *Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a cit^y.*" Many people and nations want to be recognised through their aggressiveness at the expense of the weaker ones. The Bible disapproves anger right from the start. Looking at the book of Genesis 4:6-7. Then the Lord said to Cain *"Wh^y are ^you angr^y? Wh^y is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will ^you not be accepted? But if ^you do not do what is right sin is crouching at your door: it desires to have ^you but ^you must master it."* Cain was not able to master anger. Brethrens, the world has refused to see what it should not see. Pride and inability to suffer wrong and humbly turn (repent) has made the world unacceptable to God. Sin has encroached and seriously swallowed the masses. Brethrens and Sisters of like faith, are we sincerely in any way able to master sin? We should be.

As Bereans, we ought to learn not to harbour anger for we are told in Matthew 5:22 *"But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement."* How would we claim to be knowledgeable to the Bible if we are not able to abide to rather simple Bible teachings like this?

Nations are fighting against nations due to anger. People are fighting against each other due to this sinful anger. It is merely because the nations and the people are unable to swallow their pride and accept defeat and humble down to a change. Ephesians 4:26 says, *"Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry."*

If this would be practical to many, then we would not be having tribal clashes among neighbouring tribes to mention but one. The Orma and the Pokomo tribesmen of Kenya who fight over grazing land. But this also happens among Christians and more so those sharing in the symbol of the body and blood of Christ. They continue doing so as they harbour ill motives towards one another. I Cor. 11:27-28.

Luke 6:37 says *"Do not judge, and you will not be judged: Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned: Forgive, and ^you will be forgiven."*

Brethrens, should we sit and keep on watching what we should not be seeing? As much as we castigate evils, we should as Bereans live to expectation and strive to live holy. In our Lord's prayer we pray for forgiveness. Likewise we should be a people unconditionally ready to forgive others. Forgiveness will get rid of perpetual sinful anger from the would be chosen ones.

Hebrews 12:14-15 *"without holiness we cannot see the Lord."* Let's keep away from bad ideal and deeds that would harm others. Keeping in mind that for anything we do and say, we shall have to account for it - Matthew 12:36-37.

Finally, we are advised through the Bible to be careful with our associates.

Proverbs 22:24 *"Do not make friends with a hot tempered man, do not associate with one easil^y angered."* In addition brethren and sisters, we should learn to be:

1. Humble: Accept defeat and be ready for correction.
2. Repentant: Be ready to be sorry for a wrong done and turn for the glory of God.
3. Forgiveness: As we pray to be forgiven by God, we should be quick to forgive others.

I believe that with all these done we shall be able to master that sinful anger, as we await the return of our Messiah.

Bro. Francis Ogama

DO WE MEAN IT?

We sing: *"Firm to the fight I stand! What terror can confound me?"* and *"Thy way, not mine, O Lord."* Noble words! But IS God's way, and not our own, always the paramount consideration with us? *"Not mine, not mine, the choice, in things or great or small."* Truly godly sentiments-IF they are consistently followed out. Our hearts can say.

"Tis not for present power or wealth, or worldly fame we look to Thee" . . . "All I ask for is enough." Do we, as we sing, consider the REAL MEANING of these things, and frankly examine our own activities in the light of them? *"Life's fleeting treasures I resign."* Does it come from the heart-or just the lips?

There are many subjects in which we can find scriptural admonition in the hymns. *"We should learn the rather free from wrath and strife to live, FAR REMOVING ALL THAT MIGHT OFFEND OR GRIEVE."*

To what extent can WE declare before God that we sincerely try to avoid ALL things that offend and grieve others? We can all think of several things among us-some quite easily dispensed with-which grieve our brethren. Even if these things were right in themselves, it is clearly evident that the spirit of Christ is lacking in us if we persist in them when we know they trouble others. Some day God will ask us just WHY we followed this course. WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

The Deep Things of God Treasure: New and Old

By offering as a series title, *"The Deep Things of God,"* we make no pretension whatsoever concerning our abilities, either natural or spiritual. We are not to glory in the presence of the Almighty (1 Cor. 1:29). All praise and honor belongs to our Heavenly Father who alone has graciously set forth the grand plan and purpose of the Ages. Paul writes: *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* It is a truth that the natural man is in utter darkness concerning the marvelous future that God has planned for the human family. *"But,"* Paul continues, *"God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."* The Deity has indeed provided all that we need through the ministration of the Spirit-Word. Our responsibility is to acquire this knowledge that we might learn of Him. Such requires that we study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen who need not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

James writes: *"Brethren be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater, condemnation."* With such a serious warning as this, all of us should find easy refuge in the role of student. Not that there isn't a need for teachers amongst us. Those who shepherd the Ecclesia fulfill a vital responsibility to the spiritual well-being of both Brethren and Sisters alike. We use a little hyperbole. The point is this: We are all students. If the day ever comes wherein we feel that we are no longer learning, then we will have failed our Lord as workmen. Moreover, in all likelihood, we shall have taken our place among those whom the Lord shall spue out of His mouth in the Day of Judgment.

That which may be gleaned from Holy Writ is treasure indeed. In this series of short articles, we shall search for precious jewels of truth that the Lord has carefully placed along our path toward the Kingdom. This we shall do together, as students. A few of our discoveries may be new to some, but not to others. We are all in different stages of growth. In some cases we may find that we have rediscovered old treasure that has been forgotten. *"The mind is a leaky vessel,"* a Biblical expositor once observed. This is absolutely true. At times we uncover new pearls of wisdom from the trove of Divine Truth, only to let our earlier finds slip from memory in the process. Continuous study throughout the Oracles of Deity is, therefore, paramount.

Lord willing, let us continue to learn of God's Truth and how we may walk accordingly through the eyes of Divine wisdom.

God willing the North East Fraternal will be held on the third weekend of October instead of the second as we normally do. This will be October 19, 20 and 21 at the Devens Inn and Conference Center in Devens Ma. The subject chosen is taken from 1 Tim. 6:11:

"THE MAN OF GOD"

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."

Paul in this verse lists six qualities that distinguish a man of God. If we do not pursue these virtues we cannot be a "man of God."

RIGHTEOUSNESS simply means doing right, both before God and before man. A man of God cannot lead an ungodly, lascivious, ego-centered, materialist life. *"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* (1 John 3:7)

GODLINESS refers to the spirit of holiness, of reverence and piety in the heart. It is the source of right behavior. It is living one's life in God's word, prayer, worship, communion and all the other means God provides for bringing one's heart captive to Christ. *"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."* (Titus 2:12)

FAITH is the confident trust in God for everything, complete loyalty to Him, unwavering confidence in His power, purpose, and provision. The man of God lives by trusting the sovereign God to keep his word. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6)

LOVE - The man of God must have that transforming, volitional, cognitive agape love which Paul says is "the bond of perfect ness." *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."* (Matthew 5:44)

PATIENCE does not mean a passive resignation, but activity, endurance, and unswerving loyalty. The man of God endures the inevitable and constant trials of ministry, not just with resignation, but with unwavering perseverance. *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it."* (James 5:7)

MEEKNESS is the selfless attitude of one who recognizes he must be humble, meek and kind. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a **meek and quiet spirit**, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter 3:4)

